Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992
Box 33, Folder 9, John Paul II [Pope], 1978-1979.
MEMORANDUM

To: Bertram H. Gold
From: Zachariah Shuster
Subj: John Paul II

October 19, 1978

From the welter of speculation about the background and reasons for the surprise election of a Polish cardinal to the Pontificate there emerged several informed guesses, which are accepted by those who are familiar with the situation in the Vatican and developments immediately preceding the conclave.

The main reason for not electing an Italian cardinal, something which is without precedent for almost 500 years, is the fact that the Italian Church was split wide open among conservatives and progressives who could not agree on either of the two Italian candidates.

The candidate on the conservative side was Cardinal Siri, Archbishop of Genoa. For many years he embodied the trend opposed to radical change and during Vatican Council II he stood up against all proposed major reforms. The fact that he has been the head of the Italian Bishops Conference for a considerable time is certainly responsible for the lack of ecumenical progress within the Italian Church which took no action of its own to implement the decisions of Vatican Council II.

The candidate of the progressive side was Cardinal Benelli, Archbishop of Florence, who has been an outstanding personality in the Curia and considered as a first rate diplomatic figure. His relative youth (58) which was given before the conclave as the reason for his not being a candidate, is contradicted by the fact that the new Pope is only two years older than Benelli.

One may assume that if the Italian cardinals had agreed on one candidate, an Italian cardinal would have had a good chance of being elected, in spite of the fact that the Italian cardinals are now a small minority in the conclave. It is reliably reported that because of disagreement among the Italians there developed a strong movement among Third World cardinals and also among some cardinals of European countries, particularly Germany and France, who felt that the time has come to have a non-Italian Pope.
Another surprising element is, of course, the fact that the new Pope comes from a country with a Communist regime. The best interpretation of this is that by this act the cardinals intended to encourage the faithful in the Communist world, and particularly in the country which has the largest Catholic population in the Communist orbit. One should note that Poland is considered -- next to Ireland -- as the most Catholic country on the European Continent. As a matter of fact, 23 million of the Polish population are baptized and practicing their religion. The Church in Poland was always an expression of deep attachment to national culture and was a leading force in the centuries long struggle against the big neighboring powers -- Czarist Russia, Austro-Hungary and Germany -- which subjugated Poland for long periods.

The personality of the new Pope, as described by those who have known him and followed his career, is much more colorful than that of his immediate predecessor. On the one hand, having lived most of his life in a Communist land, he is deeply conscious of social and economic problems and also of the constant struggle the Church has to lead against a regime which is committed to atheism and to diminishing the role of religion in public life. On the other hand, he is a man of solid theological and philosophical education and author of many works on social and theological issues. One feature in his biography which is emphasized by all is that in his adolescence, and even in maturity, he was associated more with the life of workers than of priests. During the Nazi occupation he was active in the Polish national underground and immediately after the end of the war he worked in a metal factory.

One of his essays, translated into several languages, is entitled "Love and Sexuality." It is pointed out that he is rather outspoken on this delicate subject and urging equal rights of women in conjugal and sexual life. He is also the author of a book on the half-Jewish German philosopher Max Scheling, a colleague of Prof. Max Horkheimer at Frankfurt University in the 20's.

The newly elected Pope played an active role in the Vatican during the last few years, and was a member of three Vatican Congregations (or Ministries): education, cult, clergy. It is assumed that he worked in full harmony with Cardinal Wyszynski in the struggle for the rights of the Church and religious education in Poland. It should be emphasized that in recent years the Church in Poland stood up forcefully for civil rights, against censorship, and in many respects has been informally allied with the dissident movement in Poland, which is particularly strong among the youth.
The present Pope took part in the latter phases of Vatican Council II and in all the Synods since then. In the discussions of the proposed Declaration on the Jews the Polish bishops were passive. Only one of them, Bishop Nowicki of Gdansk (Danzig), spoke mildly in favor of the Declaration proposed by Cardinal Bea. Neither Cardinal Wyszyński nor Cardinal Wojtyła said anything about it. However, Wojtyła came out very strongly in favor of the Declaration on Religious Liberty, the major sponsors of which were the American Bishops. This declaration has been considered one of the most important adopted by the Vatican Council for the reason that it advocates two fundamental principles: the freedom of religious exercise and the right of all religious groups to practice their beliefs. The latter point was strongly combated by the conservatives at the Vatican Council, and especially by some of the Italian cardinals, primarily Cardinals Ossavani and Siri, for the Declaration does not put the Catholic religion -- the "only true faith" -- above other religions.

With regard to the attitude of the Polish Church toward the Vatican Declaration on the Jews, there is no reason to doubt that it was fully accepted, although this declaration was not implemented in Poland in the same way it was in other countries, because the Polish Church has been too much engaged in its own complicated situation and also because the Jewish population there is so insignificant. It is known, however, that the Polish Churches in other countries with large Polish populations -- such as France, Belgium, Germany -- urged the faithful to an attitude towards Jews in the spirit of the Vatican declaration.

It is too soon to make any predictions as to the future course of the new Pope. As far as we are concerned, it will be interesting to know whether Cardinal Willebrands, head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, to which the Religious Commission on Jews is attached, will remain in this position. Cardinal Willebrands has been connected with Christian-Jewish relations for many years, first as an Assistant to Cardinal Bea during the Vatican Council, then as President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. The general surmise is that the new Pope will try to act in the spirit of Paul VI and John XXIII on Christian-Jewish relations as in any other areas dealt with by the Vatican Council.

At the same time there is a feeling that he will be rather cautious and not make any drastic innovations in any direction. This was indicated in his first address to the cardinals in which he said: "I want to insist on the constant importance of Vatican Council II. For us it is a formal obligation that it be studiously put into effect. Is not the Council a mile-
stone in the two-thousand year history of the Church, and indeed in the religious and cultural history of the world?...

Speaking about implementation of Council actions, he said that one must be "prudent and encouraging." The entire speech was delivered in a spirit aiming to reconcile conservative and progressive wings.

I am following developments in Rome closely and shall keep you informed of anything interesting to us that might take place in the near future.

cc: Tanenbaum
Karlikow
Ed Rosen called my attention to the above which I described in a letter to Msgr. Charles V. Devlin, Director of the Cardinal's Commission on Human Relations here on April 11. You will be interested that on June 10, I received a communication from Msgr. Devlin along with the enclosed Xerox copy of a letter to Msgr. Devlin from George Forde, a member of the Cardinal's Commission, recommending that the matter be passed on to the Catholic Church's Liturgical Commission either locally or nationally. Msgr. Devlin informs me that he is following up on this suggestion of his Commission.

We'll see how this one comes out.

MF:r

Enclosure

cc: Edward H. Rosen
    Richard J. Fox
    Paul S. Weinberg
May 11, 1977

Rev. Msgr. Charles V. Devlin
Director, Cardinal's Commission
on Human Relations
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, Penna. 19103

Dear Msgr. Devlin:

We have reviewed, by telephone, the letter Murray Friedman sent you under date of April 11th, and which you sent to me last week for comment. You did not send up the rite or page in question, but one of our members pointed out that the passage is by Luke (Acts of the Apostles). It was our consensus that this was not a matter for the Cardinal's Commission on Human Relations, but rather for the Liturgical Commission, possibly not the diocesan one but the national, if that is where this rite originates, and also possibly with an expression of our concern that it can be, as it has been in the past, misused for anti-Semitic purposes and may, because of that history, require current explanation if used at all.

It is clear we cannot change the Scriptures, Old or New, but we must guard against their misuse, especially by those who would apply their own private misinterpretation to thwart the Christian message. Perhaps a gentile could, living in an overwhelmingly Jewish culture, be offended by refusal of a strict observer to ride or eat with him, or perhaps even to enter his home on the Sabbath, but only because of a lack of understanding.
Similarly, we might be put off by "goy" as the word is sometimes used, but our own Faith teaches there is a difference between the people specially called by God and all others, in fact, we now also claim to have been called to a New Covenant.

The matter is beyond us as we are not biblical scholars. Yet, the "Acts" is full of references to "The Jews" and at various times the term seems to include the Apostles as well. (And why not? They were so Jewish as to have trouble deciding whether their gentile converts ought to observe the Law of Moses.) It refers to Jews as "devout men" as well as the people who rejected (at one time or other) not only Jesus, but Moses, Joseph, and others. Nowhere is there individual or collective guilt claimed or established beyond the death of Christ for (not "by") all mankind. Christ, in the gospels pleads with the Father to absolve in the absence of scienter and so does Stephen when he is stoned to death by a scandalized mob. It seems obvious that the Prophets and the Covenant of Moses could not have been fulfilled in the Christian's understanding of it, if those in charge had not acted as they did, and the New Testament points out that their motives were often of the best or, at worst, human jealousy borne of a passion for power over the people - never deicide or anything remotely like it.

We must stand on the Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions at Vatican II, as well as subsequent and similar pronouncements of the teaching authority of the Church. We must repeatedly make it clear to our people that the Jewish people remain special to God and any display of hate or distortion of His Scriptures to justify such display is a betrayal of God.

Would you please refer this inquiry accordingly?

Sincerely yours,

George S. Forde, Jr.

GSF, Jr/mac
Encls.

cc: Rev. Msgr. Andrew J. McDevitt
    Sr. Consuelo Maria, S.S.J.
    Mr. Richard Hughes
    Mrs. Donald Valois
Jewish leaders praise the Pope's Auschwitz sermon

By MEL JUFFE

THE AMERICAN Jewish Committee today cabled Pope John Paul II to hail the Pontiff's historic remarks about the Jewish victims of the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz.

John Paul's sermon yesterday at the death camp complex in Poland was enthusiastically praised as "a major document of really historic dimensions" by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, a leading authority on Vatican-Jewish relations.

"With the possible exception only of Pope John XXIII," said Tanenbaum, "he is the first pope in modern history who has reacted in conscience and in a direct, explicit way to the magnitude of the suffering of the six million Jewish victims of Nazism." John Paul, who studied for the priesthood in secret while working in a German forced-labor project in Poland, singled out the sufferings of the Jews, who made up the majority of Auschwitz's four million victims.

His visit to Auschwitz, where Catholic priests were second in number only to Jews as Nazi victims, was the first by a reigning pontiff.

"In particular I pause with you before the inscription in Hebrew," said John Paul, gesturing toward a memorial plaque.

"This inscription awakens the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination. This people draws its origin from Abraham, our father in faith, as was expressed by Paul of Tarsus," John Paul said.

(The pope, at that point in his homily, said Tanenbaum, who was the only rabbi present as a consultant during Vatican Council II, was using "theological language to describe the rootedness of Christianity in Judaism and the common spiritual bonds that link Christians and Jews. It is a deeply emotional way of expressing solidarity.")

John Paul went on: "The very people that received from God the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing.

"It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference," Tanenbaum, a main author of the AJC cable, said, "I find that last line a significant statement.

"In much of the dialogue that takes place between Christians and Jews - in the Vatican and elsewhere - Jewish leaders quite legitimately raise the question of why the churches stood by silently in Germany, in Poland and elsewhere when they knew the Jewish people were being systematically exterminated. Why were they so indifferent to the value of Jewish life?"

"I take this statement by Pope John Paul II as a response to those questions. He has gone on record that it is his personal policy that it is no longer permissible to pass by 'with indifference' to the slaughter of Jews or of any other human beings.

"We applaud and warmly welcome that forthright statement of conscience. He's not only an extraordinary spiritual leader, he's also a great humanist of deep conscience. I expect he will be one of the great moral leaders in the international community in the decades ahead."

Tanenbaum was outspoken in comparing John Paul favorably with Pope Paul VI, who in 1975 referred to the suffering of the Jewish people in only a vague and general way. Paul touched on the tragedy, but didn't penetrate to the heart of it in the way John Paul has just done.

But part of the reason, one has to say quite frankly, is that there has been a long tradition of anti-Jewish attitudes in certain quarters of the Vatican and in parts of the Roman Catholic Church. And those with such attitudes have persistently refused to face the destructive result of anti-Semitism, especially in the Nazi holocaust.

"I regard John Paul's statement as a reversal of that tradition of indifference and a return to the compassion of Pope John XXIII."

What the telegram said

National Inter-religious Director of the American Jewish Committee

The American Jewish Committee is deeply moved and heartened by the words and symbolic acts of Your Holiness in honoring the memory of the millions of victims of Nazi bestiality, in particular the nearly 3,000,000 Jews whose lives were destroyed in the crematoria of Auschwitz.

Your revered kneeling before the Hebrew and other inscriptions and your rejection of indifference to the killing of millions of Jews and other human beings in Auschwitz - the vilest and most inhuman death camp of all the Nazi murder factories - is a powerful symbol of moral conscience that is of historic magnitude.

Your rejection of hatred and prejudice against all people, your courageous affirmation of religious liberty and human rights for all members of God's human family deserve our most heartfelt and appreciative response.

Respectfully,
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
I spoke to Eugene Kusielewicz, the executive director of the Kosciuszko Foundation yesterday about what he knew about the new Pope's personality and about the Pope's views on Jews and other related issues.

It turns out that Dr. Kusielewicz has had an on-going relationship with the former Krakow Cardinal. He describes him as a man with a very sharp brain. He thinks he is quite brilliant and sensitive. He also describes him as "open" and "humanitarian." While this might be Dr. Kusielewicz's Polish pride talking and may be somewhat exaggerated, there is the likelihood of much substance to his analysis. He is one of the few Americans who have spent many hours with the new Pope and on a number of different occasions.

Dr. Kusielewicz said that the Pope's experience as an actor put him in touch with many non-conformists as a young man. While he may be a church traditionalist, he has mixed freely with many different types of individuals and he is far from a rigid man. Dr. Kusielewicz feels that the Pope will be open to diversity.

Dr. Kusielewicz thinks the press has exaggerated the new Pope's role as a fervent anti-communist. The new Pope has actually been very much the diplomat with good relationships to Polish government officials. He gained many concessions for the church through moderation, not through activism, according to Dr. Kusielewicz.

Regarding the Pope's relationships with Jews and the Jewish community, on only one occasion did Dr. Kusielewicz speak to him about Jews. This was a few years ago on the controversial cemetery issue. The Warsaw Jewish Cemetery was to be bulldozed for a highway and other Jewish cemeteries were threatened by neglect and by urban planning. Cardinal Wojtyla was very sympathetic to Jewish pleas to save the cemeteries and was enthusiastic about a plan for Catholic church guardianship over them. Whether the Cardinal actually intervened with government officials was not known to Dr. Kusielewicz.

Dr. Kusielewicz has been invited to be a member of the American delegation at Pope John Paul II's coronation.

cc: Marc Tannenbaum
    Abe Karlikow
    Mort Yarmon
    Morris Fine
Commentary:  

Pope John Paul II and the Jews

By Rabbi Bernard Weinberger

Pope John Paul II is about to conclude a spiritual pilgrimage to Poland that has captured the attention, and in some instances the anger, of people around the world. He has attracted millions to his public mass celebrations and to his homilies.  

In particular, it will be remarkable if even it took place in the free world. The fact that he was able to muster such multitudes in a communist bloc country is a milestone of international diplomacy of which our generation has not seen.  

Nor is it surprising that the Polish people have responded with such warmth and exuberance to one of their own who has attained the courted and envied position of "prince of the church" and heir to Peter. The Pope is a national hero to the Poles, and indeed, in the symbol of the power of religion to liberate them from political oppression.

In his youth and vigor displayed throughout his gruesome public appearances in Poland, gave the Catholics in Poland a new zest and vitality that resulted in spontaneous outbursts of adoration during the Pope's appearances.  

But the Pope's public utterances were all the more potent because they were spoken by the spiritual leader of the world's largest body of Catholics who had been denied religious rights for such a long period of time. The Pope's teachings on the importance of human rights and respect for the dignity of a human being were interpreted by the Polish people as a call to the West.  

The Pope is a national hero to the Poles, and indeed, in the symbol of the power of religion to liberate them from political oppression.

However, the Pope's visit will soon be over. The Polish people will return to their daily routine. It is easy to speculate that the dominant communist regime is likely to demonstrate that it is still in full control of that country.  

In the immediate run, at least, it can be assumed that some display of muscle by the Communists will bring oppressive measures to bear on the Polish people. Many will suffer pain and punishment for their exuberance for the Pope. And undoubtedly the world will wonder whether they might not have been better off if the Pope hadn't come, which would prove the church officials would assure them that the burden they will now have to bear is more than rewarded by the liberation that the Pope's visit will have brought.

The Real test, of course, will be how and whether the government will be in following through on the challenge to the Communists that was initiated by the Pope's visit.

In retrospect, the most significant aspect of the Pope's visit, that will remain vivid in the minds of all people throughout the world, was his visit to Auschwitz, where 4 million people perished in the most barbaric experiment in the annals of human history. It surely moved everyone to view the Pope offering a private prayer in the cell where a Catholic priest voluntarily gave up his life the save another Pole who was the father of two children.  

Nor could anyone fail to be touched by the recognition by the Pontiff of my birthplace in Poland I visited Auschwitz. I was moved to tears when the taxi driver who drove me to Auschwitz, a non-Jew, refused to enter inside with me. When I asked him why, he explained that he had lost some member of his family in Auschwitz and he could not visit the place. But, he too recognized that the Jewish element in Auschwitz was of a different dimension and quality and could not be equated with his own personal suffering.

Furthermore, Tannenbaum is full of praise for the Pope's "rejection of indifference," which might imply that the Pope was condemning the indifference of the Catholic Church at the time that Europe was permeated with the odor of Jewish bodies being burned at Auschwitz.

What the Pope said was "It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this image without saying a prayer. It is a place to which the Pope without Aachen.  

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...
The Pope, The Jews & Israel

By Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

Religion is more than the study of the divine; it is the rule of life. To the Anglican divine Dean Inge once wrote, "If there is truth to that maxim — as I believe there is — the Pope often feels that he is the Jewish people's Papacy and yet the Jew by his example of the Pope's papacy, he is often surprised to find that his Pope's papacy may be more promising for the future of Catholic-Jewish relations, and that he may have been taught to speak in a manner that is more like the Pope's papacy than anything that he might have taught.

As the media have abundantly documented, John Paul II was born and raised in a desperately poor family in the northern Italian village of Wadowice. He went on to study at the University of Krakow, where he worked as a glass artist. To help sustain her family, Albinio Luciani's mother worked as a servant in the household of a Jewish family.

In March 1977, at a meeting of the John Paul II Catholic-Jewish Committee of the Vatican, Cardinal Luciani saw his mother pass the room as deep as a formative of his personal attitudes toward Jews. The fact that Cardinal Luciani was very kind to Mrs. Luciani and their faith in Judaism really impressed her. The Cardinal said that his mother passed her respect for that Jewish family and their religion. On his mother's deathbed, he traces his warm feelings toward Judaism to that childhood experience.

Bishop Francis McGuerevo, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who attended the March 1977 meeting, recently said that the Cardinal was one of those whom Cardinal Luciani had warm and respectful feelings toward Jews and Judaism in general. He was a man "very much with it" in terms of understanding the cause of promoting respect between Jews and Christians.

Supported Anti-Nazi Resistance During World War II, Don Albinio Luciani, then a young seminarian and teacher in Beluio, visited prisoners in Nazi jails and was an "indefatigable" pastor, morally supporting partisans in the anti-Nazi resistance. Don Albinio's anti-fascism was consonant with Dr. Lucy Canale's description of the attitudes of the Italian people toward Jews under the Nazi regime. The work of the Catholic Church, in its classic study, "The War Against the Jews: 1939-1945:"

In Italy, the Catholic hierarchy behaved like the Italians...The overwhelming cooperation that the Italians gave their Jewish countrymen was a consequence of the repudiation of anti-Semitism and the commitment to unconditional equality. It was the fact that the Italians remained unresponsive to German demands to deport Jews. (The 8,000 Poles and 100,000 Italians annihilated were mainly destroyed by the Nazis.)

Given the pogroms and murder he received from his mother and his own personal encounter with Nazi brutality, it is not surprising that in 1975, as Cardinal Luciani, he took part in an interreligious observance in Venice commemorating the six million Jewish victims of Nazi genocide and millions of other human beings. He called the Jews and the Nazis according to the London Jewish Chronicle, Cardinal Luciani then condemned anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish extremism. He pressed his horror over the Nazi massacres, and pledged his efforts to uproot the sources of anti-Semitic hatred in Christian cultures.

That deeply human and empathetic appreciation of both the grandeur and the tragedy of Jewish life apparently carried over to Cardinal Luciani's spontaneous understanding of the importance of Israel to the Jewish people.

Once, in an interview that he gave to Marvao Dec. 8, 1972, he declared: "I certainly view the restorations of the Jews to Palestine, and believe that, after being dispersed for all these years, they are now entitled to a state of their own."

While noting that there were those in the Catholic Church who believed that the modern-day Jewish state contradicted the traditional Christian doctrine, he said: "I cannot accept the right of the Jews to Palestine and believe that, for the present, it is the United Nations..."

John Paul II has said that the practical implications of Pope John Paul's direct and open bending'-present in the Christian Church were perhaps most clearly reflected at his first weekly general audience on Sept. 6, 1978, when he took a stand against the resettlement of the Jews to Palestine, and stated that "the final solution of the Jewish people is the complete peace prayer, for which I pray, and I hope to see it realized.

The Pope's words were an admission that the Jewish people, as a people, are entitled to a state of their own. The Pope's words were a recognition of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. The Pope's words were a statement of the Pope's support for the right of the Jewish people to self-determination.

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New Pope says mother disposed him toward friendship for Jews

BY MARC H. TANENBAUM (Rabbi Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, is a leader in Jewish-Christian relations and has long studied and worked among the "us vs. them" and "us as the enlightened and influential religious leaders on America" in a poll of newspaper writers).

Religion is more caught than taught, the Anglican divine Dean Inge once wrote. If there is truth to that maxim — as I believe there is — Pope John Paul I leaves us with "caught" favorable attitudes toward the Jewish people and Judaism from his mother, and that kind of molding and naturalizing for the future of Catholic-Jewish relations under his Papacy as anything that might have been other.

As the media have abundantly documented, Pope John Paul was born and raised in a desperately poor family in the northern Italian village of Canale d’Agordo. To eke out a living for his family, his father became a migrant bricklayer in Switzerland, and then returned to an island north of Venice where he worked as a glass artisan. To help sustain her family, Albino Luciani’s mother, Musa, raised a maid in the household of a Jewish family.

Mother's respect for Jews

In March 1977, at a meeting of the joint Vatican-International Jewish Congress concerned with Catholic-Jewish relations, Cardinal Luciani saw fit to recall his mother’s experiences of her personal attitudes toward Jews. The affable Cardinal warmly recalled that the Jewish family that he grew up with, Cardinal Luciani, and their faith in Judaism greatly impressed her. The Cardinal said that his mother passed her respect for that Jewish family and their religion on to him, and added, he traces his warm feelings toward Judaism to that childhood experience.

Francis Mugyenyi, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who attended the March 1977 meeting, recently said that the group could feel that Cardinal Luciani and his personal encounter with Nazi brutality, is not surprising that in 1975, as Cardinal Luciani, he traveled to that part in an interreligious observance in Venice commemorating the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, human beings destroyed by the Nazis. Cardinal Luciani then condemned anti-Semitism, and for the first time,Cardinal to the Jewish people, only to worship in the holy places.

Pope's first foreign trip

His views then seem to anticipate the present policy of the Holy See which has canonized Pope John Paul as a saint and his addition to the calendar of saints.

The practical implications of Pope John Paul's beliefs and feelings toward Jews and Israel were perhaps most clearly reflected in his first public reference to the Middle East situation since Pope. At his first weekly general audience on September 30, the Pope asked the cheering crowd of some 10,000 people to pray for "a special intention very close to my heart: complete peace" may emerge from the Camp David summit talks.

Against collaboration with Communists

Such a "just solution" could come about, the Pope said, only if the problems of the "Palestinians, the security of Israel, and the holy city of Jerusalem" were solved. This conflict, he added, "which has been fought for more than 50 years in the land of Jews and Palestinians, already at some time, has been a much suffering, both among Arabs and Israelis.

Vaticanologists concur that this is the first time that any Pope has spoken in such balanced terms about Arabs and Israelis, which it is certainly unusual and ambiguous recognition by any recent Pope of the needs of the "security of Israel." As Patriarch of Venice, Pope John Paul — took a tough stand against Catholic collaboration with Communists, urging that Catholics could not vote for Communists or pro-Communist Socialists. It remains to be seen what impact the new Pope’s anti-Communist views will have on the recent Vatican policy of promoting détente with the Soviet Union and East European Communist countries. Conceivably his personal abhorrence of Communist denial of religious freedom will be reflected in some of the consequences to the fate of millions of Christians and Jews under Soviet domination.

Pope John Paul, as is evident from his writings and recent pronouncements, will approach the problem of anti-Semitism with the utmost care. regarding evangelization as the first priority of the church, speaks of "the uniqueness of Jesus, the Christ, the Jew, the Messiah, who converted some 10 million people in the world...as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus." Those are heady theological doctrines with problematic implications for the church’s relations with Jews and the rest of the world’s 4.5 billion people who do not share his religious commitment.

But given his offsetting predisposition, his pastoral care for people, and beyond that, his impressive track record regarding Jews, Israel, and human rights, it will be a pleasure to dialogue with such a "mentch," and even to disagree agreeably.

It is true, as the author contends, citing chapter and verse, that the Israelis have never organized their intellectual resources for fighting the propaganda war, but it is also true that the Israeli media has been mainly the replacement of the Holocaust by oil as the dominant consideration of mass opinion as well as official opinion in the country.

This reviewer vividly recalls that day in the news of Israel’s 1967 victory before the United Nations in New York. The U.S. ambassador to Israel, Ambassador Malcolm Tober, asked the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the delegation of the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israeli delegation if they had seen the Israel
Tanenbaum Reflects on Pope Paul VI and Jews

By MARC H. TANENBAUM

(We print in full an excerpt from a March 9, 1975, article in the New York Jewish Daily Forward by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum.)

NEW YORK (JTA) — I had the privilege of meeting Pope Paul VI on three separate occasions in Vatican City and in New York. The overriding impression that I carry with me of that Pope is that of a complex, dedicated, highly intellectual person who, at the same time, was a deeply spiritual man. He was warmer than first appearances indicated, and he genuinely cared for human beings.

Pope Paul entered the diplomatic service of the Vatican Secretariat of State in 1923, three years after his ordination. He spent most of his adult life in Vatican City. He had, therefore, little opportunity to get to know Jewish people, their religion or culture (or that matter, any of the other major religious communities). Vatican Council II, which opened the windows of the Catholic Church to the world outside Italy, became for him an extraordinary "on the job" training for Pope Paul to experience first-hand that outside world, including the world of the Jewish people and Israel.

During World War II, as Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini, the first of the group of Jews who met were refugees from Nazi-dominated Europe. So he knew Jews mainly as victims in exile. That would tend to confirm some of the ancient images in certain traditions of Christian teaching of the "wandering Jews" who suffered exile as punishment for not becoming Christian. But Pope Paul's exposure to the pitiful plight of thousands of Jewish refugees from Nazi and fascism also undoubtedly heightened his awareness of the catastrophic effects of the war, as well as the demonic consequences of anti-Semitism.

From the time of his election to the 261st Supreme Pontiff on June 21, 1963, until his death on Aug. 6, 1978, Pope Paul clearly went through an evolution in his attitudes toward Jews, Judaism and the State of Israel. Some of his pronouncements inevitably reflected his limited contact with Jews and Judaism. Thus, in his first encyclical issued during August 1964, Pope Paul left Jews, Muslims and followers of "the Afro-Asiatic religions" to join with the Catholic Church in "defending common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare and civil order."

But, in the same breath, he declared the loyalty required of us to declare openly our conviction that there is only one true religion—that of Christianity. It is our hope that all who seek God and adore Him may come to acknowledge its truth. Needless to say, Muslims and Eastern religions were no happier with that attitude than were Jews who do not believe that their religion is inadequate or unfulfilled.

It is a genuine tribute to Pope Paul, however, that his native intellectual integrity and his genuine, if cautious, openness to new ideas and experiences led him increasingly to modify his traditionalist views as he gained fresh insights. Some of his new insights began to emerge from his growing number of audiences with various Jewish leaders from 1963-1975.

His changing attitudes were perhaps most clearly expressed during one of his first audiences, and in his last. Referring to the trauma of the Nazi Holocaust, Pope Paul said on June 1, 1964, that an American Jewish Committee delegation that he "strongly deplores the horrible ordeals, the many trials and suffering, of which the Jews have been the victims in recent years."

Anticipating the Vatican Declaration adopted on Oct. 28, 1965, which condemned anti-Semitism and repudiated the false charge of collective Jewish guilt for the death of Christ, Pope Paul then declared that he "does not believe Jews should be held responsible for the death of Jesus" and the Jewish people should "never undergo any diminution in your human rights."

Finally, he spoke of his appreciation of Judaism in these words: "Our particular consideration for the Jewish religious tradition with which Christianity is so intimately linked, and from which it derives hope for trusting relations and for a happy future." The Pope concluded the audience with a blessing to the AJ Committee leaders, saying, "We wish you every favor from God whom we invoke with all our hearts on your behalf and that of all those who are near and dear to you." To underscore the significance of his declaration, Papal authorities had the Pope's full text reprinted on the front page of the official Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano.

In his last address on Jewish-Christian relations, Pope Paul spoke even more forthrightly of the consensus between Jewish thought and Christian thought, noting in the past "there has been real and profound mutual esteem (between Christian and Jewish scholars) and a conviction that we had something to learn from one another." Significantly, he reminded the Christian and Jewish leaders present at a Jan. 10, 1975, reception for the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), that he had called on "all the faithful of the Catholic Church to pray in order (in the words of the Vatican Guidelines of 1975) "to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience."

Again, with special warmth, Pope Paul expressed to the Jewish leaders and "for your families, but widely still for the entire Jewish people our best wishes for happiness and peace."

The most dramatic expression of his growing interest and appreciation of Judaism as a source of religious insight and inspiration became manifest in his study of several books on the philosophy of Judaism by the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, with whom he developed a personal friendship. From the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, in 1973, Pope Paul quoted from the texts of Rabbi Heschel's books and spoke of the spiritual treasures of Judaism which he committed to the attention of the Catholic faithful before him. In my judgements, it was the first time in 1,900 years that a reigning Pope cited a rabbi and texts of Judaism as a spiritual resource.

Similarly, with regard to Israel and Jerusalem, in January 1964 the "pilgrim Pope" made a journey to the Holy Land. While many were troubled by his diplomatic reticence in referring to Israel by name, the pope's exchanges with President Zalman Shazar were warm and mutually respectful, and left Israeli authorities feeling extremely positive over his visit. His authorization of Eugene Cardinal Tisserant to visit the Memorial Church on the Holy Mountain on Mt. Zion and to light candles in memory of the Jewish victims of the Nazis during World War II left a particularly forceful impression on the Jewish people.

Of profound importance was the fact that after Pope Paul visited Christian shrines in Jerusalem and saw first-hand how well they had been cared for by the Israeli government, he abandoned the Vatican's earlier policy of demanding the internationalization of the city of Jerusalem. In his audience with Golda Meir in January 1973—a clear contrast to newspaper reports to the contrary—he repeatedly his gratitude for Israel's safeguarding of Christianity's holiest shrines.

While Pope John XXIII deserves the credit for beginning the process of changing the Catholic Church's negative or ambivalent attitudes towards Jews and Judaism, to Pope Paul VI belongs the merit of personally creating the Vatican Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, which is the first instrument in the Catholic Church's history charged with promoting the Gospel and promoting understanding across religious boundaries.
Pope John Paul II and the Jews

By RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM
EDITOR of NOTE: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, was the only rabbi present at Vatican Council II and is regarded as an authority on Christian-Jewish relationships.

"He was my friendliest of the Polish Catholic bishops toward the Jews of Poland and personally helped save the lives of a large number of Jews, from certain death at the hands of the Nazis. Second, Father D'Anjou knew the new Pope when he was a priest, and met frequently with him between 1952 and 1956. Lastly, and importantly, Father D'Anjou's positive impressions were confirmed for us in an overseas telephone conversation this week between the new director of Foreign Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, Abraham Karlikow, and a leader of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, Maciej Jakubowicz of Krakow.

From conversations with reliable sources in the Vatican last week, the following portrait of the "track record" of Cardinal Wojtyła toward Polish Jewry emerges:

Around 1964, there were a series of desecrations of Jewish cemeteries in Krakow, including defacements of tombstones over Jewish graves. It was widely believed that these anti-Semitic actions were inspired by or carried out by agents of the Polish Communist party and/or the secret police. Archbishop Wojtyła called upon Catholic students attending the University of Krakow to clean and restore the defaced tombstones in Krakow and to repair the Jewish cemeteries.

Subsequently, Archbishop Wojtyła delivered a public sermon during a large Christian procession in which he condemned the Communist functionaries for their anti-Jewish acts, and called upon them to desist from any further hostile actions against the Jewish population.

His Chancery published a journal of high academic quality, Common Wealth, Archbishop Wojtyła personally authorized the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemorating the publication of a series of articles in that journal commemora