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

Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 57, Folder 14, Eastern Europe, 1989-1991.



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

October 4, 1989

Sir Sigmund Sternberg
London, England

SOME PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE PROGRAMS IN POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS:

1) A survey of the activities taking place in Poland to advance knowledge and mutual understanding between the Polish and Jewish peoples - seminars, institutes, academic research, Seminary courses, books, religious and secular publications, mass media. (One example is the International Symposium on Bibliographies of Polish Judaica, held in Cracow, July 1988)

The purpose of such a survey would be to obtain a more complete perspective on what progress has been made and what remains to be done in advancing mutual knowledge and respect between the Polish and Jewish peoples. In short, to provide a map for future work.

2) An international symposium to be held in Poland in 1990 of Polish and Jewish scholars, religious leaders, and mass communications experts on the history of Polish-Jewish relations. (The International Congress held in Vienna in November 1988 on "Christians and Jews in a Pluralistic World" is an excellent model. Lord Weidenfeld's leadership in this experience would be of invaluable importance in planning such a congress in Poland.)

The assumption of such a gathering is that there is a vast mutual ignorance which separates Poles and Jews, and an effective congress would help stimulate further initiatives for meeting this urgent need.

3) A symposium of Polish Catholic church leaders and Jewish leaders from the major branches of Judaism to be held in Poland in 1990. The thrust of such a symposium would be to examine "The Image of Jews and Judaism in the Polish Catholic Church" and "The Image of Poland and the Polish Catholic Church in Jewish Culture and Education."

4) A scientific content analysis of the portrayal of Jews and Judaism in Polish textbooks - religious and secular - as well as in popular literature, and journals. A parallel study would be carried out on the presentation of the Polish nation and the Polish Catholic Church in Jewish teaching materials. The findings would provide the basis for remedying negative portrayals or stereotypes, replacing them with truthful and historically accurate narratives.

5) A joint steering committee of Polish and Jewish leaders should be organized to "monitor" problem areas in order to prevent problems from becoming magnified into crises.

6) A special symposium of theologians on a theme such as respective Polish Catholic and Jewish understandings of "Death, Martyrdom, and Mourning," could be helpful if held at a reasonably early date.

These brief suggestions could provide a context for elaborating other proposals and strategies for overcoming misunderstanding and promoting mutual knowledge leading to reciprocal respect.

Marc H. Tanenbaum

Yogo

Marc H. Tanenbaum

December 23, 1991

Mr. Bob DeVecchi
IRC

Dear Bob,

This is in response to your Dec. 20th material on Yugoslavia.

In light of the conditions you outline, I would personally support any appropriate involvement of IRL in a monitoring capacity.

This is such a great tragedy that anything that could be done to help relieve the suffering would have my support.

I am sure this is known to you, Roy Williams, and others: there is a very deep and bitter hostility between the Catholic church in Croatia (mainly) and the Orthodox church in Serbia.

I understand that the Catholic church, through Caritas, is providing aid; I am not sure what the Serbian Orthodox churches are doing. My only point is that the special landmines here will need particularly careful watching.

With every good wish from George and me to you, Betty, and your colleagues for a healthy, healing and, above all, peaceful holy season.

As ever,

Marc

Marc H. Tanenbaum

December 22, 1991

Mr. John Whitehead, Chairman
International Rescue Committee

Dear John,

In response to your letter of December 9th, I am pleased to enclose my contribution of \$1,000.00 in support of the Leo Chernie Refugee Emergency Fund.

Leo first invited me in 1978 to join the IRL Citizens' Commission missions to Southeast Asia in behalf of the Vietnamese boat people. Those experiences had a transforming impact on my life, and I will be forever indebted to Leo and Bob Delischi.

Leo is an authentic giant in humanitarian effectiveness, and it is a privilege to join in paying tribute to him in this modest way.

With warmest regards and cordial best wishes for a healthy, fulfilling, and, above all, peaceful and more humane New Year.

Sincerely,
Marc