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Preserving American Jewish History

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I. CATHOLICS AND JEWS

SPIRITUAL MAN AT THE CROSSROADS

The middle years of the twentieth century have ushered in a period of profound change, unparalleled in the history of mankind.

Titanic forces--technical, intellectual and spiritual--are at work. Atomic energy, new methods of communication and travel, the population explosion and the dawn of space exploration, are remaking our society. Political and economic upheaval is the order of the day, as rich nations, blind and complacent, are faced with the awakening of the world's underprivileged masses. Established religions everywhere are confronted by the legions of those who openly deny the reality of spiritual things, or else wear a false religious badge while seeking only success and material comfort.

Under the impact of these forces, a totally new age has come into being in less than 25 years. Two overwhelming factors dominate this age. First: there are no islands any more; what happens anywhere on earth happens next door to us. Second: man is now able to destroy himself and his planet in a matter of minutes.

For these reasons, man's actions today have far wider repercussions than formerly--for better or for worse. The mighty forces at large in today's world can spell spiritual division and physical annihilation; or they can speed man on his search for unity and spiritual fulfillment.

CATHOLIC-JEWISH TENSION

The state of the world thus calls for a re-appraisal of values among all those concerned with the spiritual destiny of man. Conscious of the gravity of the hour and of the Church's responsibility, His Holiness Pope John XXIII has called an ecumenical council, the first in nearly a century. We understand this council is to be pastoral rather than doctrinal and will concern itself mainly with concrete issues and practical directives.

The American Jewish Committee would like to take the opportunity afforded by the calling of this Council to lay before the Head of the Church a matter of deep concern: Catholic teaching about the Jews, particularly in the United States, and the prejudice and hostility generated by such teaching.

The tensions between Jews and Catholics are centuries old, but the dangers of the present day make the issue more urgent than ever before. Whatever may have been true in past ages, prejudice against any religious group today inevitably weakens the entire fabric of society, degrades both the haters and the victims, and saps the spiritual strength of all mankind. Hostility among believers of different creeds serves only to advance the cause of anti-religious forces. In this hour of peril, all those who share the spiritual heritage of the Bible must stand together if humanity is to survive.

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE AND THE JEWS

Jews have lived in the Christian world since its beginning, yet their status among the Christian majority has almost always

been precarious. On one hand, they were protected by the Church during long periods--witness the safety they enjoyed in the Papal states from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, and the stand taken by several Popes against persecution. On the other hand, in nearly every century Jews have undergone untold suffering at the hands of supposed Christians, sometimes with the acquiescence of ecclesiastical authority.

This ambiguous attitude of the Christian world toward the Jews has persisted into our own time. When Hitlerism--an essentially anti-Christian movement generated chiefly by social and economic forces unrelated to religion--unleashed the most terrible of all persecutions, some individual Christians courageously saved Jewish lives, but the majority of Christendom stood indifferently by. The Jews will not forget their rescuers, Pope Pius XII among them; but neither can they forget the six millions whom no one rescued.

How could this diabolical crime have come to pass, in a country of ancient Christian traditions, unless the Christian conscience had been lulled to sleep--unless a strong undercurrent of anti-Jewish feeling ran through the Christian culture? In the days of the death camps as in those of the Black Death, many nominal Christians must have felt that the Jews were outside the human community, that they somehow deserved their fate, and that the rest of mankind was not responsible for them. It was this hostility and indifference which made possible the greatest mass murder in history.

TEACHING HATE OF THE JEWS

It is therefore appalling to find that, fifteen years after the catastrophe, the same hostility and indifference is being transmitted to a new generation. Our culture still is permeated by religious prejudice, the result of a variety of social, psychological and political forces.

Organized religion must share some of the responsibility for this state of affairs. Churches of several denominations still tolerate explicitly or implicitly anti-Semitic attitudes and beliefs. Among the channels by which prejudice is spread, that is one of the most insidious, because it seemingly carries the approval of the highest moral and spiritual authority.

There is ample evidence that Catholic religious teaching today abounds with misstatements and omissions likely to create hostility and contempt for Jews. We consider it our duty to bring this violation of the precepts of love and brotherhood to the attention of the Head of the Church, and to ask that it be stopped at once.

THE CHURCH'S TRUE POSITION

Teachings that tend to perpetuate hostility between Catholics and Jews appear in all their monstrous absurdity when read against the true relationship of the two faiths. The close historical and spiritual ties between them were forcefully recalled by Pope Pius XI, when he declared to a Christian audience: "Spiritually...we are Semites." In the light of this statement, we believe our concern with Catholic-Jewish relations parallels that of the Church itself.

That the Church is aware of the possible influence of words and rituals on religious hostility is indicated by certain changes in the liturgy during the last six years, particularly since the accession of Pope John XXIII. Thus, in 1955, kneeling in prayer for the Jews during the Good Friday service was reintroduced, and in 1958, references to "perfidii Judaei" and "Judaica perfidia" were removed from the Good Friday prayer. In 1959, the following sentence was dropped from the Act of Consecration of the Human Race (celebrated as part of the Mass of the Sacred Heart, the Blessing of the Holy Sacrament, the Feast of Christ and King, and on the first Friday of each month):

"Look, finally, with eyes of pity upon the children of that race which was for so long a time thy chosen people; and let thy Blood, which was once invoked upon them in vengeance, now descend upon them also in a cleansing flood of redemption and eternal life."

Finally, in 1960, this sentence was dropped from the Baptism of Converts:

"Horresce Judaicam perfidiam, respue Hebraicam superstitionem."

TOWARD MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT

The Holy See's concern with religious influences in anti-Semitic attitudes is echoed by the work of Catholic thinkers both in Europe and the United States. The improvement of relations between the two faiths is being discussed in numerous articles, studies, lectures and books.

In France, Father Paul Démann, N.D.S., has published a comprehensive survey of Catholic teachings about the Jews (La catéchèse chrétienne et le peuple de la Bible, Paris 1952). Specific issues bearing on Catholic-Jewish relations have been the subjects of statements by clerics, such as Achilles Cardinal Liénart, Bishop of Lille; Msgr. Charles de Provençères, Bishop of Aix, Father John La Farge, S.J., and Father Louis Hartman, C. Ss. R., of the Catholic Biblical Association of America.

Relations between Catholics and Jews have been discussed in the United States in Jubilee Magazine and in the Annual Report of the Catholic Library Association. The German publication Rundbrief zur Förderung der Freundschaft zwischen dem alten und dem neuen Gottesvolk im Geiste der beiden Testamente (Freiburg) is devoted to the same cause, as are the organization Amitié Juéo-Chrétienne in France, and the Catholic Commission for Israel in the Netherlands.

At the same time, Jewish scholars have shed new light on the problem--most notably the distinguished historian Jules Isaac in France. In the United States, Hyman E. Goldin, Morris Goldstein and Solomon Zeitlin have published studies of Jesus from the Jewish viewpoint during recent years.

DESTROYING THE ROUTE OF HATE

What are the stereotyped false charges against the Jews which, despite these efforts, still disfigure Catholic teaching, spreading old hatreds among a new generation? Our findings, paralleling studies made in other countries, indicate that misguided religious teaching likely to foster hostility against Jews falls into a fairly consistent pattern. Characteristic American examples of

such teaching taken from textbooks used in parochial schools, will be presented in the second part of this memorandum.

If the American Jewish Committee adds its voice to those of others who ask for a general revision of Catholic teaching materials concerning Jews, it does so without any spirit of accusation or rancor. It is moved solely by the belief that eradicating religious hostility will greatly benefit both Christians and Jews, and will strengthen the spiritual forces in the world.

NO DANGER TO DOCTRINE

The work already done shows that such a revision of Catholic teaching materials need not falsify any elements of Christian belief. As we have seen, it was possible to make important changes in the liturgy to remove sources of anti-Jewish hostility. It therefore seems reasonable to hope that similar steps can be taken in the area of lay instruction without impairing the faith in any way.

11 WHAT CATHOLICS LEARN ABOUT JEWS

The following extracts from Catholic teaching materials used in the United States are not intended as an exhaustive presentation of faulty teaching about Jews. They are merely examples encountered in a survey of a random selection of approved parochial-school textbooks, undertaken by the American Jewish Committee's Institute of Human Relations. However, the large number of objectionable passages found in these presumably typical texts would seem to indicate that the problem is widespread.

A comprehensive study of the ways in which Catholic teaching materials portray other religious, racial and ethnic groups is now in process at St. Louis University under the supervision of Father Trafford Maher, S. J. Self-studies of Protestant and Jewish teach-

ing materials have also been undertaken at Yale University, the latter by Dropsie College.

THE JEWS AS PORTRAYED IN CATHOLIC TEXTBOOKS

A Protestant scholar who recently completed an intensive seven year study of American Protestant textbooks points out that when Protestant lessons deals with intergroup relations, they invariably produce positive and friendly portraits of other racial and religious groups. "Paradoxically, it is precisely the attempts to set forth the faith that the knotty problems of intergroup writing come.....The negative...and ambiguous images of other groups appear in lessons that have no intergroup purpose-which are intended to expound scripture or set forth doctrine. Positive efforts toward good will and understanding sometimes break down the moment one gets into religious teaching."

In our judgment the same observations may be made about Catholic educational materials. In the Catholic textbooks which we have examined, we have noted many exemplary passages which stress the importance of human brotherhood and the important contribution made by different cultural and religious groups: "A considerable number of Jews have made original contributions to American culture. Through newspaper and book publishing, the theater, motion picture production, and radio, others have assisted in the popular dissemination of information and culture. There is hardly a national group or a voice in the world that has not in some way left its mark upon our arts or daily living."

Unfortunately, however, Catholic teaching about Jews often becomes uncharitable, distorted and stereotyped when lessons deal with certain specific subjects, such as the birth of Christianity,

the conflict between the early church and synagogue, the relationship between Jesus and his contemporaries.

In lessons devoted to these, and related subjects, such a negative and hostile portrait is painted of Jews and Judaism as to foster antagonism in the minds of students and cancel out the well-intentioned statements that appear in other lessons. What good does it do to teach a Catholic student that Jews have made notable contributions to culture if he is also taught, directly or indirectly, that they are collectively and unilaterally responsible for the death of Jesus?

Father Louis Hartman, C. Ss. R., General Secretary, The Catholic Biblical Association of America has stated,

"The New Testament quite clearly lays the chief responsibility for the death of Christ on a small but powerful group of men who could not claim to act as the rightly constituted head of the Jewish people. The rabble which they were able to rouse up to clamor for the death of Christ before Pilate's tribunal could not speak in the name of the whole Jewish people of that time and certainly not in the name of all later Jewish generations. The Gospels show that the vast majority of the Palestinian Jews with whom our Lord came in contact were very favorably inclined towards Him. Moreover, the bulk of the Jews at that time probably lived outside of Palestine, and apparently very few of these had even heard of Jesus of Nazareth until some decades later when the Apostles first preach to them.

"Historically speaking, therefore, there is no basis for the claim that the Jews of that time as a people were guilty of the death of Christ, and obviously there is not the slightest

reason for bringing this accusation against their descendents of two thousand years later."

In spite of this, and in spite of the Council of Trent's teaching on this subject, (Article IV) we find frequent passages either explicitly stating or inferring that the Jews as a people willfully murdered the Son of God; that they are collectively and unilaterally responsible for his death; that they are a cursed people, condemned and rejected by God.

Ex: "The Jews wanted to disgrace Christ by having him die on the cross."

"The vast majority of Jewish people, condemn Him to death as a blasphemer, and deliver Him up to the Romans to be crucified."

"The chief priests took up a cry that put a curse on themselves and on Jews for all time: 'His blood be on us and on our Children!'"

"Show that the Jews did not want Pilate to try Christ but to give permission for his death."

"Again the Jews were changing the charge, as they had done in the religious trial. If one accusation didn't work, they would try another."

"When did the Jews decide to kill Christ?"

"He declared the divinity of Christ whom the Jews had crucified."

"The curse of Christ and the subsequent decay of the (fig) tree symbolized the condemnation and the destruction of the Jewish people for their empty lives."

This verse is generally understood to mean, "If crucifixion is the lot of The Innocent, what is to be expected by the guilty, (that is, the Jews)?"

"To complete your father's reckoning? By killing the Son of God as their fathers had killed his prophets."

"The Jews as a nation refused to accept Christ, and since his time they have been wandering on the earth without a temple or a sacrifice and without the Messias."

"The Gentiles came to take the place of the Jews in Christ's Kingdom."

"God separated Israel from the rest of the world and gave it ample protection. He left it in the keeping of the leaders of the people, and from time to time, through His prophets, asked for results. The harsh treatment given these spokesmen of God reached a climax in the willful murder of Christ. As a consequence, these false leaders and their followers were rejected as the foundation of the Kingdom in favor of the Gentiles."

"When they (The Jews) would not heed the prophets, He sent His only-begotten Son to call them to repentance. Him also they put to death. Because of this fact, they were finally rejected by God and their rights to His Kingdom were given to others."

What kind of attitudes towards Jews are stimulated by these typical passages? It is our conviction that such remarks instill in the mind of Catholic students an impression of collective Jewish guilt, and a feeling that the sufferings and persecutions which the Jews have endured throughout history are somehow deserved. Such a concept is extraordinarily invidious, because it cuts off the Jews from the common body of humanity and makes Catholics passive to the fate of their fellow human beings. If Catholic students are taught that God has cursed and rejected the Jews, it is quite natural for them to do the same.

PARTIALITY IN THE USE OF THE WORD "THE JEWS"

Both psychology and history have taught us that to conceive of a people as collectively guilty, to regard them as evil or sinful as a people, is to support the kind of racist thinking that makes genocide possible. Yet this tendency is observable in Catholic teaching materials, not only in the themes illustrated by the above mentioned passages, but in the very partiality in which the word "the Jews" is used in these materials. In books retelling Jesus' life the word "the Jews" often does not appear until it is used to designate the enemies of Jesus. Seldom is it made clear that Jews were also his friends and followers.

Ex: "Scripture tells us that Judas was watching for a chance to turn his Master over to the Jews."

"They were a fraid to be seen by the Jews, for fear they might be put to death as their Master was."

"The Jews stirred up the rabble against him..."

"For what words of His did the Jews attempt for the second time to stone him."

BUT regard the following statements:

Ex: "Christ chose the twelve men who were to be the foundation of His Kingdom."

"All together, numbering well over five thousand, they listened to the Master all day, forgetting even to eat."

"In the beginning of His public life, Jesus was held in great admiration by the people."

In each of these examples, the people referred to are Jews. By pointing out this fact, Catholic textbooks could do much to change the inaccurate impression that the Jews, as a people, hated Jesus and conspired toward his death.

A shockingly blatant example of the way language is twisted to give this distorted impression is found in the following passage:

"It was on the day Christ raised Lazarus from the tomb that the Jews decided to kill him.

"Nevertheless, they were afraid of the people." (Were not 'the people' also Jews?)

Often in Catholic textbooks, there is a great difference in the way Jews are depicted in lessons dealing with the Old Testament, and those dealing with the New Testament. In lessons about the Old Testament, which are friendly and positive, the terms most often used are "Hebrews" or "Israelites." In lessons dealing with the New Testament events, which are unfriendly and negative in their impact, the term, "the Jews" is used most often. Since that is the term by which they are called today, contemporary Jews tend to be associated in the mind of the Catholic student with the conflict described in the New Testament, but not with the living people to whom God revealed Himself, who upheld even through martyrdom the faith in the one and living God which made Christianity possible. The student is not made sufficiently aware that the "Hebrews" and "Israelites," who are praised for their loyalty and devotion to God are the same people as "the Jews" of the New Testament lessons.

The terminology applied to the Jews as a group or to specific situations in which some Jews were involved is often much as to create prejudice and bias against them.

Ex: "Since Pilate could not find anything wrong with Christ, he decided to disfigure His pure and beautiful body so that even the bloodthirsty Jews would back down...."

"Jesus...was rejected by the leaders of the Jewish people because their material and carnal minds..."

Time and again, we find references to the "envious Jews," the "blind hatred of the Jews," the "unbelieving Jews," etc. The repeated use of such adjectives before the word "Jews," makes it possible for students to associate these ugly characteristics with all Jews, and to think of Jews as a hating, materialistic and carnal people.

The dangers of sweeping generalizations, oversimplification and partiality in the use of the term, "the Jews" have long been recognized by scholars and scientists as providing stimulation and support for anti-Semitic attitudes. Among the American Catholics who are concerned with the impact of such material on the mind of students is Father Trafford Maher of St. Louis University. Father Maher quotes the following passage from a Catholic textbook. "The Jews, on the contrary, by the bad influence of their pride and hypocrisy, hindered the spread of the knowledge of God among other nations." Comments Father Maher: "Patently, the problem here is the broad sweep in the author's statement, his lack of care in the statement of the facts, and his apparent unawareness of what such a statement might do in the formation of the young reader's attitudes toward people in his own world."

The Pharisees

The treatment of the Pharisees in Catholic textbooks may be questioned on several grounds. No distinction is made among Pharisees, although the New Testament itself distinguished some who opposed Jesus and others who befriended and supported him. No true religious motivation is ascribed to the Pharisees in any situation; they are depicted as being motivated only by hypocrisy, greed, blind hatred and

lust for power. Nowhere is it suggested that some Pharisees might have opposed Jesus out of sincere conviction. For example, the Pharisees "pretend" to be shocked at Jesus' claims; the possibility is never raised that they might honestly have been shocked by them. Thus the Catholic student is given a picture of a group of people utterly debased, utterly hypocritical, with no love of God, and with no motivation for opposing Jesus other than hatred and self-willed blindness.

Ex: "No one has any sympathy for the Pharisees because they deliberately made themselves blind to the inspiring miracles and teaching of Christ."

"The high-priest and the rest of the Temple Gang (Described as Pharisees and Scribes) played the part of hypocrite and looked horrified at what Christ said."

"Back of it all was the envy of the Temple Gang -- the better a man Christ was, the greater their hatred of him."

In his book "Christian Catechetics and the People of the Bible," Father Paul Dimann has written "...the manner in which one approaches and judges the Pharisees constitutes, it seems to us, a true test of the spirit of our teaching. Too often, instead of seeing in them, and in the reproaches that Jesus directed to them, the mirror of our own hypocrisies, our own narrownesses,

our own formalism, we are tempted to regard them exactly as they were tempted to regard the sinners and the publicans. To present the Pharisees in a manner historically and theologically exact, is to show that their temptations, their sins, the reproaches that were addressed to them, were not in a collective sense but rather in a permanent and universal sense - it is to understand and to make understood that the question is not them in opposition to us, but of us beside them."

Nowhere in the materials we examined are the Pharisees described in the manner called for by Father Dimann.

Unjust or Inaccurate Comparisons

Often, in the attempt to set forth Christianity, completely unjust and inaccurate comparisons are made with Judaism. Judaism is depicted as a legalistic and loveless religion concerned only with external observances. Catholic students do not get the impression that love of God and neighbor is just as obligatory in the Old Testament, where it was first mentioned, as in the New Testament.

Ex: "The Jews believed that one should hate an enemy; but Christ taught the opposite."
(St. Paul's comment, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him" (Romans 12:20) is a direct quote from the Old Testament. (Proverbs 25:21)

"David was the Holy King and his psalms are used today in the Christian Church far more than among the Jews." (This is not only an inaccurate statement but an unnecessary one. It is not

possible to depict Catholic devotion to the psalms without demigrating the Jewish religion?)

"No Jewish rabbi reads the Old Testament scriptures as faithfully as does the priest."
(Again, this seems an unnecessary slur on Jewish religious practices, in addition to being inaccurate. Cannot the Catholic devotion to the Old Testament be described without negative comparisons of this kind?)

"The first martyr was St. Stephen...who was stoned to death for defending the new Faith and the right of Gentiles (Non-Jews) to salvation."
(Jews did not, and do not now, claim to have a monopoly on salvation. The rabbinic dictum, "All the righteous of the earth have a share in the world to come" was expressed almost a century before Jesus.)

"But little progress has been made in the conversion to any form of Christianity of groups who regard their race or religion as the antithesis of Christianity, such as the Jews and Mohammedans. Both of these large bodies are more anti-Christian than they are pro something." (It seems almost unnecessary to point out that Jews do not regard their religion as the "antithesis of Christianity")

and the statement that Judaism is more anti-Christian than pro its own values is patently bigoted.)

In addition, we find in Catholic history textbooks, that Jews are accused of many evil doings by innuendo.

Ex: "In order to divert the masses from what they believed the true origin of the fire, Nero, perhaps at the suggestion of the Jews, charged it to the Christians."

"The Jews no doubt had insisted on wreaking vengeance on some one, after St. Paul had escaped their fury by his appeal to Caesar."

"In 726 Leo the Issaurian (717-741), urged perhaps by Mohammedans and Jews, ordered the destruction of all images in the churches."

Omissions

What is left out of a lesson may be as important in the formulation of attitudes and values as what is put in. By completely ignoring certain realities, or by telling only some of the facts, educational literature may stimulate or abet religious bigotry. It is possible that unconscious prejudice goes into the selection of what is included and what is omitted. For example, it is not false to state that, in the Middle Ages, many Jews were money lenders. However, it is not fair to make such a statement without also pointing out that Jews were barred from the medieval guilds and were forbidden to own land; therefore, usury was one of the few alternatives

available to them.

Some of the omissions regarded as prejudicial are illustrated here:

1. Jewish background of Christianity often ignored.

Many Catholics are largely unaware of Christianity's Jewish roots. Some passages give the impression that the Bible did not exist before the founding of the Catholic Church.

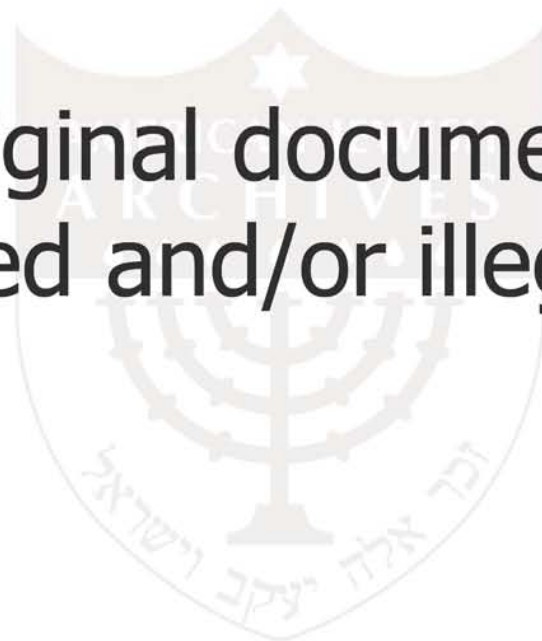
Ex: "God) inspired men whom He chose to write the different smaller books which comprise it (the Bible.) There can be no doubt that the world must thank the Catholic Church for the Bible.

2. No reference to Judaism after the birth of Christianity.

Although there are occasional reference to "the Jews," there is no reference to Judaism as a religion after the establishment of Christianity. Jewish religious practices, holy days, etc., are described only as having existed in the ancient past. The Catholic student is given the impression that Judaism as a religion ceased to exist with the founding of Christianity, or more specifically with the destruction of the Temple. What is presented in the materials is a people called "the Jews" that seem to have no religion. By implication, the Jews are depicted as an irreligious people. Granted that Catholics believe Christianity represents the fulfillment of Judaism, is there not a

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a responsibility to mention that Judaism
cermines as a living faith?

3. The Spanish Inquisition

"The Jews, as religionists, were not subject
to the Spanish Inquisition, but only as baptized
Christians, known as Maranos. Jews who practiced
their own religion were not molested. Jewish
scholars admit that many Jews, of their own free
will embraced the Catholic Church, were baptized,
followed Catholic practices, yet were insincere."

(We know of no Jewish source which states that "many Jews"
of their own free will, embraced the Catholic Church.) On the
contrary, they point out that most of the Jews who converted did
so under threats and pressure. The statement that Jews who
practiced their own religion were not molested is untrue; they were
molested by the civil authorities if not by the Church. To omit
these facts is to lead the Catholic student to believe that Jews
converted eagerly and willingly in large numbers, but were disloyal
and insincere in their new faith.)

Summation

In summation, the false teachings about Jews in Catholic
materials seem to fall into a certain pattern and may be categorized
in certain ways:

1. Slandorous Interpretations (Unilateral and collective
responsibility for the Crucifixion; Deicide; Cursed People; Reject-
ion, etc.,

2. Over-simplification and Sweeping Statements (The
Pharisees; partiality in the use of the word "Jews," etc.)

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3. Unjust or Inaccurate Comparisons (the religion of law versus the religion of love, etc.)

4. Invidious use of Language ("carnal" "Jews," "Blood-thirsty Jews" - "unbelieving Jews," etc.)

5. Omissions (Jewish roots of Christianity; continuity between Old and New Testaments, etc.)



III. AMERICAN ASPECTS

PREJUDICE A DANGER TO AMERICA

Because of certain historical and ethnic factors in American society, the problem of Catholic attitude toward Jews in the United States has important civic and social implications in addition to its spiritual ones.

The immense variety of religious faiths and national backgrounds among the American people makes it necessary to work steadily and rapidly toward the elimination of intergroup tensions--not by persuading anyone to abandon his religion for that of the majority, nor by preaching syncretism in any form, but by creating a climate free from prejudice.

To accomplish this end, American Protestants and Jews in recent years have made special efforts to do away with all religious sanctions of bigotry. The election of a Catholic to the Presidency of the United States is only one, though the most striking, result of these efforts.

CATHOLIC VS. JEWISH AMERICAN

Jews have always lived peacefully in America, even though they have been, and to some extent still are, subjected to certain forms of discrimination, such as quota restrictions in college admission, and ineligibility to some clubs and residential areas. Occasional expressions of flagrant anti-Semitic prejudice--an epithet hurled at a Jewish child on the street, an anti-Jewish slur in conversation among Gentiles--are usually dismissed as trivial.

Yet all is not well, as was shown in the winter of 1959-60, when swastikas were painted on walls and synagogues were desecrated in many parts of the country. These were not trivial incidents, and there were 643 of them.

We are deeply disturbed to find that an overwhelming majority of these acts were the work of Catholics. An inquiry by a major university has revealed that of the youths known to have been involved 81 per cent were Catholics who were attending or had attended parochial schools.

This percentage is plainly too high to be the result of coincidence. Apparently the parochial schools have failed somewhere in their task of teaching brotherhood and mutual respect. It does not seem far-fetched to assume that the failure may lie partly in the prejudice-producing textbooks we cited earlier.

No doubt the mischief is done inadvertently. Traditional statements of a kind likely to breed distrust and dislike of Jews may be repeated by educators and passed by the Censor without awareness of their possible psychological effect. But the damage they can do to America's spiritual strength is no less for being unintentional. The nation's unity is steadily undermined by animosity continuously fostered from childhood.

MORE THAN A NATIONAL PROBLEM

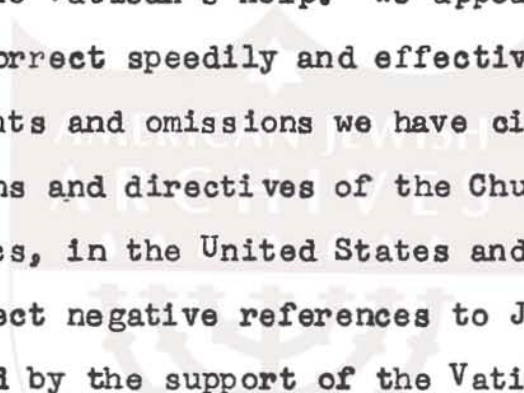
When such attitudes are encouraged in our society, how can we present to the world a nation united by bonds stronger than those of materialism? Of all the forces that might seriously impair America, none is more corrosive than intergroup tension.

Such tension has taken violent forms during bad times in

the past, and may do so again. America could look into the future with far greater confidence if divisive influences like those of which we have spoken were eliminated at once.

Because the inner strength of America is of critical importance to the destiny of mankind, tension between American Catholics and American Jews is not merely a national problem to be solved at the national level.

We need the Vatican's help. We appeal to His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, to correct speedily and effectively the hostility-breeding statements and omissions we have cited, as being contrary to the intentions and directives of the Church. We believe there are many Catholics, in the United States and elsewhere, who would be eager to correct negative references to Jews if they were assured of and encouraged by the support of the Vatican.



IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Catholic attitudes toward the Jews today are contradictory. On one hand, there are the foresight and understanding of His Holiness, Pope John XXIII and the efforts of certain Catholic leaders; on the other hand there is hostility, wittingly or unwittingly fostered in many parts of the Church community.

So that the spirit of good will exemplified by the Pope may animate the whole Catholic community--especially priests, teachers and writers of religious and educational publications and the relations between Catholics and Jews everywhere may be infused with a new spirit, we respectfully submit, in private, and without publicity, the following suggestions:

1. That His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, cause precise directives to be issued from the Vatican, through proper channels and according to established methods, for cleansing all Catholic educational and liturgical publications of inaccurate, distorted, slanderous or prejudicial statements about Jews as a group, and for revising all new and reissued books accordingly.

2. That the teaching of the Church take full cognizance of the continuity between the Jewish and Christian faiths and of Christianity's roots in the Old Testament, so that a sense of nearness and mutual respect may develop

between Catholics and Jews.

We, members of The American Jewish Committee--
an organization devoted to the betterment of
relations between religious and racial groups
in the United States--believe that such a
revision of Catholic teaching is an urgent task,
of equal importance to the spiritual health of
America and of the whole world.

