Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992
Box 34, Folder 2, John Paul II [Pope], 1982-1983.
JOHN PAUL II IN SOUTH AMERICA -
MEETINGS WITH JEWISH LEADERS
(Between Pragmatism and Commitment)

Latin America has the world's largest Catholic population, estimated at approximately 280 million faithful.

It should therefore come as no surprise that Pope John Paul II has made eight visits to that part of the world. The trip discussed here took him to Uruguay on March 31st, where he spent only eighteen hours. From there, he went to Chile, covering its extensive area, from the 1st to the 10th of April. His final destination was Argentina, where he stayed from the 6th to the 12th; his visit there included cities in the provinces as well.

It has been said that this pontifical trip fluctuated between pragmatism and commitment. In each country, the bishops' conferences must tackle with varying political differences among their own members, as well as with the relationship of these members with the government of their own countries.

In Uruguay, for example -- an admittedly anti-clerical country, which broke its own concordat with the Vatican as much as 70 years ago -- President Sanguinetti himself, in statements to the press while celebrating the Pope's visit, declared himself an agnostic. Uruguay's church hierarchy, in turn, supports Human Rights groups and political sectors challenging the government over its amnesty decreed to the military accused of human rights violations. Basically, the Pope's visit to Montevideo was announced as a ceremony recalling his acceptance of the role as mediator in the conflict between Argentina and Chile, since this was where the protocols had been signed. This particular ceremony was not attended by the Foreign Ministers of Argentine and Chile, since differences between both countries have meanwhile arisen.

In Uruguay, John Paul II spoke of "peace based on justice, respect, and the protection of the legitimate rights of the meekest."

Even prior to his arrival in Chile, John Paul II termed the Chilean regime "a dictatorship, albeit transitional." The Church in Chile has suffered from Pinochet's
repression in its own ranks: 5 priests murdered; 140 Chilean priests exiled; 18 foreigners expelled; 88 monks and nuns imprisoned and tortured. There are bishops fighting with great courage, and there are those trying to find a way towards "reconciliation" and/or peaceful transition to a constitutional form of government. Here, the Pope showed his support of the crowds asking for his commitment to democracy, liberty, and justice.

At a religious ceremony for a rally in a working-class district, the Pope used a Bible still stained with the blood of André Jarlan, the French priest assassinated in that very district by repressive squads.

He had to deal with the people's church movements as well, such as the "base communities" and liberation theology. Thus, he recommended that "competent lay people with a solid moral conscience be responsible for resolving temporal matters," adding "do not take their place by giving up your own particular place." At the same time, John Paul II did not deny the "option favoring the poor", as endorsed by the Latin American church at Medellín and Puebla, underlining that it "points out and implies that it must not be exclusive and exclusionary."

The incidents surrounding several of the public rallies left the Pope with a bitter memory on his departure from Chile. Nevertheless, it can be said that many were hopeful that the papal visit would be followed by a repetition of "the miracle" which unfolded in Haiti and the Philippines after his visits to these countries.

In Argentina, the controversy surrounding the Pope's visit took on different aspects: political polarization, antagonism between civilians and the military, the serious economic crisis, censuring the Argentine Church over its support of the military régime and its silence in the face of the tragedy of the desaparecidos (disappeared); the Church's opposition to divorce legislation (already approved by the Lower House, but not yet sanctioned by the Senate), and the Church's support of the Ley del Punto Final (Deadline for Trials) and even of the broad amnesty, resulting in confrontation with numerous human rights groups.
It should be recalled, however, that in contrast with the other two countries previously visited by the Pope, the Argentine church is, constitutionally, a part of the State. The constitution, in fact, establishes the Roman Apostolic Catholic religion as the official religion, while declaring religious liberty at the same time. To be designated President of the Republic, however, the candidate must be a Catholic.

Despite the problems discussed earlier, it must be recognized that Pope John Paul II has elicited much good feeling and recognition by an important sector of Argentina's population, as was demonstrated by a myriad of rallies. Of course, criticism was not absent; even a committee opposing his visit had been established.

It must be remembered that, thanks to the Pope's mediation which lasted for several hours, the onset of an armed conflict between Chile and Argentina related to the sovereignty over the Beagle Canal region did not materialize. With unique skill and tolerance, the Vatican led both countries towards a peace agreement in 1979. His first visit to Argentina on June 11 and 12, 1982, was not as successful, however. The country was in the throes of the Falkland/Malvinas conflict. At that time, he did not come as mediator, but solely to strike a balance for his visit to England a few days earlier.

On this last visit to Argentina, the Pope reiterated several of the above-mentioned messages, which reached their peak in a huge youth rally. The night before his departure, he voiced his concern that "one brother not be confronted by another in Argentina; that there shall be no more kidnappings or 'desaparecidos'; that there shall be no room for hatred and violence, and that human dignity be respected forever." To the bishops, he said that "I was cognizant of your ceaseless efforts and concern in those days (when guerrilla activity and repression were both stepped up), when the country's peace, co-existence and wellbeing was shattered by the pain and death unleashed by violence." He also recognized "their selfless efforts," and concluded by stating: "Silenced or forgotten, God knows of your loyalty."
These brief excerpts explain what was said earlier about the "pragmatism and commitment" characterizing this pontifical journey.

Interviews held with representatives of the Jewish communities must therefore be viewed in this context. The common practice in most visits by Pope John Paul II, at least in the countries with more or less sizable Jewish communities, was a precedent, if not conflicting, at least somewhat blurred.

It stands to reason that in Uruguay, given the briefer of his stay, the Pope did not meet with religious, inter-religious or any other groups. Therefore, the representative body of Uruguayan Jewry deemed it appropriate to publish a message which was reprinted by Uruguay's most important mass media:

The aforementioned Committee was, however, invited as a representative of the Jewish community in Uruguay, to attend an outdoor Mass held by the Pope in Montevideo. Four members of its commission on Jewish-Christian relations attended.

The Committee considers that the "Pope's message was one of peace and understanding. Because of its universal nature, it went beyond the confines of Catholicism, and was addressed to all men of good will."

Well before the Pope's arrival in Chile, by counter, Rabbi Angel Kreiman, Conservative, leader of Santiago's Sephardic community, and known as "Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Chile" -- a title bestowed upon him by the community several years ago, but questioned by several groups -- was invited by the Chilean Bishops' Conference to participate in an ecumenical meeting with the Pope. Kreiman replied that he would only participate in a Judaeo-Catholic encounter, a tradition of past years with respect to such meetings, and he agreed.
by the request of the umbrella agency of Chilean Jewry that Beny Pilowsky, president, attend the meeting as well. This was agreed upon; Kreiman read his short speech, and Pilowsky handed the Pope a letter in the Committee's behalf.

INSERT (B)

INSERT (C)

It is not known whether John Paul II gave an official reply. What did transpire, however, was that he looked pleased on learning of Kreiman's praise for the sector of the Chilean church involved in the fight for human rights. At the same time, there were signs of surprise (or annoyance) among Vatican functionaries when the Rabbi asked for the diplomatic recognition of Israel. The Pope was interested in the number of Jews and rabbis in Chile.

The meeting lasted only six minutes.

When the Pope's visit to Argentina was announced, the DAIA, the political representation of the Jewish community, made arrangements for an interview with him, both with the Argentine Bishops' Conference as well as the Nunciature. This was turned down initially, and attributed to the considerable number of secular and religious groups requesting a meeting with the Pope. Since it was impossible to comply with all requests, his visit would be limited itself to a "strictly pastoral mission." After a few days, at the insistence of local Jewish as well as Catholic groups involved in interreligious matters with them, and following steps taken at the Vatican proper by international Jewish organizations (the AJC among them), positive results were obtained. It was no easy matter for the DAIA to set up a representation for this audience, since many of its affiliated institutions wanted to participate, or requested separate audiences. Ultimately, the Jewish delegation, numbering over 20, and headed by Dr. David Goldberg, president of the DAIA, could be considered as reflecting the broad
spectrum of organizational, religious, and secular life, and it included leadership from the provinces. It must be recalled that, officially, the community recognizes exclusively the Orthodox rabbinate; however, Conservative and Reform rabbis made up part of the group as well.

INSERT (D)

Neither was there an official reply from the Pope, this time. He greeted each one of the Jewish representatives individually, and made the following remark to Dr. Goldberg: "Some things are maturing." This begs the question whether John Paul II referred to Judaeo-Catholic relations or Vatican-Israel relations. When Rabbi Banhamú (Orthodox) presented him with a Haggadah, the delegation's gift in connection with the forthcoming Pesach festivities, the Pope replied: "There is always a liberation from Egypt."

Of course, the Pope met with a number of Christian non-Catholic groups, and, separately, with a representation of Moslems.

In short, except for Uruguay, John Paul II listened once again -- in Chile and in Argentina -- to the Jewish outcry for the recognition of Israel and Jerusalem. Once more, no concrete reply came forth, but here, too, one must bear in mind his "pragmatism and commitment."
Lucia,

Do you have information - published materials - in English on Father Karlhe's anti-Semitism relating with Polish Jews? I am eager to study reliable documentation on this, and then discuss with you how to deal with it.

Marc (Mannheim)
Unfortunately, there is nothing in English, moreover, we do not have surveys about Father Kolbe in Adler here in the U.S. There are however, attempts to bring from Israel the entire set of the Small Daily. Only then we will be able to talk about it with...
Rome, December 20th, 1982

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
National Director
Interreligious Affairs
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Dear Marc,

Your welcome letter reached me just as I was leaving for a week in Venice for the annual consultation on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. I asked Sever Voicu, our librarian, to call your secretary to indicate my acceptance of your proposal, and my agreement that the first week in May would be the better time for both of us. Thus I understand a general agreement on our part to look forward to:

1. A colloquium on the general subject of human rights, which will avoid entering into particular political subjects (which would involve diplomatic and jurisdictional problems for me here);
2. the colloquium to be largely organized by you, with this office responding as far as possible to your initiatives;
3. that this Centro is the site, and is free the entire first week of May, 1983, but that May first should be avoided because it is a legal holiday when all transportation of the local sector is not in service;
4. that we could pay up to three hundred dollars towards the cost of simultaneous translation service if needed, but beyond that point we would either have to do without or find other funds;
5. that we would arrange for the translation service if necessary;
6. that the Centro would offer a reception as part of the colloquium;
7. that we would request a private papal audience during the program (and of course, that depends on the disposition of the Vatican);
8. that the program be jointly sponsored by the American Jewish Committee's Office for Interreligious Affairs and the Centro Pro Unione, and if you think a good idea, possibly also by SIDIC if they so desire;
9. that we would discuss how best we can use publicity and/or publication of papers from the program. (We will be happy with publicity, as long as it observes our limitations as indicated in 1. above).

I hope that is helpful generally. A good time to phone me, if necessary, is at the Convento (656-44-98) at 1 P.M. Rome time (dinner), or in the evenings. I'm generally at the office (659-552) from 3 to 6 P.M. Rome time.

I think this is the time for a human rights program here, as a healing factor which would be much appreciated by both Jewish
Rabbi Tanenbaum - 2/

and Catholic constituencies, both locally and internationally.

From the personal standpoint, how happy I would be to entertain you at our house, Marc, and I hope you will want to stay with us during your visit. In this day of women's lib, why don't you bring along your hard working-secretary and Inge? Ah well, we can always dream.

When you have further plans established, I'll get in touch with Jorge Mejia to see if he'll work with us.

Looking forward to hearing from you (and remember to send a copy of any communication by separate post in case of loss in Italian mails).

Sincerely, Your friend,

(Rev.) Charles Angell, S.A.
Director
The Inquisition was an historic mistake ... which caused very serious tensions, errors and exaggerations," said Pope John Paul II when he visited the University of Madrid (November 4th). The previous day he met with Spanish Jewry for the first time and on that occasion he expressed his sorrow that the attack on the Great Synagogue in Rome (October 9th) took place so close to the visit of Arafat at the Vatican (September 9th). These actions prove that there is a concern about misunderstandings which may arouse anti-Semitic and anti-Israel extremism.

It seems that after many months of the blatant deterioration of relations between the Vatican and Israel, there are now hints of an interest in changing the situation. It has been characteristic of Vatican policy for many generations to be extra-cautious, and therefore, the Church was careful not to condemn the invasion of Lebanon directly and finally did so about a month after most of the Western European countries. And, even then, only after the war had spread, the suffering of the civilian population had increased and the waves of protest against Israel had intensified. Even the recognition of the right of the Palestinians to a state came relatively later than that of the Western European countries, and only after the outbreak of the Lebanese war. It was only then that the Pope considered it proper to receive Arafat, after he had resisted pressures to do so previously in February. The massacre in the camps shocked the Vatican as it shocked the entire Western world, and consequently the Pope was in touch with President Navon.

* This article reflecting informed Israeli views on current relations with the Vatican, was written by the Italian correspondent of Haaretz, and appeared in November 11, 1982.
The simplistic explanation heard in Israel, including from government circles, for the turn for the worse in the Vatican's attitude towards Israel has been that it is a reflection of the general resurgence of antisemitism, which has always been there but is now being expressed more widely in the world, and, of course, in the Catholic Church which has a long theological tradition in this respect.

The fact that the Vatican did not cry out against the slaughter of the Christians the past few years, but joined in the outcry against the slaughter in the camps does need explanation, but blaming antisemitism is only partly right and this is done, it seems, to cover up the mistakes that Israel made which no doubt contributed to the worsening of relations. Suffice it to mention the annexation of Jerusalem, the situation in Judea and Samaria, the bombings of Beirut and the Lebanese war itself, of course.

Dr. Meir Mendes, a faculty member at the Universities of Tel Aviv and Bar-Ilan, is now working on a book about the relations between the Vatican and Israel based on the Davis' studies of the Hebrew University. The study draws on thirteen years of experience as the Minister for Vatican Affairs in the Israeli Embassy in Rome.

Dr. Mendes, who was well acquainted with many high-level Church officials who formulated Church policy, as well as the Pope himself, was invited by the Pope before leaving Rome for a lengthy, intimate discussion in the Pope's summer home even though Dr. Mendes did not represent a country recognized by the Vatican.

In response to my question, Dr. Mendes explained that the Vatican is not a monolithic entity and even now contains groups that are Philo-Israeli and groups that are pro-Arab which are concerned about the many interests that the Church has in Arab states and the Third World, which are not sympathetic to us. Alongside them are conservative groups which are anti-Israel and which a few years ago opposed the removing of the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus
from the Jewish people, and to this day still support religious antisemitism. Vatican policy and the Pope's statements are often the result of a variety of political pressures and considerations. We should keep in mind that the Pope, like many other heads of state, does not live in a vacuum and is influenced by current trends and political events, and that serious mistakes were also made in Israel. Furthermore, the current Pope lacks the rich diplomatic experience which his predecessors had.

It is in this context that we have to view the postponement of the decisions to condemn Israel for the Lebanese War and the recognition of the right of the Palestinians to a state and, subsequently, in light of the developments, the pro-Arab resolutions in July. It is also in this context that we have to view the Pope's meeting with Arafat in September, in which the Pope requested that Arafat recognize Israel's right to exist and to end the use of terrorism. A month later, in the wake of the attack in the synagogue in Rome, which shocked even the Vatican, Virgilio Lotti, the Associate Editor of the Vatican organ, the Associate Editor of the Vatican organ, the Associate Editor of the Vatican organ, stated that Arafat accepted the Pope's request. Arafat later denied this and explained that he was content with simply listening. In any case, what the Vatican believed would be helpful in the Arab-Israeli conflict turned out to be a stumbling block in the relations between the Vatican and Israel, and the Jews and the Church, and aroused the anger of the Christians in Lebanon. The Vatican's efforts to maintain a balanced position in the Middle East were damaged.

"It was an act of political naiveté," said Mendes, who supports the refusal of Prof. E. Urbach and the Mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek in their refusal to respond to the Vatican's invitations as an act of protest against the audience given Arafat. But he also believes that the freeze in relations will not continue for long and that the Vatican is aware of its mistakes. The current condition of the relations between Israel and the Vatican requires the under-
standing and encouragement of the friends of Israel in the Vatican, whose position now is much more favorable and comfortable in the light of the mistakes which were made and the impressions that the attack in Rome.

November 14, 1982

N.B. Above is a translation of an article that reflects informed views here of current relationships with the Vatican. It was written by Hulda Liebernomah, Italian correspondent for Ha'aretz, and appeared originally in the November 11, 1982 issue of that newspaper.
January 4, 1983

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

Dear Marc;

Enclosed is correspondence from Bob Spiegel, an active member of the Chicago Chapter, concerning Canon Law. It strikes me that much of what he is requesting has been accomplished through your good efforts. I would appreciate your reviewing this and contacting Bob Spiegel directly.

Sincerely yours,

Robert S. Jacobs

RSJ:cmd
Enclosure
cc: Robert I. Spiegel
    Marshall L. Zissman
    Jonathan Levine
December 29, 1982

PERSONAL

Mr. Robert S. Jacobs, Esq.
Friedman & Koven
208 South LaSalle Street
Suite 900
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Re: National Interreligious Committee

Dear Bob:

I am currently taking a course involving the study of Modern Jewish History commencing in the 17th Century. As a background for the emancipation of the Jewish communities from ghettos of pre-Napoleonic Europe, the Cannon Laws of the Catholic Church promulgated in early Christian History and remaining to the present time were discussed. I am enclosing several of these canons and I suggest that a project be undertaken at the National Level of A.J.C. by attorneys to deal directly with a liaison committee of Catholic attorneys for the purpose of seeking the basis to repeal those canons directly affecting anti-Semitic behavior.

I think the American Jewish Committee is uniquely qualified to undertake this project which would have a worldwide positive effect towards real elimination of anti-Semitism at its roots. I would be interested to learn if such an ongoing project could be undertaken.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert I. Spiegel

Enclosures
Original documents faded and/or illegible
You have no right to live.

These progressively more drastic goals brought in their wake a slow and steady growth of anti-Jewish action and anti-Jewish thinking. The process began with the attempt to drive the Jews into Christianity. The development was continued in order to force the victims into exile. It was finished when the Jews were driven to their deaths. The German Nazis, then, did not discard the past; they built upon it. They did not begin a development; they completed it. In the deep recesses of anti-Jewish history, we shall find many of the administrative and psychological tools with which the Nazis implemented their destruction process. In the hollow of the past, we shall also discover the roots of the characteristic Jewish response to an outside attack.

The significance of the historical precedents will most easily be understood in the administrative sphere. The destruction of the Jews was an administrative process, and the annihilation of Jewry required the implementation of systematic administrative measures in successive steps. There are not many ways in which a modern society can, in short order, kill a large number of people living in it. This is an efficiency problem. The greatest dimensions, one which no one can count and no one can count, was, in review of the documentary record of the destruction of the Jews, it is almost immediately impressed with the fact that the German administration knew what it was doing. With an unblinking sense of direction and an uncanny pathfinding ability, the German bureaucracy found the shortest road to the final goal.

We know, of course, that the very nature of a task determines the form of its fulfillment. Where there is the will, there is also the way, and if the will is only strong enough, the way will be found. But what if there is no time to experiment? What if the task must be solved quickly and efficiently? A rat in a maze, which has only one path to the goal, learns to choose that path after many trials. Bureaucrats, too, are sometimes caught in a maze, but they cannot afford a trial run. There may be no time for hesitations and stops. That is why past performance is so important, that is why past experience is so essential. Necessity is said to be the mother of invention, but if precedents have already been formed, if a guide has already been constructed, invention is no longer a necessity. The German bureaucracy could draw upon such precedents and follow such a guide, for the German bureaucrats could dip into a vast reservoir of administrative experience, a reservoir which church and state had filled in fifteen hundred years of destructive activity.

In the course of its attempt to convert the Jews, the Catholic Church had taken many measures against the Jewish population. These measures were designed to "protect" the Christian community from Jewish teachings and, not incidentally, to weaken the Jews in their "obstiny." It is characteristic that as soon as Christianity became the state religion of Rome, in the fourth century A.D., Jewish equality of citizenship was ended. The Church and the Christian state, conscious of decisions and imperial laws, henceforth worked hand in hand to persecute the Jews. Table 1 compares the basic anti-Jewish measures of the Catholic Church and the modern counterparts enacted by the Nazi regime.

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<td>Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together, Synod of Elvira, 396</td>
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<td>Jews not allowed to employ Christian servants or possess Christian slaves, 3d Synod of Orleans, 538</td>
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<td>The marking of Jewish clothes with a budge, 4th Lateran Council, 1215, Canon 6 (Copied from the legislation of Caliph Omar II [634-64], who decreed that Christians wear blue belts and Jews, yellow belts.)</td>
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<td>Construction of new synagogues prohibited, Council of Oxford, 1222</td>
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10. Stolle, Die Juden in Deutschland, p. 21
11. The list of Church measures is taken in its entirety from J. E. Scherer, Die Rechtsverhältnisse der Juden in den deutsch-österreichischen Ländern (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 39-49. Only the first date of each measure is listed in Table 1.
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