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JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19122

EDITORS

LEONARD SWIDLER
ELWYN A. SMITH

MANAGING EDITOR

ARLENE SWIDLER

postmarked 4/24/69

Dear Marc:

You and I have got to get together to talk over a couple of things, most particularly the implications of my recent visit with Zwi Werblowski at the Hebrew University. A letter from him dated March 3 tells me that he has been in touch with you. I would hope that we could work out something together, since he is very anxious to work in collaboration with you as well as with Temple. I am working now to see whether I can get consent in our university to co-sponsorship with Hebrew University of a good conference along lines discussed with Werblowski. It would be easier to describe this to you in a personal conversation than here.

I am planning to be at the luncheon here in the city a few weeks from now at which you are speaking. I'd be grateful if we could plan to spend a half an hour or so together at that time.

Warm regards,

Elwyn A. Smith
Elwyn A. Smith
Co-editor

EAS:vr

Handwritten signatures and notes:
P. J. ...
May 5 at H.J.L.

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

GEORGE KEHM
616 N. HIGHLAND AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15206

ABSTRACTS EDITOR

ALBERT COSTA
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219

NEWSNOTES EDITOR

JOHN OPIE
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219



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MANAGING EDITOR

ARLENE SWIDLER

April 11, 1969

Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Marc:

Noting the conference held in New York between Lutherans and Jews on March 6, I wonder whether you would care to write a brief analysis of the event for the news notes of the JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES. Here we do not simply print releases, consisting of the material which normally is found earlier in newspapers, but critical reflections by participants on the significance, either the advantages or failings or unexpected things which might emerge in such conferences. If a conference in fact should have held no particular interest, we simply do not report it. Would you have a minute to dictate something for news notes in the JOURNAL on this March 6 conference?

Cordially,


Elwyn A. Smith

EAS:gmk

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616 N. HIGHLAND AVENUE
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THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

3080 BROADWAY • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10027

212 RIVERSIDE 9-8000

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

CABLE ADDRESS: SEMINARY, NEW YORK

London, England

July 22, 1969

Dear Colleague:

This letter is being written immediately after my arrival from Israel, where I was simply kept too busy to write at all. It was wonderful to be there, particularly in Jerusalem, and to see how many of our colleagues, our future colleagues, our laymen, young and old, were gathered there. At a luncheon of Seminary alumni arranged during my visit, Rabbi Ralph Simon, President of our Assembly, indicated that Conservative Judaism at last has a "presence" in Jerusalem. As his plans, and those of the Seminary, unfold, our "presence" will be felt in an ever stronger manner.

In increasing numbers, our colleagues are settling in Jerusalem and other parts of Israel. Some of them, as you know, hold pulpits; others are teaching at the Hebrew University and elsewhere. All have been influenced by the Seminary, and reflect great honor on its founders and its great teachers. Professor Saul Lieberman has an apartment in Jerusalem, where he expects to spend the summer months, returning to the Seminary for the teaching term. I do not have to tell you that he exerts great influence there. He has turned out to be the foremost Rabbinic scholar, not only of our age, but of many ages. In his work and teaching he combines the insights of western scholarship with the predominantly eastern Rabbinic tradition, thus bringing to fruition the hopes of Doctor Solomon Schechter and Professor Louis Ginzberg. The effect of this merging of two lines of thought has been to make Rabbinic traditions far better understood than they could be alone. His great commentary on the Tosefta has become a classic in his lifetime, and is studied in universities everywhere as well as in the yeshivot. That itself necessarily helps to make our "presence" felt in the learned groups in Jerusalem.

One of the young Israelis who spent a few years with us at the Seminary, and is now back in Israel, told me, to my astonishment, that the most important lesson he owes to the Seminary is the recognition that the Talmudic authorities have to be taken seriously. This had not occurred to him earlier, although he studied in some fine schools before he came to us. At the Seminary, he explained, he learned that it is not only the norms of ritual, proclaimed by the Talmud, that have to be observed (he is a very observant Jew); but that even the passing comments of the Talmudic authorities reflect profound philosophies of life, which may be relevant to our times, as well as to other times.

At the Seminary, we all take this approach to Talmud and Midrash so for granted that, until he spoke of it, I had not realized how unusual it is. We have grown up under the tutelage of scholars who took and take the words of the Rabbis seriously, trying to understand what impelled them to say what they said, and their disciples to preserve what they preserved. Of course, we all remember Solomon Schechter's essay on "A Jewish Boswell," which quotes from Boswell's introduction to the Life of Samuel Johnson the Rabbinic comment on the verse, "And his leaf shall not wither," viz., that even the passing conversations of great men need to be studied and recorded. This sharing of Talmudic insights, as we understand them, with our brothers in Israel is one important aspect of our presence there.

Another, and no less important is the presence of the Ramah and USY groups in Israel in such large numbers. Israel is after all not a very large country; and the influx of about a thousand of our young people, travelling about the country, and particularly walking through the streets of Jerusalem, cannot but be noticed. It is also noticeable that these youngsters are drawn to Israel because of a commitment to Judaism.

Of no less vital importance in our contacts with Israel is the large number of Israelis who come to America to work in the Ramah Camps in the summer; and the considerable number who come to teach at the Teachers Institute, and even at the Rabbinical School.

However, there may be something far more profound in the ready welcome accorded us in Israel, especially when we speak to the common people. Conservative Judaism, when one considers it rightly, is an expression of faith in the purposes and dedication of the ordinary Jew. That is apparently why we get along so well without any authoritarianism. In a way, what Schechter and his colleagues were feeling for was the insight reflected in Hillel's courageous remark to the Elders of Bathyra, in his famous argument with them over the slaughtering of the Paschal lamb on the Sabbath. As we all recall, his concluding words were, "Let the children of Israel alone. If they are not Prophets, they are kinsmen of Prophets."

Officials, no matter how dedicated they may be, almost inevitably and invariably, become institution-minded, party-minded, and group-minded; forgetting that institutions and groups are created to serve the whole, not to supplant it. The common man usually escapes this error of confusing ends and means.

This is very noticeable in Israel. The ordinary kibbutznik, the colonist, the resident of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or Haifa, who is really responsible for the miraculous emergence and growth of the State, is usually a dedicated person, happy in being able to make a contribution, no matter how small, to its welfare and growth.

Apparently, the average Israeli finds it immensely comforting to discover among the immigrants and tourists from powerful America, people who share his view of life. They too are doing their best to help every affirmative expression of Judaism. They know full well that a religious community which numbers only about 11,000,000 in a world containing a billion Christians, two hundred million Moslems, two hundred million Hindus, and two hundred million Buddhists, is always living precariously. It needs all its resources to keep alive, and to grow. It cannot indulge in the luxury of reading anyone out if he has any positive contribution to offer to the survival of the faith.

This conviction was really, I believe, at the heart of the adherence of Dr. Solomon Schechter, Dr. Israel Friedlaender, and Professor Louis Ginzberg to Zionism, when in the early nineteen hundreds it seemed a purely secular movement, and was looked upon with disdain by many belonging to the "establishment." They, and their colleagues, all felt that no matter how much they might wish that Zionism were a thoroughly religious movement, they could not reject it for its failure to accept their views. Certainly, it pointed the way to the survival of Judaism in the emancipated Diaspora, and possibly in a re-established Zionist homeland. This attitude was what induced Dr. Schechter to invite Ahad Haam to become a member of the Seminary Faculty, despite the wide differences in outlook between them. And their attitude was formulated in an entirely different way, in Dr. Schechter's magnificent address at the dedication of the buildings of the Hebrew Union College, when he greeted Reform Judaism as "His Majesty's Opposition." Reform Judaism was, in his opinion, an Opposition; but it was still far preferable to the complete negation of Judaism, which seemed to threaten at that time.

It is not that we are "all things to all men." It is rather that, once more to use Schechter's words, "Nothing Jewish is alien to us."

Our concept of Torah is as comprehensive as our concept of Judaism. Torah means not any particular field of study in our literature; it includes everything that helps to shed light on man's moral problems and on human existence. At least this is how Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai understood it, when he spent time mastering the whole realm of available knowledge, in order the better to understand the Torah in the more limited sense.

There is thus an inherent spiritual kinship between the ordinary Jew of Israel, and the American Conservative Jew. In the long run, it is therefore inevitable that Israel should develop indigenously a type of Judaism, which will in all its essentials be similar to the Conservative Judaism of our country, of Dr. Schechter, of the Rabbinical Assembly, and of our congregations. Whether there will develop any organizational ties between our institutions and those emerging in Israel is open to question. Israel can never be, as Rabbi Meir Berlin once remarked, spiritually a branch of anything. If we should develop organizational ties with counterparts in Israel, our whole movement will have to have its center and focus in Jerusalem. Whether that can be done or should be done, and whether American Conservative Judaism will itself be willing to be a branch of the Judaism developing in Israel, future generations will have to decide.

The feeling that the future Judaism of Israel will in all essentials resemble that which we teach from our pulpits and at the Seminary is strengthened by the stress which the ordinary Israeli citizen places on the moral and ethical dimension in Judaism. In Israel one feels quite at home discussing this dimension of Judaism, which some groups of the Diaspora hold not particularly relevant to the struggle for Jewish survival.

"Everybody accepts the moral insights of the Prophets; what we must stress is what differentiates us from the majority," is the plaintive cry one hears when one speaks of Jewish morality in many communities of the Diaspora. But the truth is that not everybody accepts the insights of the Prophets, at least not as the Talmudic authorities understood them; and not everybody even understands them. It is the unique quality of Judaism that it is fundamentally a system of ethics, which includes ritual law and civil law, as part of the ethical life.

The ordinary Jew in Israel finds this emphasis, which comes naturally to the disciples of Solomon Schechter, very comforting and stimulating. He is not worried about the problem of the survival of Judaism in his country. That is assured. Therefore he has time and energy to worry about the survival of Jewish ethical and moral attitudes.

Our problem in America is to preserve this great insight of Conservative Judaism. While fortunately for our souls, none of us has any real power - as an individual, and no part of our movement, as institution, has any; we are emerging collectively as the most numerous, the most generous, and perhaps even the wealthiest, group of Jews which ever existed in our history.

There is much that we are doing; and there is more that we can do. But let us always be fearful of the dictum of Lord Acton, "Power tends to corrupt." We cannot win over the Israeli to our views, unless he continues to feel as he does now (if he knows about us at all), that we are his brothers, not only as kinsmen, but also as fellow-Jews concerned with the vital issues of Judaism as he sees them - almost all in the moral and ethical sphere.

As I have been pondering this relationship between Conservative Judaism and Israel, and the future development it suggests, a new thought came to me, which possibly has already occurred to you. Is the concern of the common American Jew precisely the same as that of the common Israeli Jew? Is that why Conservative Judaism has grown so miraculously within the last thirty years, without any really conscious effort to make it grow?

And is the revolt of the youth of America against the establishment, merely a somewhat confused, mumbling way of asking for precisely what Solomon Schechter held ought to be given them: less rigidity, less administration, more individual initiative, more trust in the people which (although youth does not always recognize this) really means more trust in God?

If so, should we perhaps approach the revolt of our youth, which involves so many young Jews, with a somewhat different attitude than is customary? Is our youth crying out for precisely what we want to give them; and is their revolt simply a failure of communication?

I cannot forget the tremendous impact which the essays of Solomon Schechter made on the late Morton Wishengrad, when, after undertaking to write some Eternal Light scripts, he began to understand what Conservative Judaism really is. None of the young Jewish leaders of the present upheaval of American youth could be more violent in their resentment against the tradition in which they were raised than was Morton Wishengrad. And none could be more enthusiastic in support of Conservative Judaism than Morton Wishengrad became when he began to realize what it really stood for. He who had lived so much of his life away from traditional Judaism in all its forms, joined a Conservative Synagogue, tried to give his children a Jewish education in one of our Synagogues, and above all educated himself Jewishly, at a great sacrifice of time and energy.

There may be many such people in the various extremist and rebellious youth groups, who simply do not know what we are talking about, partly because we have not used well our opportunities to talk with them.

It may be easier to speak to their counterparts in Israel, who begin with the assumption that no matter what they may dislike in the establishment, they will not turn their backs on Judaism. I was deeply impressed with an essay on Solomon Schechter, written by a student at the Hebrew University, as his master's thesis. I am told that among the students of American Jewish life, the overwhelming majority at the Hebrew University take some aspect of Conservative Judaism as the topics for their theses. All this seems to point to a new challenge, and a new opportunity, for the members of the Rabbinical Assembly, for the United Synagogue, and for the Seminary.

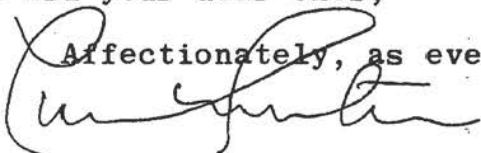
It is possible that in order to re-capture American Jewish youth for the Synagogue, we may have to turn for help to Israelis. It is further possible, as was forcefully suggested to me by several people in Israel, that in order to communicate with Israeli youth, we may have to stimulate the translation into Hebrew of some of the classics of Conservative Judaism, including the essays of Solomon Schechter, Israel Friedlaender, and Professor Louis Ginzberg, among others. I am told by competent authorities, that there is a demand for such translations; and that all we have to do is to encourage and stimulate the effort.

In short, even a brief stay in Israel is enough to convince one that, given determination and clarity of vision, we can, through utilization of the basic philosophy of our movement, win over a large part of Israeli youth to the goals for which we strive; and also with their help, win over a large part of American Jewish youth which has been estranged from us.

This possibility is so important, and this prospect is so magnificent, that one wonders whether all our history until now has been anything more than a prelude to that which is beckoning to us. In 1976-77, we will be celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the Seminary. Perhaps by that time we will have been able to translate the distant vision into a concrete program. I hope this can be done.

With best wishes to you and all your dear ones,

Affectionately, as ever,



Louis Finkelstein

P.S. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman has suggested that although the remarks I made in the White House on June 29th, (and which have led to such an unexpected furor), have been widely published, I ought to enclose a copy with this letter. As I generally take his advice, I am doing so.

COPY

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations
165 EAST 56th STREET NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

PARIS OFFICE

30, rue la Boétie

Paris VIII

FO-Eur
July 1, 1969

MEMORANDUM

To: New York Office

From: Zachariah Shuster

Subj: Christian-Jewish Relations in France

A significant development in Christian-Jewish relations in France has taken place with the establishment of an Episcopal Committee for Relations with Judaism. According to the official announcement of the Permanent Council of the French Episcopate, the task of the Committee is to inform the Episcopate on doctrinal and pastoral subjects in France concerning Judaism. It will also propose ways and means for the purpose of improving institutionally the relations between the Jewish and Christian communities. A delegation of the Episcopate, headed by Monsignor Elchinger, made the first contact with the Jewish community by an official visit to the Chief Rabbi of France, Jacob Kaplan.

This development is the climax of discussions which were initiated in January, 1968, by Monsignor Elchinger, who has been for some time in charge of Jewish matters within the French Episcopal Conference. (It should be noted that Msgr. Elchinger was one of the most indefatigable fighters for a comprehensive declaration on the Jews at Vatican Council II, and his address on this subject at the Council was both a passionate appeal to the Church for a radical change in the attitude toward Jews and a masterpiece in form and in substance.) At that time, the leaders of the Church in France felt the necessity of renewing contact with official Jewish circles which had almost ceased to exist since June, 1967, due to the silence of the Church with regard to the Israel-Arab conflict.

A meeting then took place between representatives of the Church and several members of the Rabbinate. The Catholic Church was represented by Msgr. Elchinger, Father Dabosville and Abbot Hruby; the Jewish side was represented by Rabbis Chekroun, Eisenberg and Askenazi. It was then de-

cided to create a theological Commission for dialogue. The final purpose of this effort, according to Msgr. Elchinger, was for the Episcopal Conference in France to adopt a supplementary text to the declaration on the Jews adopted by the Ecumenical Council.

Following this encounter, the Chief Rabbi of France took the initiative to create a corresponding Jewish Commission for maintaining contact with the Church. This Commission consisted of Prof. André Nehem, Rabbi Eisenberg, Mr. Levins and Mr. Vajda. It turned out, however, that it was difficult to form an appropriate group of Catholic interlocutors who could make a positive contribution to such a dialogue. The fact of the matter is that of the approximately 80 bishops of France, only three or four are versed in this subject of Christian-Jewish relations. Among the proposed names was the recently appointed Cardinal Daniélou but he was considered to be unacceptable for he is committed to the belief that the Church cannot enounce the objective of converting all Jews to Catholicism.

Meanwhile, it was realized that a Commission for Dialogue could not deal also with general problems in this area. It was therefore decided to establish a general Committee for Relations with Judaism. This Committee is composed of the following members: Msgr. Elchinger, Bishop of Strasbourg; Msgr. Delyerue, Bishop of Nanterre; and Msgr. Etchegaray, Secretary of the French Episcopal Conference. In addition, the Committee contains the following experts: Father Dupuy, Dominican, Director of the Center "Istina" and Counselor of the Episcopal Conference for Ecumenical questions; Father Debosville and Abbot Hruby, Director of the section "Knowledge of Judaism" at the Ecumenical Institute.

The Committee intends to publish a declaration on the Fabbrini affair in Italy and the Judant book. (Fabbrini is a Roman who was sentenced to two months imprisonment for interrupting a priest in the middle of a sermon in which the Jews were accused of deicide. The Judant affair involves a book by a Mrs. Judant, the main thesis of which is in support of the accusation of deicide and for which the Church in France refused its imprimatur.)

The Commission for Theological Dialogue will work parallel with the Commission for Relations with Judaism.

cc: Mr. Gold
Dr. Segal
Rabbi Tanenbaum

American Association for Jewish Education

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LEWIS H. WEINSTEIN

June 2, 1969

Dear Colleague:

On Sunday, May 18th, the National Governing Council of the AAJE adopted a Statement of Objectives proposed by its Commission on Teaching about Israel. This Statement is intended not only as a guide to the work of this Commission but as counsel and catalyst to Jewish educational institutions in the United States and Canada. The Statement itself is the product of consideration by a committee of educators, academicians and laymen under the chairmanship of Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg.

We are conscious of the fact that this Statement proposes at least three significant objectives in Jewish education which are a dramatic departure from the customary pious resolutions about the importance of Israel in Jewish life. We are aware that these proposals may be controversial. We do not expect that all of them will be accepted or immediately put into practice. But we are convinced that they must be dealt with forthrightly and courageously by leaders and policy makers in Jewish education.

What are these major emphases?

1. that the organized community help American Jewish young people enrolled in our high school programs to have at least one summer of personal experience in Israel.

All kinds of travel and study programs for extended periods of time in Israel should be encouraged. But it is especially important that young men and women who attend Jewish secondary schools be enabled to spend a summer of organized educational activity in Israel. We regard this as an essential element in the curriculum of our high schools.

2. that we encourage the teaching of Hebrew as a living language.

Many educators will argue that there is not sufficient time in the present curriculum of the supplementary Jewish school to teach content, let alone language. But we are convinced that a language of communication between Jews all over the world must be established and maintained. The ease with which Jews communicate helps determine their sense of fellowship and

identity. The reality of Israel and the reality of Hebrew as the living language of the intellectually productive Jewish community in Israel commend our emphasis on the teaching of modern Hebrew in our schools. Not only the cultural treasures of the past but the living dialogue of the present require that the teaching of Hebrew as a living language be encouraged. Indeed, current practice in foreign language methodology favors beginning with conversational Hebrew which serves as the key to the classic texts of the Bible and later Hebrew literature.

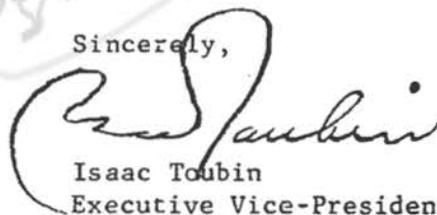
3. that students confront the option of aliyah and that they be taught to regard opportunities for aliyah in a favorable light.

The expression "opportunities for aliyah" incorporates extended visits to Israel for study and work, long-term residence, and actual emigration. We believe that the realities of Jewish needs in 1969 are radically different from those which prevailed prior to the establishment of a Jewish State. There was a time when philanthropy and sentiment were relatively sufficient to satisfy these needs. Today, they are necessary, but not enough. The possibilities of limited or extended presence in Israel needs to be explored. The place for such exploration is in the Jewish school.

As you will note, the Statement of Objectives proposes that the subject of Israel be taught as a regular part of the curriculum and not as a by-product of other subjects. And it is intended that living Israel be taught in terms of its very real problems and that it be taught objectively and fully. Towards this end the Commission on Teaching about Israel hopes to develop curriculum suggestions and instructional materials and to encourage others to do the same.

Meanwhile, we should like to place this Statement on the agenda of an early meeting of your Board or whatever policy-making body is entrusted with this problem. And we shall appreciate your communicating your personal views as well as the essence of such discussion as may be precipitated by this proposal.

Sincerely,



Isaac Toubin
Executive Vice-President

IT:h2
Encl.



Guidelines

from the

COMMISSION ON TEACHING ABOUT ISRAEL IN AMERICA

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

Special Bulletin

Spring 1969

ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH SCHOOL IN AMERICA

A STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

of

THE COMMISSION ON TEACHING ABOUT ISRAEL IN AMERICA
OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

101 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003

(Adopted by the Governing Council of the AAJE — May 18, 1969)

The Land of Israel occupies at least three dimensions in the consciousness of the Jewish people: memory, aspiration, and reality.

It is part of the living memory of our people in which we recall the inspiration of Torah, the forging of peoplehood, the creation of a nation, the words and deeds of prophets and scholars which, together, helped to spell out the character of that people.

It was and remains the aspiration of our people physically separated from the land to which it yearned to return for almost two millennia. This mystical longing envisaged not only the recreation of a political entity, but the restoration of the cultural, religious and spiritual integrity of the people. This longing was expressed in daily prayer, in a variety of customs and in the religious and secular literature of our people.

These memories and aspirations, having been acted upon by the dynamism of the Zionist movement and the tragic experiences of the Jewish people in Nazi Europe *were converted into the reality of Medinat Yisrael* (the State of Israel).

To this reality — political, social, economic, cultural, religious, moral, and sentimental — the Jewish people, both in and out of Israel, must relate itself. One of the tasks of Jewish education in the United States is to convey information and to influence attitudes so that Jewish students may deal with the reality of Israel in a constructive manner that will enrich their lives as individual Jews. Related to this general aim are the following objectives:

1. To familiarize Jewish students with the basic similarities between the democratic ideals of the United States and the State of Israel
2. To relate them to the Jews of Israel in firm bonds of kinship
3. To tie Jewish students more closely to the Jewish people throughout the world
4. To help them to consider favorably the various opportunities of aliyah to Israel
5. To teach modern Hebrew as the living language of the Jewish people.

To achieve these objectives, Jewish school authorities,

both national and local, must give recognition to the importance of Israel in planning the curriculum for students in both the elementary and high school grades. Thus, regular or formal courses on modern Israel should be incorporated into the school program in a systematic manner with an appropriate assignment of time, textbooks and other instructional materials. It is necessary to teach about the Israel of today in all of its manifestations — Israel as a political entity; the morality of Israel and Arab relations; the right of Israel to the land; the ideals of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel; the religious structure of the Jewish world and its reflections in the Land of Israel; and the indivisibility of the Jewish people of Israel and the Diaspora.

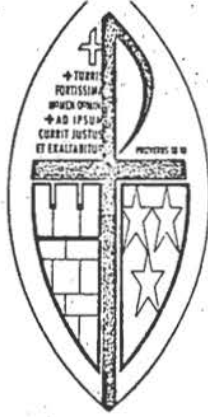
The Jewish school must relate actively and positively to Israel in its informal or co-curricular activities. Israeli music, dance, and crafts should be an integral part of the school program.

We must also add living contact with Israel. It should, therefore, become a part of the responsibility of the organized Jewish community to help American Jewish young people enrolled in our high school programs to have at least one summer of personal experience in Israel.

Furthermore, it is desirable to present to the student at the appropriate age level the very real options which Israel offers to him as a Jew and as a loyal citizen of the land in which he resides. The needs of Israel and the needs of the Jewish people in America require that we explore the critical question of how the individual Jew can best fulfill himself — whether by the enrichment of his Jewish life in America and/or by aliyah to Israel. Anything less than such a frank exploration of these options and opportunities may produce some warm sentiments about Israel as peripheral decoration both to the school curriculum and to life itself — but little more.

By emphasizing the study of Hebrew as a living language, by enhancing the role of Israel in the curriculum and by encouraging the consideration of aliyah in all its manifestations (short term study or service, extended visits and permanent relocation), the Jewish school will become an increasingly vital institution for the growth of personal authenticity in our students and for the continuity of the Jewish people and its traditions.

LUTHERAN COUNCIL



in the United States of America
315 Park Avenue South, New York,
New York 10010/Area 212-677-3950

Division of THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

May 19, 1969

Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum
Department of Interreligious Affairs
The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

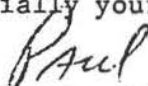
Dear Marc:

I have just returned from Europe where, among other things, I had a chance to meet with some of our colleagues in Geneva.

By this time you may well have received a copy of the theological statement drawn up by the Committee on the Church and the Jews late in March. Whether or not you saw the LWF press release or the RNS story on it, I thought it might be well to send the entire LWF press release and the statement itself to you.

I hope that we have occasion in the near future to share reactions to the enclosed document.

Cordially yours,


Paul D. Opsahl
Assistant Executive Secretary

PDO:apk

P.S. I have also received some additional information from the Lutheran Quarterly regarding publication possibilities of our Jewish-Lutheran conversation papers. I'll be in touch with you again on this item shortly.

PDO



LWF

information

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION NEWS SERVICE · LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND PRESSEDIENST

Route de Ferney 150
1211 Geneva 20 - Switzerland
Telephone (022) 33 34 00
Telegrams LUTHERWORLD GENEVA
Telex 23 423

English Editor
Neil B. Mellblom
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AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

LUTHERAN COMMITTEE STATEMENT
AFFIRMS 'SOLIDARITY' WITH JEWS

30 April 1969

ASMARA, Ethiopia -- An international Lutheran "Committee on the Church and the Jews" has completed a theological statement which affirms "solidarity" with the Jewish people and asserts "Christian responsibility for their right to exist as Jews."

The statement, under formulation since 1964, was made public as the Commission on World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation -- in annual session here -- "accepted and received" it from a committee spokesman.

It was stressed that the statement at this time stands as a document of the committee only. The LWF commission, under which the committee has worked, accepted it for distribution to member churches of the federation for their study and consideration.

The statement also was seen as the basis for future work by the special committee.

The preliminary nature of the document was stressed by the committee itself as it declared it had been unable as yet to deal with the theology of Christian-Jewish relations "with any finality." It recommended continued study not only through the LWF but on an ecumenical basis and in closest possible contact with Jews "even if on an informal rather than official basis."

(MORE)

Formed as a result of a consultation called by the LWF world mission commission at Løgumkloster, Denmark, in April 1964, the committee has been charged with completing the work of one consultation section which reached an impasse on the theology of the church's relation to Judaism.

While emphasizing that the work to date has led to "an increasingly deeper wrestling" with the question, the committee offered several points for consideration by churches.

A first main section of the document singles out "two wrong assumptions" which have confused Jewish-Christian relationships through the centuries. It states:

"The first assumption falsifies the Christian understanding by seeing the Jews of all times as identical with that Jewish group which in the first century rejected Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah.

"The second falsifies the Jewish understanding by seeing all Christians as in principle involved in the hate and persecution which were inflicted on the Jews by the official church and by nations claiming a Christian tradition."

Much-needed today, the statement says, are ways to develop Christian-Jewish understanding lost as a result of historical circumstance. It suggests "considerable revision" of theological education, particularly the teaching of church history, and urges that teachers and pastors be given material which will aid their interpretation of biblical texts and make them sensitive to past false assumptions.

Jewish-Lutheran relations, it is stated, have been burdened by the Lutheran traditional distinction between "law" and "gospel" -- as Lutherans believe "it is God's action in Christ which justifies the sinner," they cannot find the foundation for relationship to God in "obedience" to the law.

"It is possible, however," the statement continues, "that our whole outlook has been shaped and our relationship to the Jewish people has been vitiated by a strongly negative understanding of the law and its function."

The second section of the document underscores the "special Christian hope for the whole world" through the death and resurrection of Christ and its implication of a "crucial paradox for the Christian faith there is a divine future for mankind since Jesus the Nazarene was rejected."

Martin Luther's perception and expression of the central position of the cross and resurrection, the statement says, involved his refusal to identify "the elect people of God with a specific ecclesiological tradition" which was the basis for the medieval church-centered theology which looked on Jews from a position of superiority.

While Luther opposed proclamation of God in terms "of lordship, of victory and triumph," it says, a "theology of glory" is found in his polemic tracts of later years against the Jews.

(MORE)

"Luther's anxiety about the church's existence became so strong," the document states, "that he found himself no longer able to let the future rest in God's hands but, in anticipation of what he read to be God's future judgment, called upon the secular arm to effect that judgment in the present. In doing so he overstepped the bounds of what it lies in human authority to do, to say nothing of love.

"The consequences of this are still with us. The lessons which the church has had to learn in the midst of the holocausts of our century compel us to find a new, more profound, more sober, and at the same time more Christian attitude.

"Because of the deep and tragic involvement of men of Christian tradition in the persecution of Jewish people, the cruel and dangerous anti-Jewish attacks in some of the writings of the old Luther and the continuing threats in our time to the existence of the Jews as a community, we assert our Christian responsibility for their right to exist as Jews."

The final section of the document stresses that "solidarity" with the Jewish people can be affirmed "not only despite the crucifixion of Jesus but also because of it.

"Through his death Jesus has brought about reconciliation with God, has broken down the barriers with men, and has established a ministry of reconciliation which encompasses all men, both Jews and Christians."

The statement says that Christians cannot find a continuity of the church in the covenant people of Abraham and at the same time question present-day Judaism's own continuity with Old Testament Israel.

Also, it states, Christians commit a "pernicious slander" when they attribute "rejection" and "disobedience" to Jews and "faith" and "obedience" to themselves.

The existence of Jews in the world today should be seen not as "a problem" or an "embarrassment," the statement continues, but "as a profound cause for wonder and hope."

Declaring that despite "the inhuman actions of men and the frightful ambiguities of history" there exists "tangible evidence that God's grace is yet at work countering the demonic powers of destruction and guaranteeing a future for mankind which will bring the full unity of God's people," the statement concludes:

"In understanding ourselves as people of the new covenant which God has made in Jesus the Christ, we Christians see the Jewish people as a reminder of our origin as a partner in dialogue to understand our common history and as a living admonition that we, too, are a pilgrim people, a people enroute toward a goal that can only be grasped in hope.

"The church, therefore, may never so understand the Word which has been entrusted to it, the baptism which it must administer, and the Holy Supper which it has been commanded to celebrate as possessions which give Christians superiority over the Jews. The church can only administer in humility the mysteries which God has committed to it -- preaching the crucified and risen Christ, baptizing into his death, showing forth his death till he comes.

"The word which our churches, in bearing witness to Jesus the Christ, must share with Jews as with other men is a joyful message of imperishable hope. This message shows forth a time when God's purpose with his covenant in Abraham and with his covenant in Jesus the Christ will be fulfilled. Then God overcomes all blindness, faithlessness and disobedience and will be all in all."

The statement was presented to the LWF commission by its consultant on studies, Dr. Martin L. Kretzmann of St. Louis, Missouri (USA).

Under the chairmanship of the Rev. Axel Torm, Danish Israel Mission, Copenhagen, Denmark, other committee members are the Rev. Horst Becker from the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany chancery in Hannover; Dr. Harold Ditmanson, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. (USA); Dr. George W. Forell, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa (USA); Dr. Göte Hedenquist, Swedish Israel Mission, Stockholm, Sweden; Prof. Karl-Heinrich Rengstorff, University of Münster (Germany) and director of the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum; the Rev. Risto Santala of Helsinki, Finland, and Prof. Aarne Siirala, Waterloo (Canada) Lutheran Seminary.

-0-

Following is the complete text of the report of the Committee on the Church and the Jews which was presented to the LWF Commission on World Mission in Asmara, Ethiopia:

ON THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH'S RELATION TO JUDAISM

The "Committee on the Church and the Jews," as a standing committee of the Lutheran World Federation under the Commission on World Mission, was created by action of the LWF Executive Committee in 1964 to serve until the next Assembly. It presents this report as the fruit of its work to date.

We are conscious that we have only begun to see the full extent of our task, and that the questions involved in the relations of Christians and Jews touch basic theological, christological and ecclesiological issues. These issues must remain the occasion of ongoing and ever-new reflection by Christians on the meaning both of God's revelation of himself in his covenant with Abraham and of his self-disclosure in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.

This committee came into being as the result of a consultation called by the LWF Commission on World Mission at Løgumkloster, Denmark, in April 1964. The results of that consultation were published in the July 1964 issue of Lutheran World to which we wish to draw attention (see also Christians, Jews and the Mission of the Church, a reprint of the October 1963 and July 1964 issues of the Lutheran World). These results need no apology, but it is quite clear that they represent but the beginning of a long-term effort.

The committee itself was given the task of "completing" the work of Løgumkloster at one point, viz of carrying further the discussion of "the theology of the church's relation to Judaism" which had led to a certain impasse in one of the working groups at Løgumkloster.

We have been unable to do this with any finality. We have been led into an increasingly deeper wrestling with the underlying problem presented for the Christian church and Christian theology by Jews and by the history of Christian-Jewish relations. We note that the ecumenical discussion of these questions is also just in its beginning stages. We nevertheless present the following points for consideration in our churches at this time, with the strong conviction that consideration of Jewish-Christian encounter must be an ongoing concern of our Lutheran churches and of the Lutheran World Federation.

Our experience as a committee points up how essential it is that Lutherans from various traditions and from various national backgrounds wrestle together toward a common understanding and approach. We therefore recommend that the work of this committee be continued in close connection with the LWF Commission on World Mission and the Commission on Theology and in liaison with ecumenical efforts in the same direction. It is important that the work be done in close collaboration with appropriate groups in the member churches. It lies in the nature of the question that the closest possible contact be maintained with Jews even if on an informal rather than official basis.

1. We as Christians can only speak of the Jewish people if we say that we all are human beings standing under God's judgment and in need of his forgiveness. We are all men and women before we are Jews or Christians. What we say here in a special way about Jews must be understood in the light of this assertion.

The relationship between Jews and Christians has been confused through the centuries by two wrong assumptions. The first assumption falsifies the Christian understanding by seeing the Jews of all times as identical with that Jewish group which in the first century rejected Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah. The second falsifies the Jewish understanding by seeing all Christians as in principle involved in the hate and persecution which were inflicted on the Jews by the official church and by nations claiming a Christian tradition. While this committee claims no competence to remove the existing negative opinions held by Jews, it must contribute to the task of eliminating all those barriers raised by past and present Christian misunderstanding which stay in the way of our conversation with the Jews and our understanding of their faith.

We shall have to engage in an ongoing encounter with Jews and Judaism which takes seriously both Jewish and Christian history. In deepening the Jewish-Christian relationship we expect to find ways of understanding each other which have been lost due to historical circumstances. Theological education -- and the teaching of church history in particular -- will have to undergo considerable revision if this is to be done. Teachers and pastors must be given information and materials so that in their interpreting of biblical texts they will be sensitive to the false assumptions Christians have made.

The distinction between law and gospel which in Lutheran tradition becomes a key for interpreting the whole scriptural revelation is connected with this hermeneutical problem. This specific emphasis places a particular burden on Jewish-Lutheran relations. But for this reason it lends increased urgency to theological encounter. As Lutherans we believe, on the basis of Paul's witness, that it is God's action in Christ which justifies the sinner. Thus we cannot speak about the law and about righteousness as though it were obedience which lays the foundation for relationship to God. The theological issue here touches both Jewish-Christian dialogue and Christian use of the Old Testament. Our understanding can be traced to Luther and his reception through Augustine of certain Pauline motifs. It is possible, however, that our whole outlook has been shaped and our relationship to the Jewish people has been vitiated by a strongly negative understanding of the law and its function. This, it seems to us, might well be a matter for consideration by the Lutheran World Federation Commission on Theology in cooperation with a possible future committee on the Church and the Jews.

2. As we try to grasp the theological meaning of the problem we face, we recognize two aspects of the Christian understanding of God's self-disclosure, both of which lead us to the limits of human perception and speech. The first is the fact that with the coming of Jesus into the world a development began which is incomprehensible in its dimensions. It can only be described as an act of God's love for all men. In the moment when, according to Christian faith, God acted to bring his revelation to its fulfillment, among those who had first received his revelation many did not find themselves able to respond in faith to what God was now doing in Jesus of Nazareth. In spite of this rejection, however, God's saving grace found a way into the world and no human guilt or rejection could negate it. The faith and the universal proclamation that God became man, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, is an offence to human wisdom and particularly to the religious view of God's glory. It is as if God had of necessity to meet rejection and to suffer the consequences of his love in order to bring life and salvation to mankind.

The second aspect is closely related to the first. Because Jesus took upon himself his cross and became obedient unto death. God raised him from the dead. His death and resurrection constitute a special Christian hope for the whole world. This implies the crucial paradox that for the Christian faith there is a divine future for mankind since Jesus the Nazarene was rejected. Thus we are here directed toward the mystery of God's inscrutable ways with men.

Mystery and paradox -- the point where human logic leads no further -- stand at the center of all Christian thought. That is the case with christology, but it is equally true of eschatology, and it applies to ecclesiology as well. God has not only prepared a future for all mankind, but has bound this future to the cross and resurrection of the man Jesus of Nazareth. It is our conviction that the central position of the cross and resurrection of Jesus has fundamental consequences for the understanding of the church. This was perceived and expressed in a unique way by Luther. He did not accept identification of the elect people of God with a specific ecclesiological tradition. This view has led to the fatal alternatives of medieval church-centered theology, in which the Jewish people were treated from a position of superiority. Luther opposed any kind of a "theology of glory," i.e. any attempt to see and proclaim God and his deeds and works (including the church) primarily in terms of might, of lordship, of victory and triumph. The theological paradox which confronted Luther in his historical situation, however, proved to be too much for him. This one can see from his later writings against the Jews. In these polemic tracts a theology of glory does break in. Luther's anxiety about the church's existence became so strong that he found himself no longer able to let the future rest in God's hands but, in anticipation of what he read to be God's future judgment, called upon the secular arm to effect that judgment in the present. In doing so he overstepped the bounds of what it lies in human authority to do, to say nothing of love. The consequences of this are still with us. The lessons which the church has had to learn in the midst of the holocausts of our century compel us to find a new, more profound, more sober, and at the same time more Christian attitude.

Because of the deep and tragic involvement of men of Christian tradition in the persecution of Jewish people, the cruel and dangerous anti-Jewish attacks in some of the writings of the old Luther and the continuing threats in our time to the existence of the Jews as a community, we assert our Christian responsibility for their right to exist as Jews.

3. Jews, on their side, insist that there can be mutual respect and dialogue only if the "legitimacy" of Judaism is recognized by Christians. We believe that this includes not only ethnic and political but also religious factors. What does it mean for us to acknowledge its "legitimacy"? Remembering past Christian criticism of Judaism, Jews demand of Christians recognition of Judaism as a "living" religion. Can such recognition be given? Does it mean that we see two separate but necessary ministries within the one economy of salvation? Is it possible to acknowledge that the survival of Judaism is an act of God without also saying that this survival is a definitive event of salvation history? Does affirmation of the survival or acknowledgement of the legitimacy of Judaism cancel the responsibility of the Christian to bear witness to the Jew at the right time and in the proper way?

In the light of these questions we offer the following affirmations:

We as Lutherans affirm our solidarity with the Jewish people. This solidarity is legitimized in God's election and calling into being in Abraham's seed a people of promise, of faith, and of obedience peculiar unto him, a people whose unity will one day become manifest when "all-Israel" will be saved. The Lutheran churches, therefore, may not so appropriate the term "people of God" and "Israel" to the church in such a way as to deny that they applied in the first instance to the Jewish people. They may not assert that continuity of the church with the covenant people of Abraham in such a way as to question the fact that present-day Judaism has its own continuity with Old Testament Israel.

This our solidarity with the Jewish people is to be affirmed not only despite the crucifixion of Jesus, but also because of it. Through his death Jesus has brought about reconciliation with God, has broken down the barriers between men, and has established a ministry of reconciliation which encompasses all men, both Jews and Gentiles.

This our solidarity with the Jewish people is grounded in God's unmerited grace, his forgiveness of sin and his justification of the disobedient. Whenever we Christians, therefore, speak about "rejection" and "faith," "disobedience" and "obedience" in such a way that "rejection" and "disobedience" are made to be attributes of Jews while "faith" and "obedience" are made to be attributes of Christians, we are not only guilty of the most despicable spiritual pride, but we foster a pernicious slander, denying the very ground of our own existence: grace, forgiveness and justification.

After all that has happened, the existence of the Jewish people in the world today cannot therefore be seen in the first instance as a problem to be encountered, much less as an embarrassment to be faced by the churches, but as a profound cause for wonder and hope. Despite all the inhuman actions of men and the frightful ambiguities of history, God remains faithful to his promise. We have here tangible evidence that God's grace is yet at work countering the demonic powers of destruction and guaranteeing a future for mankind which will bring the full unity of God's people.

In understanding ourselves as people of the new covenant which God has made in Jesus the Christ, we Christians see the Jewish people as a reminder of our origin, as a partner in dialogue to understand our common history and as a living admonition that we, too, are a pilgrim people, a people enroute toward a goal that can only be grasped in hope. The church, therefore, may never so understand the Word which has been entrusted to it, the Baptism which it must administer, and the Holy Supper which it has been commanded to celebrate as possessions which give Christians superiority over the Jews. The church can only administer in humility the mysteries which God has committed to it -- preaching the crucified and risen Christ, baptizing into his death, showing forth his death till he comes.

The word which our churches, in bearing witness to Jesus the Christ, must share with Jews as with other men is a joyful message of imperishable hope. This message shows forth a time when God's purpose with his covenant in Abraham and with his covenant in Jesus the Christ will be fulfilled. Then God overcomes all blindness, faithlessness and disobedience and will be all in all.

M E M O

DATE: 8/14/69

TO: Balfour Brickner
Marc Tananbaum ✓
Arthur Gilbert
A. Roy Eckardt
Krister Stendahl
George H. Williams
David Hunter
Karl Baehr
C. Arild Olsen

FROM: Franklin Littell

SUBJECT: Christian-Jewish Relations

For several years, fraternal confidence between the Christian and Jewish communities has significantly worsened. The dialogue and the cooperation which were once of great support to the common good, which even on some occasions achieved a theological dimension, have flagged seriously. The major reasons for this crisis in the trust which was coming to be one of America's chief assets seem to me to be these:

1. the failure of the American churches to date to comprehend the theological and political meaning of the First Holocaust (Hitler's "final solution to the Jewish problem");
2. the failure of the churches to take seriously the significance of the "Second Holocaust" threatened by Arab League governments, and their consequent failure -- especially at the time of the Six Day War, but continuing -- to share the Jewish communities' concern for Israel;
3. the excitement of Vatican II and the resultant opening of Catholic-Protestant cooperation, which had the negative effect of diverting attention from cultivation of the older growth of goodwill between Protestants and Jews;
4. the marked growth of the Radical Right in the USA, accompanied by Anti-Semitism, and the general failure of the churches to support effective counter-action;
5. the failure of the Jewish agencies since the founding of the state of Israel to keep the Gentile population (including churchmen) as well informed on developments in the Middle East as during the refugee crisis of 1938-48;
6. the flood, especially in the last two years, of Arab League propaganda in the USA -- partly financed by oil interests domestic and foreign, partly channeled by black ethnics and communists, partly relayed by official agencies of Christian culture-religion.

Radical Right financing has soared from c. \$1,000,000 in 1961 to c. \$46,000,000 in 1968. In Congress there are between 25 and 30 members of the House and 5 or 6 Senators who are fascists in ideology and political alignment. In the churches we are in the preliminary stages of a Church Struggle. With the philosophy of the Protestant establishment in many sectors and some key positions very like that of the Deutsche Christen, the rift between the Jewish and Christian communities is an acute danger both politically and religiously.

Those Jewish leaders who still believe it worthwhile to try to salvage Christian-Jewish understanding and cooperation and those churchmen who have learned the lessons of the Church Struggle must act for the common good, now and vigorously. We need to have a "brain-storming" session of key people to explore the various possibilities and channels of effective action. One such potential is the recently launched NCCC Study Project on "Israel: the People, the Land, the State." The time is too critical, however, with the Russian investment of \$2,000,000,000 in new military equipment and growing signs of a 4th attack on Israel by the Arab League, to lean on a study project scheduled to run through May of 1970. At the very least, we need two major undertakings:

- A. A National Conference on Christian-Jewish Relations, comparable in financing and staff effort to the National Conference on Religion and Race (Chicago: January, 1963);
- B. The founding of a society of concerned Christians and Jews ("Shalom Society"?) to inform thousands comparable to those who responded years ago -- for example -- to the work of the American Christian Palestine Committee, and -- hopefully -- to press the dialogue to a deeper religious level.

Since this is a personal communication, written "without authority" in the full Kierkegaardian sense, I may perhaps state certain personal convictions:

1. Christian-Jewish understanding and cooperation are imperative to any social progress in America;
2. the Church Struggle with the Radical Right, and in some sectors with the black ethnics and Maoists, is going to get much worse;
3. a successful Arab League war against Israel would be a political and religious disaster beyond measure;
4. the strongest emphasis upon the essential Jewishness of Christianity is the only certain Christian specific against the Marcionite heresy which corrupts true Christian confession of faith and aids and abets the rise of the hyphenated "Christianity" (positives Christentum) which actually serves totalitarian ends;
5. neither the Jews nor the Christians can be saved, in the full eschatological sense, without each other.

I would be most grateful for your reactions. At present I am functioning at our summer home, without either typist or other logistics, but shortly after September 1st I'll be "operational" at Temple University. Until the 25th I'll be at the address below.

P. H. Littell
Finley Point Route
Polson, Montana 59860



JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19122

EDITORS

LEONARD SWIDLER
ELWYN A. SMITH

MANAGING EDITOR
ARLENE SWIDLER

May 13, 1969

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Marc:

How do you react to the sample letter here attached? I have also sent a copy to Littell for comment.

Would you compute the cost of bringing people we listed to New York or Philadelphia as you prefer? The cost of hotel rooms and conference room should be included in this. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elwyn A. Smith

Elwyn A. Smith

EAS:vr

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
GEORGE KEHM
616 N. HIGHLAND AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15206

ABSTRACTS EDITOR
ALBERT COSTA
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219

NEWSNOTES EDITOR
JOHN OPIE
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219



JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19122

EDITORS

LEONARD SWIDLER
ELWYN A. SMITH

MANAGING EDITOR
ARLENE SWIDLER

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Dear Professor Stendhal:

For the last two years the editors of the JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES have made it a principal concern to publish articles touching the theological and historical fundamentals of Jewish-Christian relationships. As my own editorials in that periodical indicate, I have been troubled by the effect on Jewish-Christian ties in the United States of the crisis of May-June 1967, especially the apparent inability of the denominational mission agencies and the National Council of Churches to speak out strongly when Israel was threatened. The reasons for this are complicated and, happily, many Christian individuals and ad hoc groups spoke with vigor. The fact remains that since that summer, the situation has not greatly changed in denominational and NCC quarters. They have long established relationships with Christian bodies in the Middle East that are Arab in composition, extensive institutional investments in Arab lands, and hundreds of mission personnel whose lives have been spent among Arabic speaking peoples. By contrast, no major denomination except the Anglicans has personnel in Israel and there are very few Jewish Christians.

Conversations with Franklin Littell and other Christian colleagues and with Marc Tannenbaum and Balfour Brickner of New York, led me to feel that we can do more than is now being done.

It is my opinion that a small group of scholars and professionals in religion whose concern for peace in the Middle East is well known should be formed outside any institutional auspices to make certain crucial studies; to make recommendations to Christians and Jews touching the posture of American Christian bodies vis-a-vis the danger to Israel; and where desirable, to make representations to

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

GEORGE KENN
616 N. HIGHLAND AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15206

ABSTRACTS EDITOR

ALBERT COSTA
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219

NEWSNOTES EDITOR

JOHN OPIS
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15219

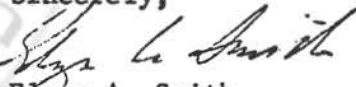
the governing bodies and administrative personnel of Protestant denominations and cooperative agencies.

For example, no full record of the responses of the American Churches to the danger to Israel in 1967 has been assembled. There are many suppositions about the reasons why the NCC and one or another of the denominational mission agencies decided to speak precisely as they did, but the objectivity possible to those who know the full body of fact remains hard to capture. Protestant professors and other religious professionals as a whole have no instrument to assist them to take initiatives in expressing their judgments. (I recall that it took Presbyterian Seminary professors most of two years to develop a committee that could draft and submit to their whole group a proposal on Vietnam -- but it was finally done.)

To meet to discuss means by which we might express our concern is the best way to find a proper avenue of action. What I have suggested above is only by way of illustration; it may be that quite another method of expressing our concern should be sought. Would you be willing to attend a one-day consultation in New York city? I am listing below the names of colleagues to whom this invitation is being sent; and I would appreciate your checking the date or dates on which you would be available in order of preference.

The JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES has the means to reimburse your travel costs. If you must stay overnight in order to keep a schedule that would run from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., we will reimburse you also for hotel, meals and incidentals.

Sincerely,


Edwin A. Smith
Co-editor

EAS:vr

CC: Rabbi Balfour Brickner
Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum
Dr. Franklin H. Littell

Copies to Tannenbaum

SAUL ABRAMS
 5005 Collins Ave., Apt. 109
 Miami Beach, Fla. 33140

Dec 20 - 1964

Mr. Bertram H. Gold - Executive Director
 Am Jewish Committee - New York - NY

Dear Mr. Gold

This is a necessary follow up to my letter
 of yesterday.

Way back in 1957 - when we could not
 even imagine a "public exoneration" by the Church -
 Rabbi Andrew H. Finberg of the A.J.C., Rev. Bernhard
 E. Olson (then of Yale) and I - meticulously drew up
 a "blue print" of the action necessary, to promote
 revision of Christian text books and teaching material.
 You will find them enumerated in considerable detail
 on Paragraphs numbered 1 to 7 inclusive on the enclosed item.

I respectfully request that you take time
 and read those 7 paragraphs and you will then
 understand why I have been "agitating" for 10 years
 for the Inter-Religious Department - since Tannenbaum
 replaced Dr. Kerger.

You will then be in a better position
 to "present the case" to the Budget Committee.

Cordially yours
 Saul Abrams

P.S. If you ask him about it, I am sure that Rabbi Tannenbaum
 will confirm the fact, that I suggested to him, that
 he discreetly bring Father Flanagan to national attention
 and to subvert his friendship. Tannenbaum did both
 with sensationally beneficial results, as you will know
 by the "ferment" in Catholic theological circles.

October 1, 1969

When the Protestant World Council of Churches in 1961 and the Catholic Ecumenical Council in 1965, both publicly exonerated the Jewish people on the false charge of deicide, they each acquired for their respective Churches a definite moral obligation to make the necessary corrections in their teachings about the Jews and the Crucifixion.

Obviously, we cannot expect the Churches to re-write the New Testament, but we have every right to expect that they will, for teaching purposes, re-write their text books and teaching materials so as to present the Crucifixion as a divinely pre-destined event, with Jesus deliberately and courageously accepting martyrdom (as per their theology), rather than (falsely) presenting Him as the pitiful victim of the Sanhedrin or of "The Jews."

However, human nature and human inertia being what it is, we should realize that we will probably obtain only such corrections as we ourselves are able to promote, with the collaboration of very many "concerned" members of the Christian clergy.

Therefore, the TASK which confronts our two major public relations agencies, consists of the following:

1. The heads of every Protestant denomination and of every Catholic diocese should be personally visited on a regular calling basis and "reminded, cajoled and persuaded" to accelerate the process of needed text-book and teaching materials REVISIONS. (this means hundreds of calls annually.)
2. The individuals or committees who actually WRITE, or who determine precisely what is actually printed in text books and teaching materials, must be "identified" and continuously "conferred with," along with their publishers or printers.
3. The heads of the Teaching Staffs and of the Publicity Departments of each church group should be visited periodically and their active cooperation solicited.
- 4. From each denomination, prominent members of the clergy who favor text-book revisions, should be "invited" to organize their fellow clergymen in each community and should be "assisted" in that operation. (There are thousands of priests and ministers who are thoroughly ashamed of their churches' behaviour towards the Jewish people down through the ages, who are waiting to be organized on behalf of text-book revisions.)
5. There are many, many annual Conclaves of Ministers which should be "addressed" by competent orators on our staffs, for the purpose of soliciting their active cooperation.
- 6. And more importantly, the STUDENTS in hundreds of Theological Seminaries, who will be the ministers and priests of tomorrow, should be regularly "addressed" by competent orators on our staffs and their active co-operation also solicited.
7. If possible, financial assistance should be offered to very small denominations, who favor text-book revisions, but who may lack the funds required for reprinting. It would be a wise investment if we can afford it. *See final paragraph of Bernard Strohers printed report.*

Continued next page.

FINAL COMMENT

This task cannot be accomplished by only four dedicated men, three from the American Jewish Committee and only one from the Anti-Defamation League, as of this date. Instead, each of these organizations should have a minimum of ten competent men, devoting their talents exclusively to this task, in co-ordinated and non-competitive collaboration. The cost will be about \$300,000 per year for each organization which represents only 6% of their current operating budgets and which should be allocated to their respective Inter-religious Departments on a PRIORITY basis.

SA LGA

