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AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 34, Folder 6, John Paul II [Pope] - Auschwitz visit, 1978-1979.

Jewish leaders praise the Pope's Auschwitz sermon



Pope John Paul II at the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland yesterday peering through the barbed wire fence that caged millions as they waited to die during the Nazi reign of terror 40 years ago.

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: "That very people that received from God the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill' it self experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing."

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 reverent 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

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 where 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."

A crown of thorns made of barbed wire

AUSCHWITZ-Birkenau — Yesterday the Church of Poland took three strips of barbed wire and shaped them into a crown of thorns and hung them on an unpainted wooden cross and had found the only adornment it needed for its Pope's celebration of the mass of the death camps.

Barbed wire is the language that Auschwitz-Birkenau uses to make its awful statement.

These rusted strands of wire run in precisely measured rows as inconceivable reminders of the wounds in the green and pleasant land they scar. Yesterday the children ducked rough them in the rush

ing school, where the young learn how to negotiate an unscratched passage through barbed wire.

Station the mildest of policemen behind four strings of barbed wire and he becomes the reincarnation of the SS man. Take away the barbed wire and the buildings of Birkenau could almost be imagined as monuments to the conscientiousness of the Nazis as engineers. Its inmates were conscripted to construct it, brick carefully laid upon brick, and it proclaims across 35 years nothing less horrible than the message that man builds his own prison.

It was in such a place that the Pope stood beneath his crown of barbed wire and bowed his shoulders and folded his hands as though he had taken upon his back the load of the world, and could not move without the risk of dropping it.



Murray Kempton with the Pope at Auschwitz feels the chill and the hope that death left behind

Paul yesterday took up the dreadful burden of declaring, and proving that men can also break out of his own prison.

The Pope stood beneath his crown of barbed wire and bowed his shoulders and folded his hands as though he had taken upon his back the load of the world, and could not move without the risk of dropping it.

He asked "All you dear participants in this encounter" to think "in particular" of the Jews, "the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination."

And then, the recollection of this special and terrible martyrdom carried him to the memory of all Europe's victims and he thought of Poland's old enemy and present master, and suddenly he improvised:

"There are also the Russians, we must not forget how the Russians suffered." Auschwitz, can, he said, only finally be understood as a testimony to war.

He called up once again the words of the prophet Isaiah: "No more war."

Never again war." Then he paused for one long and aching moment. The audience was silent and waiting. The Pope's back was still fixed and immobile but, from behind, it could only be thought he was crying.

To sit there in the blazing sun had been to look at the barbed wire and to think that the barrier between man and beast can never be thicker than these thin and rusted strands. But now there was this broad back; and it seemed a great wall indeed. He had risen up here in this place of the abandonment of all hope and he had become the universal voice of man's demand for justice and unbreakable faith.

No Vatican change on Israel

From TULLIA ZEVI
Rome

Israel's special mission to the inauguration of Pope John Paul I on Sunday will include her Ambassador in Italy, Mr Zeev Shek; the Embassy Minister for Religious Affairs, Mr Meir Mendes; and the director-general of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, Mr Israel Lippel.

Jewish circles followed the papal election with great interest. They have expressed the hope that the programme of cautious renewal outlined by the new Pope in his first speech to the cardinals does not imply any slowing down or shelving of the revision of the Roman Catholic Church's attitude to Judaism and the Jews, set in motion by the 1965 Ecumenical Council and fostered by Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI.

His confirmation in office of all

the high-ranking members of the curia, including the State Secretary, Cardinal Jean Villot, and the "Foreign Minister," Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, seems to imply the continuation for the time being of the present Vatican line on the Middle East — including friendly though unofficial, relations with Israel.

However, in his first speech, Pope John Paul I said he was "particularly thinking of the tortured land of Lebanon" and also of "the situation in the land of Jesus."

His predecessors, too, carefully avoided referring to the State, of Israel by name, generally referring to it as "Palestine," or "the Holy Land," thus implying its sacred connotations for Judaism and Islam, as well as for Christianity.

The term "land of Jesus" has been interpreted by some observers as a more exclusive reference to its significance for Christianity.

Pope John Paul said last year that he had always felt friendly towards the Jews. His mother had once worked as a maid for a wealthy Jewish family, who had always treated her very well.

This term, considered by many to be over-cautious, lends a touch of wishful thinking to the message of good wishes sent to the new Pope by Rabbi Shlomo Goren, Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, in which he expressed the hope that Pope John Paul would recognise the State of Israel.

Members of the small Jewish community in Venice do not recall having had many opportunities to meet the Pope when he was the city's archbishop. They remember him as a benevolent man entirely absorbed by his pastoral duties.

However, he was a friendly guest of honour at a reception given in Venice in April, 1977 by the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee.

Our Jerusalem Correspondent cables: Following the election on Saturday of the new Pope the Israeli afternoon paper, "Maariv," has republished an interview with him in 1972 in which he stated that he "regarded favourably the return of the Jews to Palestine."

He also told his interviewer, Mrs Geula Cohen, now a Likud Knesset Member, that he believed that "after being dispersed for all these years, they (the Jews) are at last entitled to a State of their own."

THEIR BOMBS ROCKED CAIRO— AND THE ISRAEL GOVERNMENT

But who sent them? Who gave the orders?

For the first time, the sensational details of an Israeli sabotage attempt inside Egypt told by those who took part.

OPERATION SUSANNAH

Beginning exclusively in next week's JEWISH CHRONICLE.

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June 8, 1979

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S PILGRIMAGE TO AUSCHWITZ

IS AN HISTORIC TURNING POINT IN JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

(Rabbi Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, met with Pope John Paul II on March 12 during the first official meeting the Pope held with Jewish leaders.)

- - - - -

The pilgrimage of ~~John~~ Pope John Paul II to Auschwitz on June 7 was a moral act of surpassing historic importance. It may well become the most significant development in the movement to advance understanding and friendship between Christians and Jews since the adoption of the Vatican Council's Declaration on Non-Christian Religions in 1965.

That assessment is based on the fact that virtually every Jew engaged in efforts to promote improved relations between Christians and Jews comes to the dialogue table with a consciousness deeply ~~formed~~ ^{affected} by ~~the~~ the Nazi holocaust. Auschwitz, the chief Nazi death factory in which 2.8 million Jews and a million non-Jews were burned to death, symbolizes fatally for every Jew who lives under its shadow the loss of one-third of the Jewish people. And to the majority of American Jews - who are descendants of European immigrant parents - there is the constant haunting question that can never be evaded: Why were my families destroyed and why did I deserve to live? For, there but for the grace of God anyone of us American Jews could have suffered a similar fate in the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz.

Auschwitz also symbolizes the silence and indifference of the world, including the majority of Church leaders, to the massacre of Jews and other human beings. As Dr. Franklin Littell, the Methodist scholar, and other Christian leaders have recently asserted, Auschwitz is as much

a moral and spiritual crisis in the collapse of Western Christendom - the site of the Nazi holocaust - as it is a continuing trauma for the Jewish people.

Over the past several decades, Jewish leaders meeting with Christian authorities have felt that, with rare exception, most Christian leaders have sought to avoid facing the actuality of the horrors of the Nazi holocaust and, in particular, its unique demonic consequences for Jews. The several statements made about the Nazi nightmare by Christian leaders have frequently been couched in vague pieties or sentimental universalisms - another illustration of "man's inhumanity to man." Given the concrete ideology of Adolf Hitler who was determined to exterminate the entire Jewish people under his control - the "final solution" was conceived only in relation to the Jews - such vague declarations gave more offense to the Jewish spirit than consolation.

That is why the words and actions of Pope John Paul II during last week's visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau have had almost an electric effect in the Jewish community. In his characteristically direct and explicit manner, the Pope avoid^{ed} generalities and spoke to the Jewish soul as much as he did to the Catholic peoples of the world:

"In particular, I pause with you before the inscription in Hebrew," he said gesturing toward the memorial plaques inscribed with Hebrew and Yiddish verses of tribute. "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" (thus reaffirming the common spiritual bonds in the Bible which link together Christians and Jews.)

Pope John Paul then added: "That very people that received from God the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing." And then, of utmost significance, the Pope said:

"It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference."

That is an ~~unprecedented~~ call, without precedent except for a similar declaration by Pope John XXIII in 1960, for an end to the widespread callousness and indifference to the suffering and destruction that the Nazis inflicted on the Jews and five million other human beings. And implicit in that Papal statement is a call today to humanity at large^e to end its similar indifference to the epidemic of dehumanization in the world - to stand against the massacres, the torture, and violence ~~xxx~~ suffered by the Vietnamese boat people, the Cambodians, the Lebanese, the Ugandans, the Nicaraguans, the South Africans, the oppressed Jews and Christians in the Soviet Union.

When Jews speak to Christians about ~~the~~ Auschwitz, they are not interested in invoking collective guilt; they are interested in a response of collective responsibility. Pope John Paul, kneeling before the death wall of Auschwitz, did just that, and that one gesture of healing may decisively affect the entire future course of Jewish-Christian relations in our lifetime.

HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
VATICAN CITY, ITALY

~~XXXX~~

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 THREE MILLION JEWS WHOSE LIVES WERE DESTROYED IN THE CREMATORIA OF AUSCHWITZ. YOUR REVERENT KNEELING BEFORE THE HEBREW AND OTHER INSCRIPTIONS MEMORIALIZING THE SACRED DEAD AND YOUR REJECTION OF INDIFFERENCE TO THE KILLING OF MILLIONS OF JEWS AND OTHER HUMAN BEINGS IN AUSCHWITZ, THE MOST INHUMAN AND BRUTALIZING DEATH CAMP AMONG ALL THE NAZI MURDER FACTORIES, IS A POWERFUL SYMBOL OF MORAL CONSCIENCE THAT IS OF HISTORIC MAGNITUDE. YOUR REFUDIATION OF HATRED AND PREJUDICE AGAINST A PEOPLE, YOUR COURAGEOUS AFFIRMATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL MEMBERS OF GOD'S HUMAN FAMILY, DESERVE OUR MOST HEARTFELT AND APPRECIATIVE RESPONSE.

RESPECTFULLY,
RICHARD MAASS
PRESIDENT, THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Judy Bank
read & return
name

cc: Eugene DuBow
Harold Applebaum
Irving Levine
David Roth

memorandum

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date December 1, 1978
to Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
from Adam Simms
subject Polish reaction to Pope John Paul II Statement

I think you may be interested in a follow-up to my previous memo on this subject, which detailed a mixed response I had received concerning your statement.

I had occasion in mid-November to speak for a few minutes with the Rev. Mencelaus J. Madaj, the archivist of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and president of the Polish American Historical Association.

Rev. Madaj was extremely positive about your statement and was very happy to receive it. In fact, he told me that he had taken the liberty of making copies for distribution on his own.

When I told him of the mixed reaction I had received from another quarter, he said: "Oh, you mean about Cardinal Hlond? Well, there's no way anyone can excuse or apologize for him." Rev. Madaj was not in the least fazed by the matter of pre-WWII anti-Semitism in Poland.

I might add that Ref. Madaj stayed in Cardinal Wojtyla's villa in Krakov in June, while visiting Poland to deliver a paper on Polish church history. He is ecstatic over Wojtyla's elevation, and expressed quite a bit of satisfaction that the event had the effect of "sticking it to" Cardinal Cody. (I took his word for it, and didn't inquire further.)

Best regards.

AS:dv

AS



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

EUROPEAN OFFICE • 41, Rue Paul Doumer, 75016 Paris, France • Tel. 503-0156, 520-0660 • Cable: Wishcom, Paris

Nives Fox, European Representative

December 20, 1978

Rabbi M. Tanenbaum
A.J.C.
New York office

Dear Mark,

I am sending you herewith some more articles that have appeared in German press at the end of November on Oberammergau. As far as I know there were no further comments on the subject in the recent weeks.

I should like to hear from you about the meeting of the IJCIC that was supposed to take place today, and whether decisions were made regarding Klutznit's proposals.

La Croix, the catholic daily of Paris, has published the full text of the pope's observations recently made during a weekly audience that was attended by about 50.000 people. He referred to President Sadat's wish that the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt be signed on Mount Sinai in the presence of the pope. John Paul II said:

" How much I too would like to step the soil of my Saviour and Redeemer! How I would like to take the same road upon which the People of God once walked and go to the summit of Sinai where God gave the Commandements! How I would like, with love and humility, to traverse the roads between Jerusalem, Bethleem and the Kinereth! How I would like to stop on the Hill of the Transfiguration, from where one can see the mountains of Lebanon! Since the begining of my pontificate such a pilgrimage has been and still is my greatest desire. I appreciate all the requests and suggestions that were made to me on this matter. But to my great regret, I must for the time being renounce such a pilgrimage. "

With my warmest greetings.

Sincerely Yours

Zachariah Shuster

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Rabbi.....lllll

Hryciuk *D. Hryciuk*

Mar.20



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

[A distinguished Jewish leader visiting Edmonton last week highly praised Pope John Paul II with whom he had a recent audience in which the pontiff ~~was~~ urged Christians to strive to understand Judaism on its own terms.

["The pope is a young and vigorous man who will hopefully have a long papacy," said Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, national interreligious ~~and~~ affairs director of the American Jewish Committee based in Washington, D.C.

[Rabbi Tanenbaum, addressing about 100 people in Beth Shalom Synagogue March 19 -- a week after his papal audience in Vatican City -- said the pope warned evangelizing ~~the~~ Christians not to give offense to the Jews.

Rabbi....22222

stated that
[Instead, the pope ~~said~~ Christians must strive to understand why Jews may have difficulty in accepting ^{de} Christian witness, ^{said} the rabbi ~~was~~ who was the key rabbinic consultant during Vatican II which led to the church's historic declaration on the Jews.

~~Representatives of the Jewish community and other leading representatives of world Judaism~~
[^{the rabbi} and other leading representatives of world Judaism at the audience heard Pope John Paul strongly condemn all forms of anti-Semitism as being contrary to the spirit of Christianity and to the dignity of the Human person.

[(An NC news story quoted the pope as saying at the audience: "The Catholic Church ~~is~~ clearly repudiates in principle and in practice all such violations of human rights wherever they may occur throughout the world.

(Christian and Jewish)
("I believe that both sides ~~must~~ continue their strong efforts to overcome the difficulties of the past, so as to fulfill God's ~~commandment~~ commandment of love and to sustain a truly fruitful and fraternal dialogue that contributes to the good of each of the partners involved and to our better service of humanity," the pope said.)

(Philip A. Klutznik of Chicago, president of the World Jewish Congress, told the pope in the name of the group that Catholic advances in understanding of Judaism since the Second Vatican Council have resulted in increased friendship and understanding on both sides, "based on the affirmation of a shared reverence for sacred Scripture, the condemnation of anti-Semitism, support for religious liberty and joint social action."

Rabbi.....44444

[The rabbi was impressed as the pope began his informal audience by walking down vigorously from his throne, and meeting every one of the Jewish leaders.

"He shook hands firmly with every one of us, ~~he~~ asked about how ~~we~~ we were and what we did and looked us firmly in the eyes."

[The Polish pope, Rabbi Tanenbaum ^{said} had an excellent record of helping Jews when he was still a priest and bishop in Poland.

[In 1964, there were a series of desecrations of Jewish cemeteries in Cracow, including defilements of tombstones over Jewish graves. It was widely believed that these acts were inspired or carried out by agents of the Polish Communist party or the secret police.

[But the then archbishop of Cracow called upon Catholic students attending the University of Cracow to clean and restore the ~~the~~ defiled tombstones and to repair the Jewish cemeteries, ~~Rabbi~~ Rabbi Tanenbaum ^{said}.

[Subsequently, Archbishop Wojtyla publicly condemned Communist functionaries for their anti-Jewish acts and called on them to desist from any further hostile actions against the remnant Jewish population.

[As cardinal, the pope also helped the ~~the~~ Jewish community raise funds ~~to~~ to open a synagogue. ~~to open a synagogue.~~

[Rabbi Tanenbaum described the pope as being able to identify with Jews as victims of persecution.

Rabbi.....555555

"Auschwitz happens to be in his diocese," the rabbi said.

The Jewish leader ^{also} said he thought Pope John Paul will be "a great activist" in the church rather than a conservative, as portrayed by the media.

The rabbi ~~also said he thought~~ ^{speculated that} John Paul II may well become one of the great popes in history, ^{praising him and other} ~~and praising him and other~~ Christian leaders ~~everywhere~~ for fighting anti-Semitism.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



זכר אלה יעקב
אשר לא יישׁאל



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

No.15466

FROM THE VATICAN,

April 25, 1979

Dear Cardinal Cooke,

The letter from Mr Benjamin Meed, President of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, that you transmitted to Pope John Paul II has reached His Holiness as he is preparing for his journey to Poland, during which he intends to visit Warsaw and Auschwitz.

In the April 22 commemoration of the uprising of his Jewish fellowcountrymen the Holy Father sees a reminder of the need to safeguard at all times the objective and inviolable rights of every human being. Man is made in the image and after the likeness of God. As such, he is superior to systems and ideologies. The repeated attempts to subordinate him to what is lower than him and the curtailment of the rights of any individual or group of human beings must be countered by vigilance and self-sacrifice. His Holiness prays that through the commemoration many will be inspired with such an attitude and he invokes God's blessings on their work for the good of all.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+G. Caprio
Substitute

Cardinal Terence Cooke
Archbishop of New York
1011 First Avenue
New York, New York 10022



NEWS

WARSAW GHETTO RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION
ווארשעווער געטא ווידערשטאנד ארגאניזאציע

871 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019

For further information call: 564-1065

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POPE JOHN PAUL II PRAISES WARSAW GHETTO REMEMBRANCE

REFERS TO "UPRISING OF JEWISH FELLOW COUNTRYMEN"

As Pope John Paul II is preparing for his journey "home" to Poland, he received notice of the April 22, 1979 Commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which was held in New York's Temple Emanu-El, according to a communication today received from the Vatican Secretariat of State. The Pope responded with a statement containing a warm reference to "commemoration of the uprising of his Jewish fellow countrymen." He noted that in addition to visiting Warsaw he will also visit the site of the former Auschwitz concentration camp in southern Poland.

The Vatican communication was transmitted to Cardinal Terence Cooke, Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, who referred it to the New York Board of Rabbis with a request that it be brought to the attention of Benjamin Meed, president of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization in New York. The latter, known as WAGRO, had organized the annual April 22 Commemoration.

"The Holy Father," reads the statement, "sees a reminder of the need to safeguard at all times the objective and inviolable rights of every human being."

"The curtailment of the rights of any individual or group of human beings," it continues, "must be countered by vigilance and self-sacrifice."

In releasing the text of the statement, which was signed by Archbishop Giovanni Caprio, substitute Vatican Secretary of State, Mr. Meed expressed his and his organization's appreciation of the Pope's understanding and compassion for the remembrance of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Mr. Meed added that this is a significant development in Roman Catholic-Jewish relations, which he hoped "will serve as a memorandum for history".

JTA daily news bulletin

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No. 105

POPE RESPONDS WARMLY TO WARSAW GHETTO MEMORIAL SERVICE

NEW YORK, May 31 (JTA) -- The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising memorial service held at Temple Emanu-El in New York April 22, has drawn a warm response from Pope John Paul II, the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization (WAGRO) reported today. WAGRO president Benjamin Meed, who had written to the Pope about the event, received a letter yesterday conveying the Pontiff's acknowledgement.

The letter, addressed to Terence Cardinal Cooke, Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, was signed by Archbishop Giovanni Caprio substitute Vatican Secretary of State. Cooke referred it to the New York Board of Rabbis with a request that it be brought to the attention of Meed. The letter stated that Meed's message, transmitted by Cardinal Cooke, reached the Pope "as he is preparing for his journey to Poland during which he intends to visit Warsaw and Auschwitz."

It stated that "In the April 22 commemoration of the uprising of his Jewish fellow countrymen the Holy Father sees a reminder of the need to safeguard at all times the objective and inviolable rights of every human being." The letter observed that "Man is made in the image and after the likeness of God. As such, he is superior to systems and ideologies. The repeated attempts to subordinate him to what is lower than him and the curtailment of the rights of any individual or group of human beings must be countered by vigilance and self-sacrifice. His Holiness prays that through the commemoration many will be inspired with such an attitude and he invokes God's blessings on their work for the good of all."

Meed, whose organization organized the annual Warsaw Ghetto memorial, said the Pope's understanding and compassion for the remembrance of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust was a significant development in Catholic-Jewish relations which, he hoped, "will serve as a memorandum for history."

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
EUROPEAN OFFICE

30, rue La Boétie, 75008 Paris
359.69.11

OCT 6 1978

September 29, 1978

OCT 5 1978

Dear Marc:

Enclosed is the only clipping the Chronicle dug up about Pope John-Paul -- and it is dated this year. According to the Chronicle there is no story by Zevi except this one; and in general their library has no material on Pope John-Pau.

Today, however, all this ~~ix~~ has become academic, the poor man died and that's that. But having started the search I thought I'd finish it.

It was nice to see you, and I hope all's well with you.

With very best wishes for a Happy New Year,

Cordially,

Quel

Nives

Nives Fox

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022