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Box 3, Folder 30, "Jewish Statement Prepared for Audience with
Pope John Paul II" [draft], 12 March 1979.

DRAFT TEXT OF JEWISH STATEMENT PREPARED FOR AUDIENCE WITH
POPE JOHN PAUL II, MARCH 12, 1979, VATICAN CITY

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The International Jewish Committee for Interreligious
expresses to our
Consultations ~~xxx greets~~ Your Holiness ~~with the~~ traditional
Hebrew greeting of "Shalom," and we offer our heartfelt prayers
for
~~and blessings for~~ God's richest blessings over You ~~as Your~~
~~Holiness and Your Pontificate~~ and for millions of our Catholic
brothers and sisters throughout the world to whom You minister
as Holy Father.

This is an historic moment in the ~~xxx~~ long history of relations
between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people. Destiny has
ordained that the first non-Italian Pontiff in almost five centuries
comes from a country which has great significance for many nations
and peoples, and, in particular, to the Jewish people. Jewish religious
life and culture have flourished for a thousand years in all parts
of Poland, and during the last epoch of its existence, Poland
was a vital center of Jewish spiritual and cultural creativity in
various forms of expression; it has nourished Jewish life throughout
the world.

But Poland was also the setting in which took place the
destruction of millions of Jewish men, women, and children from all
over Europe and the demolition of the rich treasures of spirituality
and culture produced by Jews in the course of many generations.

It is deeply significant to us that the present Pontiff of
the Catholic Church is one who has seen the last moments of the
that
long period of growth of ~~xxx~~ life and culture as well as the

almost total disappearance of it.

Having experienced first-hand the demonic consequences ~~of the existence~~ of religious and racial hatred and the dehumanization that ~~is~~ is integral to totalitarian societies, we believe that Your Holiness brings a special understanding of the ~~the~~ need to uproot the poisonous weeds of anti-Semitism and prejudice in all its forms, and the compelling obligation of Catholics and Jews to affirm the infinite preciousness of every human life created in the sacred image of God.

The existential experiences which both Your Holiness and the Jewish people have shared in the denial of religious liberty has also created a basis for profound empathy, and a desire on our part to join with the Catholic Church and with all people of good will in the universal struggle to uphold freedom of conscience and religious pluralism that are the keystones of mutual respect and creative coexistence between all faiths and peoples.

Vatican Council II has made a fundamental contribution to the improvement of Catholic and Jewish understanding and friendship through its decisive repudiation of anti-Semitism, its affirmation of our shared reverence for Sacred Scriptures, its support of religious liberty, and its call for fraternal dialogue and joint social action. We trust that during Your Pontificate these principles will be reaffirmed and that vigorous progress forward/^{will be encouraged} in advancing esteem and solidarity between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people.~~xxx~~

As you know, Your Holiness, the Jewish people are

now engaged in a tremendous process of reconstruction and renewal throughout the world, nowhere more dramatically than in the reborn State of Israel and the reunited Holy City of Jerusalem. ~~By~~ By God's grace, we have determined to find hope and the affirmation of the value of human life rather than succumb to the despair of the ashes of Auschwitz. Israel, the Promised Land, the fulfilment of millenia of prayers, the cynosure of Jewish hope in the face of nihilism, is at the center of the Jewish future, fusing both historic memories and spiritual ties between all members of the Jewish family. It is our ardent prayer and hope that Y^hur Holiness will lend his good will and his recognition to the centrality of Jerusalem and of Israel in the spiritual consciousness of the Jewish people,

Together, we pledge our cooperation in working with you and the Catholic Church in helping to establish the cause of human rights in the rights, justice for the deprived and forgotten, and above all, peace for the welfare of the entire human family.

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After a year and a half, we presented to the Iranian Government a comprehensive plan for the restoration and development of the Ghazvin area.

In place of subsistence agriculture controlled by absentee landlords, we proposed sweeping agrarian reforms. We recommended an improved system of crop rotation and the planting of new crops, such as cotton and sugar beets, the introduction of agricultural industry, new and more effective systems of irrigation and land utilization, programs for the extension of credit for the purchase of seeds and fertilizers, more advanced techniques for the marketing of crops, and the establishment of agricultural cooperatives.

Having put these proposals before the Iranian Government, we then defended them before the World Bank, which furnished the funds for their implementation. The Ghazvin region is now one of the most modern and fertile regions on the Iranian plateau.

But this was only the most extensive of many such Israeli missions. Israeli experts helped to modernize the dairy and poultry industries of Iran. They improved

veterinary procedures and introduced better insecticides. In the field of health care, the Israeli contribution has been particularly notable, and Iranian patients who required special treatment were welcomed to Israeli hospitals. Thousands of Iranians have been trained in Israel's fields and universities.

When I arrived with my team at the rubble of Ghazvin I did not think for a moment that we had come to help a government. We came to help a suffering population. Our work was humanitarian, not political, and we worked hard. The friendship of the villagers and the improvement of their lot were our rewards.

Israel has no desire to bear the "white man's burden" in the Middle East. It wishes to live in that part of the world, to aid and be aided by it. I am confident that when Israel and its neighbors reach a settlement, when the problem of the Palestinians is solved, such relations will become real.

In these still-troubled days, I remember my many friends in Iran and wish them and all the Iranian people a swift and painless road to social reconstruction, economic prosperity and peace.

Shavuot Greetings

From the Staff of Jewish Digest!

"This Alone Justifies the Series"

The Impact of 'Holocaust' on German TV

By MARC H. TANENBAUM

Adapted from an NBC COMMENTARY

No book, no TV documentary, no film, no lecture has touched the soul of modern Germany on the moral watershed tragedy of the Nazi Holocaust as has the NBC-TV series, "Holocaust." That dramatic but factual conclusion has emerged from a series of overseas telephone calls that I had with public officials in West Germany, and in particular, with leaders in the

village of Oberammergau, following the viewing of the third installment of "Holocaust."

Reports from West Germany in major American newspapers show an estimated 13 million people, or 39 percent of the 34 million people in the viewing audience, watched the third of the four installments. This was up from 13 million viewers, or 36 percent last who watched the second installment, and 11 million, or 32 percent, who watched the first installment.

The viewing audience for each of the three installments was more than the predicted 15 percent that was expected to watch the program.

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over Westdeutsche Rundfunk (WDR) of Cologne, the regional station coordinating the telecasts

The German officials I spoke with said that the figures reported in the American newspapers were underestimated, and that, in fact, some 20 million people had seen the second installment. That means one in three potential regional viewers were exposed to the "holocaust" account. "That audience broke every record for regional television in Germany," one official told me. "The program has created a moral and psychological earthquake of unprecedented proportions."

More than 20,000 people called the WDR television offices and two-thirds of the callers were in favor of "Holocaust" being televised in Germany. Many of the viewers told the TV station authorities that they either could not go on watching it, and some said that they could not sleep and had to take valium or sleeping pills so powerful was the program's impact.

One authority told me, "The experience with the program already has been quite extraordinary. Nobody, even the most sympathetic in the TV industry, expected such an emotional reaction. It has staggered everybody."

The effect has even spread to East Germany where, according to reports, many living beyond the West German regional broadcasting range are demanding to see the series. Regional television

broadcasts can be received in East Germany and in areas along the boundary, but most East German viewers are beyond their range. According to reports, among the East Germans who had seen the program and called to express their reactions, positive comments outnumbered negative comments 6-2.

I spoke with several people in the village of Oberammergau who are involved in an effort to revise the anti-Semitic version of the Oberammergau Passion Play scheduled for production in April, 1980. Hans Schwaighofer, director of the Rosner text of the Passion Play, told me "Practically everybody in Oberammergau has watched the first two installments of 'Holocaust'. The impact has been tremendous. There is a feeling of shock throughout much of Oberammergau. Many people are walking around the streets of the village saying, 'God's sake!' and shaking their heads in disbelief. How did we let that happen?"

The Oberammergau Town Council has sent around a questionnaire to all the villagers inviting them to sign up for the 1980 Passion Play. In light of the shocked feeling in the village in the wake of 'Holocaust' many are refusing to answer the questionnaire, and it is now being extended for eight days.

Several hundred of the younger villagers, identified with the Rosner text have indicated that they will refuse to act in the Daisen-

berger version of the Passion Play which has been condemned by Christian and Jewish authorities alike as "structurally anti-Semitic." Some Oberammergau officials told me that they now hope that the reaction to 'Holocaust' will play an important role in influencing the rejection of the anti-Jewish Daisenberger text of the play.

There were a good number of negative and hostile reactions of Germans who asked, "Why reopen old wounds? We should forget all this. It is enough time already."

Heinz Galinski, head of the Jewish community in West Berlin, said that "the reactions of the Jewish community throughout West Germany had been positive" adding that he had received many calls from Jews and non-Jews alike. There are about 27,000 Jews in West Germany today, a tragic remnant of the more than 500,000 Jews who lived in pre-war Germany.

Galinski said the "Timing of the showing was perfect. It comes at a time when there is talk again of the Auschwitz lie," a reference to the Nazi effort to revise history and claim that the genocide of Jews never took place, "when some students are making jokes again about Jews, when the statute of limitations on Nazi war crimes of murder is an issue and when many seem to be preaching 'let us forget'."

Perhaps the most significant response of all to "Holocaust" was that of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. In a debate in the lower house of the West Germany Parliament, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt commended the "holocaust" series, said that the film is a "must" in connection with the current controversy over extending the legal time limit under which Nazi war criminals can be prosecuted. He added that the series encourages critical and moral reflection which "is important in view of the decision each of us must make for himself in the course of this year on the statute of limitations."

Based on the impact already registered, the American Jewish Committee now plans to carry out a systematic study of responses to the entire series in Germany as well as in the 15 other countries in which the film is being shown, and then an intensive follow-up educational program in German religious and secular school systems. I have no hesitation in saying that if this "Holocaust" series had achieved nothing other than the impact that it has already had in Germany, it more than justifies all the investment of time and energy in helping bring its message before millions of Germans who might otherwise have avoided facing the tragedy of the Holocaust.

