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"A SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONSHIPS
SINCE VATICAN COUNCIL II"

A Paper Presented by
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Interreligious Affairs Director
of the American Jewish Committee, New York, New York

In cooperation with Sister Rose Albert Thering of the Seton Hall Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies; Mrs. Judith Banki, Rabbi James Rudin, and Dr. Gerald Strober, Interreligious Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee.

"Toward a Theology of Israel" Convocation, Sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies Observing the Fifth Anniversary of the Conciliar Statement on the Jews, October 25-28, 1970, Seton Hall University, South Orange, N. J.

The most significant fact in Jewish-Christian relations during the past five years that Vatican Council II inaugurated is that meaningful first steps have been taken to create an emergent new Christian culture within which anti-Semitism can no longer find official church sanction, and in which Judaism is beginning to be appreciated as a permanent source of truth and value for the Jewish people. In that emergent new Christian culture, the Jewish people are being perceived in their own terms, rather than as candidates for conversion, and that constitutes the most significant breakthrough which now makes it increasingly possible to have authentic communication between Judaism and Christianity as religious peers.

That period of five years has also witnessed a growing relaxation of suspicion and defensiveness against the Catholic community

among many Jews, and in this freer atmosphere Jewish thinkers and leaders are beginning to reevaluate seriously, also for the first time in centuries, the Jewish religious convictions about the legitimacy of Christianity as a valid form of salvation for Christians who stand in some true relationship with the Covenant of Israel. That many Catholics have struggled with integrity and sympathy to comprehend the complex but profound bonds that link Jewry with the land and people of Israel has been a strong motivation to many Jews to explore a reciprocal relationship that will contribute to genuine human community with Christians in which religious fellowship, cooperative study, and mutual aid can flourish.

Some in the Christian as well as in the Jewish communities would undoubtedly challenge these summary statements as unwarrantedly optimistic, suggesting perhaps that my judgments regarding "the spirit of the times" of the "emergent new Christian culture" are closer to Goethe's skeptical characterization of the Geist der Zeiten as the historians' "own spirit in which the times are reflected."

Indeed, the historian of ideas, H. Stuart Hughes (Consciousness and Society) says it is legitimate to question, "Who is bold enough to say exactly what this spirit is? Who is confident that he knows how to locate it or to define it?" Hughes answers his own questions, saying, "The paradoxical truth is that the discovery of the spirit of the times is at once a technical near-impossibility

and the intellectual historian's highest achievement."

The fact during the four sessions of Vatican Council II some 2,500 Council Fathers from throughout the inhabited world spent hours deliberating, many with utmost seriousness, the relationship of the Church to the Jewish people and of Christianity's rootedness in Judaism, and articulated its majority consensus through the adoption of the Statement on the Jews argues forcefully for the existence of such a new Christian spirit. Those conciliar deliberations represent in fact the most extraordinary "seminar in Jewish-Christian relations" ever held in the past 1,900 years. That is a far more significant reality than the specific final language of the text. An imperfect text that is vigorously implemented on the key substantive issues is to be preferred over a "perfect text" that is ignored.

The fact that groups of serious and recognized thinkers such as those assembled at this convocation, and at similar other colloquia that have met here and abroad since Vatican Council II, are moving toward sharing common attitudes regarding the respective validities of Judaism and Christianity as co-existing branches of the people of God suggests an emerging new critical consciousness on Jewish-Christian relations that is unique in the perspective of the past two millenia.

Nevertheless, it could be fairly argued, these examples of "the new spirit of the times" involve only a small number of individuals and a serious evaluation ought not to overestimate their

influence. Indeed, there should be no overestimation, but neither should there be underestimation, and I fear that we are frequently guilty of that failing which then sets into motion self-fulfilling prophecies of impotence. From the study of the history of ideas we have learned "only a small number of individuals are actually responsible for the establishment and maintenance" of the fund of ideas and civilized values. The enunciation and development of such ideas eventually will inspire the ruling minorities which Benedetto Groce identifies as "the governing elites." In this way there "filters down" a common store of social, moral, and religious ideas that become the characteristic popular beliefs and practices.

(It may be relevant to observe, as has H. Stuart Hughes, that the Germans, the Austrians, the French, and the Italians in general provided the fund of ideas that has come to seem most characteristic of our own time as reflected in our shared institutions and our intellectual heritage. The guiding pattern of thought of the last fifty years was shaped by the cluster of genius dominated by Sigmund Freud, Max Weber, Benedetto Groce, and Emile Durkheim.)

These observations are intended therefore to reinforce the first conclusion of the decisive importance of the first steps already taken toward the creation of a "new Christian culture" with regard to fresh ideas on Jews, Judaism, and Israel, and toward Christians and Christianity in "the new Jewish culture." Also intended is an underscoring of the indispensability of the "cluster"

of individual scholars who are responsible for establishing and maintaining these revised ideas and values without which nothing lasting or permanent will take place on "lower" levels of culture and society.

There are however at least two serious hazards that attend the work of Jewish and Christian scholars in this field:

The first has to do with the highly individualistic character of scholarship and the academic enterprise itself. A substantial measure of very solid work is being done in Biblical, theological, historical, liturgical and sociological studies directly or indirectly related to Judaism and Christianity and their interrelationship, but because it is being carried out by individuals who are relatively isolated in relatively isolated academic institutions, the impact of this work is either being frittered away, or muted, or is lost altogether. A survey of the scholarship and studies in Jewish-Christian relations discloses, in my opinion, the urgent need for establishing some effective communications center, well-staffed, well-financed, and of high status, that will help focus and augment the impact of the thinking and writing and research that is already going on or that can be stimulated. Ideally, if you will forgive the borrowed image, a "Manhattan Project" in Jewish-Christian relations (and Islamic relations as well) is required if we are at all serious about moving beyond our present halting, scattered probings in this area. During the past three years, I have been discussing such a proposal

with Christian, Jewish, and some Islamic scholars, somewhat in the form of an Institute for Advanced Studies in Jewish-Christian-Islamic Relations that will have both national and international centers, and the response was been quite positive. I have no doubt that such a vital project will come into being in the not too distant future, and I will certainly do everything in my power to help in its realization. Failure to provide such instruments for rational, systematic development of the field may well lead to a loss of the precious momentum released by Vatican Council II, or its diversion into pathways that in the end could demean the entire concern for Jewish-Christian-Islamic Relations as a priority.

The second hazard has to do with the "incestuousness" of scholars and scholarship in this field. As highly as I prize the centrality of academic work in Jewish-Christian relations, unless some more effective way is found for establishing direct, ongoing and effective connections between the "right" ideas about Judaism and Christianity that scholars formulate and the Jewish and Christian communities in which we are rooted, I fear we shall contribute further to perpetuating the crisis in the religious communities of having a group of ecumenical generals who blow their trumpets and find their infantry troops marching off in the opposite direction. We see evidences of such a crisis in the area of religious social action where religious leaders have developed a consensus on liberal social justice causes regarding peace and war, race, anti-poverty,

dissent, and not having paid adequate attention to forming the consciences of their constituents are startled to find at moments of decision that they speak only for themselves and their witness to their churches and synagogues, and to the nation at large, has become severely weakened. It is not inconceivable that scholars and religious leaders can repeat that error in relation to forming a new culture of Jewish-Christian relations.

Participatory democracy is as much an obligation of the academic community committed to Jewish-Christian relations as it is on the university campus. The closing of the gap between the scholars on seminary, college and university faculties and the religious and communal systems in the Christian and Jewish communities that have access to millions of our constituents is indispensable of our new theologies of Israel and of Christianity, and our new historical insights are to become formative forces in the lives of the people of God, and not remain just essays in esoteric journals with which we impress, as well as enlighten, one another. The obligations of participatory democracy is a two-way street - scholars have an obligation to come close to established religious and communal structures and to infuse their ideas into the vast systems of communication; religious institutional leaders have a parallel obligation to involve the academic community on a serious, systematic, and decision-making basis in conceiving programs and implementing them. The Ethics of the Fathers spoke of "the raising up of

many disciples" as serious a mitzvah as the studying of the Torah itself.

This reflection is occasioned by the fact that Vatican Council II has not only fostered a "new spirit of the times" for the advancing of Jewish-Christian understanding, but has become the foundation on which a number of other important building-blocks have been constructed during the past five years. As has been noted by Father Cornelius Rijk and others, the Vatican Statement on the Jews has become the text around which an oral and written tradition has begun to develop, which in many ways has gone beyond the original declaration. The guidelines of the American Catholic Bishops on Catholic-Jewish relations have not only spoken clearly on such crucial issues as the rejection of proselytism, the uprooting of anti-Semitism in the teaching process, the overcoming of old polemics about the Pharisees, the law versus the gospel, etc. The guidelines have also sparked the creation of local ecumenical and interreligious commissions in dozens of dioceses around the country. Similarly, interreligious groups involving Protestants, Catholics and Jews have been established in numerous communities throughout the nation. Virtually in each instance the involvement of scholars in the deliberations of these bodies would be a vastly energizing contribution to local religious leadership, and at the same time would provide a setting in the reality of religious community life for testing and working out the ideas and conceptions of the scholarly community.

There is a major movement in the religious communities, as there is in other levels of government and voluntary activity, toward decentralization of programming toward the local communities. The adoptions of guidelines by the dioceses of New York-Brooklyn-Queens, of Albany, N. Y.; Cincinnati; Allentown, Pa., and a number of other communities suggests that there is emerging a pattern of strong church support, with parallel Jewish support, for growing and deepening interaction between Christians and Jews in most of the major communities throughout the United States. In 1969, the American Jewish Committee was involved in 104 Jewish-Christian programs. From the Jewish side, if you add the parallel programs of the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Chatauqua Society of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, local Jewish Community Relations Councils, and Rabbinical groups and you have some idea how extensive a network of interreligious relations has already been developed during the past five years.

These local interreligious dialogues have involved scholars (frequently on a single-lecture basis), clergy, religious teachers, seminarians, men, women, youth, mass media representatives. We must resist the urge in this survey to be encyclopedic, if for no other reason than that the data is far too heterogeneous, ranging over all levels and types of sophistication. The materials also are only in small part measurable since the whole range of human expression and interaction between Christians and Jews are involved--their scholar-

Tanenbaum, p. 10

ship, their writing, their speech, their routine social and commercial intercourse, their unorganized as well as their organized sentiments. Suffice it to say, virtually an entire new discipline has emerged in Jewish-Christian relations as well as the structures for the creation of a new culture. It is substantial enough, as well as potentially important enough for the life of our people and our society, to warrant far more attention, care, and intellectual involvement than most of us have given it thus far.



In order to enable scholars and religious leaders to assess the impact of Vatican Council II's Statement on the Jews, and to probe its implications for their future work in Jewish-Christian Relations, the American Jewish Committee and the Institute of Judaic-Christian Studies have just completed a detailed, systematic, nationwide survey of the specific changes in educational programming that have taken place during the past five years in response to the call for implementing the objectives of the Conciliar statement. The educational categories surveyed cover curricula courses, teaching methods, examination of textbooks and other materials, institutes on Jewish-Christian relations, use of specialized Christian and Jewish faculty, etc. While members of the AJC and the IJCS knew that some changes had taken place because they had themselves been involved in various programs of implementation in the academic and religious communities, at no time had there been any such systematic study to document and to evaluate the efforts to implement the Vatican Statement. This study is designed to meet that need.

Description of surveys - The surveys were limited to the American scene. Somewhat different surveys were sent to a representative sampling of four key Catholic groups: Catholic seminaries (100); Catholic colleges and universities (227); Catholic high schools (500); and offices of superintendents of diocesan schools (152). No investigation of the elementary curricula was done except that which was covered by the Superintendent's office.

Obviously, some questions directed to seminaries and universities were inappropriate for high schools, and vice versa. However, some key questions were asked of all four categories: whether courses in Jewish studies were provided in the schools, whether the school curricula dealt with present-day Judaism, whether it covered areas such as the Nazi Holocaust, and whether the history or the theological implications of the State of Israel.

Similar questionnaires were also sent to Protestant colleges (344) and seminaries (210).

A version of the questionnaire was also sent to Jewish educational institutions - seminaries, colleges, boards of Jewish education. Unfortunately, the results have not been compiled in time to be included in this survey. They will be included in the final publication of the study. (It should be noted that during this time a study of Jewish elementary and secondary textbooks was carried out by an Orthodox Jewish educator in consultation with AJC regarding the nature of Jewish teaching about Jesus, Christianity, and Jewish-Christian relations.)

The response percentages varied among the Catholic and Protestant groups, and this fact should be kept in mind in any evaluation of these responses. For example, since a smaller percentage of high schools than of colleges and universities responded to the survey, we may assume that only the more interested high schools responded - perhaps those which had already taken some steps to imple-

ment the Conciliar Declaration.

Responses to the survey were:

Catholic:

14 out of 227 colleges and universities, or 6%

31 out of 100 questionnaires for seminaries, or 30%

177 out of 500 high schools, or 35.4%

46 out of 152 superintendents of schools, or 30%

Protestants:

180 out of 344 colleges, or 52%

65 out of 210 seminaries, or 30%

Reviewing the survey responses may help to provide an understanding of the ways in which Christian students and seminarians learn about Jews and Judaism, a question related directly or indirectly to the Conciliar Statement on the Jews. Very few of the institutions have departments of Jewish studies. (For the Catholics, zero percent of the seminaries, and only 1.3% of the colleges; for the Protestants, zero percent of the seminaries and 4% of the colleges.) Nearly half of the institutions do provide separate courses in Jewish studies (44.8% of the Catholic seminaries and 43.2% of the Catholic colleges; 30.7% of the Protestant seminaries and 37.7% of the colleges. 27.3% of Catholic high schools treat Judaism in Comparative Religions. A high percentage of all these institutions (68.9% Catholic colleges; 82.7% Catholic seminaries; 82.1% Catholic high schools; 78.4% Protestant seminaries; and 81.1%

Protestant colleges) offer Scripture and/or Theology courses which specifically treat the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. Only 14.1% of Catholic colleges offer a course covering the intertestamental period, as compared with 50.2% of Protestant colleges; 48.2% of Catholic seminaries offer a course as compared with 26.1% of Protestant seminaries. 55.3% of Catholic high schools teach the Rabbinic background of New Testament in religion classes. 37.3% of Catholic colleges offer a special course on Judaism; 24.1% seminaries.

Do these institutions deal with (the meaning of) the Nazi Holocaust? Here the figures for the institutions of higher learning are much smaller, ranging from zero percent (Protestant seminaries), 2.2% (Protestant colleges), 1.3% (Catholic colleges), to 6.8% in Catholic seminaries. (Catholic high schools reported 23.2% treated the Nazi period in religion courses, and 13.6% did so in Church history courses.)

Courses on the history of Israel?

10.3% of the Catholic seminaries and 5.4% of the Catholic colleges and universities say yes, but only 1.5% of the Protestant seminaries and 6.8% of the Protestant colleges. Catholic high schools report 13.6% yes.

Courses dealing with the theological significance of the State of Israel are comparatively low: Catholic colleges (1.3%), Catholic seminaries (10.3%), Protestant seminaries (zero %), and

Protestant colleges (5.1%). (Catholic high schools - 25.3%).

On the question of whether Jewish scholars are teaching courses in the institutions, the figures are:

7% yes for Catholic seminaries; 42.5% for Catholic colleges; 12.3% for Protestant seminaries; and 20.5% for Protestant colleges. Only 5.3% of the Catholic high schools responded that they had Jewish scholars teaching courses, but almost 70% - a really remarkable figure - responded that they invite a local rabbi to join the class when specifically Jewish subjects are being discussed. Many high schools visit neighboring Temple or Synagogue for added lectures or Sabbath services (57.7%).

What are some of the implications of these figures and statistics?

One possible conclusion is that the two most decisive events which have forged the consciousness of contemporary Jews - the Nazi Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel - are relatively ignored in both Catholic and Protestant seminaries and colleges.

It can also be surmised from the responses that Judaism is taught essentially as a "religion" (in the Theology Dept. or the Dept. of Religious Studies of Catholic colleges, 75.6%; only 29% in History Dept.) and probably most specifically as background for, or prelude to, Christianity. Of course this does not mean that Judaism must necessarily be presented in a negative light. But it does seem appropriate to question whether certain aspects of Judaism which are

critical to Jews as they understand themselves receive full exploration, such as, Jewish historical continuity, the strong sense of Jewish peoplehood, and Jewish religious development in the post-Biblical period as reflected in the oral law and the opinions and decisions of the Talmudic and Rabbinic scholars and teachers.

In other words, even a sympathetic treatment of "Old Testament" Judaism in Christian educational institutions will not likely prepare students for an adequate understanding of contemporary Jews and Judaism.

Interestingly, Catholic high schools score somewhat better on these grounds. Understandably, a smaller percentage of them offer courses in Jewish studies (27.3%), but their responses showed a somewhat fuller treatment of the meaning of the Nazi Holocaust (either in religion or in church history courses). The Catholic high schools also scored a higher percentage on teaching the history of the State of Israel.

The high school responses, incidentally, appeared to be supported by the responses of the diocesan school superintendents. 50% of them responded that the treatment of present-day Judaism was covered in their schools; 56.5% indicated their belief that their religious textbooks carried an adequate and positive treatment of Judaism and its relationship to Christianity; 49% said that the theology of Judaism was part of the curriculum of the secondary schools; and 18% said the schools dealt with the theological sig-

nificance of the State of Israel.

While these questions may point to some negative findings of the survey, they must also be viewed in the light of the past. There is no pre-Vatican II study with which to compare our present results, nevertheless we have no reason to doubt that the responses are better today than they would have been five years ago - and the increased positive interest in Jewish studies and in institutes on Jewish-Christian relations is reflected in the kinds of comments made by the responding institutions. (A sampling of the answers given are carried in the appendix of the study).

For those who do offer courses on Judaism, their evaluation of the courses ranges from good to excellent. (A very small percentage indicated a "poor" response.)

Most institutions indicated visible rewards both in the courses on Judaism and in the institutes. As Sister Rose Albert Thering, O. P., summarizes these responses:

"Almost every college engaged in an implementation of the Conciliar Statement stated, in one way or another, that students, faculty, administration, and the community (both Christian and Jewish) surrounding the institution developed a deeper understanding, awareness, and appreciation not only of each other but of their own faith and tradition. Both Testaments of the Sacred Scripture became more meaningful to the Christians. In these classes, there was focusing on Jewish roots that apparently had not even been

guessed. A deep appreciation of Jewish spirituality resulted. A deep interest in Jewish thought was generated not only as it related to Christianity and present-day situations, but an appreciation of the grandeur of Judaism itself developed.

"An awareness of the injustices meted out to Jews throughout history helped remove latent prejudices, and attitudes moved toward real brotherhood."

In general, a high proportion of the respondents felt that the courses and institutes encouraged Jewish-Christian understanding and friendship; moreover, they appeared to evoke especially good responses among students. A number of graduate students were stimulated to carry out research projects dealing with Biblical, Historical, or liturgical aspects of the interrelationships between Judaism

¹ Question #27 asked for an evaluation of the institutions' efforts at implementation of the Vatican II Statement. Of Catholic colleges and universities, 27% responded "very good", 28.3% "good", 13% "fair", 6.7% "poor." Among the "very good" responses were such opinions as these:

"In the excellent atmosphere of Jewish-Christian relations here, we feel we have shown that Vatican II was 'for real'..."

"Our student response is excellent."

"Great progress has been made since Vatican II".

(Seminaries) "This institution recognizes its responsibility to implement Vatican II's Statement, and it has taken some significant steps to meet it; much still remains to be done, however."

and Christianity. (In one university, a M. A. comprehensive exam found very knowledgeable responses to the question: "How would you reconcile Matthew's handling of the Jews in the Passion narrative with the Statement of Vatican II?") From the comments of those who answered the questionnaire, it would seem that implementation of the Conciliar Statement was very rewarding. The sampling of Catholic institutions of higher learning (65.5%) shows an overall honest effort to implement the Conciliar Statement, and perhaps most encouraging, many of the institutions which have made beginnings, indicated their desire to do more, and many which have done little have indicated a desire to begin. (Seminaries - "Badly in need of further development and implementation. Hope to do so.") Several schools requested additional copies of the questionnaire as a basis for future programming. (The questionnaire itself has proven to be a tool of teaching, bringing faculty members to an awareness hitherto not present.)

Lack of qualified personnel, lack of funds, and lack of time in already crowded schedules appeared to be the major impediments, rather than lack of interest or leadership, for programming in Jewish-Christian studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In light of the foregoing findings, the authors of this study recommend 1) Colleges, universities, and seminaries should consider including in their curriculum a course related to the Nazi Holocaust,

the history and theology of the State of Israel. These areas could very well be covered in a survey course on Jews, Judaism, or Jewish-Christian relations. A well-prepared faculty member could cover this material in a course on the history of Israel.

2) More attention should be given to the intertestamental period, particularly the Rabbinic background of the New Testament for seminary students who will be the future priests preaching homilies.

3) To help prepare faculty in these areas, institutes of Jewish studies - such as those conducted by the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith - need to be continued.

4) High school textbooks, even those with good intergroup orientations, need to consider more adequate treatment of the Nazi period and the State of Israel.

5) A high school curriculum for the history of the State of Israel is needed.

6) High school faculties need to be given more opportunities for further preparation in this field of study so as to be able to teach more adequately courses on Jews and Judaism, the Nazi Holocaust, and the State of Israel. Institutes of studies in Judaism and Christianity offered during the summer months at universities and colleges can make possible the necessary education in these areas which many teachers never received when doing their graduate work in Theology, Sacred Scriptures, or History. Teachers should seek

in service programs from their local diocesan or archdiocesan officials. School offices could co-sponsor these programs with the local university or college.

7) The Office of Superintendents should consider taking the initiative in providing in-service education in these areas.

8) The setting up of libraries on Jewish-Christian relations in Ecumenical Institutes and in various schools.





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Candle Lighting Time, Friday, February 13 1970 - 5 26 P M

Sabbath Portion of the Week - TERUMAH

Sedra, Exodus 25 1-27 19, Prophets, Kings 1, 5 26-6 13

Still on the agenda

When a nation faces an external threat, the last thing it needs is a civil war. It is understandable, therefore, why the Israeli Cabinet acted so fast to patch over differences that arose within the nation and among Jews throughout the world over the question of who is a Jew. Yet no one is deluded that the differences remain and that they must be resolved some day.

In this connection we commend to our readers the following view of the situation by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee.

A precipitate redefinition of who is a Jew, especially one that would depart radically from the historic Jewish self understanding that has been operative over the past 2,000 years - namely that a Jew is one born of a Jewish mother, or one who converts to Judaism - would lead inevitably to a profound rupture in the unity of the Jewish people not only in Israel but within every Jewish community throughout the world.

At a time when Israel continues to be ringed about by nations pledged to destroy or weaken her, a religious and ideological KULTURKAMPF pitting Jews against Jews is a luxury that Israel can little afford.

At the same time Jews in Israel and throughout the world recognize that the issue raised by the Israeli Supreme Court decision that allowed Commander Shalit to register his non Jewish wife and children as Jews by nationality rather than by religion is too fundamental a question for Judaism and the world Jewish community to be regarded as finally resolved through a political decision of the Israeli Cabinet.

When the issue of Israel's physical security is no longer paramount in the consciousness of the Jewish people there can be little doubt that a great debate will surface throughout the whole of world Jewry over the question of Jewish identity, not unlike the widespread dialogue that Vatican Council II has inaugurated over Christian identity.

In that debate, one can only hope that polarization will be kept to a minimum and that the merits in the respective positions of the various schools of thought - religious, nationalist, secularist - will be acknowledged and incorporated in the universal Jewish consensus.

There is unarguable merit in the Orthodox position which asserts that Torah religion is central to Judaism, and that it has preserved Jewish identity across thousands of years of dispersion in foreign cultures, and in fact kept alive the ancestral memories of return to the Holy Land as a religious obligation.

There is merit also in the Reform Jewish position, which opposes the use by some Orthodox leaders in Israel of the political instruments of a sovereign state to impose their interpretation of Judaism on the entire Jewish people.

There is merit too, in the Conservative Jewish position which claims that Judaism is the religious expression of a universal Jewish civilization and must not exclude forms of identification besides that of religion.

As Jews both in Israel and elsewhere sort out the paradoxes and complexities of their identity problems it will be serviceable for all to keep in mind the old Yiddish proverb, VOS MIR SEINEN, SEINEN MIR OBER YIDDIN SEINEN MIR, "Whatever we are, we are, but above all else, we are Jews."