



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 48, Folder 2, Vatican - Islam, 1976.

# *International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations*

432 Park Avenue South / New York, N.Y. 10016 / Tel. (212) 686-8670

1 Rue de Varerbe / 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland / Tel. (022) 34 13 25

FEB 18 1976

Constituent Agencies: —

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

B'nai B'rith/ADL

Israel Council for Interreligious Contacts

February 11, 1976

His Eminence, John Cardinal Willebrands  
President  
Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews  
Secretariat ad Christianorum Unitatem Fovendam  
The Vatican  
Rome

Your Eminence:

As you must be aware, we were deeply distressed by aspects of the joint declaration adopted in Tripoli by the Vatican Secretariat on Non-Christian Religions and Islamic Leaders. We therefore welcome the clarification issued today by the Holy See which rejected the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish statements of the joint declaration as not being in accord with the basic positions of the Vatican. However, we believe that the action taken in Tripoli is of such a serious nature that it should be placed on the agenda of our forthcoming meeting in Jerusalem.

May we also take this occasion to thank you for your letter of January 28, 1976. At your request, its contents were shared with the members of IJIC.

Our very best wishes go to you.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein  
Chairman

On behalf of:

Dr. Gerhart M. Riegner, World Jewish Congress, Geneva  
Rabbi Henry Siegman, Synagogue Council of America  
Dr. Bertram Gold, American Jewish Committee  
Dr. Benjamin R. Epstein, B'nai-Brith/Anti-Defamation League  
Professor Shmaryahu Talmon, Israel Council for Interreligious Contacts

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

MIRIAM CANTOR  
(212) 686-8670

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS EXPRESSES  
CONCERN OVER JOINT STATEMENT BY VATICAN-ISLAMIC LEADERS

The International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations has expressed deep concern over aspects of a joint declaration adopted and made public in Tripoli, Libya by the Vatican Secretariat on Non-Christian Religions and Islamic leaders after a meeting held there from February 3 - 6.

(more)

IJCIC is the coalition of major national and international Jewish organizations whose primary concern is representing Jewish interests and developing inter-religious relationships.

"In particular," said a spokesman for the Committee, "we are offended by those aspects of the joint declaration which defame Judaism, falsify the nature of Zionism and which proclaim political objectives that can only inhibit the prospect of peace in the Middle East.

"For this reason," said the Committee spokesman, "we welcome the clarification issued on February 11 in Rome's L'Osservatore Romano by the Holy See, which rejected the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish statements of the Libya declaration as not being in accord with basic Vatican positions. This constitutes a repudiation of the Libyan declaration by the highest authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

"However," said the Committee spokesman, "the fact that such an offensive action in Tripoli could have taken place at all has such serious consequences that we have requested that the matter be placed on the agenda of our upcoming meeting with representatives of the Vatican."

The statement was signed by:

Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein, chairman, IJCIC; Dr. Gerhard Riegner, secretary general, World Jewish Congress, Geneva; Rabbi Henry Siegman, executive vice president, Synagogue Council of America; Bertram Gold, executive vice president, American Jewish Committee; Dr. Benjamin R. Epstein, national director, B'nai B'rith/Anti-Defamation League; Prof. Shemaryahu Talmon, chairman, Israel Council for Interreligious Contacts.

TO: AJC Area Directors and CRCs

FROM: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

DATE: February 18, 1976

RE: VATICAN-ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN LIBYA, FEBRUARY 1-5

This office has received a number of inquiries during the past week asking for clarification as to what happened at the Vatican-Islamic meeting in Libya from Feb. 1 through 5, and its possible implications for Vatican-Jewish-Israeli relations. The following report is based on conversations with the AJC Paris office, with sources in Rome, and especially on detailed conversations I had with Catholic representatives who attended the Libyan meeting.

The five-day seminar on Islamic-Christian relations was co-sponsored by the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians and the Libyan Arab Republic. The conference was held in the large modern 800-seat "Liberation Theater" building in Tripoli, that is fully equipped for simultaneous translations in Arabic, French and English, with radio and TV transmission facilities. Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Libyan president, paid all the travel expenses for the Catholic and other Christian participants. The official delegations consisted of 14 Vatican and 16 Muslim representatives from 10 countries. There were, however, some 300 observers and 120 mass media people present from some 43 countries with Muslim populations. One informant told me that Qaddafi spent "well over a million dollars" for this meeting. Cardinal Serge Pignedoli, president of the Vatican secretariat, in his opening remarks praised "the generous hospitality" of the Libyan Arab Republic.

The announced purpose of the seminar--described by Father Thomas C. Donlan, O.P., as "the first time since before the Crusades (that) official delegations of the Islamic and Christian faiths have met"--was to increase understanding and collaboration between Christians and Moslems, an altogether laudable objective. In an Islamic newsletter dated as early as January 2, 1976, the editor, Muhammad Tahir, announced that the "Islamic agenda" for the seminar was the following:

"The dialogue is certain to center around Colonel Qaddafi's Third International Theory which calls for the unity of God-fearing men and women to struggle together to overcome some of the common enemies of Capitalism, Communism, Zionism, Racism, and materialism."

Since this was originally intended as a pan-Christian and pan-Islamic conference, the Vatican Secretariat invited representatives of the World Council of Churches, the Copts and the Eastern Orthodox. The World Council and the Copts declined, reportedly indicating unhappiness that Libya was

February 18, 1976

subsidizing the meeting. But the Orthodox patriarchate of Damascus accepted, and, at the last minute, the Moscow Orthodox patriarchate also agreed to attend.

Four themes composed the seminar agenda: 1) Whether religion can be effective in guiding men's lives today; 2) Whether religion must concern itself with social justice; 3) What common bases are shared by Islam and Christianity; and 4) What antagonistic prejudices exist among adherents of the two faiths and what steps can be taken to overcome them?

My informants tell me that the Vatican officials insisted prior to the conference that there would be no political discussions, especially with regard to the Middle East, since these were outside the competence of this secretariat. Apparently the Muslim officials agreed to these ground rules. At each morning session (from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) a Christian and a Muslim scholar presented papers on each of the themes listed above. At the evening sessions, from 5 to 9 p.m., discussion was held based on the morning presentations.

The Vatican spokesmen, both in their papers and in the discussions, avoided all political issues, and spoke generally in a spirit of good-will typified by Cardinal Pignedoli's remarks: "We begin our dialogue in a spirit of fraternity. Not to affront each other, not to judge each other reciprocally and not to minimize our respective faiths. We begin with full respect and with full love one for the other." Muslim speakers also began with expressions of good-will, but regularly interspersed their remarks with strong attacks on Zionism, the Crusades, Christian missionaries, Western civilization and imperialism.

The one-sided Muslim attack on Christian imperialism had some effect. On the final day of the seminar, a White Father missionary from Tunisia, French Father Jacques Lanfri, invited the Christians in the audience to condemn Christian "errors of the past," and to rid themselves of "present prejudices and misunderstandings" in relation to the religion of Islam. Turning to the Islamic delegation, the priest pleaded for "forgiveness" of his "Muslim brothers" for "misunderstandings, injustices, and erroneous criticisms" on the part of Christians towards "the Prophet Mohammed and his followers." Suddenly, two Imams (senior Muslim religious leaders) got up from their places in the front row, went up to Father Lanfri and warmly embraced him. The entire assembly burst into applause. There was no comparable Muslim "confiteor" for persecutions or massacres of Christians (not to speak of Jews) in the past or present (i.e., Sudan, Uganda, Lebanon, etc.).

Later that morning, a Muslim participant suggested that a mixed Islamic-Christian commission be created and dispatched as a messenger of peace to such places as Lebanon, the Philippines, and Northern Ireland. Msgr. Pietro Rossano, secretary of the Vatican Secretariat, turned down the proposal saying that intervention in such areas was best left to United Nations agencies.

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While all this was going on, a joint committee consisting of four Vatican representatives and four Muslims were meeting to draft a communique for the conference. The Christian members were an Arab who is the chief officer for Islam of the Vatican Secretariat, Melkite Catholic Archimandrite Francis Abou-Mokh; and three Arabic-speaking Western Christians: Father Ary Roest Crolius, a Jesuit professor of Islamic Studies at the Gregorian University in Rome and a secretariat consultor; Father Maurice Borrmans and Jacques Lanfry.

According to my informants, a decision was made to split the drafting committee into four pairs--one Christian and one Muslim--each pair being assigned to evaluate a separate section of the 24-point text that was prepared by the Muslim drafting group. As it turned out, the Christian drafters saw only the section they worked on, and signed that section. Only Archimandrite Abou-Mokh initialed each page of the entire document that was presented to the conference as "the final declaration". Abou-Mokh, not incidentally, told my informant that he personally supported the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist positions in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the text, but that he also realized that his was not an official Vatican approval. (A good constructive influence to have as an official member of a Vatican Secretariat!)

The full text of the declaration is attached. Articles 20 and 21 read as follows:

Recommendation number 20 (also called a resolution, although it was not subject to any vote on the part of the Vatican delegation) reads as follows:

"The two sides look upon the heavenly religions with respect and accordingly they distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, the latter being a racial aggressive movement, foreign to Palestine and the Middle Eastern region."

Recommendation (resolution) number 21 --also not subject to any Vatican delegation vote -- says: "Adherence to truth, justice, and peace, and belief in the rights of peoples for self-determination prompt the two sides to affirm the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to return to their homeland, and to affirm the Arabism of the city of Jerusalem and the rejection of (its) Judaization, partition, and internationalization."

"(The two sides) denounce all violation of all sacred places. (They) demand the setting free of all detainees in occupied Palestine... and ask for the liberation of all (Israeli) occupied lands, and call for the formation of a permanent commission to investigate the alteration of sacred Muslim and Christian sites and reveal this to world public opinion."

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The final declaration was presented to the conference by a Muslim delegate at the closing session on Friday afternoon. Neither Cardinal Pignedoli, nor Msgr. Rossano, nor other members of the Vatican delegation who were not involved in its preparation were given the courtesy of seeing the text in advance of its introduction, nor were they aware that it contained the anti-Israel paragraphs. In fact, Cardinal Pignedoli at this point was taken conveniently to the palace of Colonel Qaddafi for a very lengthy private audience.

When Msgr. Rossano finally got a Spanish translation of the Arabic text, he said, "It is a mistake, a mistake!" Father Boormans, who authored two good papers for the conference, said he was "crushed," called it "the blackest day of my life. Everybody lost, only Qaddafi won." Interestingly, Dr. Ezhaddin Ibrahim, Minister of Cultural Affairs of the United Arab Emirates and a member of the Muslim delegation, said privately that, "if an objection had been made during the drafting, the Muslim group was prepared to withdraw articles 20 and 21."

The next day, on arriving in Rome, Cardinal Pignedoli issued a statement at a press conference and over Vatican Radio in which he "disassociated" himself "not only as a Vatican representative, but as a Christian," from the position taken in the two paragraphs "by our Muslim brothers". the cardinal added that "the contents" of the paragraphs were to be transmitted to "the authorities of the Holy See (Secretariat of State) who alone have competence in this matter," since "political elements" enter into it.

Reporting on this event, the Vatican City newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, quoted Cardinal Pignedoli as saying that he could not sign the document that contains points "beyond my jurisdiction". The prelate was then quoted as saying that the statements on Zionism, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem remained solely "the expression of the Muslim delegation."

On the following Tuesday, representatives of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) made a formal demarche to the Vatican Secretariat of State and asked for a clarification on the highest levels. They indicated that such repudiation of the document was necessary before the March 1 meeting between the Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with Judaism and IJCIC could take place in Jerusalem.

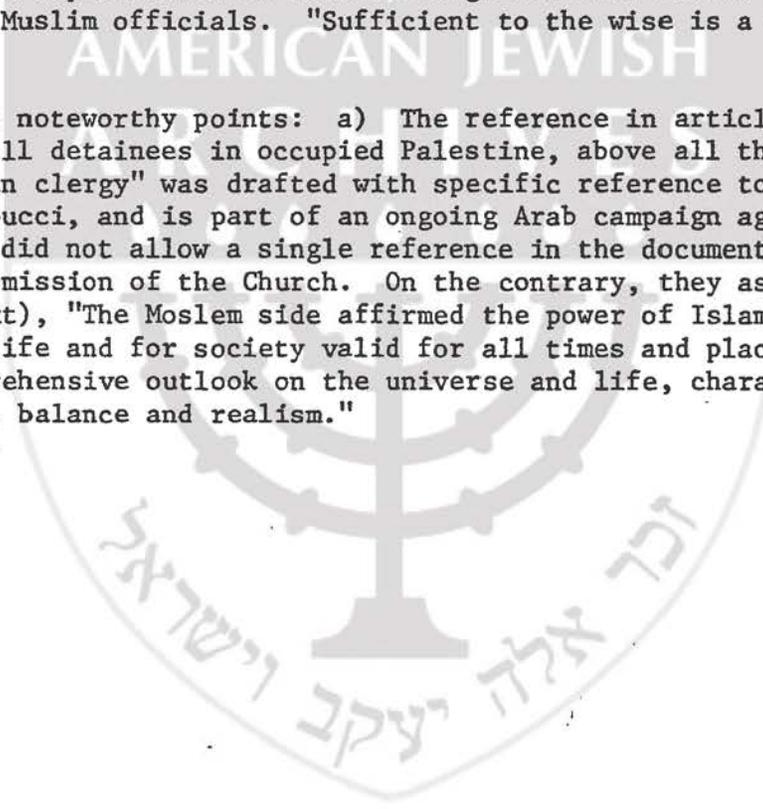
The next day, Archbishop Giovanni Benelli, Deputy Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat of State (and one of its most influential and authoritative spokesmen) issued a statement that was published on the front page of L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican authority stated that paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Tripoli declaration had been examined by "competent Vatican authorities." He added, "The Holy See declares that it cannot accept these two articles because their content does not correspond in essential points to the position, known to all, of the Holy See."

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That clarifying statement was telephoned to a New York meeting of IJCIC representatives that Bert Gold and I attended, and all the Jewish groups present agreed that the clarification was adequate and acceptable and that plans for the March 1 meeting in Jerusalem should proceed. We agreed, however, that the entire Libyan episode must be placed on the agenda of the Jerusalem meeting for a full airing, with a view toward trying to assure that such anti-Israel entrapments are not allowed to happen again.

It should be made clear that while Vatican spokesmen indicated they were "mortified" by this event, they were trying to prevent the incident from compromising what they regard as "the basically positive achievements at the religious level with Islam" of the Libyan seminar. Undoubtedly, there will be other Vatican-Islamic "dialogues" and there will be inevitable attempts to repeat the exploitation of such meetings for anti-Israel and anti-Jewish purposes by Muslim officials. "Sufficient to the wise is a wink," says the Talmud.

Two noteworthy points: a) The reference in article 21 to "the liberation of all detainees in occupied Palestine, above all the Moslem Ulema and the Christian clergy" was drafted with specific reference to the release of Cardinal Capucci, and is part of an ongoing Arab campaign against Israel; b) The Muslims did not allow a single reference in the document to evangelization or the mission of the Church. On the contrary, they asserted (p. 28, in the full text), "The Moslem side affirmed the power of Islam to establish a system for life and for society valid for all times and places, springing from a comprehensive outlook on the universe and life, characterized by originality, balance and realism."



ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

OF B'NAI B'RITH

315 Lexington Avenue  
New York, N. Y. 10016

MEMORANDUM

**To:** Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Bertram Gold, Rabbi Israel Klaven, Morris Laub  
Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein, Rabbi Henry Siegman, Mark Tanenbaum

**From:** Rabbi Leon Klenicki

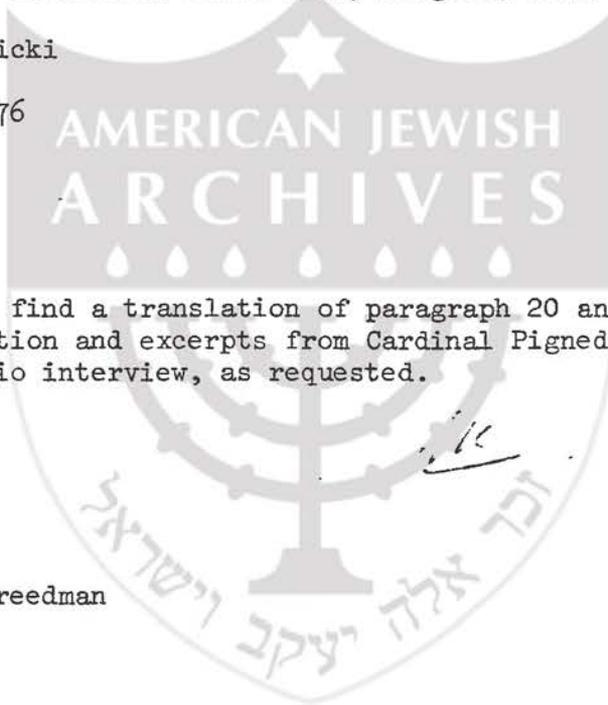
**Date:** February 11, 1976

**Subject:**

Enclosed please find a translation of paragraph 20 and 21 of the Tripoli Declaration and excerpts from Cardinal Pignedoli's press release and radio interview, as requested.

LK:am  
Enclosures

cc: Theodore Freedman



Translation - Paragraph 20

The two delegations respect all celestial religions, therefore, they distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, inasmuch as Zionism is a racist movement, hostile and foreign to Palestine and to all the Middle East.

Paragraph 21

The obligation to respect the righteousness, justice and the desire for peace, the faith and the self-determination of the people, imply on the two sides a confirmation of the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to return to their country, the confirmation of the Arab character of Jerusalem and the rejection of the plans to Judaize Jerusalem, the partition and internationalization, and the condemnation of any violation concerning the Holy Places.

The two sides request the deliverance of all those jailed in the occupied territory of Palestine, and primarily, of the Muslim priests and the people of the Christian faith. (This is a reference to Bishop Cappuchi, L.K.) They also request the liberation of all occupied lands.

We request the formation of a permanent commission that will check the attempts to modify the status of the Holy Places, Islamic and Christian, and to denounce them before international public opinion.

Document #1 - An excerpt from a release after the press conference given by Cardinal Pignedoli.

"The Cardinal noticed immediately that a mistake was made since paragraphs #20 and #21 were unacceptable particularly in their anti-Zionist and Palestinian contents; also especially because the conference in Tripoli was limited to a religious dialogue and should not have touched upon international politics and the relations with the Jews since, specified the Cardinal, these relations belong to other Departments of the Holy See.

"The document will be signed by the Vatican, added Cardinal Pignedoli, 'only if the two unacceptable passages are deleted.' He added that he will also suggest some modification of other minor points in the document."

Document #2 - An excerpt from a radio interview given by Cardinal Pignedoli (February 7).

"Since the details of this subject (paragraphs #20 and #21) were not free from political elements regarding Palestine and the Palestinians and so-called Zionism, it naturally became my responsibility to disassociate myself from the position of our Moslem brothers not only as a representative of the Vatican but also as a Christian, and in agreement with the Moslem brothers we decided to issue the following statement (given to Rabbi Klenicki yesterday, February 9)."

MEMORANDUM

TO: ADC FIELD OFFICES, JCRCs

in his opening remarks praised "the generous hospitality" of the Libyan Arab Republic.

FROM: RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

DATE: Feb. , 1976

RE: VATICAN-ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN LIBYA, FEB. 1-5

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120  
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The announced purpose of the seminar - described by Father Thomas C. Donlan, O. P., as "the first ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ time since before the Crusades (that) official delegations of the Islamic and Christian faiths have met" - was to increase understanding and collaboration between Christians and Moslems, an altogether laudable objective. In an Islamic newsletter dated as early as January 2, 1976, the editor, Muhammad Tahir, announced that the "Islamic agenda" for the seminar was the following:

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The one-sided Muslim attack on Christian imperialism had some effect. On the final day of the seminar, a White Father missionary from Tunisia, French Father Jacques Lanfri, invited the Christians in the audience to condemn Christian "errors of the past," and to rid themselves of "present prejudices and misunderstandings" in relation to the religion of Islam. Turning to the Islamic delegation, the priest pleaded for "forgiveness" of his "Muslim brothers" for "misunderstandings, injustices, and erroneous criticisms" on the part of ~~xxx~~ Christians towards "the Prophet Mohammed and his followers." Suddenly, two Imams (senior Muslim religious leaders) suddenly got up from their places in the front row, went up to Father Lanfri and warmly embraced him. The entire assembly burst into applause. There was no comparable Muslim "confiteor" for persecutions or massacres of Christians (not to speak of Jews) in the past

or present (i.e., Sudan, Uganda, Lebanon, etc.).

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~~ENTIRE~~ entire document that was presented to the conference as "the final declaration". Abou-Mokh, not incidentally, told my informant that he personally supported the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist positions in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the text, but that he also realized that his was not an official Vatican approval. (A good influence to have as an official member of a Vatican Secretariat!)

The full text of the declaration is attached, including articles 20 and 21.

The final declaration was presented to the conference by a Muslim delegate at the closing session on Friday afternoon. Neither Cardinal Pignedoli, nor Msgr. Rossano, nor other members of the Vatican delegation who were not involved in its preparation were given the courtesy of seeing the text in advance of its introduction, nor were they aware that it contained the anti-Israel paragraphs. In fact, Cardinal Pignedoli at this point was taken to the palace of Colonel Qaddafi for a very lengthy private audience.

When Msgr. Rossano finally got a Spanish translation of the Arabic text, he said, "it is a mistake, a mistake!" Father Boormans, who authored two good papers for the conference, said he was "crushed," called it "the blackest day of my life. Everybody lost, only Qaddafi won." Interestingly, Dr. Ezhaddin Ibrahim, Minister of Cultural Affairs of the United Arab Emirates and a member of the Muslim delegation, said privately that "if an objection had been made during the drafting, the Muslim group was prepared to withdraw articles 20 and 21."

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Reporting on this event, the Vatican City newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, quoted Cardinal Pignedoli as saying that he could not sign the document that contains points "beyond my jurisdiction". The prelate was then quoted as saying that the statements on Zionism, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem remained solely "the expression of the Muslim delegation."

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The next day, Archbishop Giovanni Benelli, Deputy Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat of State (and one of its most influential and authoritative spokesmen) issued a statement asserting

THAT paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Triopli declaration had been examined by "competent Vatican authorities." He added, "The Holy See declares that it cannot accept these two articles because their content does not respond substantially to the position, known to all, of the Holy See."

That clarifying statement was telephoned to a New York meeting of IJCIC representatives that Bert Gold and I attended, and all the Jewish ~~xxx~~ groups present agreed that the clarification was adequate and acceptable and that plans for the March 1 meeting in Jerusalem should proceed. We agreed, however, that the entire Libyan episode must be placed on the agenda of the Jerusalem meeting for a full airing, with a view toward trying to assure that such anti-Israel entrapments are not allowed to happen ~~xxx~~ again.

It should be made clear that while Vatican spokesmen indicated they were "mortified" by this event, they were trying to prevent the incident from compromising what they regard as "the basically positive achievements at the religious level with Islam" of the Libyan seminar. Undoubtedly, there will be other Vatican-Islamic "dialogues" and there will be inevitable attempts to repeat the exploitation of such meetings for anti-Israel and anti-Jewish purposes by Muslim officials. "Sufficient to the wise is a wink," says the Talmud.

Recommendation number 20 (also called a resolution, although it was not subject to any vote on the part of the Vatican delegation) reads as follows:

Recommendation (resolution) number 21 says:

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE.  
EUROPEAN OFFICE  
30, rue la Boétie, Paris VIII  
ELYsées 69-11

February 10, 1976.

Marc Tannenbaum  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East 56th Street  
New York . N.Y. 10022

Dear Marc:

I am sending you herewith the full text of the declaration adopted at the Islamic-Christian conference that was held in Tripoli a few days ago and which is now the subject of great consternation not only on the Jewish side but also on the part of many liberal elements within the Catholic church.

Sincerely yours,



Zachariah Shuster

P.S.: You might want to share this document with Bertram Gold and others in our organization interested in this matter.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE ALL-MERCIFUL  
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE

Under the motto: " Invite all to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching " (Koran) .

And:

" Let us search for what supports peace and brother-hood " .

In an atmosphere of confidence and optimism and bearing the mutual responsibility towards the future of man, who is threatened by real danger; the Seminar of the Islamic-Christian Dialogue has been held in the city of Tripoli in the Libyan Arab Republic during the period 1 - 6 Safar, 1396, A.H., corresponding to 1 - 6 February, 1976, A.D., by an invitation extended by the Libyan Arab Republic and the Vatican. A number of Muslim and Christian thinkers from most of the countries of the world participated. Moreover, observers from among the Muslim U'lemas and the Christian clergy of the Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Protestant Churches attended the Seminar together with thinkers, politicians, pressmen and men of information media who came from more than sixty countries of the world.

The aim of holding this seminar was the creation of a new atmosphere of mutual confidence between the Muslim and Christian Worlds, with the view to eliminating different sediments of periods of remoteness, of dispute and colonialism, and to explore the real causes thereof, and to undertake joint efforts to eradicate them, and to

Cont'...d. .

being concerned with constructing bridges of understanding and co-operation among the believers of the two Religions in order to create the suitable atmosphere that helps to understand what modern man inherently suffers from the material and spiritual crises facing him and to submit practical solutions thereto. They are confident that religion is the authentic source which is able to achieve these objectives, for religion is not only spiritual values, but embraces the co-ordination between Matter and the devotion of the Spirit.

Humanity bemoans under the yoke of many grievances, and the man of today lives in a continuous vacuum, anxiety, spiritual alienation and remoteness from Stability and happiness. He lives in burning fire caused by the materialistic tyranny which pervades the world and which is curtaining him from the sources of goodness, truth and mercy which Religion represents their real authentic source.

The fight for the liberation of man from all forms of ignorance, tyranny, oppression and exploitation springs from the heart of religion, and constitutes, therefore, a duty of every pious man. There are priorities which no Divine religion can be lenient with, and carries in defending them. These include the respect of man, his right to live, freedom, justice and equality.

In the light of these concepts the following topics were discussed:

1. Is it possible for Religion to be an Ideology for Life?

Cont'...d.3.

2. The Common Bases of Beliefs  
and spheres of Meeting Together  
in all Fields of Life.
3. Social Justice, a Fruit of  
the Belief in God.
4. How can we eliminate faulty  
Prejudices and Weak Confidence  
Which Still Separate Us From  
Each Other.

In each topic two scholars, a Muslim and a Christian participated; each expressing the point of view of the party he represents. A positive dialogue took place characterized by frankness and clearness, and in an atmosphere of free thinking and self-committal responsibility in which both parties affirmed the power of Religion to contain the developing circumstances of this age.

Both parties have agreed that RELIGION is superior to all ideologies. The Muslim side affirmed the power of Islam to establish a system for life and for society valid for all times and place springing from a comprehensive outlook to the universe and life characterized by originality, balance and realism. The Christian side also affirmed that Christianity concerns itself in the first instance, with the spiritual aspect and that it should commit itself, as a religion, to inspire ideologies.

Cont' . . . 3. 6.

The Two Parties have also reviewed the problems of doctrine in both religions. The two religions meet in the belief in one God, the Only One inspite of the difference of their concepts for a number of problems of the doctrine. Both parties affirmed the necessity of undertaking joint efforts to support and exalt the spiritual values and ethical principles and the happiness of man.

The points of view of the two parties also met in considering Social Justice as a natural fruit of the belief in God, as tyranny, in all its forms, contradicts the spirit of religion and Divine Books. The Muslim side affirmed that Islam presents an integral system for Social Justice in all its aspects, be they humane, social and economic. The Christian side also affirmed that Christianity directs man in his behaviour with the view to realizing Social Justice and that the Christian Church has undertaken many initiatives in the fields of social education and its application.

In an atmosphere of frankness and genuine desire to overlook the faults of the past and to open a new page of relations based on understanding and co-operation, the two parties reviewed many cases which were the causes of enmity, doubts and mitigated confidence which made Islam and Christianity remote from each other. The Muslim side followed with satisfaction certain paragraphs recited from the Declaration issued by the Second Universal Vatican Synod, especially those pertaining to a new outlook towards Moslems and found in them a good initiative which will help to turn off the pages of the past; that have become the property of history.

Cont'...d.5.

Both parties agreed upon starting a new page based on respect, cooperation, and joint endeavour for the goodness of humanity.

And eager to realize the noble objectives for which the Dialogue was held, the Seminar adopted the following resolutions and recommendations:

- (1) The Two sides affirm their belief in God, the Only One, and recommend sustained work in one row and in one front for the deepening of religious and ethical values in the souls of men.
- (2) Both sides honour all Prophets and Apostles in all revealed Religions and denounce discrediting them or dare to disgrace their eminent position, for such an act is a protest against God who misadored them.
- (3) The Two Sides affirm that RELIGION, in its essence, is the source of moral obligation and that is the fundamental regulator of the behaviour of individuals, Communities and States.
- (4) Organizing one's life cannot be accomplished in seclusion of

Cont'...d.6.

Religion which draws to humanity plans of guidance and righteousness, the two sides, accordingly affirm that RELIGION is the basis of true legislation, and that all legislations enacted by man alone will never reach the acme of perfection.

(5) The Two Parties affirm that the belief in God implies the necessity to stand by the side of truth wherever it is, and to help the triumph of man, his dignity and his welfare.

They invoke all moral forces in the world to embody this meaning in the behaviour of men, communities, peoples and states in order to stand against tyranny in all forms, to achieve the triumph of man's dignity, his welfare and his freedom.

(6) In triumph of man's dignity, the Two Parties declare their condemn to racial discrimination in all its forms and dimensions as discrimination underates the value of man whom God has honoured.

Cont'...d.7.

- (7) For the realization of human welfare the Two Parties affirm their concern in recommending the necessity of unifying efforts to draw programmes of development for the service of humanity as regards planning, distribution and international transactions, as the existence of millions of hungry and naked people in all parts of the world constitute a SHAME to humanity, and a degradation to all religious values. The Two Parties appeal to all states and international institutions and bodies whose tasks are connected with project of development to take into its prime consideration this objective.
- (8) The Two Parties affirm the necessity of freedom of religious belief, the performance of religious rites, and the right of the family to rise up their children in accordance with their religious beliefs.

Cont'...d.8.

They denounce all types and forms of religious persecution and consider the regimes and theories which call for the persecution of believers as non-human regimes.

(9) The Two Parties affirm that peace is a message of RELIGION and look forward for its realization on the basis of truth and justice. They appeal to those states which own destructive weapons to cease its production and invest their resources in serving peaceful purposes to realize the prosperity and welfare of humanity.

(10) Both Sides believe that Religion is a comprehensive perception to the Universe and existence, and affirm that science is a part thereof, and that all progress in the field of science gives new evidences of the supremacy of God, creator of the Universe in the best of moulds, our creator of its laws in accordance with rules which science discovers

Cont'...d.9.

each day its accurateness and miraculousness. Science should always remain in the service of religion and committed to its values and ideals, and directed to the service of humanity, thereby restraining man from atheism and delinquency which both ruin many youth of the world when they, mistakebly, imagine that Science contradicts Religion. When science supports belief it can succeed in liquidating many problems of the youth.

- (11) In view of the fact that an effective role is played by the youth in building the future, the Two Parties recommend the necessity of paying importance to the curricula of education and its aids in schools and colleges that among the fundamental aims of these curricula be the implanting of religious values and moral virtues in the souls, and that they should avoid all what would degrade the doctrine,

Cont'...d.10.

morality and understanding among nations.

(12) Both Sides encourage the translation of the Divine Books to all languages, and condemn any attempt aiming at confiscating these Books or prohibit their circulation in any part of the world.

(13) The Christian Side, expresses its desire that the Muslim Side should continue the historical research and satisfactory interpretations with regard to the evaluation of the "Holy Bible" in a genuine scientific approach.

(14) The Muslim Side, desires that the Christian Side spare no endeavours and efforts to separate the Church from the Mosque of Cordoba and effect the separation at the earliest possible time.

(15) The Two Parties recommend the necessity of joint work to follow up the mistakes included in the school curricula, text-books, in the books of some orientalist

Cont'...d.11.

and scholars regarding the beliefs of each party with the view to correcting them in accordance with the beliefs of their holders. The Muslim side accepted with appreciation the initiative of the Christian side in seeking the advice of Muslim scholars in all what is written on Islam in the schools belonging to the Christian side.

(16) The heritage of civilization and culture are the property of all humanity, and humanity has the right to receive this heritage in a true way. Owing to the circumstances of past misgivings between the Muslim and the Christian worlds, the Two Parties appeal to the universities, religious and theologian institutes to act as host to visiting professors of the two religions.

(18) To effect real co-operation between the Muslim and Christian worlds the two parties recommend the ceasing of all endeavours, aiming at diverting Muslims in their beliefs by Christians,

or to divert Christians, in their beliefs by Moslems.

(18) Lebanon, a country dear to the hearts of both Muslims and Christians, has been exposed to a sedition in which thousands of innocent people were victims. Certain people of ill-intentions, inside and outside Lebanon, have tried to describe the struggle as a sectarian one between Moslems and Christians. This slander does not only insult the Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, but it aims at exploding all genuine and earnest endeavours for an 'approachment' between the Muslim and the Christian worlds. The Two Parties, therefore, denounce the sedition which rose in Lebanon and refute stamping it as a sectarian struggle, and condemn all attempts of such evaluation or distort the sublime, magnanimous co-existence, prevailing among the religious families in Lebanon.

Cont'...d.13.

(19) Desirous of narrowing the gap between the states scientifically advanced and the developing countries, and believing in the right of all the peoples of the world in their advancement, the Two Parties appeal to the United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) for issuing a Universal Charter to be sanctioned by the UNITED NATIONS ensuring all peoples the legitimate right to obtain Scientific Development and Technology and its methods and not curtaining this right from the Third World in particular, and to ask all conferences which study questions pertaining to raw materials the necessity of introducing technology and its methods to the developing countries producer of these raw materials. The realization of this objective will avoid the world a possible discord, lack of harmony between the Third World and the Developed World.

(20) The Two Parties look upon the Revealed Religions with respect, and accordingly they distinguish between Judaism and

Cont'...d.14.

Zionism, the latter being a racial aggressive movement, foreign to Palestine and the entire Eastern region.

(21) Aiding by Truth and Justice and fully concerned with Peace and believing in the right of peoples for self determination, the two parties reaffirm the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to return to their homeland, and to affirm the arabism of the city of Jerusalem, and the rejection of judaization, partition and internalization projects, and denounce any violation of all sacred places. The Two Sides request the setting free of all the detainees in occupied Palestine, above all the Moslem U'lems and the Christian Clergy, they also demand for the liberation of all occupied territories and call for the formation of a permanent commission to investigate the alteration of sacred Muslim and Christian sites

Cont'...d.15.

and reveal all these to the world's public opinion.

(22) Should there be other difficult circumstances as it is the case prevailing in the Philippines, both parties shall undertake a mutual initiative to endeavour in finding an effective role leading to appropriate solutions based on justice and impartiality.

(23) The Two Parties decided the formation of a permanent joint follow-up Committee whose task will be the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations above mentioned to follow-up any new problems which might arise therefrom. The Committee shall also be entrusted to prepare for similar forthcoming Symposiums.

(24) The Two Parties, with great esteem and consideration, greet Colonel Mu'ammār al Qaddafi, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council who patronized this Symposium and positively participated in its discussions. His deep concern in this symposium greatly contributed to its success.

These Resolutions and Recommendations have been agreed upon through the mutual understanding of the Muslim and Christian Parties with regard to the meaning, the aims and precepts of the Dialogue. The Two Sides agreed that the aims of the Dialogue are the exchange among the discourses belonging to the two Religions, of information, ideas and facts which shall enrich the knowledge of each party about the religion of the other party, its history, culture and other particulars; thus, to clarify in a sincere objective way, the points of meeting and differences which might exist among them with a view that each party maintains its beliefs, commitments and attitudes in an atmosphere of cordiality and mutual respect.

The Two discoursing Parties seize this blessed opportunity to extend their heart-felt thanks to all those who participated in this Symposium either by their presence or in taking part in the discussions, or observations or by performing any activity relevant to the success of the Dialogue, no matter how humble it has been for it is great in the sight of God.

In conclusion we all thank God, the Omnipotent, who helped us by his great mercy to live together in an atmosphere of perfect brotherhood during the days of the Islamic-Christian Dialogue in Tripoli.

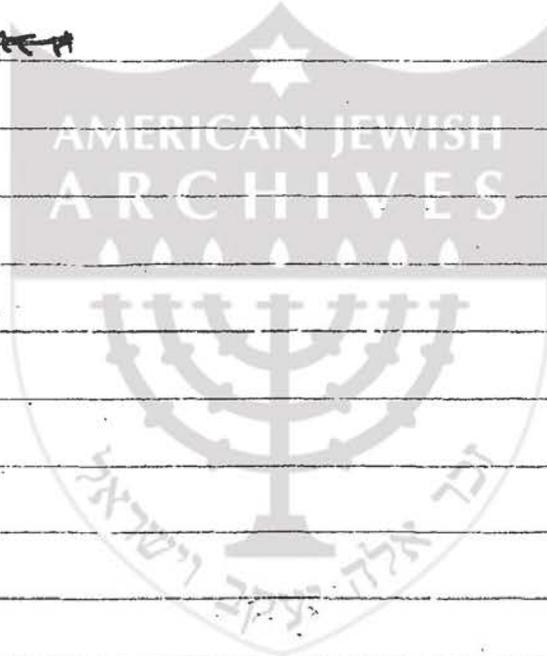


① THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN LIBYA OF THE ADOPTION OF A JOINT DECLARATION BY THE VATICAN SECRETARIAT ON NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS AND ISLAMIC LEADERS IS DEEPLY DISTRESSING TO ISJIC. WE ARE OFFENDED BY THOSE ASPECTS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION WHICH DEFAME JUDAISM, FALSIFY THE TRUE NATURE OF ZIONISM, AND WHICH PROCLAIM OTHER POLITICAL OBJECTIVES THAT CAN ONLY INHIBIT THE PURSUIT OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WE WELCOME THE CLARIFICATION ISSUED BY THE VATICAN SECRETARIAT OF STATE WHICH REJECTED THE ANTI-ISRAEL AND ANTI-



(A)

THESE UNFORTUNATE PRONOUNCEMENTS  
THREATEN TO IMPAIR <sup>OUR</sup> THE ~~CONSTRUCTIVE~~  
~~SPIRIT OF OUR~~ <sup>DEVELOPING</sup> RELATIONSHIPS. AND  
~~CAST A CLOUD OF DOUBT TO JEOPARDIZE~~  
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The American Jewish Committee  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56th Street  
New York, N. Y. 10022

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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REMARKS:





# THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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MAY 13-16, 1976, THE WASHINGTON HILTON

TO: AJC Area Directors/CRCs

FROM: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

DATE: February 18, 1976

RE: VATICAN-ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN LIBYA, FEBRUARY 1-5

This office has received a number of inquiries during the past week asking for clarification as to what happened at the Vatican-Islamic meeting in Libya from Feb. 1 through 5, and its possible implications for Vatican-Jewish-Israeli relations. The following report is based on conversations with the AJC Paris office, with sources in Rome, and especially on detailed conversations I had with Catholic representatives who attended the Libyan meeting.

The five-day seminar on Islamic-Christian relations was co-sponsored by the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians and the Libyan Arab Republic. The conference was held in the large modern 800-seat "Liberation Theater" building in Tripoli, that is fully equipped for simultaneous translations in Arabic, French and English, with Radio and TV transmission facilities. Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Libyan president, paid all the travel expenses for the Catholic and other Christian participants. The official delegations consisted of 14 Vatican and 16 Muslim representatives from 10 countries. There were, however, some 300 observers and 120 mass media people present from some 43 countries with Muslim populations. One informant told me that Qaddafi spent "well over a million dollars" for this meeting. Cardinal Serge Pignedoli, president of the Vatican secretariat, in his opening remarks praised "the generous hospitality" of the Libyan Arab Republic.

The announced purpose of the seminar -- described by Father Thomas C. Donlan, O.P., as "the first time since before the Crusades (that) official delegations of the Islamic and Christian faiths have met" -- was to increase understanding and collaboration between Christians and Moslems, an altogether laudable objective. In an Islamic newsletter dated as early as January 2, 1976, the editor, Muhammad Tahir, announced that the "Islamic agenda" for the seminar was the following:

"The dialogue is certain to center around Colonel Qaddafi's Third International Theory which calls for the unity of God-fearing men and women to struggle together to overcome some of the common enemies of Capitalism, Communism, Zionism, Racism, and materialism."

Since this was originally intended as a pan-Christian and pan-Islamic conference, the Vatican Secretariat invited representatives of the World Council of Churches, the Copts and the Eastern Orthodox. The World Council and the Copts declined, reportedly indicating unhappiness that Libya was subsidizing the meeting.

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But the Orthodox patriarchate of Damascus accepted, and, at the last minute, the Moscow Orthodox patriarchate also agreed to attend.

Four themes composed the seminar agenda: 1) Whether religion can be effective in guiding men's lives today; 2) Whether religion must concern itself with social justice; 3) What common bases are shared by Islam and Christianity; and 4) What antagonistic prejudices exist among adherents of the two faiths and what steps can be taken to overcome them?

My informants tell me that the Vatican officials insisted prior to the conference that there would be no political discussions, especially with regard to the Middle East, since these were outside the competence of this secretariat. Apparently the Muslim officials agreed to these ground rules. At each morning session (from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) a Christian and a Muslim scholar presented papers on each of the themes listed above. At the evening sessions, from 5 to 9 p.m., discussion was held based on the morning presentations.

The Vatican spokesmen, both in their papers and in the discussions, avoided all political issues, and spoke generally in a spirit of good-will typified by Cardinal Pignedoli's remarks: "We begin our dialogue in a spirit of fraternity. Not to affront each other, not to judge each other reciprocally and not to minimize our respective faiths. We begin with full respect and with full love one for the other." Muslim speakers also began with expressions of good-will, but regularly interspersed their remarks with strong attacks on Zionism, the Crusades, Christian missionaries, Western civilization and imperialism.

The one-sided Muslim attack on Christian imperialism had some effect. On the final day of the seminar, a White Father missionary from Tunisia, French Father Jacques Lanfry, invited the Christians in the audience to condemn Christian "errors of the past," and to rid themselves of "present prejudices and misunderstandings" in relation to the religion of Islam. Turning to the Islamic delegation, the priest pleaded for "forgiveness" of his "Muslim brothers" for "misunderstandings, injustices, and erroneous criticisms" on the part of Christians towards "the Prophet Mohammed and his followers." Suddenly, two Imams (senior Muslim religious leaders) got up from their places in the front row, went up to Father Lanfry and warmly embraced him. The entire assembly burst into applause. There was no comparable Muslim "confiteor" for persecutions or massacres of Christians (not to speak of Jews) in the past or present (i.e., Sudan, Uganda, Lebanon, etc.).

Later that morning, a Muslim participant suggested that a mixed Islamic-Christian commission be created and dispatched as a messenger of peace to such places as Lebanon, the Philippines, and Northern Ireland. Msgr. Pietro Rossano, secretary of the Vatican Secretariat, turned down the proposal saying that intervention in such areas was best left to United Nations agencies.

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While all this was going on, a joint committee consisting of four Vatican representatives and four Muslims were meeting to draft a communique for the conference. The Christian members were an Arab who is the chief officer for Islam of the Vatican Secretariat, Melkite Catholic Archimandrite Francis Abou-Mokh; and three Arabic-speaking Western Christians: Father Ary Roest Crollius, a Jesuit professor of Islamic Studies at the Gregorian University in Rome and a secretariat consultor; Father Maurice Boormans and Jacques Lanfry.

According to my informants, a decision was made to split the drafting committee into four pairs--one Christian and one Muslim--each pair being assigned to evaluate a separate section of the 24-point text that was prepared by the Muslim drafting group. As it turned out, the Christian drafters saw only the section they worked on, and signed that section. Only Archimandrite Abou-Mokh initialed each page of the entire document that was presented to the conference as "the final declaration". Abou-Mokh, not incidentally, told my informant that he personally supported the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist positions in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the text, but that he also realized that his was not an official Vatican approval. (A good constructive influence to have as an official member of a Vatican Secretariat!)

The full text of the declaration is attached. Articles 20 and 21 read as follows:

Recommendation number 20 (also called a resolution, although it was not subject to any vote on the part of the Vatican delegation) reads as follows:

"The two sides look upon the heavenly religions with respect and accordingly they distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, the latter being a racial aggressive movement, foreign to Palestine and the Middle Eastern region."

Recommendation (resolution) number 21 --also not subject to any Vatican delegation vote -- says: "Adherence to truth, justice, and peace, and belief in the rights of peoples for self-determination prompt the two sides to affirm the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to return to their homeland, and to affirm the Arabism of the city of Jerusalem and the rejection of (its) Judaization, partition, and internationalization.

"(The two sides) denounce all violation of all sacred places. (They) demand the setting free of all detainees in occupied Palestine... and ask for the liberation of all (Israeli) occupied lands, and call for the formation of a permanent commission to investigate the alteration of sacred Muslim and Christian sites and reveal this to world public opinion."

The final declaration was presented to the conference by a Muslim delegate at the closing session on Friday afternoon. Neither Cardinal Pignedoli, nor Msgr. Rossano, nor other members of the Vatican delegation who were not involved in its preparation were given the courtesy of seeing the text in advance of its introduction, nor were they aware that it contained the anti-Israel paragraphs. In fact, Cardinal Pignedoli at this point was taken conveniently to the palace of Colonel Qaddafi for a very lengthy private audience.

When Msgr. Rossano finally got a Spanish translation of the Arabic text, he said, "It is a mistake, a mistake!" Father Boormans, who authored two good papers for the conference, said he was "crushed," called it "the blackest day of my life. Everybody lost, only Qaddafi won." Interestingly, Dr. Ezhaddin Ibrahim, Minister of Cultural Affairs of the United Arab Emirates and a member of the Muslim delegation, said privately that, "if an objection had been made during the drafting, the Muslim group was prepared to withdraw articles 20 and 21."

The next day, on arriving in Rome, Cardinal Pignedoli issued a statement at a press conference and over Vatican Radio in which he "dis-associated" himself "not only as a Vatican representative, but as a Christian," from the position taken in the two paragraphs "by our Muslim brothers". The cardinal added that "the contents" of the paragraphs were to be transmitted to "the authorities of the Holy See ((Secretariat of State) who alone have competence in this matter," since "political elements" enter into it.

Reporting on this event, the Vatican City newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, quoted Cardinal Pignedoli as saying that he could not sign the document that contains points "beyond my jurisdiction". The prelate was then quoted as saying that the statements on Zionism, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem remained solely "the expression of the Muslim delegation."

On the following Tuesday, representatives of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) made a formal demarche to the Vatican Secretariat of State and asked for a clarification on the highest levels. They indicated that such repudiation of the document was necessary before the March 1 meeting between the Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with Judaism and IJCIC could take place in Jerusalem.

The next day, Archbishop Giovanni Benelli, Deputy Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat of State (and one of its most influential and authoritative spokesmen) issued a statement that was published on the front page of L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican authority stated that paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Tripoli declaration had been examined by "competent Vatican authorities." He added, "The Holy See declares that it cannot accept these two articles because their content does not correspond in essential points to the position, known to all, of the Holy See."

Area Directors/CRCs

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That clarifying statement was telephoned to a New York meeting of IJCIC representatives that Bert Gold and I attended, and all the Jewish groups present agreed that the clarification was adequate and acceptable and that plans for the March 1 meeting in Jerusalem should proceed. We agreed, however, that the entire Libyan episode must be placed on the agenda of the Jerusalem meeting for a full airing, with a view toward trying to assure that such anti-Israel entrapments are not allowed to happen again.

It should be made clear that while Vatican spokesmen indicated they were "mortified" by this event, they were trying to prevent the incident from compromising what they regard as "the basically positive achievements at the religious level with Islam" of the Libyan seminar. Undoubtedly, there will be other Vatican-Islamic "dialogues" and there will be inevitable attempts to repeat the exploitation of such meetings for anti-Israel and anti-Jewish purposes by Muslim officials. "Sufficient to the wise is a wink," says the Talmud.

Two noteworthy points: a) The reference in article 21 to "the liberation of all detainees in occupied Palestine, above all the Moslem Ulema and the Christian clergy" was drafted with specific reference to the release of Cardinal Capucci, and is part of an ongoing Arab campaign against Israel; b) The Muslims did not allow a single reference in the document to evangelization or the mission of the Church. On the contrary, they asserted (p. 28, in the full text), "The Moslem side affirmed the power of Islam to establish a system for life and for society valid for all times and places, springing from a comprehensive outlook on the universe and life, characterized by originality, balance and realism."

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NC FEATURES

FOR RELEASE WEEK OF MARCH 22, 1976

THE YARDSTICK

By Msgr. George G. Higgins

The fifth annual meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee took place in Jerusalem, March 1-3. The sessions were held at the Martin Buber Center of the Hebrew University, Mount Scopus.

The Liaison Committee is composed of representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC). Previous meetings of the Committee took place in Paris, Marseilles, Antwerp and Rome.

While the Jerusalem dialogue was closed to the press, local reporters were duly informed that a summary of the proceedings would be made available, in the form of a joint press release, at the end of the meeting. Unfortunately, however, some of the reporters jumped the gun and began to speculate out of thin air on what was likely to be said or done at the meeting. Some, I suppose, were simply trying to scoop their competitors. Others, I am afraid, were grinding their own political axes, mainly in opposition to the State of Israel.

As an American participant in the Jerusalem meeting, I regret to say that one of the worst offenders, in the latter regard, was Desmond Sullivan, who covers Jerusalem for the NC News Service. Mr. Sullivan's NC release, dated 3/3/76 and obviously written before he knew what had taken place at the meeting was, in my opinion, a mischievous anti-Israeli editorial camouflaged as a routine news story.

A blind man could see what Sullivan was up to. With nothing to go on but a series of vague and obviously loaded "fears" and rumors attributed to anonymous local sources, he criticized both the site and the makeup of the meeting.

(MORE)

First of all, he adroitly planted the unfounded fear that, because the meeting was being held in Jerusalem, it "may" result in political statements "as happened with the Christian-Islamic dialogue in Tripoli, Libya in February." Secondly, he complained that "church representatives from Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Holy Land have not been included in the talks." He was compelled to add, of course, that "a meeting has been arranged outside the dialogue program between heads of churches here and members of the commission."

I will never understand why Sullivan felt it necessary to indulge in anti-Israeli speculation instead of waiting a day or two to find out what actually happened at the meeting. Ditto for his clumsy attempt to drive a wedge between the Vatican-sponsored Jerusalem meeting and the local Catholic community in Israel. In the latter case, he was playing with dynamite, and I strongly suspect that he knew he was. In any event, the fact is that Catholic and Jewish participants in the Jerusalem dialogue held a cordial and, hopefully, fruitful meeting with official representatives of all of the local Catholic groups in Israel (Latins, Greeks, Armenians, Coptics, et al).

From the point of view of professional journalistic standards, Sullivan's most offensive blooper was his incredibly bizarre statement to the effect that "Jewish members of the dialogue group are also thought to be under pressure to declare that there should be no guilt imparted to modern Christians for past persecutions. This would match a Vatican Council statement that modern Jews are not to be held guilty for the death of Christ."

That statement (which at least one other American reporter was floating around Jerusalem during our stay in the Holy City) is a figment of somebody's disturbed imagination. There is not a word of truth in it. I am left to wonder why Mr. Sullivan tried to palm it off on his unsuspecting American readers. All I know for a fact is that he never checked <sup>it</sup> with me or with any of the other participants in the dialogue.

I also find it hard to understand why we have not heard from Mr. Sullivan since the

(MORE)

3/22/76

Jerusalem meeting ended. My guess is that he has yet to figure out how to cope with the fact that the results of the meeting were obviously out of line with his own poorly concealed anti-Israeli point of view, specifically with reference to the subject of Zionism. In his one and only NC story on the Jerusalem meeting, he went out of his way (again, hiding behind anonymous local sources) to criticize earlier statements on this subject and on the State of Israel by two of the most experienced participants in the dialogue-- Father Edward Flannery of the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, and Father Marcel Dubois, O.P., Director of a Dominican center in Jerusalem dedicated to the promotion of Catholic-Jewish relations.

In view of Sullivan's anti-Israeli point of view, I can only conclude, <sup>then,</sup> that he was extremely disappointed when he read in the joint communique released at the end of the Jerusalem dialogue that "members of the Liaison Committee expressed deep joy over the historical and religious significance of the fact that they met for the first time in the Holy City of Jerusalem."

I have no doubt that he was also distressed to learn that the Liaison Committee "noted with satisfaction the repudiation by various authorities of the Catholic Church of the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations equating Zionism with racism" and expressed profound concern over the continuing campaign to defame the State of Israel and the Jewish people and <sup>isolate</sup> them from the international community.

My criticism of Mr. Sullivan's trouble-making release on the Jerusalem meeting is not meant to be a criticism of the NC News Service as such. In my opinion, NC has consistently played the Israeli-Arab issue fair and square. Mr. Sullivan's tendentious handling of this delicate issue is the exception that proves the rule. My only purpose in citing him here is to set the record straight with regard to the Jerusalem meeting, which was strictly a religious encounter, and a very successful one in my opinion.

I would like to think, now that the meeting has been concluded, that Sullivan shares my admiration for the Israeli government's statesmanship in scrupulously respecting the religious character of the event. Judging, however, from the substance as well as the tone of his NC release on the Jerusalem dialogue, I am afraid that's wishful thinking on my part.

3/3/76

By Desmond Sullivan

JERUSALEM (NC) -- While Catholics and Jews from Europe and America met here March 2 and 3, two criticisms arose about the site and makeup of the meeting, part of a 10 year dialogue between the Vatican and Jewish representatives.

The choice of this city, with its potential pressures, has raised the fear that political statements may result as happened with the Christian-Islamic dialogue in Tripoli, Libya, during February. (The political elements were later repudiated by the Vatican.)

Second, church representatives from Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Holy Land have not been included in the talks. However, a meeting has been arranged outside the dialogue program between heads of churches here and members of the commission.

To avoid premature publicity, meeting participants have been asked to say nothing to journalists until a final communique is issued.

Local ecumenists point out, though, that commission advisors and members have gone on record favoring two statements which, if adopted, could arouse controversy in the Arab world.

Msgr. Edward Flannery of the U.S. Bishops' secretariat of Jewish-Catholic relations, one of three American participants, was quoted as saying, "The modern state of Israel is the political manifestation of the deep messianic core of Judaism."

Father Marcel Dubois, a participant from France, said, "National and religious aspects of Judaism are inextricably interlaced...Anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism in disguise."

Jewish members of the dialogue group are also thought to be under pressure to declare that there should be no guilt imparted to modern Christians for past persecutions. This would match a Vatican Council statement that modern Jews are not to be held guilty for the death of Christ.

The Vatican delegation to this meeting is headed by Bishop Ramon Torella Cascante, vice president of the secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity; the Jewish group, by Rabbi Joseph Lookstein, president of the Synagogue Council of America.

American Catholics in the dialogue besides Msgr. Flannery, are Bishop Francis Mugavero of Brooklyn, president of the Jewish-Catholic relations secretariat, and Msgr. George Higgins, research secretary for the U.S. bishops.

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FROM: Liaison Committee  
World Council of Churches, and  
International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jerusalem, February 29, 1976--

Representatives of the World Council of Churches and of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, meeting in Jerusalem Feb. 25-27, will recommend that their sponsoring organizations engage in wider patterns of relationship in the future.

Such wider patterns, the Liaison Committee of the WCC and ICJIC has concluded, should lead to deeper mutual understanding, help combat prejudice, prevent misconceptions and permit both faiths to improve conditions for living together within the context of wider community.

Seven years after initiation of formal relations and consultation, and following the recent Nairobi Assembly, both delegations felt the time was appropriate to review the purposes and progress of their Christian-Jewish dialogue.

World Council of Churches delegates gave a detailed account of discussions at the Nairobi Assembly of particular concern to the Jewish world community.

Various themes considered for possible future exploration included "Relations between Churches and the Jewish People in the Wider Context of the Human Community" and "Christian and Jewish Traditions About Creation, in Relation to Science and Technology."

The different levels of encounter between the two faiths and enlarged patterns of relationship being suggested by the Liaison Committee now will be submitted to the competent sponsoring bodies on both sides for approval.

Following the three-day Jerusalem meeting, the two delegations went to Kibbutz Lavi, near Tiberias, for the Sabbath. Kibbutz members explained the role of the religious kibbutz in Israel society and its contribution to the renewal of Jewish religious life.

The World Council of Churches delegation consisted of Dr. Stanley Samartha, Chairman; Dr. Ellen Flessman-van Leer; Dr. Franz von Hammerstein; Professor Krister Stendhal; Dr. Lukas Vischer. Joining them was Archbishop Shahe Ajamian, member of the WCC Central Committee.

The Jewish delegation consisted of Rabbi Joseph Lookstein, Chairman; and Messrs. Bernard Resnikoff and Zachariah Shuster, The American Jewish Committee; Dr. E.L. Ehrlich and Dr. Joseph Lichten, B'nai B'rith-Anti Defamation League; Professors Shemaryahu Talmon and Zvi Werblowsky, Jewish Council in Israel for Interreligious Consultations; Rabbis Balfour, Brickner and Henry Siegman, Synagogue Council of America; and Dr. Nathan Lerner and Dr. Gerhart M. Riegner, World Jewish Congress.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dr. Franz von Hammerstein  
(World Council of Churches)  
Lutheran Hostel, Jerusalem  
Tel. 282120

Dr. Gerhart M. Riegner  
(World Jewish Congress)  
Kings Hotel, Jerusalem  
Tel. 35232



# JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19122

March 5, 1976

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

Dear Marc,

Here are copies of the correspondence between Cardinal Pignedoli and myself. Do you think there would be any point to trying to arrange for a meeting between Cardinal Pignedoli and American Jewish leaders to explain in person the Tripoli misfortune? Pignedoli is an extremely sincere, open and genial man - and might be the next pope.

Sincerely,

Lenard Swidler  
Editor

*dictated before  
he spoke to you  
by phone about this*

LS:pr  
Encl.

JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES  
Room 511, Humanities Building  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, PA. 19122

13 February 1976

Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli  
Secretariat for Non-Christians  
VATICAN  
Rome  
ITALY

Dear Cardinal Pignedoli:

I trust that you will have already received the carbon copies of the letters I have just sent to Cardinal Willebrands and Villot about the Tripoli communiqué. I am certain that I need not tell you how serious the whole matter is in the United States as far as our relations with Jews are concerned. I know, for example, that when some of my Jewish doctoral students here at Temple University heard about the developments in Tripoli they were most depressed and upset—even though I had given them all of the details of the extraordinary confusion that led to the most unfortunate set of statements in the communiqué about Zionism and Judaism, namely numbers 20 and 21. We will have a very difficult job in reassuring our Jewish brothers and sisters that this was simply a wild aberration which really does not reflect the feeling and sensitivity of the Holy See. I would urge you also to do whatever you think you can to concretely reassure the Jewish world that dialogue with Islam will not be entered into at the expense of Judaism. But, alas, I fear that it will take more than a few words to blot out that suspicion newly engendered in their hearts. Perhaps a visit by you personally to Jerusalem, to New York, and other Jewish centers to meet with Jewish leaders to reassure them might be of some real value. Presumably you would also have to make a special effort to then visit some Muslim leaders to assure them that the intentions of dialogue expressed at Tripoli were absolutely genuine and that Rome was drawing back only in the question of numbers 20 and 21, but no more.

If there is any way that you think that I can be of some assistance in this or in other matters, either publically or privately, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Leonard Swidler, Ph.D., STL, Editor  
Prof. of Catholic Thought and Ecumenism

P. S. --

Since dictating this letter I have been deluged by phone calls both from Catholics officially involved in inter-religious dialogue for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and also Jewish leaders in this country who are involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue. It appears clear to me from these conversations, which are only beginning to take place, since the news of the Tripoli communiqué is only now starting to filter through in America, that the above suggestions of Rome's taking a position of non-endorsement of numbers 20 and 21 will by no means be anywhere sufficient. It appears more and more clear to me that a very straight forward disavowal of numbers 20 and 21 by the highest Vatican authorities will be absolutely necessary to avoid an irreparable damaging of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue. Even with such public disavowals it will have been very severely strained, for those Jewish individuals and institutions which have been engaging in dialogue with Christians will be coming under very severe attack from the more right-wing and orthodox elements within their own community. They will need to have every available means of defending the validity of the dialogue put at their disposal to ward off these attacks which will doubtless ensue for many months. In light of these conversations I am all the more convinced that it might very well be quite helpful if you personally could arrange to visit with the Jewish leadership in Israel, Europe, and the United States to carry these assurances from Rome in a personal fashion.

I would also like to make one further suggestion for your consideration. I believe that it would be extremely helpful if someone were appointed as a sort of liaison officer to work with your committee on dialogue with Islam who would be particularly trained and responsible to relate all matters from the Islamic-Catholic committee to how they would affect dialogue with Judaism. At the same time it would also be extremely helpful to have a similar liaison officer who would be an expert in Islamic matters who would work in the office of relations between Catholics and Jews to relate all of the developments there to how it would affect dialogue with Islam. I realize that it would be absolutely essential to find precisely the right sort of persons to carry out this task since the matters would be extremely delicate in both instances. However, if something like this is not done, then it is quite possible that continued mutual isolation would lead to another such "nuclear accident."

If there is any way that you can be reached in other arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact me.

CC'

Villot

Willebrands

Bernardin

blind to: Hotchkin



E Civitate Vaticana, die 24 February 1976

SECRETARIATUS PRO NON CHRISTIANIS

Prot. N. ....  
(In responsione fiat mentio huius numeri)

Prof. Leonard Swidler, Ph.D., STL,  
Editor,  
Journal of Ecumenical Studies,  
Temple University,  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19122,  
U.S.A.

MAR 1 1976

Dear Prof. Swidler,

I write to acknowledge with thanks and appreciation receipt of your kind letter, dated 13 February. Thank you also for the copy of the letters you had sent to Cardinals Willebrands and Villot.

With regard to the communiqué of the Tripoli meeting, especially numbers 20 and 21, you know well that I have also been deeply sorry about the unpleasant event and surprise: it was a surprise of the last moment. About half an hour before the final declaration, Msgr. Rossano and myself had asked whether every thing was going fine or not. We had tried our best to avoid and not to enter into any polemical question of politics, which might concern either our Jewish brothers and sisters and the Palestinians, but that event was a big surprise to us all in the last moment. Besides, I must also tell you that another surprise for us was also that we had thought the Tripoli meeting would comprise the Christian delegation and a limited number of Muslim delegates, but in fact there was at the meeting a big mass of people.

Until today, you may have already been informed that the Vatican has not failed to make declarations regarding paragraphs 20 and 21.

During my next visit to the States at the end of July, to give talks at Princeton Theological Seminary, and at the beginning of August to attend the International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, I shall be glad to meet you. It is not the competence of our Secretariat to visit Jewish Community, but this concerns Cardinal Willebrand's. So, if you wish, you may write to him about the matter. As for me, I have a good number of young Jewish friends, and shall have an opportunity of meeting them personally during my next visit to the USA.

With renewed thanks and kind regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

*Sergio Card. Pignedoli*  
Sergio Card. Pignedoli  
President

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** March 9, 1976  
**to** Marc Tanenbaum  
**from** Brant Coopersmith  
**subject**

1. The enclosed ad appeared in the Sunday Washington Post of March 7th: It contains the repudiated Articles 20 & 21 of the Resolutions and Recommendations. Since you don't get the Sunday Post, I thought I had better forward it.
2. Also enclosed is an article by Jonathan C. Randal which appeared in the Sunday, March 7th, edition of the Post: It was buried back in the "G" section and might not have been noticed.

Regards,



BC:gvp

encl

# Lebanese Strife Sour Maronites

3-7-26  
Washington Post

By Jonathan C. Randal  
Washington Post Foreign Service

## On Their Future

BEIRUT—"We Maronites built Lebanon," the cultivated Lebanese gentleman said matter-of-factly. "We bear more than our share of responsibility for its destruction and our best sons are leaving it."

These are pessimistic words, even in these somber days when Lebanese are weighing the heavy costs of a civil war that has shaken faith in the country's future both here and abroad.

But the speaker's pessimism reflected a feeling that luck—or perhaps more accurately, shrewd leadership—had finally deserted the Maronite Catholics after more than a millenium.

Historian Kamal Salibi, a professor at the American University of Beirut, believes the Maronites over the centuries have shown a peasant shrewdness for survival that made them "the only Christians living in the Islamic world who have been politically successful."

But now not just many of the best and brightest among Lebanon's roughly 500,000 to 600,000 Maronites—but also the better educated among the smaller Christian communities who shelter behind them in times of stress—are thinking of leaving.

The ripple effect on the other Christians appears motivated by fears that the Maronite elite itself is questioning the viability of the classic assumption that only a forceful Maronite presence can guarantee a liberal democracy in which a capitalist economy can flourish here.

Running through the long Maronite history is a flair for seeking the most powerful protectors—often in the form of a Western power—a firm belief in themselves as a people and a willingness to fight to guard their often privileged position.

Originally farmers in the Orontes Valley of Syria, the Maronites take their name from St. Maron, a legendary 5th-century figure. But it was St. John Maron who is credited with founding the separate Maronite Church in 68, when his followers elected him to succeed to the vacant Orthodox See of An-

tioc. Byzantium was not amused. Theologians record the Maronites' schism with the Byzantine Church as the result of their heretical belief in the monothelite nature of Christ. This belief holds that Christ had two natures which were so confused as to produce a single will.

But historians such as Salibi suggest the real split was between the unsophisticated Maronite farmers of the countryside and the more Hellenized Syrian Christian townspeople.

The Maronites retained Syrian for their liturgy—the original language of the Eastern church, while the Orthodox soon turned to Greek—and only used Arabic for their theological writings apparently as early as the 9th century.

Between the 7th and 12th centuries the Maronites increasingly retreated into the nearby mountains of Lebanon in the face of the breakdown of law and order in the Orontes Valley due to incursions from Moslem marauders and Byzantine invaders bent on punishing the heretics.

In their mountain fastness, they developed a sense of separateness, of "peoplehood" and of organized leadership based on the clerical hierarchy which served as a repository of experience.

"They learned not to make the same mistake twice," said Salibi in stressing the Maronites' gift for political judgement.

The Maronites shrewdly opted for ties with Rome rather than with Constantinople during the Crusades on the common sense judgement that a Christian people willing to cross land and sea to conquer land from Moslems and Mongols must be solid.

Their vision was the more extraordinary since the Maronites were generally considered the least sophisticated of the scattered Christian communities of the Orient. Even Maronite patriarchs were barely literate at the time of the Crusades.

Accounts of those times which recount the Maronites' cooperation with the Crusaders foreshadow their

outstanding military bearing during the present civil war, in which they are estimated to have inflicted 10 times as many casualties on their foes as they themselves suffered.

The ringing of church bells in 1291, for example, reputedly turned out 30,000 warriors to answer the call. Their epic poetry recounts how Maronites "descended from the mountains like rain and Moslems out for a stroll found death on the battlefield."

Crusader Bishop William of Tyre praised the Maronites as a "stalwart race of valiant fighters of great service in difficult engagements with the Saracens," while Jacques de Vitry described them as "numerous, using bows and arrows and swift and skillful in battle."

After the Crusades, the Maronites' ties with Rome for all practical purposes were allowed to lapse, but were revived when the Vatican concluded that the fall of Constantinople was inevitable, less than 10 years before its capture by the Turks. In an effort to preserve its hold on its last surviving outpost in the Levant, the Vatican formally recognized the Maronite patriarch's claims to the See of Antioch—more than 7½ centuries after they had first been advanced.

There ensued strong connections with Catholic Europe—with Phillip II of Spain, the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, and later France and Austria. The Counter-Reformation spurred missionary activity in Lebanon and in general as the Catholic powers sought to control the Mediterranean and needed allies. Even European ties with the Ottoman Empire helped the Maronites, since a central pressure point then existed.

Moreover, under weak Ottoman régimes various Levantine principalities sprang up—often with Maronite support—since the princes wanted European connections these local Christians could provide, as well as their advice and military muscle.

Europeans encouraged the

Maronites to grow silk—and in the process they became brokers and constituted the beginnings of a merchant class.

By the 19th Century the Maronite middle class, backed by the peasantry, took on their feudal masters, the members of the breakaway Druze sect of Islam. A running war starting in 1840 went on for two decades until France intervened after the Druze massacred more than 10,000 Maronites.

But if they lost the battle, the Maronites had won the war. The Ottomans set up a Maronite autonomous region around Mount Lebanon and the Maronites' battle cry of freehold and commerce prevailed over Druze feudalism.

They increased their political and economic power under the French League of Nations mandate between the two World Wars, and worked out a sophisticated sharing of honors with the country's Moslems and other Christian sects that left them in effective control.

But even before the Moslems demanded power sharing—and the Palestinians allied themselves with a nascent Lebanese left—Maronite power was beginning to erode.

Essentially tribal, the rank and file wanted patronage at the expense of the neglected mechanisms of a modern state. The Maronite rich became culturally alienated from the old peasant values and slipped into Levantine excesses and decadence.

During the fighting in the mixed Moslem and Christian upper-class neighborhood of Kantari last fall, the young Christian Phalangist militiamen had nothing but contempt for their rich coreligionists who had fled to safety abroad.

Two choices face the Maronites: Either accept their place in an Arab world now that their old Western friends have failed to come to their rescue—or emigrate from a country they feel they can no longer control as they did in the past.

Judging by the numbers of Maronite doctors, dentists engineers and other trained men and women lining up in uncreasing numbers in front of foreign it would seem that many have made their choice.

Despite this dire outlook, Salibi remains moderately optimistic. A poor country, Lebanon traditionally has exported its excess population.

"It's often the alienated, if most motivated, who leave — the people who would cause trouble," he said. "And it's the committed who tend to stay."

They may yet form the kernel of a Maronite political comeback based on less messianic assumptions.