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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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March 12, 1964

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York 22, New York

Dear Marc:

Father Jean Toulat, author of the remarkable book "Juifs, mes Frères" (Jews, my Brothers) published last year, has now published a book entitled "Avec Paul VI en Terre Sainte," in which he gives a complete report of the events that took place during the Pope's visit to Israel and Jordan.

In this book he recounts in detail his impressions and experiences during his visit, with particular attention to the events that took place in Israel. Below is a translation of a few passages which, I believe, deserve to be known.

"His own people did not receive him," it was said about Jesus. His own people of today, the Jews, are acclaiming his Vicar: school children accompanied by their teachers, people of the kiboutzim...And the Pope is blessing this people who is supposed to be accursed. And the Pope stops to embrace a child, as Jesus has done. A generous crowd, particularly remarkable in view of the fact that Sunday is a day of work in Israel, while the day of sacred rest is fixed for the Sabbath, as in the time of Moses.

Many Israelis, however, must have had a somber image of the Church because history textbooks (Jewish) until now, primarily under the influence of the national-religious party, have insisted on the persecution of Israel by "Christians." But public authorities in anticipation of the pontifical voyage, have taken measures to enlighten objectively public opinion. On January 3rd a school broadcast was devoted to the Church. The entire youth of Israel listened to the exposé about the Holy See, the Pope and the rapprochement among Christian groups. One of these broadcasts was made by a Jew who originally came from Neuilly, and who became a priest and Assumptionist, Father Jean-Roger. He is one of the six Jewish priests in Israel. Having adopted Israeli nationality, his archeological, biblical and sociological knowledge merited him to be chosen as official guide of the Israeli

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National Office for Tourism. And all those who are preparing themselves for positions as guides have followed the courses given by Dr. Coldi, of the Ministry for Religion, on Christian holidays, the Gospel, the holy places. Today the Jews, generally, accept Jesus as one of theirs, and some of them even as a prophet (but not as Messiah, for the messianic era of Universal peace has not yet arrived).

"Your God and my Master" says, while speaking of Jesus, Prof. Flusser, teacher of the New Testament and patristics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. And the Dominical fathers of the new house of St. Isaiah, who study at this University various branches of Jewish sciences, recite their prayers in Hebrew. This reciprocal comprehension is concretized by the Jewish Committee for Interfaith Understanding (the equivalent of Jewish/Christian Friendship societies in the West) which is preparing a Hebrew edition of the encyclical "Pacem in Terris," already put to music by another son of Israel, Darius Milhaud.

...

Cardinal Tisserant, guided by the Minister of Religion, descended into the crypt of the martyrs. In the name of Paul VI, amidst the commemorative tablets...he lit six candles in memory of the six million Jews, victims of Nazism. "We are here to share the suffering of the Jewish people, victims of such a terrible hecatomb," he said.

Before leaving, the Cardinal conversed with his entourage. "I was born in Nancy in a house that was built in 1703 by a Jewish banker originating from Frankfurt. On the doorpost my father found a mezuzah, which I have preciously conserved." A curious coincidence: exactly one year ago, on the 3rd of January, the Cardinal, writing from Rome about "Jews, my Brothers," told me the same story and added: "I started the study of Hebrew after entering the seminary in October 1900. In addition to using the grammar by Chabaud, I utilized that of Mayer-Lambert, which I had seen in the hands of the sons of the Jewish fashion merchant, whose store was close to our home. One of my school mates wrote, under my first name, which had been spelled out in Hebrew: 'Future Jew'. I have not changed my religion, but I have always been interested in the life of the Jews and the writings following the time of Our Lord, the Talmud and other literature. At this moment I am reading the biography of Eliezer ben Yehouda, who was the restorer of the Hebrew language in Israel. I knew him personally when I studied in the Dominican school in 1904/5, and this biography, in English, was offered to me by Mr. Coldi, Chargé of Christian Affairs at the Ministry of Religion in Israel." The Cardinal concluded his letter by saying: "I wish that the Council would do something to show our Jewish brothers our affection for them."

The Council, last November, proposed a schema to the Fathers which, on the one hand, clears definitively the Jewish people of the accusation of deicide (for it is no more guilty of the crucifixion than the English peo-

ple for putting Joan of Arc to the stake) and on the other hand refers to the Jewish roots of Christianity. There is every reason to hope that this text will find a large majority in the Council assembly next autumn. It is fortunate that the Church is already manifesting its cordial disposition vis-a-vis the people of whom St. Paul has written "It remains the beloved people because the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable."

With best regards,

Sincerely,



Zachariah Shuster

cc: FAD





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E. C. ...
G. ...

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y. • PLaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom, New York

July 3, 1964

Dear Jacob:


Thanks very much for your June 30th letter enclosing Archbishop Shehan's communication to you. His direct contact with Cardinal Cicognani and interview with Cardinal Spellman can prove extremely important. As you know, Cicognani is the center of the curia problem in Rome.

Many things have happened since I last saw you on this issue, and it is for this reason that I have suggested that you, Morris Abram and I get together the next time you are in New York with respect to the White House situation. I hope this can be soon.

Confidentially, in all likelihood, the President will take steps to make his concern known to the Vatican. There is a long story connected with this result which I will recount to you the next time I see you. Also, the latest reports are somewhat more encouraging as a result of the pressures from the United States and different parts of the world.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,


John Slawson

Mr. Jacob Blaustein
P. O. Box 238
Baltimore 3, Md.

JS/ss

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JACOB BLAUSTEIN

BLAUSTEIN BUILDING
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September 8, 1964

Rabbi Marc C. Tannenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

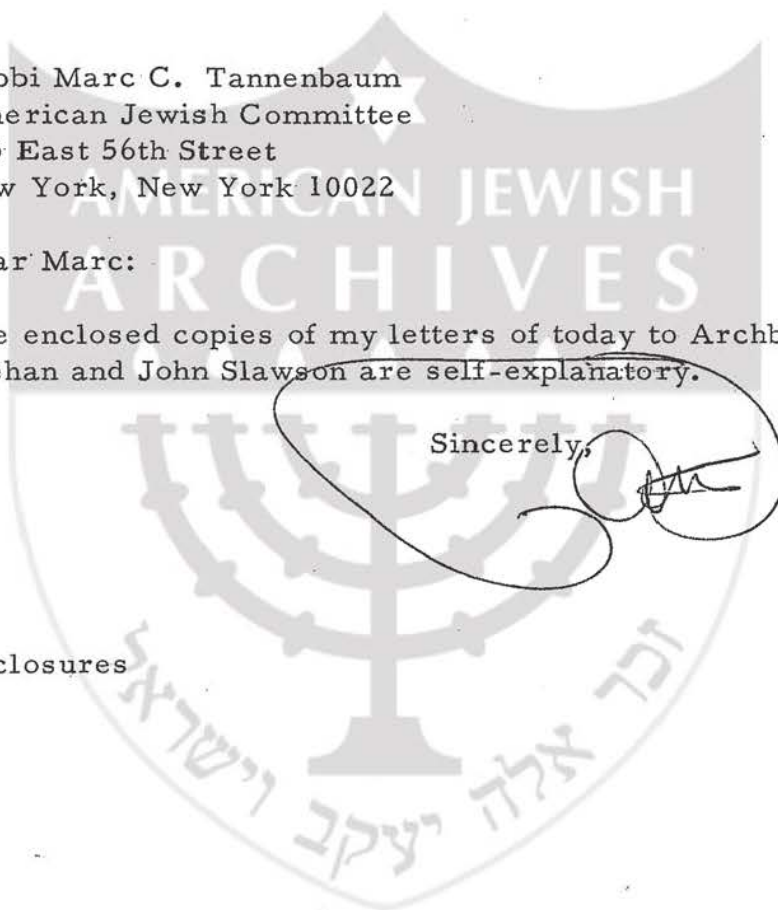
Dear Marc:

The enclosed copies of my letters of today to Archbishop
Shehan and John Slawson are self-explanatory.

Sincerely,



Enclosures



JACOB BLAUSTEIN
ONE NORTH CHARLES
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BALTIMORE, MD. 21208

September 8, 1964

CONFIDENTIAL

Archbishop Lawrence J. Shehan
408 North Charles St.
Baltimore, Md. 21201

Your Excellency:

Many thanks for the audience this morning, and for your good consideration of the views I expressed with regard to the latest draft of the Ecumenical Council declaration on Christian-Jewish relations.

As I stated, this latest draft is most disturbing and, if adopted, will in my opinion engender intense feeling on the part of the Jewish community throughout the world and between the creeds.

In this latest draft: (1) the Deicide absolution is greatly watered down and (2) there is introduced a proselytizing thrust - absent in the previous draft - which would seem to make the friendship of the Church for the Jews contingent upon Jewish conversion.

We fervently hope, therefore, that you and the other Bishops and Cardinals of the United States, northern Europe and like-minded elsewhere will do everything possible to have this decree changed back to the wording of Chapter IV of the Schema on Ecumenism that was introduced in November 1963 during the second Session of the Vatican Council.

If this proves impossible, then we would like to suggest as a less desirable but alternative position, the views expressed in the attached memorandum entitled 'Memo on Recent Draft of the Proposed Jewish Decree - - - Suggestions for Revision'. May I be permitted to repeat that this would serve only as an alternative and would not be as desirable adoption of Chapter IV of November 1963.

My colleagues and I deeply appreciate your interest in this matter, and we are confident that what we propose will be good for humanity at large. And if I may say so, unless the changes from the latest draft are made, the declaration will do much more harm than if the whole idea had not been proposed in the first instance.

With high respect,

Faithfully,

MEMO ON RECENT DRAFT OF THE PROPOSED JEWISH DECREE - - -

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION (Preferably Adoption of Chapter IV
of the Schema on Ecumenism That Was Introduced in November 1963
Session)

- I - Based on a fairly good idea of the content and the language of the text of the decree that has been distributed to the Council Fathers, there is reason for considerable disquiet.
- II - The causes for this disquiet are found in the last two paragraphs of this text. These involve (1) the references to a strong proselytizing thrust at the Jews and (2) a vague and imprecise reference to the deicide issue.
- III - It is quite clear that in almost every respect the text of Chapter IV of the Schema on Ecumenism that was introduced in November 1963 during the second session of the Vatican Council was much more complete and stronger than the present text. Chapter IV would certainly be more acceptable to the majority of Jews than the present version. WE WOULD THEREFORE RESPECTFULLY URGE THAT IF AT ALL POSSIBLE CHAPTER IV BE ADOPTED BY THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COUNCIL IN PLACE OF THE PRESENT TEXT.
- IV - IF THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING AS A LESS DESIRABLE BUT ALTERNATIVE POSITION:
- 1 - That the present text be retained but that the reference to "the union of the Jewish people with the Church" and that entire paragraph (5) be eliminated for the following reasons:
- A - While many Jews respect the right of the Church to hold out an eschatological hope for the conversion of the Jews, the promulgation of this formulation in a decree which is designed

to seek better relations between Catholics and Jews and to overcome misunderstanding is, to say the least, strategically unwise. The reaction in the Jewish community to that paragraph will be dreadful and explosive.

- a - This paragraph which speaks of "The union of the Jewish people with the Church" and that "The Church expects in unshakable faith and with ardent desire the entrance of that people into the fullness of the people of God established by Christ," means that the friendship of the Church for the Jews is contingent upon the dissolution of the Jewish people as a living historic entity and the disappearance of the Synagogues and all Jewish religious institutions and values.
- b - Such a declaration will without question deeply offend the sensitivity of the Jews and the more militant Jewish spokesmen will seize upon this as an occasion for violent criticism and denunciation. The enemies of the Church and of the Jews will spare no effort in maintaining that the Jewish decree is intended to bring about the end of the Jewish faith.
- B - Committed as we are to the improvement of mutual knowledge and respect, some way must be found to eliminate any statement of this evangelical character that would place weapons into the hands of those who are hostile to this great purpose.

2 - The one-line reference to the role of the Jews in the Crucifixion is incomplete and not a conclusive rectification of the deicide conception (last line on page 1). Further it is subject to misinterpretation.

A - The inference of this present statement is that the Jews living at the time of Christ were collectively responsible for his murder. The effect of such an inference on the mind of the Catholic child and adult would be such as to generate hostility toward "the Jews" of today as much as of the past.

B - We strongly urge that in the place of this one line, that there be adopted the language of the original Chapter IV of the Schema on Ecumenism, "De Catholicorum Habitudine Ad Non Christianos Et Maxime Ad Iudaeos."

a - That Chapter IV declared in its condemnation of the deicide charge the following:

"It would be a wrong and injustice to call this people a cursed people, since it remains most beloved of God on account of the Fathers and the gifts made to them (cf. Rom. 11, 28), or (to call them) a deicide people, because the sins of all men, which were the cause of the Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ, were wiped out by the Passion and the Death of the Lord (cf. Luke 23, 34; Act. 3, 17; 1 Cor. 2, 8)."

"But the death of Christ was not brought about by all the (Jewish) people then living, and much less by the present (Jewish) population."

b - Arguments in favor of the use of this substitute paragraph are (1) this document has already become part of the official Council documentation through its introduction at the second session; (2) this language has been publicized as the norm

against which the present weaker language will be viewed. The restoration of this clear and decisive statement would help restore some of feeling of approval among Jews that attended this decree when it was first made public.

- c - The last paragraph of the present version which urges that Catholic catechetics and preaching "Not... expose the Jewish people as a rejected nation" is weak and ineffective when contrasted with the condemnation of hatred against the Jews contained in the original Chapter IV.
- d - We urge strongly that that original language of Chapter IV be introduced as a substitution for the present language.

The Chapter IV condemnation states the following:

"Wherefore since there is such a patrimony common to the Church and the Synagogue, this sacred Council wishes and intends to foster mutual knowledge and esteem of each one of them, a knowledge and an esteem which is obtained by theological studies and fraternal discussions, and besides, just as it reproves severely the wrongs and injustices inflicted everywhere on men, so also and more the hatreds and the persecutions against the Jews, whether perpetrated in ancient times or in our times, (these) she deploras and condemns."

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September 8, 1964

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. John Slawson
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear John:

Learning that Archbishop Shehan is leaving for Rome tomorrow morning, I had Snyder phone yesterday afternoon for an appointment and despite the shortness of time and his necessary preparation for the trip, he was good enough to grant me an audience for early this morning.

I reviewed the situation with him fully, and enclose a copy of the letter and enclosure I am sending him by messenger today which are self-explanatory.

The Archbishop was good enough to show me in confidence the splendid letter he wrote Cardinal Cicognani after my last visit to the Archbishop, and he told me about additional steps he has taken to the very high.

He said he will do everything he can, including behind the scene with the American and other like-minded hierarchy, to have Schema IV that was introduced in November 1963 adopted in place of the draft of the new declaration. And he has a good deal of confidence that this can be accomplished, and failing in this - as a last resort - to have our revisions adopted. I gather he feels that the present draft was introduced principally to placate the Eastern hierarchy, but that the real desire of others is Chapter IV or at least what would be something along the lines of the revisions we suggest.

He authorized me to contact him in Rome if and when I feel it is necessary, and is of the opinion that the main session of the Ecumenical Council will run until the latter half of November.

I am sure you and our other colleagues will be pleased with what I am able herein to report.

With warm regard,

Cordially,

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Recent Developments in Rome

June 8, 1965

1. At the end of May, Pope Paul VI addressed a letter to the Coordinating Committee ordering that the declaration on the Attitudes of the Catholic Church toward Non-Christian Religions, which was adopted with an overwhelming majority last year, be withdrawn and not be included in the agenda of the fourth session of the Ecumenical Council scheduled to begin on September 14. The crucial passage in this letter reads as follows:

"We of our authority have decided for reasons of sound pious doctrine, and reasons arising out of cordial relations with secular governments, to withdraw the document on the Attitudes towards Non-Christian Religions from the consideration of the Committee. And we reserve to ourselves the final judgment as to the manner of disposing of this document. The Committee will proceed with its work and draw up the list of schemata to be discussed..."

2. The declaration is out of the hands of Cardinal Bea's Secretariat after it made some minor emendations along the lines proposed by the members of the Council. The Secretariat forwarded this document to the Coordinating Committee for consideration when this Committee would make decisions on the agenda of the next session. By the order of the Pope the document is thus withdrawn from the Committee and the Pope is now in sole charge of it.

3. From the above quotation it is clear that the reasons given are both theological and political. However, it is reported that in the strategy that is being prepared in the Vatican for explaining this reversal emphasis will be laid not only on Arab pressure but also on so-called "Jewish pressure."

4. It is also reliably reported that while a declaration on Religious Liberty will be presented to the fourth session of the Council, the Vatican is now preparing an appendix to this declaration which would interpret the text in a restrictive way.

5. Some members of the American Catholic hierarchy have been informed of the Pope's order and are planning to take direct action by informing the Pope of the shock and indignation that would most probably occur in the United States if the declaration on the Jews will be eliminated from the agenda of the fourth session.



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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November 12, 1965

Dear Colleague:

On October 28, the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church promulgated a declaration on "The Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," which includes a section on the Jews and anti-Semitism.

While there are differences of views within the Jewish community regarding this declaration, it is my personal conviction that in the perspective of 1900 years of Jewish-Christian relations this document is a significant step forward. It provides the basis for a program of implementation to bring about real changes in Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism.

The American Jewish Committee has played a central role in this effort, and has sought the advice and counsel of leading authorities in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jewry. The enclosed document is a background report describing our position and program in relation to the passage of the Jewish declaration. This is shared with you as a "private communication" and is not for publication.

I would welcome any reaction that you might have. With warmest good wishes.

Cordially,

Marc H. Tanenbaum
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director
Interreligious Affairs Department

MHT:fb
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