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Preserving American Jewish History

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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 45, Folder 12, Shuster, Zachariah, 1986.

SHUSTER—Zachariah, age 83, died Saturday, February 15th, 1986. Beloved father of Daniel and father-in-law of Nancy. Devoted grandfather of Wendy, Laurel, Mark and Douglas. Funeral services will be held Monday, February 17, 12:15 PM, Riverside Chapel, 76th Street and Amsterdam Avenue.

Zachariah Shuster, Ex-Aide With American Jewish Group

Zachariah Shuster, a former director of the European office of the American Jewish Committee, died of cancer yesterday at Mount Sinai Hospital. He was 83 years old and lived in Manhattan.

Mr. Shuster, a native of Poland, came here in 1927 and began to work for the American Jewish Committee during World War II. At the end of the war, he was a member of a committee delegation to the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945.

He was sent to head the European branch in 1948. Based in Paris, Mr. Shuster directed programs to rebuild and secure Jewish communities in Europe and North Africa. He also represented his organization at the Second Vatican Council, which was convened by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

Mr. Shuster remained the committee's chief representative in Europe until 1974, after which he became a consultant. He returned to the United States in 1981 and continued to advise the committee on European affairs and relations with the Vatican and the World Council of Churches.

Survivors include a son, Daniel, of Stone Ridge, N.Y., and four grandchildren.

Deaths

SHUSTER—Zachariah. The American Jewish Committee grieves over the loss of its European Director Emeritus who died Saturday after a lengthy illness. Zach Shuster was a moral giant among Jewish professionals who gave 40 years of brilliant, dedicated service to world Jewry, the causes of human rights and Jewish-Christian understanding. As director of AJC's European office in Paris since 1948, he played a leading role in helping rebuild Jewish communities in Europe devastated by the Nazi holocaust. He used his unique diplomatic skills in securing the human rights of Jews and others in Eastern Europe, North Africa, and at the founding of the United Nations in 1945. His formidable knowledge of Judaism and Christianity, his linguistic skills, and his statesmanship were significant influences during Vatican Council II that changed the 2,000-year course of Catholic-Jewish relations. His wide circle of colleagues, friends, and admirers will miss greatly his extraordinary presence, his penetrating mind, his ebullient humor, and, above all, his gift of friendship which endure in our midst forever.

Howard I. Friedman, President
David Gordis,
Executive Vice President
Marc H. Tanenbaum,
International Relations Director
(AJC will hold a memorial service in 30 days at a date to be announced.)

February 16, 1986

ZACHARIAH SHUSTER - A MORAL GIANT IN JEWISH SERVICE

WINS RELIGION COMMENTARY

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM* OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

When I visited him at Mt. Sinai hospital last Thursday, I told him the good news that Anatoly Scharansky had just been released from prison by Soviet authorities. His shrunken face lit up with a broad grin, and he said, "That's just wonderful."

Zachariah Shuster had reason to feel personal satisfaction over Scharansky's liberation, because in the early 1950s, Shuster was among the first to focus world attention on the plight of Soviet Jewry before most people even knew there was such a problem.

Zach Shuster died yesterday morning after a lengthy illness. During his incredibly rich 83 years, he became a moral giant among Jewish professionals, and he was my inspired mentor and friend. Zach Shuster gave 40 years of brilliant and dedicated service to world Jewry, and to the causes of human rights and Jewish-Christian understanding.

As director of the American Jewish Committee's office in Paris since 1948, he played a leading role in helping rebuild Jewish communities in Europe devastated by the Nazi holocaust. His unique diplomatic skills helped secure the human rights of Jews and others in Eastern Europe, North Africa, and at the United Nations in 1945.

Zach Shuster had a formidable knowledge of Judaism and Christianity; he spoke seven languages fluently, and these skills enabled him to play an influential role at Vatican Council II where I served at his side.

On Monday, March 17, at a Memorial Service at AJC's national headquarters, the wide circle of colleagues, friends and admirers will say a fond farewell to Zachariah Shuster, one of the most extraordinary public servants of our lifetime.

*Rabbi Tanenbaum is director of the international relations department of the American Jewish Committee, and presents a weekly religion commentary over WINS-Westinghouse Broadcasting System.



**The American Jewish
Committee**

Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022
212 751-4000
Office of the Executive Vice President

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DATE: March 6, 1986

TO: Friends of Zachariah Shuster

FROM: David M. Gordis

RE: Memorial Service for Zach Shuster, Monday, March 17,
at 5 p.m.

The American Jewish Committee will hold a Memorial Service in tribute to our colleague, Zachariah Shuster, former AJC European Office director in Paris, on Monday, March 17, 5 p.m.

The service will be held at the Community House of Central Synagogue, 123 East 55th Street, between Lexington and Park Avenues.

Joining us in honoring Zach will be Howard I. Friedman, AJC president; Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, international relations director and colleague of Zach's during the past 25 years; and the Rev. Edward H. Flannery, the first director of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference Secretariat on Catholic-Jewish relations and also a long-time friend of Zach Shuster's.

The Memorial Service will begin immediately after the close of the Board of Governors meeting at 4:45 p.m.

We plan to announce the establishment of a Zachariah Shuster Memorial Fund for his friends who have indicated a desire to honor his memory in an appropriate way. The Fund will be utilized to further efforts in behalf of international interreligious understanding, a cause dear to Zach's heart.

DMG:RPR

For Release: February 28, 1986

A GIANT AMONG JEWISH PROFESSIONALS

By Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

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(c)WNS-Seven Arts

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date March 3, 1986
to Friends of Zachariah Shuster
from Marc H. Tanenbaum
subject Remembering Zach Shuster

As you know by now, our cherished colleague, Zach Shuster, died after a long illness on Saturday, February 15, about 9:00 a.m., at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York.

I am enclosing a copy of the text on which my eulogy of Zach was based at his funeral service on Monday, February 17, 12:15 p.m., at the Riverside Memorial Chapel.

Apart from wanting to share with you my feelings of deep love and respect for Zach that are suggested in this tribute, I want to ask you for a favor.

Zach had such extensive impact on so many of us, in so many different ways, over the past 40-some years, that I would like to collect as many of the "Zach stories," the memories, the experiences, the reflections that remain with his wide circle of AJC and other friends and acquaintances. In particular, I would appreciate your sending me photographs, letters, memoranda, and any other documentation that refer to Zach Shuster.

Perhaps the enclosed eulogy will help stimulate your recollections.

As you know, David Gordis and our AJC officers have agreed to hold a special memorial service in tribute to Zach on Monday, March 17, in connection with the Board of Governors meeting that day. It would be lovely if I could receive a note from you about your Zach experience for possible incorporation in that service, or thereafter.



mht:rpr

"ZACHARIAH SHUSTER - A MORAL GIANT"

Eulogy Delivered by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, International
Relations Director of the American Jewish Committee, at
Funeral Services, February 17, 1986, Riverside Chapel, New York City

I saw Zach Shuster for the last time on Thursday morning of last week. He was being prepared in his Mt. Sinai hospital room for radiation therapy. His pained body was shrunken; his face needed a shave -- which he got the next day. With all his discomfort and anxiety, his eyes shone brightly.

He put his voice machine to his throat and he said, almost buoyantly, "After my treatment is over, I want to see you again, Marc. I've got many ideas, many thoughts about our program in Europe..." Then he was wheeled onto the elevator that took him downstairs for his cancer therapy. That was the last time I saw Zach.

The next day, Friday, Selma Hirsh, Robert Haines, and Daniel Shuster, Zach's son, were to visit with him. In addition to responding to Zach's requests about his estate, they talked about where Zach would go -- which home or hospice -- after he left the hospital. Zach told them that he thought he would prefer the home on 106th Street in Manhattan. "When I will be feeling better," he told them, "I want to be able to go to the AJC office and this place would be convenient."

It is somehow comforting -- in the face of our monumental loss -- to know that Zach Shuster remained quintessential Zach to the very final moments of his life. He was alert and clear-minded to the end. His vital intelligence was at work until his last breath expired on Saturday morning at about 9:00 a.m. It was also typically Zach that he insisted on getting a shave and haircut on Friday afternoon, as if to be ready for his closing performance.

This is the image we carry in our heads of Zach Shuster -- his indomitable spirit, his buoyant optimism, his determination to prevail, his restless energy, his creative vitality, his incredible dedication and service to his people, his love for and devotion to the American Jewish Committee which was inseparable from his life.

Zach was an original. He was his own mold. When he died, the mold was shattered. There are no duplicates. There will never again be another Zach Shuster.

Zach's singularity springs in large measure from the fact that he spanned four cultures -- East European, West European, American, and American Jewish-Israeli. He appropriated the best and highest in each, and combined them synergistically into that special Shuster intellectual excellence and cultural depth.

I - EASTERN EUROPE - 1902 -1926

Zach Shuster was born 83 years ago (on December 15, 1902) in Lomza, a small town near Bialystok. In 1920, at age 18, he came to Kovno, Lithuania, and became a yeshiva bochur in Slobodka Yeshiva. Slobodka was famed for nurturing Charifus, Talmudic sharpness and logical penetration of issues. According to Howard Rogg of Montreal, a longtime friend of Zach's, young Shuster soon became known as a Talmud Chacham, a precocious Talmudic "wise man."

Zach was later to fuse that Talmudic sharpness with Gallic, Cartesian logic into a formidable mind that was relentless in its pursuit of "fundamental" knowledge and wisdom. ("Fundamental" was one of Zach's favorite words. In his deeply sonorous voice it often sounded as if he invented it.) That dialectical bent of his mind led him to disdain superficiality, soft-mindedness, pretense, and mediocrity.

While still a yeshiva student, Zach began showing signs of becoming a "maskil," a rationalist who was uncomfortable with mysticism and obfuscation. He was moving toward a "weltliche" (worldly) orientation, with increasing interest in Jewish scientific knowledge, Judische Wissenschaft. In his search for his Jewish self, he became steeped not only in Jewish law (Halacha, Rabbinic Commentaries, the Midrash, etc.) but also in weltlich Jewish literature and culture. Clearly, Zach was not the usual nor "typical" yeshiva bochur.

One year after entering the Slobodka Yeshiva, in 1921, Zach Shuster began writing for the Yiddish daily newspaper Der Yiddishe Stimme. He also contributed articles to five or six other newspapers. In 1925, Zach became editor of Die Welt Spiegel. (I was not able to check it, but I assume he left yeshiva before this date.)

During these years, Lithuania was an independent country, and Jews played an important role in the government, in commerce, culture, and in general societal affairs. There was a Jewish ministry with official government status, and Jewish politicians and diplomats were active in the parliamentary debates and policy-making in the Sejm. Zach Shuster became fascinated and preoccupied with these practical real-world developments affecting Lithuanian Jewry, and he reported extensively on them in the Yiddish newspapers and journals.

The quality of his reporting and analysis apparently were of such high caliber that Mr. Rogg told me, he soon developed a reputation as an "up-and-coming star journalist," a potential Yiddish James Reston. Zach's stature became such in these years, that he is referred to

several times in "Yahadut Lita," a history or yearbook of Lithuanian Jewry.

II - THE AMERICAN PERIOD -- 1927-1948.

After a year-long stay in Paris from 1926-27, (during which he reported on the Schwartzbart trial), Zach Shuster came to New York. Shortly after his arrival in 1927, Zach was writing for Der Tag, Der Tageblatt, among other Yiddish papers. In a Yiddish letter to Harold Rogg, Zach reported that "in my first seven weeks here, I wrote 12 articles for the Yiddish press." He also indicated that he had started night school in college.

In those letters, Zach wrote, "It is a sin to come to the United States and become a pessimist." That summarized the natural optimism which characterized Zach's life, despite the sufferings, stresses, and difficulties that fell his way. Like his namesake, the Prophet Zachariah, he repeatedly affirmed "hope and joyful expectation" for himself and for others.

Zach Shuster left Lithuania, but Lithuania never left Zach. A remorselessly keen observer of the events of Jewish life in "der alter heim" as well as in the United States, Zach became active in helping the Jewish Lithuanian Relief Fund which provided food, clothing, medicines, and financial aid to impoverished and needy Lithuanian Jews. He also used his prolific writing to bring their plight to the attention of his readers.

Among the publications for which he wrote were the Yiddish Zukunft, the Hebrew Hadoar, The Nation, Commentary, The Menorah Journal and the Contemporary Jewish Record.

III - AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE PERIOD -- 1938-1985

Zach Shuster began his lengthy and distinguished career with the AJC in 1938 as a Yiddish-language publicist and translator of the Yiddish press into English.

In 1948, Dr. John Slawson, then AJC executive vice-president, sent Zach to Paris to establish AJC's European office. It was during this tumultuous period that Zach -- and through him, the AJC -- demonstrated their true genius and unique style of service to world Jewry. Thousands of destitute and despairing Jewish D.P.s (displaced persons) and refugees -- survivors of the Nazi holocaust -- wandered over the face of Europe seeking to pick up the threads of their lives.

Zach Shuster, as AJC's Ambassador-at-large, interviewed thousands of the hapless Jewish survivors. With cartons of dossiers in hand, Zach played a major role in securing restitution and indemnification from the

West German government. Those large sums of "wiedergutmachung" helped thousands of Jews rebuild their personal lives, as well as to reestablish Jewish communities throughout Europe.

Zach served as advisor and confidant to Jacob Blaustein, AJC's towering president, who together with Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, created the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. The Conference was responsible for negotiating the allocation of several hundred million dollars in restitution funds to the Jewish victims of Nazi barbarism.

In addition, Zach and AJC established the first "Community Services" project that provided urgently-needed religious, educational, cultural, and community organization resources and supplies to practically every needy Jewish community in Western and Eastern Europe.

To help the culturally depleted European Jews begin their intellectual reconstruction, Zach Shuster organized the publication of a quarterly magazine on Jewish subjects in the French language. It was called Evidences. According to Abraham Karlikow, Zach's associate and later successor in the 1950s, "Evidences was the first French Jewish intellectual journal on the Continent, and it is still unequalled."

In the mid-1950s, Zach Shuster's concerns and activities shifted to the Jewish communities of North Africa. With decolonization and the rise of independent Arab countries in the Maghreb, AJC became deeply anxious over the security of the Jewish minorities in these Arab-Muslim countries. As AJC's roving ambassador, Zach Shuster, began intensive negotiations with the governments of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya over two issues:

- a) Assuring legal equality of citizenship for Jews in North Africa; and
- b) Granting the right to leave for those Jews who wished to do so.

To reinforce the validity of AJC's claims, Zach invited Prof. Andre Chouragui, formerly of Morocco, to prepare a scholarly study on "The Legal Status of Jews in Morocco." That became a model for all of AJC's work in behalf of North African Jewry.

While Zach was reluctant to acknowledge it, I was informed by others that he played a key role in cooperation with the JDC in helping save practically the entire Jewish community of Egypt after the 1967 Middle East conflict.

During the Polish crisis in the 1960s, when Politburo members were cynically exploiting anti-Semitism for internal political purposes, Zach Shuster went to Warsaw on a number of missions. Since Polish was his native tongue, he was able to make effective interventions for AJC

demanding an end to the fanning of anti-Semitic hatred. He carried out similar missions to each of the other countries in the Communist bloc.

Fluent also in German, Zach traveled frequently to West Germany to advocate AJC's views regarding the necessity for an active de-Nazification program. He also organized a series of major fact-finding studies on "The Neo-Nazi International," using data gathered from AJC correspondents all over Europe -- including Simon Wiesenthal.

Earlier, in 1945, Zach accompanied Jacob Blaustein and Judge Proskauer as an advisor to the AJC delegation that participated in the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco. He played an important role in the deliberations that led to the drafting of the UN Charter on Human Rights, as well as in the efforts to achieve official status for the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) within the United Nations Charter.

IV - VATICAN COUNCIL II -- 1960-65

Zach entered my life in early 1960 when I joined the staff of AJC. Our first and most significant collaboration centered on AJC's historic role in relating to Vatican Council II. In 1960, Pope John XXIII announced his plans to convene the Ecumenical Council in 1962. Dr. Slawson set up a working team that included David Danzig, Simon Segal, Zach and myself. From the beginning of 1960, we talked with Zach by overseas telephone literally every week and worked out a joint strategy on how to be most effective in responding to the historic opportunities of the Council for combatting anti-Semitism and for advancing improved relations between Catholics and Jews throughout the world.

Two years before the Council opened, Zach was urged by us to go to Rome several times to establish contact between Prof. Jules Isaac, the French historian, and Pope John XXIII, as well as with Augustin Cardinal Bea, who was charged with responsibility for drafting the "Jewish schema." (AJC has issued several documents, and I have published a paper detailing the long and complex story of AJC's and Zach's remarkable role in helping achieve the passage of Nostra Aetate.)

I simply want to record here several dominant images that establish the unique and critical role that Zach played in this watershed activity in the Vatican in behalf of AJC.

Beginning in 1957, Zach arranged the first audience that any Jewish group had with Pope Paul VI at Vatican City. The AJC delegation, headed by Morris Abram, raised forcefully the issue of Christian responsibility for anti-Semitism in Europe that culminated in the Nazi holocaust.

By 1962, Zach had developed a warm, intimate and trusting relationship with Cardinal Bea, the architect of Nostra Aetate. I experienced first-hand the significance of that trusting friendship when, in 1964, Cardinal Bea called in Zach and myself to discuss the massive problems

he was facing in having the Vatican text on Catholic-Jewish relations adopted.

The Arab Christian prelates from the Middle East, the archconservative Cardinal Ottaviani, 14 ambassadors from Muslim countries had all conspired to suppress the text permanently by burying it in the Theological Commission. In a spirit of confidence, Cardinal Bea asked -- pleaded, would be more accurate -- for our help in breaking the story of the proposed suppression of the Jewish text out into the open.

Zach and I contacted our friend, Milton Bracker, Rome bureau chief of the New York Times, and told him what was going on. In two days, the story of the Arab-ultra-conservative conspiracy to sabotage the Jewish text appeared on the front page of the New York Times. That story changed the entire atmosphere in Rome, with the American hierarchy using that story to pressure for the restoring of the text to Cardinal Bea's jurisdiction. I am persuaded that that AJC intervention saved the text, and ultimately helped change the course of Catholic-Jewish relations during the past 20 years. At the core of that achievement was the trust that Cardinal Bea invested in Zach Shuster...and AJC.

One more memory of Zach in Rome. As many of you know, Zach was a linguist. He was fluent in Polish, French, German, Italian, Yiddish, Hebrew and English, with a nodding acquaintance with Russian. One of my clearest and most delicious memories of Zach was that of seeing him sitting in the lobby of the Mediterraneo Hotel on the Via Cavour in Rome every morning about 6:30 a.m. He began each day during Vatican Council II by reading six or seven newspapers -- in Italian, French, Polish, German and English. By the time he finished reading the columnists, editorials, and news coverage of what was going on at the Vatican Council he knew more about what was happening in and around the Council than almost anyone else in Rome.

Each morning at breakfast time and often again, late in the evening, Bishops and Periti (theological experts) from many parts of the world whom we had come to know as friends, would wander into the Mediterraneo Hotel lobby and discuss with Zach and myself what was going on at the Council. Over and over again they would marvel that Zach seemed to know more about the intricacies of the Council than they did.

Zach Shuster was the secret weapon not only of AJC, but of world Jewry, at Vatican Council II. Through his knowledge of Judaism and Christian theology, his linguistic skills, his boyish charm, his irrepressible wit; his gifts as raconteur, he made friends and had developed contacts in every key center in the Vatican that was to play a role leading to the adoption of Nostra Aetate, as well as the Vatican Declarations on Religious Liberty, and the Church and the Modern World.

As I told him often in our many collegial talks over the past twenty-five years, Zach Shuster was my part-brother, part-father, and above all, he was my brilliant mentor from whom I learned more about the

Vatican and Christian-Jewish relations than I did from all my university and seminary professors. Whatever I may have contributed to the advancement of Jewish-Christian relations during the past quarter century, I owe in large measure to his inspiration, knowledge and wisdom.

Parallel to our close cooperation during the Vatican Council was an entire world we worked on together in seeking to sort out German-Jewish relations. Together with John Slawson, Zach pioneered in helping organize the first German educators exchange program that has been exceedingly influential in introducing the teaching about democracy in the German school systems.

Together, we inaugurated a program with the University of Duisburg that has resulted in the publication of a dozen new textbooks on Jews, Judaism, anti-Semitism, the Nazi holocaust, and Israel in the German school systems. At the Arnoldshain Academy, we co-sponsored several teacher training seminars for German textbook writers, school superintendents, and editors.

Zach was pivotal in our Jewish-Christian programs with the French Conference of Catholic Bishops which produced very positive guidelines on Catholic-Jewish relations. He helped establish the Amistad, the Jewish-Christian Friendship Society, in Spain. He was our "anchor man" in establishing the Sperry Center on Intergroup Relations at Pro Deo University in Rome. That Center, under Zach's influence, produced the first major social-psychological studies of Italian, Spanish, and French-language textbooks used in Catholic schools throughout the Continent. He also played a role in the Louvain University (Belgium) studies of the image of Jews and Judaism in French-language catechetical works.

And of transcendent scholarly importance was the role that Zach played in helping organize the monumental and landmark Amsterdam academic studies of "The Jewish People in the First Century," which featured a galaxy of Christian and Jewish scholars from Europe, Israel, and the United States.

In sum, it is impossible to consider any significant development in Jewish-Christian relations anywhere in Europe without finding that one way or another this movement traces back to Zach Shuster. Like the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, his monuments are all around us.

The career of Zach Shuster coincided with the period of glory of the American Jewish Committee. From the 1940s through the 1980s, AJC helped shape history -- Jewish history and universal history -- and more often than not, Zach Shuster sat at the tiller and guided the rudder of that history.

We are assembled to say a loving farewell to our cherished colleague and friend. We are here to tell him and his family, -- Daniel, Nancy, Wendy, Laurel, Mark, and Douglas -- that we do not take his life and magnificent achievements for granted, for Jewish tradition teaches us that gratitude, not taking another person for granted, is the truest mark of our humanity.

AJC made tangible its profound appreciation of Zach as colleague and cherished friend when Bert Gold, to his everlasting credit, kept Zach active as consultant when he retired in 1971. Bringing Zach to New York in the late 1970s as a full-time staff member of our International Relations Department, I am persuaded, added 10-12 years to his life. He was received and doted over with love and caring by Selma Hirsh, Bill Trosten, Rita Reznik, and all our professional colleagues, and Zach knew every day that his adopted AJC family really loved him.

We are crushed by the loss of Zach, and yet somehow we will find consolation in the abundant, unending wonderful memories of his great life and achievements that are his real immortality.

The Midrash teaches us that "every deed well done gives birth to an angel who watches over the doer of the deed." And, it adds, that Isaiah's angels had one voice to speak with, but six wings to fly and act. Isaiah did six times as much as he said.

Zach was often lonely, but he was never alone. He created a world of great and good deeds. His mitzvot hover over him, care for him, protect him, wherever he is now and wherever he may be going.

T'heh nishmato t'zura b'zror ha-chayim -- May the great soul of our beloved Zach be bound up with the bond of immortal life, forever. Amen.

Earlier, in 1945, Zach accompanied Jacob Blaustein and Judge Joseph Proskauer as an adviser to the AJC delegation that participated in the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco. He played an important role in the deliberations that led to the drafting of the UN ~~xxxx~~ Charter on Human Rights, as well as in the efforts to achieve official status for the Nongovernmental Organizations within the United Nations Charter.

VATICAN COUNCIL II - 1960-1965

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Two years before the Council opened, Zach was urged by us to go to Rome several times to establish contact between Prof. Jules Isaac, the French historian, and Pope John XXIII, as well as with Augustin Cardinal Bea, who was charged with responsibility for drafting the "Jewish schema." ^{issued} AJC has ~~published~~ several documents, and I have published a paper detailing the long and complex story of AJC's and Zach's remarkable role in helping achieve the passage of Nostra Aetate.

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One more memory of Zach in Rome. As many of you know, Zach was a linguist. He was fluent in Polish, French, German, Italian, Yiddish, Hebrew, and English, with a nodding acquaintance with Russian. One of my clearest and most delicious memories of Zach was that of seeing him sitting in the lobby of the Mediterraneo Hotel on the Via Cavour in Rome every morning about 6:30 a.m. He began each day during Vatican Council II by reading six or seven newspapers - in Italian, French, Polish, German, and English. By the time he finished reading the columnists, editorials, and newscoverage of what was going on at the Vatican Council, he knew more about what was happening in and around the Council than almost anyone else in Rome.

Each morning at breakfast time, and often again, late in the evening, Bishops and Periti (theological experts) from many parts of the world whom we had come to know as friends would wander into the Mediterraneo Hotel lobby and discuss with Zach and myself what was going on at the Council. Over and over again they would marvel that Zach seemed to know more about the intricacies of the Council than they did.

Zach Shuster was the secret weapon not only of AJC, but of world Jewry, ^{at} ~~xxx~~ Vatican Council II. Through his knowledge of Judaism and Christian theology, his linguistic skills, his boyish charm, his irrepressible wit, his gifts as raconteur, he made friends and had developed contacts in every key center in the Vatican that was to

play a role in leading to the adoption of Nostra Aetate, as well as the Vatican Declarations on Religious Liberty, and the Church and the Modern World.

As I told him often in our many brotherly talks over the past twenty-five years, Zach Shuster was my part-brother, part-father, and above all, he was my brilliant mentor from whom I learned more about the Vatican and Christian-Jewish relations than I did from all my university and seminary professors. Whatever I may have contributed to the advancement of Jewish-Christian relations during the past quarter century, I owe in large measure to his inspiration, knowledge and wisdom.

Parallel to our close cooperation during the Vatican Council was an entire world we worked on together in seeking to sort out German-Jewish relations. Together with John Slawson, Zach pioneered in helping organize the first German educators exchange program that has been exceedingly influential in introducing the teaching about democracy in the German school systems.

Together, we inaugurated a program with the University of Duisberg that has resulted in the publication of a dozen new textbooks on Jews, Judaism, anti-Semitism, the Nazi holocaust, and Israel in the German school systems. At the Arnoldsheim Academy, we co-sponsored several teacher training seminars for German teachers, textbook writers, school superintendents, and editors.

Zach was pivotal in our Jewish-Christian programs with the French Conference of Catholic Bishops which produced very positive guidelines on Catholic-Jewish relations. He helped establish the Amistad, the Jewish-Christian Friendship Society, in Spain. He was our anchor man in establishing the Sperry Center on Intergroup Relations

at Pro Deo University in Rome. That Center, under Zach's influence, produced the first major social psychological studies of Italian, Spanish, and French-language textbooks used in Catholic schools throughout the Continent. He also played a role in the Louvain University (Belgium) studies of the image of Jews and Judaism in French-language catechetical works.

And of transcendent scholarly importance, was the role that Zach played in helping organize the monumental and landmark scholarly studies of "The Jewish People in the First Century," which featured a galaxy of Christian and Jewish scholars from Europe, Israel, and the United States.

In sum, it is impossible to consider any significant development in Jewish-Christian relations anywhere in Europe without finding that one way or another this movement traces back to Zach Shuster. Like the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, his monuments are all around us.

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The career of Zach Shuster coincided with the ~~primex~~ period of glory of the American Jewish Committee. From the 1940s through the 1980s, AJC helped shape history - Jewish history and ^{universal} ~~human~~/history - and more often than not, Zach Shuster sat at the tiller and guided the rudder of that history.

We are assembled to say a loving farewell to our cherished colleague and friend. We are here to tell him/that we do not take his life and his magnificent achievements for granted, for Jewish tradition teaches us that gratitude, not taking another person for granted, is the truest mark of our humanity.

We are crushed by the loss of Zach, and yet somehow we

will find consolation in the abundant, unending wonderful memories of his great life and achievements that are his real immortality.

The Midrash teaches us that "every deed well done gives birth to an angel who watches over the doer of the deed." And, it adds, that Isaiah's angels had one voice to speak with, but six wings to fly and act. Isaiah did six times as much as he said.

Zach was often lonely, but he was never alone. He created a world of great and good deeds, His mitzvot hover over him, care for him, protect him, wherever he is now and wherever he may be going.

T'heh nishmato t'zura b'tzror ha-chayim - ~~Myx~~ May the great soul of our beloved Zach be bound up with the bond of immortal life, forever. Amen.