



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

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line: "This article is re-  
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League of B'nai B'rith.")

Catholics and Jews: Another Chapter

by Burton S. Levinson

Mr. Levinson is national chairman of the  
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

The dismay and disappointment expressed by Jews over Pope John Paul II's June 25 meeting with Kurt Waldheim was the beginning of a nearly three-month period in which more concentrated attention was paid to Catholic-Jewish relations than at any time since Vatican Council II.

Then, too, there was dismay and disappointment. Then, too, the American bishops played an important role in preventing a serious breach from stopping progress.

The issue then, late in 1963, was a draft of a section of the Vatican's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions which denounced anti-Semitism and explicitly rejected the deicide charge against the Jewish people. But by spring of 1964, word came from Rome that the statement on the Jews was being weakened -- renunciation of the deicide charge was being removed, and a solution to anti-Semitism was being coupled with a plea for conversion.

The Anti-Defamation League took to Rome the preliminary findings of a study, "Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism," being conducted for it that year by the University of California Survey Research Center. The findings, shared by ADL in consultations with American Catholic leaders, documented a strong link between accepting derogatory secular stereotypes of Jews and belief that the Jewish people are guilty of the crucifixion. In Rome, they were translated into various languages and pub-

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lished by the Dutch Documentation Center, the agency responsible for preparing background materials for the prelates gathered for the Council sessions prior to their debates.

At about the same time, 170 American bishops -- many of whom had been involved in ADL programs around the country -- met and decided to actively press for an improved declaration by reintroducing deleted passages and taking out others not in the spirit of their position. Perhaps one of the most dramatic pleas made on the floor of the Council session in September 1964, came from Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston: "How many Jews suffered and died because of Christian indifference? Even if there have not been in the past many Christian voices lifted against these inequities, let our voices humbly cry out now."

By November 1964, when a vote was to be taken, the media was reporting attempts made to either prevent strengthening the declaration or to remove it entirely. Arab nations saw any exoneration of the Jews from guilt of Jesus' death as political recognition of Israel by the Vatican and bombarded Council fathers from the Middle East with threats and warnings of diplomatic repercussions. Two anti-Semitic pamphlets distributed to the prelates in Rome attempted to "prove" the deicide charge with time-worn mendacious stories about Jewish ritual practices and also claimed there was "a Jewish plot to overthrow the Church."

But the declaration received overwhelming approval -- 1770 in favor; 185 against. The version formally adopted in the fall of 1965 said, in part, that the death of Jesus "cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today." It further declared that the church "deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source."

So began a new era in Catholic-Jewish relations. In the 22 years since Vatican Council II, great progress has been made in this country in eliminating troublesome teachings about Jews from Catholic texts and sermons, gaining greater understanding of Jews and Judaism and greater appreciation and support for Israel -- albeit still without formal Vatican recognition of the Jewish state.

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Included in recent evidence of progress was Pope John Paul II's visit to Auschwitz and the Rome synagogue and his apparent willingness to give private audiences to Jewish leaders, including several in which I participated along with other ADL officials.

For the Pope to grant an audience to Kurt Waldheim was disappointing but not totally surprising if the rationale were used that Waldheim is a head of state, or if one remembered that the Pope has embraced Yasir Arafat and even met with and forgiven Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who tried to assassinate him. It was the Pope's silence on Waldheim's Nazi record and the Holocaust itself -- reminiscent, ADL said, of the church's silence during the Nazi years -- together with his praise of Waldheim as an outstanding diplomat which was shocking and repugnant. Therefore, ADL reconsidered its participation in the Pontiff's September meeting in Miami with Jewish leaders.

There were members of the American Catholic hierarchy who were dismayed by the bluntness of Jewish reaction. But there were others who understood. The director of ADL's Interfaith Affairs Department, Rabbi Leon Klenicki, was in constant communication with Dr. Eugene J. Fisher, executive secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) Secretariat of Catholic-Jewish Relations, and Bishop William H. Keeler, its chairman. American bishops voiced their concern to the Vatican through Bishop John L. May, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishop May triggered a response from the Pope by enclosing a copy of a book, "John Paul II: On Jews and Judaism," which had just been published by the NCCB Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs and ADL.

The Pontiff's response, a three-page letter of sensitive comment about Jewish suffering during the Holocaust and stressing the need to continue the dialogue, was regarded as a sincere attempt to get Catholic-Jewish relations back on track after the derailment of the Waldheim meeting. It preceded an official invitation, made through Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, chairman of the Vatican's Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, to Jewish leaders to meet with the Pope and papal officials in Rome to discuss their concerns. Rabbi Klenicki, representing ADL, was one of the nine members of the Jewish delegation who met first with Vatican officials on August 31 and then with the Pope the following day at his summer residence, Castel Gandolfo.

In the August 31 meeting, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the Vatican Secretary of State, made several particularly interesting comments. In a discussion on the Vatican and Israel, he noted the Jewish delegates' use of the word "recognition," saying that it is rather a question of "normalization of relations" since the Vatican already recognizes Israel as a state. He cited the fact that Israeli dignitaries are received at the Vatican and Israel's embassy in Rome has a desk for relating to the Vatican. The "normalization," he said, depends on political questions and problems, adding "there are no theological reasons in Catholic doctrine that would inhibit diplomatic relations."

The meeting with the Pope the next day was described by Rabbi Klenicki as having been "for Vatican customs, an informal gathering -- the first of its kind with Jewish leadership. For example, the Pope's chair, usually elevated, was at the same level as everyone else's. He listened to what we had to say about the Waldheim affair, about events we regarded as Christianization of the Holocaust, about anti-Semitism and the lack of Vatican diplomatic recognition of Israel and then gave a 20-minute presentation of his own."

Avoiding mention of Waldheim, the Pope described the Holocaust as "a second Exodus." He pointed out that the Jews had suffered under the Nazis as they had under Pharaoh and responded to both with miraculous reconstruction of their communities. He called Israel "essential to Jewish existence" -- which brought protests from some Arab ambassadors to the Vatican. And he announced that the Vatican will consult with Jewish experts in preparing a new papal document on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism and will develop a "special mechanism" for closer Catholic-Jewish contacts involving the Vatican Secretariat of State,

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which formulates the church's policies on diplomatic and international issues.

All in all, it was a unique encounter, certainly not totally satisfactory but the two days of meetings were not expected to resolve a 2,000-year relationship so laden with anguish and misunderstanding. The sincerity of the open and free discussions in the meetings, however, were enough for ADL to send its delegation to Miami as an expression of faith in a new beginning.

Headed by myself, Abraham H. Foxman, ADL's national director, and Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel, chairman of ADL's National Executive Committee, the ADL delegation included Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International, and Rabbi Klenicki, both of whom had participated in the meetings at the Vatican; Irma Gertler, president of B'nai B'rith Women, and ADL honorary chairman Maxwell E. Greenberg. The other participants were Elaine S. and Ira B. Born, Allentown, PA; David T. Chase, Hartford, CT; Shirley and William R. Fleischer and Edna and Sydney Jarkow, East Hills, NY; Gerald Kraft, Indianapolis, IN; Samuel H. Miller, Cleveland, OH; Donald R. Mintz, New Orleans, LA; Melvin Salberg, New York, NY; Alvin J. and Marcelle Steinberg, Kensington, MD; Thomas Neumann, director of ADL's Intergroup Relations Division, and Judith Herschlag Muffs, director of ADL Special Projects.

The Jewish statement in Miami referred to the differences expressed at the meeting in Rome and described both meetings as part of "the healing process that is now visibly underway."

The Pope gave a firm response to Jewish fears that the Vatican was universalizing the Holocaust and playing down the special victimization of the Jews. He called the Nazi slaughter a "ruthless and inhuman attempt to exterminate the Jewish people...only because they were Jews."

It was the first time, I told reporters in a news conference after the speech, that any Vatican official had said it with such clarity.

The Pope used the word "Shoah," the Hebrew equivalent for the term Holocaust. He said Catholics "recognize and appreciate the spiritual treasures of the Jewish people and their religious witness to God."

He said: "...it is to be hoped that common educational programs on our historical and religious relations, which are well developed in your country, will truly promote mutual respect and teach future generations about the Holocaust so that never again will such a horror be possible. Never again!"

He also said, however, he was convinced that Pope Pius XII, long charged with not speaking out against the Nazis' "final solution," had worked "hard and effectively" to assist the Jewish people during World War II and that there would be a Vatican study of the Nazi years. And he repeated his controversial linking of the right of the Jewish people to a homeland with "security" and "tranquility," to the right of the Palestinian people, "so many of whom remain homeless and refugees" to a homeland, too.

As one reporter saw it, the fact that touchy matters were brought up openly before the world press corps was a sign of new maturity in Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

In truth, the significance of the meetings was the meetings themselves. The task now is to encourage, accelerate and deepen relations between the two faiths in order to resolve long-standing conflicts.

A conference cosponsored by ADL's Miami Regional Office and the Archdiocese of Miami was being planned for October even before we left the city. New ADL educational publications, seminars, missions to Israel, guidelines and curricula for Catholic educators and seminarians are being planned around the country with the cooperation of various American dioceses. And, in addition to ADL's Interfaith Affairs Department, its International Center for Holocaust Studies and its office in Rome look forward with great hope to their involvement in new projects with the Vatican.

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Perhaps the meaning of it all was best summed up by Cardinal Willebrands when he addressed some 500 Jews and Catholics at a dinner in Miami the night before the meeting with the Pope.

The 78-year-old prelate, who had helped draft the landmark Vatican II Nostra Aetate statement with its declaration on the Jews, received a standing ovation. He began his talk with an apology for not having arrived at the dinner on time.

"Tonight I came late, but not too late," he said, adding with a smile, "that might be an image of the relations between Jews and Christians."

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AJ,CP,IP,JSP,LAJ,LAP-FOR,PP,RE-I,MPR,BHR-10/13/87





# NEWS FROM THE Committee



The American Jewish  
Committee

Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56 Street  
New York, New York 10022  
212 751-4000  
Morton Yarmon  
Director of Public Relations

The American Jewish Committee protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and anti-Semitism and promotes human rights for all; works for the security of Israel and deepened understanding between Americans and Israelis; defends democratic values and seeks their realization in American public policy; and enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the U.S.

## THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, Feb. 10... The American Jewish Committee today welcomed the Vatican document, "The Church and Racism," which has just been released in Rome by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, as "A clear and powerful refutation of all forms of racism and bigotry," representing "another effective weapon in the global struggle to eradicate these cancerous pathologies from the human family."

A statement by Rabbi A. James Rudin, the AJC's National Interreligious Affairs Director, pointed to the Vatican document's specific repudiation of all forms of anti-Semitism, including the use of anti-Zionism "as a screen for anti-Semitism," and mentioned several other references to Jews:

\*The document singles out for special condemnation "certain organizations with branches in many countries that keep alive the anti-Semitic myth";

\*The document specifically condemns terrorist acts "which have Jewish persons or symbols as their target";

\*The document criticizes those countries that "impose undue harassment and restrictions on the free emigration of Jews."

Rabbi Rudin's statement added that the Vatican document, although it fully affirmed several United Nations resolutions, was "careful to omit any reference to the infamous 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution that linked Zionism to racism."

The American Jewish Committee, Rabbi Rudin asserted, looks forward to "continued close cooperation with the Vatican and Roman Catholics everywhere" in working together to advance the causes of religious and cultural pluralism.

The full statement follows:

"The American Jewish Committee welcomes the Vatican document, The Church And Racism, that was released today in Rome. It is a clear and powerful refutation of all forms of racism and bigotry, and it represents another effective weapon in the global struggle to eradicate these cancerous pathologies from the human family.

"The document's specific repudiation of all forms of anti-Semitism, including the use of anti-Zionism 'as a screen' for anti-Semitism, significantly strengthens the statement. It also singles out for special condemnation 'certain organizations with branches in many countries, that keep alive the anti-Semitic racist myth', and the document specifically condemns terrorist acts 'which have Jewish persons or symbols as their target.' It also criticizes those countries that 'impose undue harassments and restrictions on the free emigration of Jews.'

-more-

Theodore Ellenoff, President; Lee Nevas, Chair, Board of Governors; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, National Executive Council; Edward E. Elson, Chair, Board of Trustees  
Ira Silverman, Executive Vice-President

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CSAE 1707



"While fully affirming several United Nations resolutions, the Vatican document is careful to omit any reference to the infamous 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution that linked Zionism to racism.

"The Vatican document, issued by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, advances the causes of religious and cultural pluralism, and the American Jewish Committee looks forward to continued close cooperation with the Vatican and with Roman Catholics everywhere in working together to achieve these goals."

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

89-960-29  
AJRZ



MARC H. TANENBAUM  
International Consultant  
American Jewish Committee

45 East 89th Street  
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DATE:- Dec 19, '89  
TO: Elli Wohlfelder  
FAX #- 643-8498.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES  
INCLUDING COVER SHEET- \_\_\_\_\_

## MESSAGE AREA

Elli,

IF you can use the enclosed commentary  
on Sakharov in some way, feel free to  
do so.

Marc

☐ IF THIS BOX IS CHECKED, PLEASE FAX BACK TO CONFIRM RECEIPT  
OF THIS FAX.

## RESPONSE AREA

P.S.- Please fax the Slawson Column Bonus  
it is ready. Thanks!

Marc

☐ THE ABOVE FAX WAS RECEIVED GARBLED. PLEASE RESEND FAX.

Mon. Sept 2, 90 - Prague -

Prague bishop meeting -

Walter Wurzburger chair

Rev. Frizzell - Patriotic

Funigalli - middle Ages

iniquity of Jews

Challenging -

David Berger - Perceptions, but not

Anglo-American position - tolerated, & suppression

codified / logic of repression

be around to testify to Xan truth

missionizing

medieval context

devel - and the Jew -

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

sacred precedent on side of toleration /

denied validity of blood libel -

Protestantism born at moment of crisis

anti J - attitude

Xan as persecutor / is idolatry

Xan as persecutor - i) turning (2) his carnation

pp. 7-10 - 1

Contemp J attitude

R. Menachem Hameiri - Xans now

Civilized arguments

Moses Hameiri - Xans are different

defiant Hameiri

1770-1850

in connection of true God w/ idolatry

Jewish Law (1770-1850 - 1800/1)

(not cause anyone to sin) - idolatry monothism

Noahides not commanded against

not forbidden for gentiles -

1770-1850 -

modern times - idolatry faded away (R. Menachem Hameiri)

Wurzburger - JB Solovitch to Catholic physician (taken to RC)

Fischer - Islam - (Cutler)

12th Cent. - conversion of Jews -

① Roman Empire - productive -

Prof. Phomo Simonson - Canada

Contradictions -

Apostolic Jee 4 Jews (Archives)

insoluble contradictions

De Bois - Contradiction but behavior

Gospel (turn war)

tragic inability to own origins

Jerome (veritas behavior)



INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE  
ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

February 17, 1989

RABBI A. JAMES RUDIN  
Chairman

DR. LEON A. FELDMAN  
Consultant

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World Jewish Congress  
501 Madison Avenue  
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TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE IJCIC  
CONSTITUENT AGENCIES

THE NEXT MEETING OF IJCIC WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1989 at 9.30 am.  
in the offices of the Synagogue Council (39 St)

The proposed Agenda will include:

1. Report of Chairman
2. Update: Status report on effort to remove Carmelite Convent from Auschwitz campsite.
3. Financial obligations for IJCIC/Vatican book "Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: Selected Papers."
4. Meeting and Consultation with Lutheran World Federation.
5. Proposed ADL membership in IJCIC.
6. Good and Welfare.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR ATTENDANCE AND LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR COOPERATION.

P.S.

Please find also the following items enclosed:

- a. "Catholic-Jewish Progress Waylaid," Chicago Tribune, 2/17/89
- b. Draft of statement to be issued by IJCIC re Auschwitz Convent. Please make sure that your response and proposals are in this office by Tuesday, February 21.

Our FAX number is (212) 686-8673

Paris, le 14 février 1989

(1)

Maître Théo KLEIN  
44, Avenue des Champs-Élysées  
75008 Paris

Maître,

Le 22 février 1987, à Genève, les Cardinaux Danneels, Lustiger, Macharski et moi-même nous sommes engagés à ce que les Carmélites quittent le vieux théâtre, lieu de dépôt du gaz Zyklon B pendant la guerre, pour s'installer dans un nouveau couvent qui serait construit à l'intérieur d'un Centre d'information, d'éducation, de rencontre et de prière, situé hors des limites des camps d'Auschwitz et de Birkenau.

A la date d'aujourd'hui, force nous est de reconnaître que ni le nouveau couvent, ni le Centre n'ont commencé d'être construits. Nous regrettons et déplorons profondément ce retard par rapport aux engagements pris. Nous comprenons même que ce dernier puisse être interprété comme un non-respect de nos engagements.

Mais nous affirmons que les engagements signés seront tenus, en dépit du retard survenu parce que les difficultés qui ont été les causes de ce retard sont maintenant connues de nous et ont été surmontées. Nous voulons vous livrer quelques clarifications sur ces difficultés et le signe que la phase des constructions est maintenant imminente.

Difficultés administratives :

La position officielle du gouvernement polonais a été exprimée le 31 décembre 1987, par une lettre du ministre des cultes, M. Loranç, au Dr Riegner. Le ministre déclarait que le gouvernement ne s'opposait pas à l'Accord de Genève II, mais que l'approbation définitive n'interviendrait qu'après l'élaboration d'un plan d'ensemble. Une copie de cette lettre a été transmise au Cardinal Macharski. Tout n'a cependant pas été résolu par cette annonce. La cession du terrain dépend encore, en effet, de l'adoption par la Voïvodie d'Oswiecim du plan d'urbanisme en cours dont nous ignorons la date d'application.



.../.

2.

Difficultés tenant à l'opinion catholique et nationale polonaise :

L'Accord de Genève a été signé par le cardinal Macharski parce qu'Auschwitz est sur le territoire de son diocèse. Il lui restait à convaincre le peuple polonais qu'en le respectant, on ne maltraitait pas les Carmélites et qu'on ne niait pas le martyre des Polonais perpétré également en ce lieu. La tâche était considérable et infiniment délicate. Il fallait à la fois réaliser l'Accord et faire évoluer les mentalités et les consciences.

Aujourd'hui, les Soeurs ont accepté la décision de construction d'un nouveau couvent. Cette acceptation est d'une extrême importance. En s'établissant à Auschwitz, l'intention des Soeurs était de prier pour les morts. Ce geste ne voulait, en aucun cas, ignorer le martyre du peuple juif. Elles ont donné maintenant à la décision du transfert du couvent, un consentement irrévocable, car elles perçoivent l'intention de l'Eglise catholique, exprimée par leur archevêque, de respecter la Shoah. Elles entendent, par cette démarche d'obéissance, contribuer au progrès de la relation entre juifs et catholiques, demandé par le Concile Vatican II dans la déclaration Nostra Aetate et adhérer aux orientations sans cesse rappelées depuis lors par le Pape Jean Paul II.

Autre élément nouveau, le Supérieur Général de l'Ordre des Carmes vient de me confirmer cette acceptation par une lettre qu'il m'a adressée le 27 janvier dernier : "Si l'Accord de Genève du 23 février 1987 a été signé par la Délégation catholique au nom de l'Eglise, le devoir d'en exécuter tous les points était hors de toute discussion et, par conséquent, les Carmélites déchaussées d'Auschwitz devaient accepter le transfert prévu par l'Accord. C'est ce que j'ai fait savoir au Définitoire général, en la session du 19 janvier 1989 et aux Supérieurs de notre Province carmélitaine de Pologne, le plus rapidement possible. Le Père Provincial de Pologne, bien que personnellement défavorable au transfert, accepta fidèlement ma pensée et ma volonté et la fit connaître au Cardinal F. Macharski et aux Carmélites déchaussées, lesquelles l'ont acceptée de même, avec un grand amour de l'Eglise et du Pape."

Nous devons rappeler aussi que le projet de construction du Centre est un élément essentiel des dispositions prévues à Genève. Ce projet, préparé par le cardinal Macharski, est désormais accepté par l'Episcopat polonais. Afin de mieux souligner la dimension ecclésiale de cette création, le cardinal Macharski a demandé à Mgr Muszynski, Président de la Commission polonaise pour le dialogue avec le judaïsme, d'assumer, en raison de ses fonctions, la responsabilité de la constitution du Centre.

Les Eglises catholiques d'Europe ont été appelées à soutenir activement ce projet. Depuis deux ans, des dons ont été recueillis à cet effet. Un comité international, composé de personnalités de différentes nationalités, va être créé dans les jours qui viennent pour définir les orientations du Centre.



Les dispositions prévues :

L'attribution du terrain n'est pas encore intervenue pour les raisons administratives expliquées plus haut. Dans l'éventualité de réponses imminentes à donner à l'administration, voici les dispositions qui sont envisagées et sur lesquelles nous aimerions recueillir votre accord.

Le nouveau couvent sera construit en tout état de cause en un lieu à distance du camp d'Auschwitz et de ses annexes. Il en sera séparé par le terrain et les bâtiments du Centre. Le couvent sera isolé et protégé par un mur et un rideau d'arbres.

Le Centre devra être installé sur un emplacement relativement proche du camp pour en faciliter l'accès aux visiteurs du camp et lui permettre de remplir le but qui lui a été assigné dans l'Accord de Genève.

Si, d'ici le 22 juillet 1989, anniversaire de la Déclaration Zakhor de Genève I, de nouveaux obstacles, indépendants de notre volonté, se présentaient, retardant les opérations et si nous n'étions pas alors en mesure de vous proposer un calendrier définitif qui pourrait être acceptable par vous, nous demanderions au Supérieur Général de l'Ordre des Carmes de prendre les mesures voulues pour une installation provisoire des Soeurs en attendant l'achèvement de la construction du couvent. D'ores et déjà, celui-ci m'a assuré que, pour des raisons graves, il pourrait, avec son Définitoire, envisager une telle décision.

Quant au bâtiment du vieux théâtre, dépôt du gaz Zyklon B pendant la guerre, sa destination sera réglée d'un commun accord, dans l'esprit de la Déclaration d'Auschwitz du 22 juillet 1986, et sera l'objet d'une convention ultérieure entre les deux parties.

Il va sans dire, Maître, que vous pouvez faire état de cette lettre publiquement.

Je vous prie d'agréer l'expression de ma haute considération.

*T. A. Cardinal Decourtray*

• Albert cardinal DECOURTRAY  
Co-président de la Réunion de Genève



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2

Maître Théo KLEIN  
44, avenue des Champs Elysées  
F - 75008 PARIS

Rome, le 9 février 1989

Maître,

Le 27 janvier dernier, la presse a rendu public l'accord des Carmélites installées à Auschwitz pour se déplacer du Vieux Théâtre au nouveau monastère qui sera bâti dans le Centre d'information, d'éducation, de rencontre et de prière actuellement en projet.

J'ai l'honneur, et c'est mon devoir, de vous informer personnellement, en votre qualité de co-Président de la Réunion de Genève du 22 février 1987, de l'attitude de l'Ordre du Carmel sur le problème d'Auschwitz, comme je l'ai déjà fait connaître au Cardinal Decourtray, qui avait tenu à m'informer au début de l'année 1989 des derniers développements concernant cette affaire.

Bien que je n'aie pas été mêlé aux discussions qui ont préparé la Réunion de Genève ni à l'Accord qui en a résulté, mon attitude, partagée par mon Vicaire Général, a été claire et concrète: l'exécution de l'Accord de Genève, signé par d'éminents représentants de l'Eglise en Europe, était hors de toute discussion et devait être intégrale. Par conséquent les Carmélites d'Auschwitz devaient accepter le transfert prévu et s'installer dans le nouveau monastère dès que celui-ci sera construit.

D'accord avec mon Définitoire Général, j'ai transmis ma pensée et ma volonté au Père Provincial des Carmes de Pologne. Celui-ci accepta fidèlement ma position et la fit connaître au Cardinal Macharski ainsi qu'aux Carmélites d'Auschwitz qui, elles aussi, l'ont pleinement acceptée.



L'exécution de l'Accord de Genève II est arrivée à une étape décisive. L'acceptation du transfert par les Soeurs était un point essentiel et elle signifie de façon concrète qu'il est "tenu compte des sentiments légitimement exprimés par la Délégation juive" à Genève le 22 février 1987. Mais la réalisation effective du transfert dépend des constructions pour lesquelles je n'ai aucun pouvoir.

Je puis donc vous donner l'assurance que les Soeurs déménageront dès que le nouveau monastère sera construit. Mais cela signifie aussi qu'en attendant la communauté continuera à vivre où elle est actuellement, à savoir l'ancien théâtre aménagé en monastère depuis 1984. Je demande à tous les Responsables de la Réunion de Genève que le Centre projeté, et en particulier le monastère, soient mis en oeuvre aussi vite que possible, pour autant qu'il dépend d'eux, afin que les Soeurs puissent connaître le climat de paix et de silence indispensable à la vie contemplative et que les rapports fraternels entre juifs et chrétiens n'aient plus à souffrir de nouvelles tensions à cause d'Auschwitz.

Je tenais à vous faire part de l'intention de l'Ordre auquel appartiennent ces Soeurs et de sa satisfaction de voir l'aboutissement de l'Accord de Genève II.

Veuillez croire, Maître, à l'assurance de mon religieux dévouement.

  
P. Philippe Sainz de Baranda, O.C.D.

Préposé Général



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## COMITÉ ÉPISCOPAL POUR LES RELATIONS AVEC LE JUDAISME



Paris, le 19 février 1989

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

Docteur RIEGNER

2 Rue de Varenne  
BP. 191

C.H. 211 Genève 20.

Cher Monsieur,

Lors de notre rencontre à Rome début février, Monseigneur MUSZYNSKI m'a demandé de bien vouloir vous transmettre la note ci-jointe.

C'est un complément qu'il a voulu apporter à votre interview à l'Agence APIC-KIPA.

Avec le Père DUPUY, nous avons pris soin de lui expliquer le sens de votre intervention. Je crois qu'il l'a très bien compris. Mais, sa note est sans doute très utile sur deux points. Premièrement, elle témoigne clairement maintenant de l'accord de l'épiscopat polonais en ce qui concerne Auschwitz. Deuxièmement, elle souligne, ce qui est certainement très nouveau en Pologne, que la construction du Centre et le transfert du Carmel devront se faire en même temps, alors qu'auparavant les deux opérations étaient prévues dans un autre ordre chronologique. Tout cela est en soi très essentiel par rapport à ce qui se passe. Mais je comprends bien que pour vous et pour les Communautés Juives en général, ce ne soit absolument pas nouveau par rapport aux accords de Genève.

C'est notre problème, un très grave problème. Je ne peux en dire davantage...

Je vous prie de croire, cher Monsieur, à mes sentiments respectueux et cordiaux.



Jean DUJARDIN  
Secrétaire du Comité Episcopal

## DECLARATION

## DE LA COMMISSION DE L'EPISCOPAT POLONAIS POUR LE DIALOGUE

## AVEC LES JUIFS

Suite à l'énoncé du Dr Gerhard Riegner, co-Président du Conseil directeur du Congrès Juif mondial/ CJM/ à Genève, rapporté par l'Agence de Presse Internationale Catholique dans le n° 4 du 4 janvier 1989, je suis dans l'obligation d'y apporter quelques précisions.

1. Tous les documents de l'Eglise catholique d'une certaine importance concernant les relations avec les Juifs, ont été depuis longtemps traduits en polonais et sont facilement accessibles aussi bien dans le pays tout entier que dans chaque diocèse. Actuellement la publication complète, en langue polonaise, et en un seul volume, de tous les textes concernant ces problèmes, est en cours de préparation. Ils ont, par ailleurs, fait l'objet d'études et de travaux universitaires.
2. Le Cardinal Joseph Glemp, Président de la Conférence Episcopale Polonaise et Primat de Pologne, et l'Episcopat polonais tout entier, apprécient l'importance du projet proposé par le Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, Métropolitain de Cracovie, pour la construction du Centre d'Information, d'Education, de Rencontre et de Prière à Auschwitz.
3. Le rôle du Centre d'Auschwitz - tel que l'Eglise catholique le conçoit - a été clairement défini par le Pape, qui, s'adressant aux autorités juives à Vienne, a affirmé : "Parmi les multiples initiatives d'aujourd'hui qui sont prises dans l'esprit du Concile pour le dialogue judéo-chrétien, je voudrais indiquer le Centre pour l'information, l'éducation, la rencontre et la prière qui va être réalisé en Pologne. Il a pour objectif d'étudier la Shoah, ainsi que le martyre du peuple polonais et des autres peuples européens, à l'époque du national-socialisme, et de se confronter à eux sur le plan spirituel. Il est à souhaiter que ce Centre produise de féconds résultats et serve de modèle à d'autres."



nationna. Les initiatives de ce genre produiront également  
fruits pour la cohabitation de tous les groupes de la société et  
inciteront à s'engager en faveur d'une attention réciproque pour  
les faibles, les délaissés, les marginaux, à surmonter l'hostilité  
et les préjugés, à défendre les droits de l'homme, en particulier  
le droit à la liberté religieuse, pour chaque personne  
communauté." Par ces paroles, le Pape, a définitivement donné  
projet du Centre d'Auschwitz, orienté vers l'avenir, une dimension  
ecclésiastique et universelle.

4. Les difficultés retardant la réalisation du projet du Centre comme  
le déplacement du Carmel d'Auschwitz, ne proviennent en rien de la  
mauvaise volonté, mais sont toutes de nature objective. Elles  
résulteront en partie de formalités administratives, en partie de  
l'histoire même d'Auschwitz, de sa signification et de la valeur  
symbolique de ce lieu pour le peuple polonais. De même que pour  
les Juifs, Auschwitz est le symbole de la Shoah, de même pour tous  
les Polonais, Auschwitz reste le symbole du martyre sanglant de la  
nation polonaise.

Pour nous, la construction du Centre et le déplacement du Carmel  
sont aussi importants l'un que l'autre pour l'avenir, dans  
l'esprit même de l'accord signé à Genève, le 22 février 1987. Ce  
projet de Centre est orienté d'une manière tellement évidente vers  
l'avenir. Il doit servir à l'éducation des générations futures, au  
perfectionnement de l'information et à l'approfondissement de la  
compréhension mutuelle. Il mérite sans aucun doute de la part des  
chrétiens et de la part des Juifs, la juste reconnaissance de sa  
valeur, l'engagement sincère et les efforts communs.

Au nom de la Commission

Mgr Henryk Muszyński  
Président

(4)

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum  
Director  
International Relations  
The American Jewish Committee  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022-2746

My dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

I am very much honoured in having the opportunity, thanks to the congress in Vienna, to come to know you, a truly leading and highly esteemed personality, both in the Jewish and in the Christian world. I have already expressed these feelings in our personal conversation in Vienna, now I would like to acknowledge it also in writing.

First of all I want to thank you very much for your letter which has touched me deeply. It reflects so well your profound commitment and your warm care for the cause of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue.

As for the subject of your letter: In the last weeks the whole of my time and of my efforts is devoted to this one cause. Trying to do all my possible I have been a few days ago in Kraków and after that in Warszawa, always in touch with Cardinal Macharski. The much expected Cardinal Macharski's communiqué concerning the Auschwitz center is published yesterday. There are unfortunately new aggravating complications which arose lately in a quite unforeseen way. The pressure exacted by some Jews and their a little too one-sided view of the problem have brought about, as one could well expect, a sharp reaction of some Polish people. In this situation I am the more grateful for your letter, so full of goodwill, understanding and solicitude for the future shape of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.



Please, believe me, Cardinal Macharski and myself, we are both doing everything possible to avoid the worst. Cardinal Macharski would like truly very much "to place a spade in the ground of the proposed new center", but he cannot do it at this moment, because the ground is not yet his property.

As I guess, in the Macharski's communiqué there are some things which could be questioned from the Jewish point of view, but in the present conditions it was really all what it was possible to do. I, personally, believe the turning point has been reached. I am trying to understand also the Jewish sometimes violent reaction because of the long silence from our side. In two days I am going to Paris to explain our true intentions and the new difficulties in realizing the Auschwitz project which arose lately. I do hope to find, also outside Poland, some deeply involved friends for the idea of the new Auschwitz center which, as you know, has received the full support from the Pope. It seems to me that this project directed so much to the future merits indeed our common commitment and endeavors.

I am confident we have avoided the worst and shall continue from now on efforts for better mutual understanding and dialogue in which I highly appreciate your personal commitment, your sincerity and devotion.

With kindest regards

sincerely yours

*Bp Henryk Muszyński*  
Bishop Henryk Muszyński

*P.S. I just received the text of the above mentioned statement of Cardinal Macharski in French language. I enclose this text.*

Le Métropolite de Cracovie, Franciszek Cardinal Macharski fait savoir, que le projet de construction du Centre d'Information, d'Education, de Rencontre et de Prière à Auschwitz - Oswiecim est entré dans la phase finale de sa mise en oeuvre. Le projet concerne aussi bien la localisation du Centre, en face du Vieux Théâtre, que la destination et la forme architecturale des bâtiments qui en feront partie. La réalisation du projet commencera dès la fin des formalités en cours.

ecclésiale  
En communion avec les Soeurs Carmélites d'Auschwitz, le Métropolite de Cracovie déclare, que les Soeurs restent fidèles à leur vocation qu'Elles vivront dans leur nouveau couvent, dès que celui-ci sera construit sur un terrain séparé à l'intérieur du Centre avec lequel Elles resteront unies spirituellement. Cet acte s'accomplit dans la charité et la générosité, pour le bien de la tolérance et du respect. Le bâtiment du Vieux Théâtre concourra aussi aux finalités pour lesquelles le Centre est fondé.

Cracovie, le 24 janvier 1989

+ Franciszek Card. Macharski



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RCA FEB 16 0930

20625 EUJS B

Dr. Feldman

686.8673

TO : ISRAEL SINGER  
FR : EUJS  
DA : 16-02-89

DEAR DR SINGER,

WE (MICHAEL HART, LAURENT MOYSE FOR AGENCE FRANCE PRESS, MARAM AND I) HAVE JUST COME FROM THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE CARMELITE CONVENT AT THE SITE OF AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP. THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD BY THEO KLEIN, MARCUS PARDES AND J WYBRAN. THEO KLEIN SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PROTEST AT THE NUNS' OCCUPATION OF THE OLD THEATRE AT AUSCHWITZ AND BROUGHT US UP TO DATE ON DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO CARDINAL DECOURTRAY, THE NUNS WILL NOT MOVE BY THE 22 FEBRUARY BUT THAT THEY WILL MOVE EVENTUALLY. KLEIN SAID THAT HE HAD CONFIDENCE THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN. HE ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THE PROMISES MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WERE MADE IN GOOD FAITH AND HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD BE ADHERED TO. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME JEWS HAD HAD TO DEAL IN A DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HE FELT THAT IT HAD BEEN POSITIVE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION (FROM LAURENT MOYSE) AS TO WHETHER JEWISH-CATHOLIC RELATIONS WOULD BREAK DOWN OVER THE AFFAIR, HE REPLIED THAT HE SAW NO REASON FOR THIS TO HAPPEN. THERE WERE VERY FEW QUESTIONS ASKED AT ALL AND THIS ANNOYED KLEIN - HE TOLD THE JOURNALISTS OFF FOR NOT WANTING TO KNOW MORE.

I FOUND THE WHOLE CONFERENCE EXTREMELY WEAK AND DISAPPOINTING. KLEIN DID LITTLE MORE THAN DEFEND THE CATHOLIC LEADERS. HE DID NOT SEEM AT ALL PUT OUT THAT THE NUNS WILL NOT MOVE BY THE 22ND AND THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS THEREFORE NOT KEPT ITS COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THEIR REMOVAL IN THE SPACE OF 2 YEARS.

I WAS VERY SURPRISED THAT HE ADVOCATED NO ACTION AT ALL IN PROTEST AT THIS. IF THIS IS THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT JEWISH OUTRAGE AT THE GENEVA MEETINGS WITH THE CARDINALS THEN IT IS NO WONDER THAT NOTHING HAS HAPPENED. THEY MUST BE LAUGHING UP THEIR RED VELVET SLEEVES.

YOURS  
MELINDA  
ACTING EUJS CHAIRPERSON

236129 WJC UR



(6)

**Text of statement adopted at the conclusion of the meeting between Catholic dignitaries and Jewish personalities, Geneva, February 22, 1987**

**R**ecalling the July 22, 1986 statement which acknowledged that Auschwitz remains forever the symbolic site of the Shoah that resulted from the Nazi determination to destroy the Jewish people in a unique, unthinkable and unspeakable manner;

In a mutual concern for the respect of the dead on the sites where the Nazi crimes were committed, particularly the extermination of the vast majority of the Jewish communities in Europe;

Recalling this dramatic period which demands reverence and deep respect for the suffering inflicted upon the Polish nation at that time and place;

The undersigned have solemnly agreed on the following:

1. Resulting from a clearer awareness of its responsibilities towards future generations, the Catholic delegation declares that it commits itself to a project which will involve the Catholic churches in Europe in creating a center for information, education, meeting and prayer to be established outside the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp grounds. To this end the European Catholic churches and all those likely to join in the project have been approached. The aims of the project are:

- a) to promote dialogues among European churches concerning the Shoah, and the martyrdom of the Polish and other people of Europe, because of the totalitarian violence throughout the 1939-1945 war and its aftermath;
- b) to struggle against disinformation and the banalization of the Shoah and against revisionism;
- c) to welcome groups of visitors to the camps and to provide them with full information;
- d) to foster colloquia between Jews and Christians.

2. The establishment of this center is the result and implementation of the agreements reached at the July 22, 1986 meeting in Geneva. It implies that the Carmelites' prayer initiative will find its place, its confirmation and its true meaning in this new setting, and that the legitimately expressed feelings of the Jewish delegation will be also taken into account. Thus there will be no permanent Catholic place of worship on the sites of the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps. Every person will be able to meditate there as his heart, his religion and his faith may dictate.

3. The Catholic delegation stressed that Cardinal Macharski will see to the promotion of the project, while the bishops of the other countries undertake to raise the funds to ensure its implementation within a period of 24 months.

Cardinal Macharski will keep Mr. Klein, president of the European Jewish Congress, informed of the progress made in establishing the project.

4. The Jewish delegation took note of the above commitments made by the Catholic delegation.

5. Both delegations are conscious of having conducted the above dialogue in a common desire to emphasize the unique character of the Shoah within the Hitler tragedy, which so cruelly afflicted the peoples of Europe, in particular the Polish people, and with respect for the identity and faith of those who there lived and died.



# Convent at Auschwitz Will Be Closed

By THOMAS W. NETTER

Special to The New York Times

GENEVA, Feb. 22 — Roman Catholic prelates from Poland, France and Belgium, meeting with European Jewish spokesmen here, agreed today to close a Carmelite convent at the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp within two years.

The Catholic delegation, which included the Archbishops of Paris, Lyons, Brussels and Cracow, the Polish diocese where Auschwitz is situated, will move the 10 Carmelite nuns to a new site, at an interreligious center to be built a mile or so away from the camp, according to a handwritten joint communiqué issued today after a five-hour meeting at a private chateau of Baron Edmond de Rothschild in Chambésy, a Geneva suburb.

The establishment of the convent in an unused theater just outside the Auschwitz camp in 1984 stirred dismay among Jewish groups in the United States and Western Europe, who said it was an affront to the memory of millions of Jews who died at the hands of Germans in Auschwitz-Birkenau during World War II.

## Promoting Cooperation

A participant in the Catholic-Jewish talks, Theo Klein, said he believed the agreement today would help promote cooperation between the two faiths. He said the planned interreligious center would provide a place for both Roman Catholics and Jews to meditate, reflect and pray.

Mr. Klein, president of the Representative Association of Jewish Institutions in France, added, "I don't want to talk about a victory, but this is satisfying for us because what was also really at stake were the relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, a relationship which, as we know from history, was not always easy."

Many Jewish groups in Western Europe insisted that the convent be closed to preserve Auschwitz as a monument to the mass killing of Jews. But Catholic groups, like the Aid to the Church in Distress group in West Germany, which had solicited money to renovate the convent, have argued that the Carmelite sisters were praying and doing penance for people of all faiths who died there.

The issue had provoked emotional reactions since January 1986, when the fund-raising effort drew attention to the convent. In addition to concern among Jews, some senior Catholic leaders have questioned the establishment of the convent in light of a widespread perception of Auschwitz as a symbol of the genocide of the Jews.

## Canonization of Polish Priest

But they also noted that Auschwitz had taken on additional religious significance for Roman Catholics since 1982, when Pope John Paul II canonized the Polish priest, Maksymilian Kolbe, who died of starvation in an Auschwitz punishment cell in place of a married prisoner.

The name Auschwitz is generally used for a huge complex that em-

president of a committee opposing the convent.

At their earlier meeting here last July, the Catholic-Jewish group issued a joint statement recognizing the "special significance" of Auschwitz and

Birkenau to the mass murder of the Jews. The statement apparently cleared the way for the communiqué today, which resulted from negotiations between Archbishop Lustiger and Mr. Klein and the Polish Catholic Church.



# The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society

## A Jewish Perspective

by

Judith H. Banki

Associate National Director, Interreligious Affairs  
The American Jewish Committee

*The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*, issued on February 10, 1989 by the Vatican Commission on Justice and Peace, forthrightly denounces racism as contrary to Roman Catholic values and teaching. It quotes liberally from papal statements and other authoritative church documents which condemn racism as an ideology and discrimination based on racial, national or ethnic distinctions. While religious prejudice is addressed less frequently, the document upholds the basic rights of religious minorities within a given state, and calls for equality of treatment under law. It declares that respect for differences, fraternity and solidarity are a "moral consequence" of Christian teaching, and calls for persuasion, education, and legislation as appropriate methods of counteracting racism.

In addition to calling for a positive appreciation of human diversity, the document includes a number of specific references of immediate concern to Jews. It notes that Jews were often "the object of serious humiliations, accusations and proscriptions" within Christendom during the Middle Ages. It identifies the Jewish people as the primary victims of Nazi genocide; it specifies anti-Semitism as "the most tragic form that racist ideology has assumed in our century" and notes that anti-Semitism is still alive, supported by organizations with networks of publications and expressed in terrorist acts against Jewish persons and symbols. It notes that some countries impose restrictions on the free emigration of Jews. Importantly, it specifies that anti-Zionism serves at times as a screen for anti-Semitism, "feeding on it and leading to it."

In its passages on Judaism's legacy to Christianity, the document reflects a remarkable

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\* Elsewhere in the document, the right of the Palestinian people, like the right of the Jewish people, to a country is noted.



sensitivity. Whereas Christians have frequently succumbed to the temptation to blame the Jewish background of Christianity for attitudes of racial superiority and exclusion found among Christians, this paper clearly resists that temptation. God's choice of the Jewish people and God's love for the Jewish people are upheld and placed in a universal, not a narrow or chauvinistic, context. The New Testament is described as reinforcing the dignity of persons revealed in the Jewish encounter with God. The document firmly rejects any effort to find justification for theories of racial superiority in the Bible and notes that such theories are Christian, not Jewish, distortions of the Hebrew Scriptures. In this sense, the Vatican document reflects notable progress in assimilating Jewish self-understanding.

It should be noted that the Vatican paper invokes a number of United Nations documents in support of various positions, but it conspicuously omits the infamous 1975 "Zionism is Racism" UN General Assembly resolution from those included. The omission is clearly deliberate and is honorable in intent.

This document treats anti-Semitism largely as a racial phenomenon. It does not directly confront the distinctive problem of Christian anti-Semitism that is based in a tradition of Christian religious hostility to Jews and Judaism and in teachings of contempt about Jews that fed this hostility. While this latter question is obviously critical to understanding and overcoming the pathology of anti-Semitism, it does not fall within the purview of the Vatican Commission which issued this valuable and timely document. It nevertheless remains a concern which we hope to share with the appropriate authorities of the Roman Catholic Church in the near future.

We welcome the document on racism as an important contribution to the struggle against hatred and discrimination based on racial, ethnic and religious differences, and stand ready to cooperate in confronting these evils.

February 15, 1989

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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Meeting with Dr. Paul Wee and Dr. Eugene Brand,  
Lutheran World Federation, on 18 January 1989.

Dr. Riegner and I met with Dr. Paul Wee, Assistant Secretary General of the LWF, and Dr. Eugene Brand, in charge of interreligious dialogues.

There was a general and informal exchange of views on the ways and possibilities of implementing the proposals made to IJCIC by the LWF in their letter of 20 October 1988, more particularly with regard to the new and wider structure envisaged by them.

In general terms, it was agreed that the possibility of having a yearly bilateral encounter on broader issues of joint concern should be welcomed. Topics such as human rights, including religious freedom, sharing of information on new developments in Eastern Europe and in the USSR, among others, might be suitable items of issues of common concern.

In order to have a closer view of these and other possible subjects, and to define more precisely the format and the methodology of the new structure, it was agreed in principle to have a first informal IJCIC/LWF meeting in Geneva, at the LWF Headquarters, to last for two days, in the second week of June 1989.

Jean Halpérin



INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE  
ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

Seymour Reich

June 15, 1990

Chairman

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**European Secretariat**  
World Jewish Congress  
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World Jewish Congress  
501 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 755-5770

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Leon A. Feldman  
Consultant

Dear IJCIC Member:

We are sending you some items of interest for your perusal. These deal with matters of concern to our ongoing activities.

Your attention is also drawn to several resolutions adopted by the National Council of Churches in the USA.

Attached is also a document adopted by a study group "Jews and Christians" of the Central Committee of German Catholics, April 4, 1990. - It is written in German and is valuable.

You will be kept informed of further developments.

TEXT AUDIENCE June 6, 1990 (420 words)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Here is the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's remarks in English at his weekly general audience June 6.

Dear brothers and sisters,

In our catechesis we have considered how the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ was the greatest work accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the history of creation and of salvation. Through union with the divinity of the Son of God in the incarnation, human nature received a new and lasting source of holiness.

When the angel told Mary at the annunciation that her son would be called holy (Lk 1:35) he made it clear that the source of Jesus' own holiness was the Holy Spirit. From the beginning of his earthly life Jesus was consecrated by the Spirit in both body and soul. In Jesus' body, which is given to us in the Eucharist to be our spiritual food, our bodies, too, receive a new destiny by sharing in the benefit of the redemption.

Just as -- in the words of St. Luke's Gospel -- Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace (cf. Lk 2:52), we can say that the fundamental holiness with which he came into the world was more clearly and completely manifested in the course of his human life, culminating in the events of the paschal mystery.

The incarnation, then, signals the beginning of a new holiness in our world. It is the holiness of the Son of God, which pervades and consecrates the humanity of Jesus, the Son of Mary, and is therefore the source of holiness for all men and women. Through Jesus' humanity our human nature is freed from concupiscence and enabled to live in the Spirit.

I wish to welcome the Sisters of the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy who are celebrating their golden jubilee of religious profession. Dear sisters: As you visit the tombs of the apostles and martyrs and give thanks to God for the many blessings you have received in these past 50 years, may you be renewed in your commitment to serve Christ and his church with joy and gladness. My greetings go as well to the group of Capuchin Brothers who are taking part in a course of formation in Rome. To all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors, especially those from England, the United States, Korea and Sri Lanka, I cordially impart my apostolic blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

END



POPE-AUDIENCE June 6, 1990 (290 words)

CITIZENS OF NEW DEMOCRACIES MUST FOLLOW CHURCH, POPE SAYS

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Citizens of emerging democracies should "follow the way of the church" by defending human rights and taking seriously the responsibilities of citizenship, Pope John Paul II said.

Just as it did on the first Pentecost, the church witnesses to Jesus' message and calls believers to live as the Gospel taught, the pope told Polish pilgrims at his June 6 weekly general audience.

"The church of our times has defended faithfully the rights of man," he said. "It is necessary that man, in the changed circumstances" of Poland and other East European countries, "follow the way of the church again."

The pope reminded his fellow Poles of the responsibilities of citizenship spelled out by the Second Vatican Council: to obey legitimate authority, "be lovers of true freedom," form personal judgments in the light of truth, carry out activities with "a sense of responsibility and "commit themselves to pursue all that is true and good."

In his main audience talk, the pope continued his discussion of the Holy Spirit's role in the incarnation, in making Jesus fully human and fully divine.

"Through union with the divinity of the Son of God in the incarnation, human nature received a new and lasting source of holiness," the pope said.

In the sacrament of the Eucharist, Catholics receive the "spiritual food" of Jesus' body, he said. And in that way, "our bodies, too, receive a new destiny by sharing in the benefit of the redemption."

The incarnation signaled "the beginning of a new holiness in our world," he said. "Through Jesus' humanity our human nature is freed from concupiscence and enabled to live in the Spirit."

END

SYNOD June 5, 1990 (620 words)

## EUROPEAN BISHOPS MUST RESTORE CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE, SAYS POPE

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- With the downfall of hard-line communist regimes in Eastern Europe, bishops must seize the opportunity to restore Christianity's influence in Europe, Pope John Paul II said.

Although for the past 50 years faith has competed with secularism and materialism in the West and was repressed in the East, it has survived "more or less deeply rooted in individuals, environments and societies" of Europe, he said.

While communist governments lost power in 1989, "religion and the church have shown themselves to be the most effective means to liberate man from a system of total subjugation," the pope told European bishops and religious superiors.

The pope addressed 40 church leaders, including representatives from Byelorussia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, on the first day of their June 5-7 meeting to prepare for the 1991 special assembly of the European Synod of Bishops.

At the synod, the bishops should share the lessons learned since World War II as citizens either of the communist East or the democratic West, the pope said. They should find ways to use those experiences in meeting the needs of the future, he added.

The synod was announced during the pope's April trip to Czechoslovakia, "a visit finally made possible after many years of closure while that country was under the totalitarian restraints of the Marxist system," the pope said.

"A new situation is dawning" in Central and Eastern Europe, he said. People who have lived under communism "can come out from the catacombs."

"They leave behind a situation of more or less radical violation of personal rights, in particular the right of religious freedom and of freedom of conscience itself," he said.

In regaining their freedom and rebuilding the church, the pope said, "the reality of disunity among Christians" must be kept in mind.

The synod sessions will include the presence of "our Orthodox and Protestant brothers and sisters," he said, "for they, too, share the same experiences and the same tasks connected with the service of the Gospel."

Trends that have secularized Europe will be another challenge to a new evangelization of the continent, the pope said.

"Many Europeans, particularly the more educated, have become used to seeing things 'as if God did not exist,'" he said. "They have also become accustomed to behaving in a like manner."

The "tragic series of events" that began with the Second World War made some people realize that perhaps human beings did not have all the answers and that freedom is a gift of God.

"The war itself with its immense cruelty, a cruelty that reached its most brutal expression in the organized extermination of the Jews," Gypsies and others, showed Europeans "the dark side of a civilization 'considered superior to all others,'" the pope said.

In the West, the war was followed by rapid progress in human rights, but in the East it was followed by "a strengthening of the totalitarian nature of the Marxist state," the repression of religious freedom and other basic rights.

"Christians on their part must carefully reflect and ask themselves if and to what degree the extinguishing of the church's rights was not somehow related to an inadequate evangelization," the pope said.

And in rebuilding the church in those countries, people must combine civil and patriotic concerns with Christian faith and morals, he said.

While Catholics in Western Europe have the financial resources needed for new evangelization programs, a "mutual contact" between bishops of the East and West is needed to design those programs, he said.

The synod's discussions should "enable us to discern more exactly what the Holy Spirit is saying through the experiences of each of the particular churches of Europe," the pope said.

END



(June 6, 1990)

See BILLINGS June 5, 1990.

Dr. Edmund Pellegrino

Speaks at Creighton University

(CNS photo by Nick Schinker,

The Catholic Voice)

(June 6, 1990)

See PELLEGRINO June 6, 1990.

END

AUTHORITY June 6, 1990 (340 words)

CATHOLIC, ORTHODOX THEOLOGIANS DISCUSS PROPOSED AUTHORITY DOCUMENT

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Catholic and Orthodox bishops and theologians are discussing a proposed document on authority in the church and receiving a report on Eastern-rite Catholic churches during a meeting in West Germany.

The International Catholic-Orthodox Commission, which includes 14 Orthodox churches, was scheduled for June 6-15 in Freising, West Germany, said a June 5 statement from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The co-presidents of the dialogue are Archbishop Edward I. Cassidy, head of the pontifical council, and Greek Orthodox Archbishop Stylianos of Australia. Archbishop William H. Keeler of Baltimore is a member of the commission.

Since its first meeting in 1980, the commission has completed three documents. They highlight agreements and differences between the churches on the Eucharist, on baptism and confirmation and on the sacrament of orders in the structure of the church.

As Catholics and Orthodox work to restore the unity lost in the 11th century, the role the pope would have is a major question. The document on authority will provide a preliminary discussion of papal primacy in addition to the roles of patriarchs and synods -- the decision-making authorities of the Orthodox churches.

In discussing practical ways of operating as a united church, the commission members have agreed that a structure other than that used by Eastern-rite Catholic churches should be found.

Some of the Orthodox churches, from whom various Eastern rites split to come into communion with Rome, believe the presence of those rites are an obstacle to their future unity.

At the commission's 1987 meeting, a subcommission was appointed to study the question and present a report at the 1990 plenary session.

Pope John Paul II asked people at his June 6 weekly general audience to pray that the discussions would be enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

He said he hoped the meeting and other ecumenical dialogues would "contribute to promoting a better, reciprocal understanding and a more profound care" among Christian denominations.

END

A RESOLUTION  
of the  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115

CONCERN AND PROTEST OVER THE OCCUPATION OF  
ST. JOHN'S HOSPICE IN THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER OF OLD JERUSALEM  
(Adopted by the General Board, May 18, 1990)

Having learned with great concern and regret that:

- In Holy Week 150 armed Jewish settlers illegally and suddenly occupied St. John's Hospice in the Christian Quarter of Old Jerusalem, a property of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem;
- A demonstration in response, led by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros, other Christian hierarchs, and Muslim leaders, was met by tear gas and rubber bullets in an aggressive and brutal reaction by Israeli police;
- The Israeli government, after repeatedly denying any complicity in the settler's action, admitted on April 22nd to having financed this transaction at a cost of some \$1.8 million;

Mindful that the Christian, Armenian, Jewish, and Muslim quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem, possessing a unique historical character and status, have been defined, governed, respected and preserved under long-standing "status quo" principles and agreements; and

Further mindful

- that these same principles and agreements have been honored for over a century by authorities responsible for the city, by the international community, by the resident Jews, Christians, and Muslims; and
- that the Israeli government has pledged repeatedly since 1967 to uphold and preserve the unique status, rights, historical, ethnic, religion, geographical and cultural character of the Old City; and

Grateful for the condemnation of this occupation by many Israeli and American Jewish groups;



The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA., meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 16-18, 1990:

- deplores and condemns this state-sponsored provocation and attack upon these historical understandings on the status, character and rights of the faith communities of Jerusalem, understandings that have served to preserve the peace of Jerusalem;
- deplores and condemns the brutal and aggressive reactions of the Israeli police against the Christian and Muslim leaders and laity;
- deplores and condemns the continued occupation of St. John's Hospice;
- urges the Israeli government to heed the call of many Israeli leaders and of international religious and political communities:
  - to honor its own pledge to respect the age-old status of the old city;
  - to speed the full implementation of the initial Israeli High Court decision ordering the evacuation of the hospice;
  - to remove the settlers immediately; and
  - to reassure the international religious and political communities by word and actions, that the status and total character of the quarters will be preserved;
- reiterates the appeal addressed by the NCCC General Secretary to the U.S. Secretary of State urging the Administration to continue to reject every unilateral effort to alter the status of Jerusalem or the configurations of its neighborhoods;
- urges the United States Administration to use all its power and influence to effect the total removal of Israeli settlers from the St. John's Hospice, and to obtain firm guarantees that any further aid to Israel will not be used for the purposes of settlement in any territories occupied after 1967;
- prays for reconciliation and dialogue among the Jewish, Christian and Muslim populations of Jerusalem;
- expresses unity and solidarity with the Jerusalem churches in their prayers and struggles to preserve their legitimate rights and geographic, ethnic and spiritual concerns;
- joins in solidarity with the Middle Eastern Council of Churches in its appeal "to confirm Jerusalem as a city of dialogue between people of these monotheistic faiths, a model of living on the basis of mutual respect and justice and a pillar of peace in the Holy Land, the region and the world."
- requests the General Secretary to communicate this resolution with the request for action, to the President, the Secretary of State, the members of the House of Representatives and Senate, the Heads of all member communities, the Ambassador of Israel to the United States, the Middle East Council of Churches, and the heads of Christian Churches and Communities in Jerusalem.

A RESOLUTION  
of the  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115

JERUSALEM

(Adopted by the General Board May 18, 1990)

The General Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.,  
meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 16-18, 1990,

1. Notes with regret and concern the recent actions of the U.S. Senate Concurrent Resolution 106 (March 22, 1990) and the U.S. House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution 290 (April 24, 1990) each of which "acknowledges that Jerusalem is and should remain the capital of the State of Israel;"
2. Reiterates its historic policy that
  - a) the future status of Jerusalem, a focus of the deepest religious inspiration and attachment of three faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, should remain unaltered; and
  - b) that unilateral actions by any one group in relation to Jerusalem will only perpetuate antagonisms that will threaten the peace of the city and possibly of the region;
3. Urges the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to reaffirm the long-standing U.S. policy that, in recognition of its importance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam the final status of Jerusalem should be determined only through negotiations among all of the concerned parties.
4. Requests the General Secretary to send this resolution to each member of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and to the Secretary of State; and
5. Urges member communions to communicate their concurrence with this resolution along with their own positions on the status of Jerusalem to each member of the U.S. Congress and the Secretary of State.



CASAROLI-SPEECH June 4, 1990 (510 words)

POPE, GORBACHEV KEY TO EAST BLOC CHANGES, TOP CARDINAL SAYS

By John Thavis

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope John Paul II and Mikhail Gorbachev were the two crucial figures in Eastern Europe's political revolution, said Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Agostino Casaroli.

Cardinal Casaroli credited Gorbachev with speaking out against the failures of communism. He said the Soviet leader, while facing serious problems, was seeking a real solution -- "which is in the interest of everyone to encourage and support."

The cardinal made the comments June 2 in Krakow, Poland, where he was receiving an honorary degree. An Italian translation of his Polish-language speech was released at the Vatican.

Cardinal Casaroli said that for decades, as the Vatican's chief negotiator in Eastern Europe, he was convinced that communism was a bankrupt system that had moved far away from its utopian goals. But, along with others, he was surprised last year when one East European country after another began throwing off communist rule.

Looking back, the cardinal said, the election of Pope John Paul II and the rise of Gorbachev were "two facts that, because of their unforeseen nature and the influence they exercised, must surely be considered fundamental" to the change.

The Polish pope's defense of human and religious rights had a profound echo in his homeland, he said. Among the East-bloc nations, Poland was the ripest for reform and in fact became the first to challenge its communist regime, he noted.

No less surprising was Gorbachev's emergence, Cardinal Casaroli said. Without naming the Soviet leader, the cardinal characterized him as "a voice of great authority raised to denounce the failure of the system and in recognition of the urgent necessity to change direction."

Gorbachev saw the need to "turn to democratic methods in order to heal the mortal wounds of the people, caused by a long dictatorship of a socio-political, moral and economic type," Cardinal Casaroli said.

There remain "very serious and difficult problems," the cardinal said, but under the new approach they are no longer hidden. He said that "a clear vision and courageous action represent the only realistic and effective way to a solution, which is in the interest of everyone to encourage and support."

Cardinal Casaroli defended the Vatican's patient policy of negotiating with Soviet-bloc regimes during the decades of communism. He said the Holy See acted "with prudence, without illusions, keeping to firm and clear principles, without compromises in essential things but in search of honest practical agreements."

His speech included a harsh post-mortem of communism, saying that the regimes made a crucial error in attacking "the sanctuary of the moral and religious conscience, which is always alive even in people who seem to have given it up."

He said the socialist utopia was one that "had caused an enormous number of victims." The cardinal referred to the purges that occurred under Josef Stalin and succeeding Soviet leaders.

The Marxist idea of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" was in reality domination by a minority, which used its power and privilege to thwart the wishes of the majority, the cardinal said.

END

Jewish Chronicle London 6/1/90

## HOME NEWS

# Hume hits at antisemites

By RUTH ROTHENBERG

The Archbishop of Westminster added his voice to protests against recent antisemitic outbreaks when he presented the Council of Christians and Jews' Sternberg Prize to Rabbi Albert Friedlander at Leo Baeck College, Finchley, last week.

Cardinal Basil Hume said: "In common with the Catholic bishops of countries in Europe, I deplore the recent outbreaks of antisemitism on the Continent and I am deeply saddened that a form of this desecration should also have occurred recently here in London."

He continued: "These are depraved acts committed by those who must have lost all sense of dignity of the person in life and in death. Such acts are deeply offensive to Jews and Christians alike."

"They must not deter the efforts of

all people of goodwill to create harmony between different races, faiths and nations."

Introducing Rabbi Friedlander, dean of Leo Baeck College and minister of London's Westminster Synagogue, college principal Rabbi Jonathan Magonet pointed to Rabbi Friedlander's 16 years of dialogue with German Christians.

Receiving the award, Rabbi Friedlander — who fled Germany in 1939 — paid tribute to Sir Sigmund Sternberg for his intervention which helped settle the Auschwitz convent dispute last autumn. "This was a case of lack of communication. Both sides have much to learn from each other," he said.

Sir Sigmund, executive chairman of the International Council of Christians and Jews, also participated in a recent Russian TV appeal for Chernobyl survivors, at the Russian Embassy's request.



ANTI-SEMITISM June 8, 1990 (290 words)

U.S. JEWISH GROUP URGES STRONG EUROPEAN STAND AGAINST HATE GROUPS

By Paulinus Barnes

Catholic News Service

LONDON (CNS) — European religious and political leaders have been urged by an American Jewish group to speak out "clearly and forthrightly" against recent outbursts of anti-Semitism on the continent.

In an advertisement placed in European publications, leaders of the American Jewish Congress said that "nearly everything in the world, particularly in Eastern Europe, seems to be changing. Is it possible that the only constant is hatred of Jews?"

The plea, signed by Jewish congress president Robert K. Lifton and executive director Henry Siegman, noted that less than 50 years have passed since the Holocaust took millions of Jewish lives.

"In the aftermath of the gruesome descent into hell that was the Holocaust, it was widely assumed that civilization had finally and forever foresworn the disease of anti-Semitism," they said. "Today the ugly cadences of anti-Semitic slogans and threats have in fact resurfaced, but thunderous denunciations are yet to be heard."

The statement refers to extremist nationalist groups in the Soviet Union, promising pogroms and threatening "Death to the Jews!" The renewed anti-Semitism is often couched in the vocabulary of an earlier anti-Judaism, it said.

"Is it conceivable that the Russian Orthodox Church, the national churches in the various Soviet republics, and the Catholic and Protestant churches of Europe are not appalled and offended by this anti-Semitism?" it said.

"Can the leaders of the Christian churches of Europe remain silent once again?" the statement asked.

Last month French church leaders joined national protests after Jewish graves were desecrated at Carpentras, south of Paris.

Britain's Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster has also voiced his concern over increasing expressions of anti-Semitism.

END

POPE-FAITH June 11, 1990 (330 words)

ANNIVERSARY MUST BE NEW CALL TO FOLLOW GOSPEL, SAYS POPE

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the evangelization of the Americas must be "a new call to all to follow" the Gospel, Pope John Paul II said.

"True evangelization cannot remain only on the level of a simple proclamation of the salvific message, but it must infuse with the spirit of the Beatitudes the daily relations among people and with God," the pope said.

He made his comments in a June 11 ceremony welcoming the Dominican Republic's new ambassador to the Vatican, Ramon Arturo Caceres Rodriguez.

The pope said he would inaugurate the 1992 celebrations in North and South America -- marking the arrival of Catholic missionaries who traveled with Christopher Columbus -- with a visit to the capital city of Santo Domingo.

The Dominican Republic, the pope said, was where "the cross of Christ was planted five centuries ago" and from where the faith spread to other parts of the Americas.

"The process of evangelization, which began with the first missionaries, exemplary for their self-sacrificing spiritual and social work, and which in five centuries has passed through diverse ecclesial and socio-political changes, must continue in our day," he said.

The message which the church preaches must also "project itself into the future, taking into account the changing situations of the persons and the peoples in their historical situation," he said.

"The spirit of the Beatitudes," he said, can have a profound influence on "the criteria for judgment, social values, trains of thought and the principles which inspire behavior and models of life, that is to say, above all upon the cultural process of a people."

The church, the pope said, "wishes to collaborate with the various civil causes so that our beloved sons and daughters of the Dominican Republic, making progress in their Christian life, may also reach a greater social well-being as the fruit of solidarity and justice."

END



SABBAH June 11, 1990 (290 words)

PATRIARCH URGES CATHOLICS TO VISIT HOLY LAND DESPITE TENSIONS

By John Thavis

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Catholics around the world should come to the Holy Land to give the church moral support at a time of political stress, said the Latin-rite patriarch of Jerusalem.

Patriarch Michel Sabbah, in a letter to bishops' conferences and pilgrim groups worldwide, said that by making the trip pilgrims could "contribute to the rebirth of the Jerusalem church."

"We are making an appeal to you, an encouragement to take the road to Jerusalem again, to come to pray in its places of redemption, to know its local churches," he said.

The patriarch said visitors have always been an important part of the church in the Holy Land, and their presence is an essential sign that the holy places are "not only history and archeology, but contain a message that can and must be understood."

He said "the continuous and numerous presence of pilgrims constitutes a moral and spiritual support for local Christians, who are so sorely tried." The letter was quoted in reports by Vatican Radio and Italian newspapers June 10.

Patriarch Sabbah said he was making his appeal "above all because of the situation created after the political events that have involved the Holy Land."

The last three years have seen a Palestinian uprising suppressed by Israeli occupation forces. Hundreds of young Palestinians have been killed, as well as some Israelis.

This spring, Jerusalem was the center of religious controversy when a group of Jewish settlers, backed by Israeli government funds, tried to move into the Christian sector of the city.

Christian leaders protested by closing Christian holy places for one day. The number of visitors has since declined, observers said. Much of the local economy is based on pilgrimages.

END



"Information Service" 71 (1989)

## COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE  
POLISH EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD  
WAR II, September 1, 1939

August 26, 1989

*...In this message the Pope called attention to the  
crime of the extermination of the Jews*

...It is truly difficult to calculate the magnitude  
of the losses suffered, and even more, of the suffer-  
ings which were inflicted upon individuals,  
families and communities. Many facts are already  
known; many more must yet be brought to light.  
The war was waged not only on the front, but as a  
total war, a war which struck entire societies.  
Whole groups were deported. Thousands became  
victims of prison, torture and execution. Quite  
apart from strict combat, people died as victims of  
bombing and of systematic terror. The organized  
instruments of the latter were the concentration  
camps, ostensibly established for labour, yet  
transformed in reality into death camps. One par-  
ticular crime of the Second World War remains the  
massive extermination of the Jews, who were  
doomed to the gas chambers because of racial  
hatred...

APOSTOLIC LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

August 27, 1989

*In one section of this Apostolic Letter, the Pope  
called attention to the persecution of the Jews.*

*...Among all these anti-human measures,  
however, there is one which will forever remain a  
shame for humanity: the planned barbarism which  
was unleashed against the Jewish people.*

As the object of the "final solution" devised by  
an erroneous ideology, the Jews were subjected to  
deprivations and brutalities that are almost in-  
describable. Persecuted at first through measures  
designed to harass and discriminate, they were  
ultimately to die by the millions in extermination  
camps.

The Jews of Poland, more than others, lived this  
immense suffering: the images of the Warsaw ghett-  
to under siege, as well as what we have come to  
learn about the camps at Auschwitz, Majdanek and  
Treblinka, surpass in horror anything that can be  
humanly imagined.

One must also remember that this murderous  
madness was directed against many other groups  
whose crime was to be "different" or to have  
rebelled against the tyranny of the occupier.

On the occasion of this sorrowful anniversary,  
once again I issue an appeal to all people, inviting  
them to overcome their prejudices and to combat  
every form of racism by agreeing to recognize the  
fundamental dignity and the goodness that dwell  
within every human being, and to be ever more con-  
scious that they belong to a single human family,  
willed and gathered together by God.

I wish to repeat here in the strongest possible  
way that hostility and hatred against Judaism are  
in complete contradiction to the Christian vision of  
human dignity.

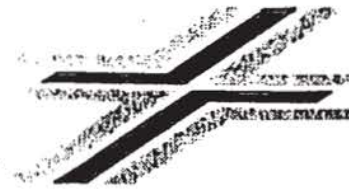
The new paganism and the systems related to it  
were certainly directed against the Jews, but they  
were likewise aimed at Christianity, whose  
teaching had shaped the soul of Europe. In the peo-  
ple of whose race "according to the flesh, is the  
Christ" (Rom 9:5), the Gospel message of the equal  
dignity of all God's children was being held up to  
ridicule.

In his Encyclical "Mit brennender Sorge" my  
predecessor Pope Pius XI clearly stated "He who  
takes race, or the people or the State, or the form  
of Government, the bearers of the power of the  
State, or other fundamental elements of human  
society... and makes them the ultimate norm of all,  
even of religious values, and deifies them with an  
idolatrous worship, perverts and falsifies the order  
of things created and commanded by God" (March  
14, 1937: AAS 29 [1937] p. 149 and p. 171).

This pretension on the part of the ideology of  
the National Socialist system did not spare the  
Churches, in particular the Catholic Church, which  
before and during the conflict experienced her own  
"passion". Her fate was certainly no better in the  
lands where the Marxist ideology of dialectical  
materialism was imposed.

We must give thanks to God, however, for the  
many witnesses, known and unknown, who in  
those hours of tribulation had the courage to pro-  
fess their faith steadfastly, who knew how to rise  
above the atheist's arbitrariness and who did not  
give in to force.





**Zentralkomitee  
der deutschen Katholiken**  
**ZdK**  
**Dokumentation**

26. April 1990

## Kloster und Kreuz in Auschwitz?

Erklärung des Gesprächskreises "Juden und Christen" beim Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken

### Kloster und Kreuz in Auschwitz?

Erklärung des Gesprächskreises "Juden und Christen"  
beim Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken

1. Auflage April 1990 2500  
2. Auflage Mai 1990 5000

Herausgegeben vom  
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### Zum Sachverhalt

Seit fünf Jahren ist der "Karmel von Auschwitz" Gegenstand einer schmerzlichen Kontroverse zwischen Katholiken und Juden. Die Vereinigung "Kirche in Not/Ostpriesterhilfe" hatte anlässlich des Pastoralbesuchs von Papst Johannes Paul II. im Mai 1985 in den Beneluxländern mit einem Flugblatt unter der Überschrift "Ihr Geschenk für den Papst: ein Konvent in Auschwitz" um Spenden geworben. Der Spendenaufwurf verwies auf die Existenz eines Konvents der barfüßigen Karmelitinnen im Gebäude des alten "Theaters" von Auschwitz. Dieses Gebäude, unmittelbar am Zaun des Konzentrationslagers von Auschwitz I gelegen, diente in den Jahren der Vernichtung als Lagerort für das Giftgas Zyklon B und war Teil des Gesamtkomplexes von Auschwitz, der das 3 km entfernte Vernichtungslager Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II) ebenso umfaßte wie eine Vielzahl von Außenlagern.

Die Information über den Karmelkonvent in diesem Gebäude führte zu spontanen Reaktionen des Protestes der jüdischen Gemeinschaft - zunächst in Westeuropa, dann in Israel und der weiteren Diaspora. Bedeutende katholische Persönlichkeiten erhoben ebenfalls Einspruch. Um den entstehenden Konflikt zu entschärfen, trafen sich autorisierte hochrangige Vertreter der katholischen und jüdischen Welt zu Beratungen. In einer gemeinsamen Erklärung vom 22. Februar 1987 in Genf kam es zu der Übereinkunft, ein Zentrum für Information, Erziehung, Begegnung und Gebet außerhalb der Grenzen der Lager von Auschwitz und Birkenau zu errichten. In

diesem Zentrum sollte auch der Konvent der Karmelschwestern seinen Platz erhalten. Die Absprachen von Genf setzten eine Frist von zwei Jahren. Es wurden aber keine Anzeichen für ein Handeln im Sinne dieser Vereinbarung sichtbar.

Nach Ablauf der zwei Jahre wurde die Frist um ein halbes Jahr verlängert. Auch in dieser Zeit wurde kein Schritt zur Errichtung des Zentrums und zur Auslagerung des Klosters sichtbar. Hingegen wurde im Herbst 1988 ein etwa 7 Meter hohes Kreuz im Klostergebäude gegenüber dem Ort der Ermordung polnischer Martyrer errichtet.

Der Konflikt spitzte sich im Sommer 1989 zu. Aktionen jüdischer Gruppen vor Ort sorgten für Aufsehen und Eskalation. Erst die Intervention der vatikanischen Kommission für die religiösen Beziehungen zum Judentum, die am 18. Oktober 1989 die Genfer Vereinbarung bekräftigte, milderte den Konflikt. Das Eintreten der polnischen Regierung für eine rasche Lösung des Problems entschärfte ebenfalls die Lage. Daß inzwischen ein Grundstück für das Projekt erworben wurde, ist ein konkretes Hoffnungszeichen.

Neben der Verlegung des Klosters und dem Bau des Zentrums bedarf es auch einer Klärung der dem Konflikt zugrunde liegenden unterschiedlichen Auffassungen von Symbol und Spiritualität bei Juden und bei Christen. Hierzu will unsere Erklärung - insbesondere mit Blick auf die Diskussion in der Bundesrepublik - ein Beitrag sein.

## Stellungnahme

Wie kein anderer Name erinnert Auschwitz an die Vernichtungslager der Hitler-Diktatur. Ursprünglich zur Vernichtung der polnischen Intelligenz errichtet, wurden hier Millionen Menschen ermordet: Polen, Russen, Ungarn, Deutsche, Holländer, Belgier, Franzosen,

Sinti und Roma, vor allem aber Juden: nur weil sie Juden waren. Anders als die anderen Lager ist Auschwitz als der größte jüdische Friedhof Europas das Realsymbol für den Holocaust, die Schoah, d.h. den Versuch, das jüdische Volk auszurotten.

Gerade im deutschen Sprachraum wurde Auschwitz auch zum Inbegriff für die Katastrophe der christlich-jüdischen Geschichte und zum Mahnwort für eine christliche Umkehr. Was der Theologe Johann Baptist Metz beim Freiburger Katholikentag 1978 gesagt hat, bleibt für uns Christen eine immer noch einzulösende Aufgabe: "Wir Christen kommen niemals mehr hinter Auschwitz zurück; über Auschwitz hinaus aber kommen wir, genau besehen, nicht mehr allein, sondern nur noch mit den Opfern von Auschwitz."

Deshalb schmerzt der Konflikt, der durch die Errichtung eines Karmelitenklosters im Vernichtungslager Auschwitz ausgelöst wurde, gerade uns, die wir als Katholiken und Juden seit 20 Jahren miteinander im Gespräch stehen. In diesem Konflikt hat - weil die zugesagten Verpflichtungen nicht eingelöst wurden - die Glaubwürdigkeit der katholischen Kirche Schaden erlitten. Er hat auch das Band der Einheit innerhalb der katholischen Kirche belastet. Zugleich wurde offenbar, wie schwer die Last der Geschichte auf uns allen liegt: gewiß, für Christen und Juden auf ganz unterschiedliche Weise. Es wurde aber auch erfahrbar, wie unterschiedlich die Wahrnehmung der jeweils anderen Glaubens- und Lebensweise ist und wie schwer es deshalb fällt, diese zu respektieren und ernst zu nehmen.

Für die Juden unter uns ist Auschwitz Ort und Name für die Schoah überhaupt, für die Manifestation des Bösen schlechthin, für das unbegreifliche Schweigen sowohl Gottes als auch der Menschen. Es ist kein Ort für nachträgliche Symbole oder schnelle Deutungsversuche. Denn im Auschwitz von heute ist die Wirklichkeit von damals gegenwärtig. Auschwitz ist ein Real-Symbol. "Es genügt, sich zur Erde zu beugen, um dort die Asche zu finden, die seinerzeit vom Himmel fiel



und die armen Reste von Tausenden und Tausenden jüdischer Kinder, schweigend und weise, in die vier Winde zerstreute"; auf dem Boden von Auschwitz läßt sich die Stimme einer Erinnerung vernehmen, welche "brennt, aber sich niemals verzehrt" (Elie Wiesel). Auschwitz kann an Aussagekraft verlieren, wenn ihm eine symbolisch gemeinte Einrichtung beigegeben wird. Die Symbolik von Auschwitz bleibt am eindrucklichsten erhalten, wenn es von nachfolgenden Zeichen freigehalten wird. In solcher Zeichenlosigkeit und in diesem Verzicht auf Symbolisierungen drückt sich auch eine Solidarität mit allen Opfern aus, wie Théo Klein, Leiter der jüdischen Delegation bei den offiziellen Gesprächen über den "Karmel", sie verdeutlichte: "Was uns (Juden) anlangt, so haben wir niemals geleugnet, daß Polen, Russen, Zigeuner und andere dort gestorben sind. Wir verlangen nicht, daß Auschwitz eine Synagoge wird.. (Die Toten) waren Katholiken und Protestanten, Juden, Muslime und Freidenker; niemand von ihnen hat das Recht, ihr Gedenken an sich zu reißen."

Auschwitz muß vor jeglichem Versuch geschützt werden, es für Interessen von Gruppen oder von Wahrheitsansprüchen von Institutionen welcher Art auch immer zu mißbrauchen.

Die Ehrfurcht vor den Leidenden und Toten von Auschwitz, aber auch unser Respekt vor dem jüdischen Volk als dem Bundesvolk Gottes verwehren es uns Christen, an diesem Ort allein auf unsere christlichen Formen von Liturgie und Spiritualität zurückzugreifen. Unter dieser Rücksicht kann der Verzicht auf ein Symbol eine positive Zeichenfunktion gewinnen. Es gibt Dimensionen und Abgründe des Leidens - auch des Leidens an Gott -, angesichts derer verstummendes Erschrecken und nachdenkendes Schweigen der gemäße Ausdruck sind.

Wir Christen müssen den Ernst der Anfrage begreifen, die Nichtchristen an unsere Theologie des Kreuzes richten, das für uns vom Schandpfahl zum Heilszeichen geworden ist. Viele Nichtchristen, vor

allem Juden, haben in der Geschichte das Kreuz als Verfolgungssymbol erfahren: bei den Kreuzzügen, durch Inquisition und Zwangstaufen, bei Pogromen und Verfolgungen. Wir müssen also lernen, daß das Kreuz für viele Menschen ganz anderes bedeutet, als wir damit aussagen möchten; unsere Symbole, Absichten und Kriterien können nicht für alle anderen als Maßstab gelten.

Auch wir Christen können das zeichenlose Auschwitz als Symbol begreifen. Die Leere dieses Ortes kann uns zur beredten Mahnung an die Verlassenheit, die Ungetröstetheit und den Schrecken der vielen werden, die dort leben und sterben mußten. Ein Kloster könnte diese Leere überlagern. Ein heute gesetztes Kreuz könnte christliche Präsenz in einem Maße beschwören, in dem sie damals nicht da war. Wer hier fragt, was Juden störe, wenn dort christliche Nonnen beten und sühnen, muß verstehen lernen, daß es nicht angeht, Auschwitz im Nachhinein christlich anzueignen oder auch nur diesen Anschein zu erwecken. Das Gebet für die Opfer von Auschwitz ist unabhängig vom Ort Auschwitz, das Eintreten der Sühne für die Untaten ist nicht an den Ort des Geschehens gebunden.

Gewiß, die christliche Frömmigkeit kennt seit der frühen Kirchengeschichte die Tradition, an den Stätten des Martyriums oder über Martyrergräbern das Kreuz oder eine Kirche zu errichten. Diese Tradition kann aber in Auschwitz nicht fortgesetzt werden. Sie hätte den Charakter einer Anmaßung; denn die Toten von Auschwitz sind nicht "unsere" Märtyrer, auch wenn unter ihnen Frauen und Männer waren, die als Christen gestorben sind. Zudem würde die Tatsache verstellt, daß es Getaufte waren, die zu Täterinnen und Tätern wurden. So verständlich die Sehnsucht von Christen ist, das abgründige Leiden von Auschwitz unter das Kreuz Christi zu stellen, um über diesen Ort unbegreiflicher Gottesverlassenheit und Menschenverachtung zugleich das Hoffnungslicht der Auferstehung aufscheinen zu lassen, und so groß der Ernst ist, mit dem das polnische Volk diesen Ort nun als Symbol seines Martyriums und seiner Erneuerung



erinnern will - zuallererst und unaufgebbar muß Auschwitz als der Ort ausgehalten werden, an dem Millionen von Juden gestorben sind, verlassen von einer gleichgültigen Welt und im Stich gelassen auch von den Kirchen, die doch mit dem jüdischen Volk in dem einen und gemeinsamen Gottesbund leben.

Wir Christen müssen die Last der Geschichte wirklich annehmen. "Denn die Geschichte ist nicht etwas Äußerliches, sie ist Teil der eigenen Identität der Kirche und kann uns daran erinnern, daß die Kirche, die wir als heilig bekennen und als Geheimnis verstehen, auch eine sündige und der Umkehr bedürftige Kirche ist" (Deutschsprachige Bischofskonferenzen zum 50. Jahrestag des Novemberprogroms 1938). Im Eingedenken von Auschwitz müssen wir Christen uns bewußt machen,

- daß der millionenfache Mord am jüdischen Volk so mit dem Namen Auschwitz verbunden ist, daß gerade die Stimmen der Angehörigen dieses Volkes bei der "Verfügung" über Auschwitz nicht übergangen werden dürfen,
- daß wir viel von unserer Glaubwürdigkeit eingebüßt haben, weil wir damals als kirchliche Gemeinschaften - trotz des beispielhaften Verhaltens Einzelner - mit dem Rücken zum Leiden des jüdischen Volkes gelebt haben,
- daß wir bemüht sein sollten, Umkehr zu tun und unser Verhältnis zum jüdischen Volk zu erneuern,
- daß Auschwitz auch zwischen dem polnischen und deutschen Volk steht und als Ort des polnischen Leidens erinnert sein will,
- daß wir - und dies mag das Schwierigste sein - begreifen, warum unsere Maßstäbe nicht die einzigen und auch nicht die allein gemäßen sind, wiewohl sie von uns redlichen Herzens als wahr angesehen werden.

Als Juden und Christen sind wir davon überzeugt, daß Auschwitz davor geschützt werden muß, zu einem Ort oberflächlicher Besichtigung oder ideologischer Belehrung zu verkommen. Es wird nicht einfach sein, diesen Ort so zu erhalten, daß er die Erinnerung an die Opfer wachhält und den Besuchern jenes Gedenken ermöglicht, das ihrer unterschiedlichen Beziehung zu den Opfern gerecht wird. Das außerhalb des Lagerbereichs geplante Begegnungs- und Studienzentrum kann dazu beitragen. Seine in Angriff genommene Errichtung und die damit verbundene Verlegung des Klosters und des Kreuzes sind notwendige Schritte, an denen sich die Ernsthaftigkeit der katholischen Erneuerung hinsichtlich der bleibenden kirchlichen Verbundenheit mit dem jüdischen Volk zeigen kann. Die entscheidende Wende im Verhältnis der katholischen Kirche zum jüdischen Volk (und zu einzelnen Juden), die nach den Worten von Papst Johannes Paul II. bei seinem Besuch der Großen Synagoge Roms mit dem Zweiten Vatikanum eingetreten ist, hat ihre Bewährungsprobe: Ob wir Christen als "Kirche nach Auschwitz" zur Umkehr bereit und fähig sind, muß sich gerade in Auschwitz erweisen.

Beschlossen vom Gesprächskreis "Juden und Christen" beim Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken am 4. April 1990



REMARKS OF SHOLOM D. COMAY  
PRESIDENT, AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

APOSTOLIC PALACE  
VATICAN CITY  
MARCH 16, 1990

*(Mr. Comay delivered these remarks at a private audience with His Holiness, Pope John Paul II. Joining Mr. Comay was a Leadership Delegation of the American Jewish Committee.)*

It is with warm sentiments of esteem and respect that I bring you the traditional greeting of SHALOM on behalf of this Leadership Delegation of the American Jewish Committee.

It has been twenty five years since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council and its adoption of the historic Declaration, NOSTRA AETATE. During the past quarter century, the American Jewish Committee has been privileged to play a major role in building mutual respect and understanding between Roman Catholics and the Jewish people. We have engaged in this effort because like you, we share a profound commitment to overcoming the mistrust, suspicion, and prejudice that have so often poisoned Catholic-Jewish relations in the past.

NOSTRA AETATE, and the several Catholic teaching and implementation documents that followed from it, have irrevocably transformed Catholic-Jewish relations. The 1974 Vatican "Guidelines", the 1985 "Notes", and your own leadership efforts, including the 1986 address at the Rome Grand Synagogue and your addresses the following year in Miami and Los Angeles, have been significant contributions to this vital undertaking.

Indeed, we believe that the development of constructive Catholic-Jewish relations throughout the world is one of the great success stories of this century. We especially commend the superb leadership of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews here at the Vatican, and the Office on Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States. We acknowledge with appreciation the excellent work being done in the fields of Catholic teaching, preaching, and liturgy.

The American Jewish Committee, a pioneering human rights organization, works closely with Catholics on a host of universal concerns including human rights and religious liberty, immigration and refugees, racism, world hunger, war and peace, destructive religious cults, and bioethics. The American Jewish Committee warmly welcomes the extraordinary positive changes of the past 25 years, and we reaffirm our pledge to work cooperatively with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in the years ahead. We are especially proud that the American Jewish Committee maintains close relationships with Polish-American organizations and other like minded groups in the United States in order to foster dialogue and mutual respect.

Five years ago when you met with another American Jewish Committee Leadership Delegation, you declared:

Anti-Semitism, which is unfortunately still a problem in certain places, has been repeatedly condemned by the Catholic tradition as incompatible with Christ's teaching... I once again express the Catholic Church's repudiation of all oppression and persecution, and of all discrimination against people -- from whatever side it may come -- 'in law or in fact, on account of their race, origin, color, culture, sex, or religion'.

While we celebrate the extraordinary changes that are currently taking place in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, we are saddened and profoundly concerned by the growing reports of anti-Semitism in that part of the world. The existence of openly anti-Semitic organizations, public rallies and demonstrations, publications, and threats of violence are increasing in number.

We strongly believe the Church has a significant role to play in shaping the new Eastern Europe that is rapidly emerging. As you so eloquently declared -- oppression, persecution, and anti-Semitism must be repudiated and opposed "from whatever side it may come."

Your continued active leadership in publicly opposing all forms of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe will help guarantee that the recent gains, so painfully achieved, will not be lost by a resurgence of this ancient pathology. Together we must make every effort to ensure religious liberty, individual freedom, and personal security for all peoples and groups.



The efforts by the Holy See to bring about a mutually satisfactory resolution to the Convent issue at Auschwitz is deeply appreciated. When we leave Rome, our AJC Leadership Delegation will visit Poland for a series of meetings with Catholic and governmental leaders.

Among those whom we will meet in Poland is Bishop Henryk Muszynski, the Chairman of the Polish Episcopate's Commission for Dialogue with Judaism. Bishop Muszynski and his colleagues have played a key role in helping to resolve the Convent crisis. We will also visit the Auschwitz death camp, and we welcome the news that ground has recently been broken for the construction of a new Convent and a center for study and assembly.

We believe the successful resolution of this crisis proves the ongoing strength, and not the weakness, of the Catholic-Jewish dialogue. The fact that we were able to work together to achieve a solution to a most difficult problem should not be underestimated, and hopefully, the solution to the Auschwitz Convent crisis can serve as a model to follow when other serious confrontations may arise between our two faith communities.

In less than ten years, Christians will mark the beginning of the third millennium of their faith. The current decade provides an opportunity to work for peace throughout the world in anticipation of the year 2000. And no part of the globe is more in need of the healing power of peace and reconciliation than the Middle East, an area sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. Hopefully, the 1990s will be the decade when a just and lasting peace between the State of Israel and its neighbors is finally achieved.

Several of my colleagues here today along with myself have just concluded an intensive study mission to Israel, and as always, we were deeply stirred by the profound and palpable yearning for peace that we sensed among the citizens of Israel. But the scourge of terrorism has been a serious stumbling block to the advancement of the peace process as has the doctrine of anti-Zionism. Once again the Holy See has forthrightly addressed these concerns. "Terrorist acts which have Jewish persons or symbols as their target have multiplied in recent years. Anti-Zionism...serves at times as a screen for anti-Semitism, feeding on it and leading to it." "The Church & Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society" (February 10, 1989)

In your Miami address you declared: "After the tragic extermination of the Shoah, the Jewish people began a new period in their history. They have a right to a homeland, as does any civil nation, according to international law", and your Apostolic Letter in 1984, REDEMPTIONIS ANNO, spoke powerfully of the loving and eternal ties that exist between the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem and the Land of Israel.

One of the most severe problems in achieving a Middle East peace is a prevalent belief held by many of Israel's foes that without formal diplomatic recognition by the international community, Israel's legitimacy, even its very existence, can somehow be undermined.

By taking the necessary steps to establish full and formal diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, we believe the Holy See will help dispel that myth and will make a significant contribution to the peace process.

Such a step would be an historic contribution to achieving peace in that part of the world. Such an act by the Holy See would send a clear signal to the entire world that Israel is indeed a fully recognized member of the international family of nations, and we hope this will happen soon.

We live in extraordinary, perhaps even miraculous times, and it is the mark of leadership to capture and use those moments in history when great and positive change is possible. That was the case twenty-five years ago when the Second Vatican Council adopted the NOSTRA AETATE Declaration.

And that is the case today when old patterns of thought and repressive systems of government are everywhere being severely challenged. Hopefully, history will judge us as kindly as it judges those men and women, including yourself, who a quarter century ago successfully reversed the harmful patterns of 1900 years of Catholic-Jewish relations.

May God bless you with many more years of gifted leadership, and the American Jewish Committee, for its part, pledges to continue its efforts to achieve those goals that we both seek. There is much left to do, and as the Talmud reminds all of us: *"The day is short, the work is difficult and God, the Sovereign of the Universe, is urgent."*



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

M I N U T E S

OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held from February 29 to March 1, 1989  
at the Martin Buber House, Heppenheim

THERE WERE PRESENT:

Mme Suzanne Bidot (Member)  
Mrs Gunnel Borgegard (Member)  
Father Pier Francesco Fumagalli (Vatican Observer)  
Dr Victor C. Goldbloom (President)  
Sr Mary Kelly (SIDIC Observer)  
Rev. Christoph Knoch (Member)  
Rev. Arie Lems (Vice-President)  
Rabbi Dr N. Peter Levinson (Vice-President)  
Dr Elisabeth Maxwell (Observer)  
Dr Gerhart Riegner (Honorary Vice-President)  
Rabbi Dr David Rosen (Member)  
Mr Antoon Ruygers (Treasurer)  
Dr Jacobus Schoneveld (General Secretary)  
Rev. Dr Simon Schoon (Member)  
Dr Stefan Schreiner (Member)  
Sir Sigmund Sternberg (Chairman Executive Committee)  
Rev. D. Martin Stöhr (Member)  
Mr Rudolf Wirtz (Member)  
Mrs Ruth Weyl (Minutes Secretary)

IN ATTENDANCE

Prof. Pierre Pierrard (Member of Advisory Panel)  
Rabbi Dr József Schweitzer (Member of Advisory Panel)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs Judith Banki (Member)  
Lord Coggan (Honorary President)  
Mme Claire Huchet-Bishop (Past President)  
Mr Elliott Wright (Member)

No apologies were received from the AJC, WJC and WCC observers.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg chaired the sessions until he had to return to the UK in the early afternoon of Wednesday, 1st March. The last session was chaired by Rabbi Dr N. Peter Levinson.

After prayers, said by Rabbi Dr N. Peter Levinson, Sir Sigmund Sternberg opened the meeting by welcoming in particular Dr Elisabeth Maxwell who following the decision taken in Montreal under the provisions of Article 8 of the Constitution had agreed to attend ICCJ meetings as an observer. Her acceptance of this invitation was unanimously welcomed.

#### AGENDA

Arie Lems suggested that the 1991 Annual Conference be added as a discussion point (item 19a) to the agenda, previously circulated.

This was agreed and the agenda was adopted.

Arie Lems requested the Chairman to ask Observers and guests to leave to enable him to make a personal statement. As no prior notice of this intent had been given, the chairman refused the request, but it was unanimously agreed to give Arie Lems a later opportunity to make such personal statement.

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD IN MONTREAL, CANADA, 19, 22 AND 24 AUGUST 1989

The minutes were adopted and duly signed.

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was agreed that any matters arising from the Montreal minutes would be covered by the present agenda.

#### GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

In submitting his report (Appendix A) the General Secretary informed the Executive Committee that since its circulation on 9th February 1989 he had also discussed cooperation with the newly established Ecumenical Foundation who had appointed Mrs Ruth Weyl to act as Research Director. As previously proposed by Lord Coggan, the primary function of the Foundation will be the preparation of an annual report that would provide a profile of major constructive developments, as well as lapses into intolerance or worse, seeking in the first place to complement the work in the countries of the ICCJ member organisations by providing a network



of mutually available information. To this end the documentation centre being built up by Mrs Ellen Schoneveld at the Martin Buber House would serve as a basis for the foundation's task.

The Chairman complimented the General Secretary on his wide-ranging and ever increasing involvements.

Mme Bidot brought a suggestion from Mme Huchet-Bishop who felt that in view of the role the Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne had throughout played in the Jewish-Christian dialogue the Board ought to include a French representative. The General Secretary explained the reasons underlying the changes in the composition of the Executive, and the Advisory Panel decided on by the Montreal AGM.

A suggestion that the new History of the ICCJ should contain a list of publications by the member organisations was not taken up, although the need for such cross-information was appreciated. It was rather felt that information about such publications should be included in the report of the Ecumenical Foundation.

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman submitted a report, previously circulated, about his wide-ranging involvements. He stressed the ever increasing outreach of the ICCJ's activities and influence.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

##### The 1988 Balance Sheet

The Treasurer explained that despite difficulties that had arisen in connection with the 1988 Montreal Colloquium, he has been enabled to close the accounts as per 31 December 1988 with a zero balance. He expected to present a detailed account within a couple of months.

##### 1989 Budget and Proposed Contribution by Member Organisations

The Treasurer explained that in principle the newly drawn up budget was consistent with previous ones, with the exception of a forecast need to increase gifts by DM 20.000,--.

With regard to member contributions it was agreed with regard to Italy to increase the proposed contribution by the newly formed Federazione delle Amicizie Ebraico-Cristiane in Italia (now composed of the Amicizie in Firenze, Ancona, Roma and Torino) to DM 1.000,-- as from 1990.

With regard to Venezuela it was thought that despite the difficulties prevailing in that country it should have been possible to collect the DM 1.000,-- due for 1988, and that an approach be made to the Comité de Relaciones entre Iglesias y Sinagogas to try and increase the proposed 1989 contribution.

Rabbi Dr David Rosen expressed gratitude to the ICCJ for having waived the Israel Interfaith Association's contribution for 1988 and expressing readiness to do likewise for 1989. However, it was hoped that despite some ongoing difficulties, they would be able to honour their obligation for 1989.

The Treasurer's Budget, and Membership Contributions as agreed by the Committee were unanimously approved.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg thanked Antoon Ruygers for his ongoing dedication and skillful handling of the ICCJ's finances.

Examining financial strategy in general, the discussion concentrated on

#### Widening the Circle of Member Organisations

Dr Elisabeth Maxwell expressed surprise that there were still European countries who were not represented. Gunnel Borgegard explained the desinterest still prevailing (also within the Jewish communities) in Denmark and Norway.

With regard to Portugal Sir Sigmund pointed out that while Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon, Antonio Ribeiro, expressed willingness to help establish a council, the Jewish community appeared disinclined. Lisbon University was willing to establish a course in Judaism, and Sir Sigmund has been in touch with Father Marcel Dubois in the matter. Dr Goldbloom reported on approaches made by the Greek community in Canada. However, contrary to the situation in the USA, there still existed near insurmountable difficulties in entering dialogue with the Greek Orthodox Church. He was continuing his efforts and would report further.

Sir Sigmund pointed out the need to counter the immense disinformation with regard to Jews and Judaism in Japan.

Gunnel Borgegard reported that a recent visit to South East Asia had made her aware that while there were many dialogue groups, there existed none with Jews, while David Rosen reported that the Asian Pacific Jewish Association held a colloquium every other year.

It was suggested that the General Secretary study the possibility of creating a small committee that would look objectively at the human resources from whose experience and information the ICCJ and its Advisory Panel could benefit.

Dr Riegner stressed the need for a fundraising secretary, while Dr Maxwell suggested that members travelling should where- and whenever possible visit responsible personalities, urging the establishment of dialogue organisation and consequently membership in the ICCJ. Contact should also be taken up with the Peace Foundations.

Ruth Weyl suggested including an item to this effect in the next Newsletter.



#### ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENDOWMENT FUND

Rabbi Dr Levinson and Dr Wirtz reported optimistically about steps taken since the visit of the Hesse Minister of State for Education and Culture, Dr Christean Wagner, to the Martin Buber House on 19 September 1988, when he declared his readiness to undertake coordination of Church and State bodies towards establishment of the proposed Endowment Fund. Following that visit, Federal Chancellor Dr Kohl in his address at the Frankfurt Synagogue on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 'Kristallnacht' made specific reference to the work of the ICCJ in the Martin Buber House. Sir Sigmund reported having received a letter from Mr Mertes confirming that the Chancellor would visit the Martin Buber House later in the year. Mr Wirtz stressed that in the light of recent political developments politicians in Bonn as well as in Hesse were eager to respond positively.

The Board was following the matter up and was writing to Minister Wagner to set in motion the required formalities for the establishment of the Endowment Fund.

While it was deplored that in the past there had not been sufficient support from industry and commerce, the General Secretary pointed out that the Association of Friends and Sponsors had started to write numerous letters to individuals in the Federal Republic of Germany inviting them to join the circle of friends and that some positive response was expected.

#### INTENSIFICATION OF CONTACTS WITH LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

The General Secretary reported that in correspondence he has had since Montreal, Rabbi Kripper has affirmed the need for closer cooperation suggesting that a small delegation visit a number of South American countries to find out the best way of promoting cooperation in the dialogue. Dr Goldbloom had suggested such a visit early in 1990. An offer by Dr Riegner to use the occasion of his forthcoming meeting with Cardinal Willebrands in Brazil (11-16 June, when they would each be presented with an award from the Brazilian Catholic Bishops Conference) to visit suitable personalities in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay was gratefully accepted by the Committee. Dr Riegner suggested asking his Brazilian hosts to make such meetings possible. It was hoped that Dr Riegner would be able to report back to the ICCJ at or soon after the Lille Conference.

Any follow-up and ICCJ initiative would however have to be kept in abeyance until financial commitment in this important development could be assured.

## EASTERN EUROPE

### Hungary

Father Fumagalli and Rabbi Dr Schweitzer reported on developments and talks held with regard to the formation of a Hungarian Council of Christians and Jews.

### Proposal to hold a third seminar of Jews and Christians from the East and the West in Cracow, Poland

Dr Stefan Schreiner reported on talks held with Cardinal Macharski, Bishop Muszynski and others concerning plans to hold the proposed third seminar early in 1990, and not as originally planned late in 1989. IJCIC and the ADL plan to hold meetings in the course of 1989, and the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia in Cracow propose to hold a colloquium on Theology after Auschwitz. Given the less structured nature of the ICCJ consultations it was felt that it would be most beneficial if the meeting could take place after the said events. The Cracow Club of Catholic Intelligentsia is ready to host the meeting and extend an official invitation. At the same time the Polish colleagues are aware of the reasons for the ICCJ's hesitation to accept as long as the issue of the Carmelite Convent in Auschwitz has not been resolved.

Dr Riegner presented an analysis of the agreement reached and the present situation when no conclusive action has yet been taken, underlining the fact that as the Church in Rome has throughout supported the Jewish point of view some of the opposition within Poland has been overcome. The Carmelites' General in Rome had overruled the decision of the Carmelite head in Poland, and the sisters themselves appear ready to move. To date nothing practical has happened, no architectural plans have been submitted, nor was it clear whether the venue envisaged was still available. It was appreciated that the Carmelites' stand was not directed against Jews, but equally Jewish feelings ought to be understood. There hardly existed a Jewish family who did not mourn somebody who perished in Auschwitz.

Dr Stefan Schreiner further reported that a Declaration of the Polish Church vis-à-vis the Jewish people was being prepared; as was a special curriculum for teachers of theology, followed by a six-weeks course in Chicago by 55 specially selected Polish theologians. But there was also intra-Polish conflict in the matter.

It was agreed that contacts with these progressive elements ought to be maintained on a personal level without however disturbing the present delicate balance of major agreements. Father Fumagalli expressed the hope that the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II would be a suitable occasion for wider practical reconciliation.

The Chairman thanked Dr Stefan Schreiner for his invaluable help in guiding the ICCJ in its ongoing efforts towards wider Jewish-Christian dialogue in the Socialist countries.



He congratulated him on his recent appointment as 'Dozent' (Lecturer) in Old Testament and Jewish Studies at the Humboldt University, Berlin (GDR). The appointment meant the introduction of Jewish Studies into this university.

#### USSR

Dr Schoneveld stressed the ICCJ's interest in dialogue possibilities in the USSR following the new policy of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', the opening up of the Churches and consequential re-emergence of traditional antisemitic teaching in parts of the Orthodox Church. Dr Maxwell emphasised the prevailing ignorance about the Holocaust. Reference was made to contacts with the Russian Church in Israel. Dr Riegner suggested establishing a small committee, headed perhaps by Dr Elisabeth Maxwell, that could study the complete new possibilities. The Chairman informed the meeting that he had held informal meetings in a purely personal capacity with interested parties aiming at the establishment of a Soviet Jewish-Christian dialogue group, and that it was hoped to invite participants from the USSR to the Lille colloquium".

#### Bulgaria

Dr Goldbloom reported on contacts with the new Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires in Canada, and representations by the Canadian Jewish Congress (Mr Alan Rose) invoking the history of Bulgarian Jewry's protection during the Holocaust and the total lack of recognition, such as had been granted to Denmark. An invitation had been extended to hold a consultation in Sofia. Referring to Bulgaria as 'one of the nations who did not hand over their Jews', Dr Elisabeth Maxwell reported on her and her husband's experiences and contacts in Bulgaria, urging that a positive response to Bulgaria's evident keenness to be involved in dialogue be made as soon as possible. And to make sure that Bulgarian representatives attend the Lille Conference.

It was agreed that contacts be taken up through the intermediary of Mr Maxim Cohen who had already attended ICCJ meetings, indicating to him the Executive's thinking and asking for his suggestions how best to help. And this in particular in view of the openmindedness of the Government and Church, at the same time bearing in mind the general secular stance of the Bulgarian Jewish community which contained only a very small percentage of religiously affiliated members. It was further suggested that the General Secretary contact Dr Zweigenbaum of the Jewish Agency and WCC in the matter.

#### Yugoslavia

Sir Sigmund Sternberg reported on the Zagreb exhibition on the history of Yugoslav Jewry, and Dr Maxwell told of the concern of the Jews living there that even the ghetto is no longer remembered. Dr Riegner gave an overview of developments since the end of the war when Yugoslav Jewish leadership was positive and strong leaving a legacy of determination to continue Jewish life.

## ICCJ EDUCATION PROJECT

The General Secretary reported that at their November 1988 meeting the officers had agreed that all possible steps be taken to reactivate the programme of 'Presenting Christianity in Jewish Teaching'. The plan was to aim at a three-stage consultation in the USA, in Europe with an emphasis on the Holocaust experience, and in Israel, relating the regionalised projects to one another. He was still waiting to hear from the NCCJ and Judith Banki. Welcoming the project David Rosen deplored the situation in Israel where efforts in that regard encountered the prejudices of history, exasperated by political circumstances. He also emphasised that contrary to efforts made in other countries there was no reciprocity in Israel where the Church schools were predominantly Arab.

The President stressed the need for the ICCJ to avoid being thought one-sided in the education programme. Admitting that while for practical purposes it was incumbent upon the individual member countries to implement the programme, it was unanimously agreed that in order to give effective guidance the General Secretary pursue his efforts to bring about the consultation on the Presentation of Christianity in Jewish Teaching, and report further in Lille. Dr Riegner referred to the detailed analysis on Jewish Textbooks on Jesus and Christianity in the recent publication of 'Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue' (pp 104-130).

## FORMATION OF A WORKING GROUP OF CHRISTIANS, JEWS AND MUSLIMS

The President referred to the ICCJ programme concerning the trilateral dialogue and a proposal of the November 1988 officers' meeting to form an advisory sub-committee to the Executive, drawn in the main from participants in the St. Augustin (near Bonn) symposium of 29 May to 2 June 1988. While financial constraints would in the first instance allow only consultation by correspondence it was hoped that the members of the working committee could get together at a later stage.

The following had been approached and indicated their readiness to accept subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee:

Christians:	Dr Eugene Fisher Father Gordian Marshall Dr Stefan Schreiner
Jews:	Prof. Hava Lazarus Yafeh Kalman Yaron
Muslims:	Prof. M. Arkoun Dr Riffat Hassan Prof. Mohammed Shaalan Imam G.M.A. Solaiman

As it was agreed that there was need to add somebody with orthodox religious Jewish background,



Rabbi Dr David Rosen

was asked and agreed to serve on the Committee.

Dr Victor Goldbloom and Dr J. Schoneveld would ex officio join the working group.

All nominations were unanimously confirmed by the Executive Committee.

It was felt that in the light of tensions created by Salman Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses' it was important to let the Muslim dialogue partners know that the dialogue must continue. It was hoped that the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung would be prepared to sponsor another symposium. To this end the General Secretary was asked to suggest to the members of the working group to propose suitable theme and topic, and to let the members of the Executive Committee see these suggestions.

#### SCHOLARS' CONSULTATION ON AN ANTHOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN WRITINGS ON JEWS AND JUDAISM THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

The General Secretary referred to the proposals contained in his letter of 12 December 1988, based on the decision taken by the officers at the Board meeting of 7/8 November 1988, and the attached programme suggestions for the consultation (Appendix B/C to these minutes). There was unanimous agreement that the ICCJ should put to its administrative and organisational expertise at the disposal of the proposed consultation. Appreciation was expressed to Dr Schoneveld for the care he had taken in widening the scope of the proposed anthology.

Dr Elisabeth Maxwell suggested that the Foundation get in touch with MacMillan's who might be able to assist with project financing.

#### THE NEWLY FORMED FEDERAZIONE DELLE AMICIZIE EBRAICO-CRISTIANE IN ITALIA

The General Secretary submitted the constitution and application of the newly formed Federazione delle Amicizie Ebraico-Cristiane in Italia to membership of the ICCJ in place of the Amicizia Ebraico-Cristiana di Firenze which henceforth together with the Amicizie of Ancona, Rome and Torino would form the new organisation.

It was unanimously agreed to propose acceptance of this newly formed organisation to the Lille AGM. The General Secretary was asked to inform Signora Manuela Paggi-Sadun accordingly.

## THE ISRAEL INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION

Rabbi Dr David Rosen reported on changes and developments in the reconstituted Israel Interfaith Association, the extension of its Executive into an Advisory Board under the chairmanship of Dr Geoffrey Wigoder, a Secretariat of nine people representing a cross-section of the major components of Israel's population, including indigenous Christian and Muslim communities, expatriate Churches, women and the younger generation. The latter has now been adequately structured to be in control and follow up all programs. Joseph Emanuel continues to act as General Secretary essentially concerned with programmatic innovations and effective development. The Chairman of the Secretariat charged with financial and organizational control is Mr Shmuel Toledano at present engaged in fund-raising.

Due to the personal generosity of a number of friends they were able to clear all debts. In view of the enormous changes that were introduced other institutions have declared their readiness to give moral and financial support. Dr David Rosen paid tribute to Sir Sigmund Sternberg's dedication and the great interest he has taken in the affairs of the Israel Interfaith Association.

These developments were welcomed by all present, and Dr David Rosen was asked to convey the Executive's good wishes to all concerned.

## 1990 COLLOQUIUM AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

In response to the offer of the Israel Interfaith Association to host the 1990 Conference in Israel, it was unanimously agreed to submit to the Lille AGM acceptance of this proposal.

The venue proposed was Jerusalem, possibly the Jerusalem Forest.

The date still to be agreed.

A proposed title: "Israel: Origin, Obstacle, Opportunity".

The event would also provide occasion to respond to the suggestion submitted in Montreal by Joseph Emanuel and Mrs Judith Klara Molnar to plan a Bill Simpson Memorial Forest within the newly established Brotherhood Forest near Jerusalem, as reiterated by the Israel Interfaith Association's letter of 20 February 1989. The General Secretary was asked to look into the matter and take the necessary preparatory steps as agreed at the November 1988 officers' meeting.

## 1991 COLLOQUIUM

It was agreed to accept the Chairman's proposal to hold the 1991 colloquium and AGM in the UK.



### 1992 Colloquium

It was suggested to hold the 1992 Conference in Spain, the year of the fifth centenary of the expulsion of the Jews from that country.

### THE 1989 ICCJ SIR SIGMUND STERNBERG AWARD

The President informed the members that his nomination committee had agreed to give the 1989 award to Professor Paul van Buren of Boston. The Award to be presented in the USA, there was unanimous agreement with this decision.

### ICCJ COLLOQUIUM LILLE, FRANCE, 2-6 JULY 1989

After some discussion following Professor Pierrard's explanation of date, venue, theme and programme of the colloquium it was considered advisable to entrust a working committee (Dr Maxwell, Prof. Pierrard, Mme Bidot, Dr Riegner and Rabbi Dr Rosen) with some changes in structure and sequence of the programme. These changes were unanimously approved, incorporated in the programme and, where necessary, lectures would be duly advised.

### Proposed Budget

In submitting his budget proposals (Appendix D to these minutes) the Treasurer explained that in an effort to avoid pitfalls experiences at previous conferences he had based his costing on an assessment of actual costs and overheads ratio of 3/4 to 1/4.

While local participants would be welcome and would not be charged participation fees, they would have to pay for their meals.

Special arrangements were made for the 40-45 expected participants from the Young Leadership Conference.

After careful perusal and some discussion the Treasurer's proposals were unanimously accepted.

### YOUNG LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, 29 JUNE - 2 JULY 1989, PARIS

Christoph Knoch submitted the programme proposal for the YLC pre-conference which was approved in principle. There was some discussion concerning the title, as it was felt that it emphasised a Jewish concept rather than one with which Christians or Muslims could feel comfortable.

With regard to costs it was agreed that although Sir Sigmund Sternberg had agreed to fund 10 participants, and the Anne Frank Foundation to fund 7 participants, and some member organisations

would cover their delegates travel in full, each participant would be required to contribute DM 200.--.

WOMEN'S SEMINAR ON "REVOLUTION, LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND WOMEN"  
LILLE, 30 JUNE - 2 JULY 1989

Gunnel Borgegard submitted the programme proposals dated 17 February 1989 drawn up by the ICCJ Working Group on Women's Role in Religion. Each participant would contribute \$100.-- to cover travel and meals as well as travel expenses of the invited speakers. It was hoped that the process of integrating the particular identity of the women's group into the work of the ICCJ would be reinforced by the forthcoming seminar and the active involvement in the programme of the colloquium.

YOUNG LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE CHARTER AND REGULATIONS

Christoph Knoch submitted a proposal for charter and regulations of the Young Leadership Group (Appendix E to these minutes). After some discussion it was suggested that

- a) the document be entitled "Structure and Purposes of the Young Leadership of the ICCJ";
- b) to give a more realistic wording to the Statement of Purpose;
- c) to change the final sentence of (1) to read:  
"The Chairperson of the YLC shall be a full voting member of the ICCJ Executive and, if unable to attend Executive meetings, shall be entitled to designate an alternative representative.
- d) Regulation 2 be re-drafted.

It was agreed that the Executive Committee informs the AGM about the adoption of the document for a period of 12 months subject to the proposed changes and amendments, and that it be reviewed after that period.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Rabbi Dr Levinson suggested two names for nomination to the Advisory Panel: Mr Curtis Roosevelt, a grandson of the late President Roosevelt, and Mr Hubert Burda, Publisher of Munich.

Resignation

Rev. Arie Lems who had previously intimated his intention to resign from the Vice-Presidency and the Executive Committee, explained that for personal reasons he felt unable to reconsider his decision.



The decision was received with regret, and gratitude was expressed to him for the dedication he has throughout brought to the work of the Council. The members were glad to learn that he would continue to attend annual events or consultations.

The President was asked to appoint a committee to nominate a new Vice-President to be elected by the General Meeting in Lille.

#### Luxembourg

The President reported that M. Edouard Wolter had expressed the wish of the Luxembourg Association to host the annual meeting of the Executive Committee. The suggestion was received with gratitude. And while German subsidy for the Executive meeting would not be available if it took place outside Germany, the Executive would look into the possibility of extending the meeting and spend a day in Luxembourg.

#### The Parkes Library

Ruth Weyl reported on her attendance at the official handing over of the W.W. (Bill) Simpson papers to the Special Collection of the James Parkes Library in the University Library of Southampton on 22 February 1989 where they would be accessible to scholars and researchers.

#### Israel Municipal Elections

The General Secretary was asked to send a telegramme to Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem and strong supporter of the inter-faith dialogue, congratulating him on the municipal election result of 28th February 1989 (Appendix F to these minutes).

#### Next Meetings of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will meet in Lille:  
on Sunday, 2nd July 1989, at 2 pm and  
on Friday, 7th July 1989, at 9 am.

The next major annual meetings will take place  
Monday, 5 March 1990, 4 pm, to Wednesday, 7 March 1990.

Rabbi Dr Levinson had who chaired the last session closed the meeting tanking all members for their participation.

Subsequently the members attended a meeting in the historic Kurfürstensaal where Rabbi Dr József Schweitzer and Dr Stefan Schreiner lectured on "New Developments in the Socialist Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and their Impact on Christian-Jewish Relations"; and Dany Bober accompanied by Frank Koblinsky sang Hebrew and Yiddish songs.

APPENDIX F

TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT TO TEDDY KOLLEK

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL  
OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS PRAYS FOR THE PEACE OF  
JERUSALEM UNDER YOUR RENEWED LEADERSHIP

MARTIN BUBER HOUSE HEPPENHEIM  
SCHONEVELD GENERAL SECRETARY .

(APPENDICES A - E HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE MEETING)





ADDRESS TO HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II  
BY RABBI HENRY I. SOBEL,  
LEADER OF THE DELEGATION OF THE JEWISH CONFEDERATION OF BRAZIL  
BRASÍLIA, 15 OCTOBER 1991

Your Holiness:

It is not easy to be involved in Catholic-Jewish dialogue in Brazil. Surely not because of any fault on the part of our Catholic partners. Much to the contrary; the family of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops has been wonderful towards us. What makes our task difficult is the criticism we receive from our fellow Jews, not only from the right, but from the left as well. They say that the dialogue is not leading anywhere... that the Pope is intransigent... that these meetings are only media events or, at best, exercises in public relations.

We who are here this evening take dialogue very seriously, as Your Holiness does, the difference being that when you go back to Rome, no one will demand from you "concrete" results of this meeting. But when we go back home tomorrow morning, we will be pressured by our constituency: "Well, did you accomplish something with the Pope?"

Your Holiness knows only too well what that "something" is, which would not only confer greater credibility to this delegation of the Jewish Confederation of Brazil, but would also encourage Jewish communities throughout the world to engage in dialogue with the Catholic Church.

There are other subjects that would be worthy of being included on the agenda of this meeting — the rise of religious fundamentalism the world over, the outbreak of xenophobic racism in Europe, the growing poverty in Brazil, the rampant violence, the disrespect for the sanctity of human life, the bankruptcy of moral values, the so-long-yearned-for peace in the Middle East — these are issues which affect all of us, Catholics, Jews, men and women of all faiths. But your time is precious, your day was long and tiring, so allow me, Your Holiness, to go back to the one issue that will not be brought up by any other group during your stay in our country.

It is not proper for a rabbi to teach the *Pater noster* to a priest, how much less so to the Pontiff. But it is appropriate for us to make an appeal to Your Holiness, to ask Your Holiness, on behalf of Brazilian and world Jewry, to try to grasp — as your apostles here in Brazil have grasped — the profound significance, for Jews all over the world, of that small piece of land which is called the State of Israel.

Your Holiness: tomorrow is the 13th anniversary of your election as Pope. According to Jewish tradition, 13 is the age of *Bar-Mitzvah*, religious maturity. It is our fervent wish that your *Bar-Mitzvah* bring with it the full ripening of Catholic-Jewish relations that will result from the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel.

We are deeply grateful to the Papal Nunciature in Brazil for making possible this meeting. And we earnestly hope that our next audience with Your Holiness will be organized with the same loving care by the Papal Nunciature in Jerusalem, the eternal and indivisible capital of the State of Israel.

May we count on Your Holiness? It will be an honor and a great joy for us to see you once again "*ba'shanah habaah b'Yerushalayim*", next year in Jerusalem.



*Henry I. Sobel is Senior Rabbi of the Congregação Israelita Paulista in São Paulo, Brazil, and coordinator of the National Commission for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue, under the auspices of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops.*





## THE POPE AND THE JEWS

(Press summary -- September 7, 1987)

Last week's meeting between a number of American Jewish leaders and Pope John Paul II in Rome, in preparation for the Pope's visit to the U.S., received relatively little media coverage in Israel. It was a week that was dominated by the protests of the Israel Aircraft Industries workers against the cabinet's decision to terminate the Lavi project and by the growing intensity of the ultra-Orthodox-secular confrontation in Jerusalem. What little commentary there was on the meeting in the Vatican, was nearly entirely negative.

Shlomo Shafir writes in Davar (Sept. 3): "One should recall that the present crisis between the Jewish organizations and the Vatican originated with the invitation to Austrian president Kurt Waldheim to meet with the pope, and the pope's rejection of any demand that he express regret over that meeting. The reception for Waldheim in Rome was, of course, not intended to anger the World Jewish Congress or the State of Israel, or to absolve the millions of Austrian and German soldiers who served the "Fuehrer" in World War II. It was merely another expression of the Vatican's realpolitik, which is seeking to strengthen the status of the church, and conservative political trends, in a Catholic country like Austria. The progressive line in internal and foreign affairs which was adopted by the former head of the Austrian Catholic Church, Cardinal Koenig, for 30 years, was anathema to the conservatives in the Vatican. Following the retirement of Koenig -- who favored an agreement with the Socialists and supported the international peace movement -- the pope appointed conservative priests and bishops to positions of importance, who were identified with the People's Party which had put up Waldheim for the presidency. The Vatican also hoped that its support of the People's Party would help put a stop to erosion in the membership in the Austrian church, which is estimated at about 30,000 a year. For all of Pope John Paul's desire to prevent a confrontation with U.S. Jewry, the fate of the church in Austria has a higher priority in his eyes. One should also consider that, as opposed to Rumanian president Nicolai Ceaucescu and many others, the head of the strongest Christian church in the world and his advisers, are not inclined to exaggerate the 'omnipotence' of world Jewry.



"As for the Vatican's attitude towards Israel, besides the theological arguments against recognition -- which certainly continue to exist -- there are also realpolitik ones. (Editor's note: But in a statement of clarification issued following the meeting with the Jewish leaders, the Holy See made it clear that there were no theological but only political problems impacting final recognition of Israel.) The Vatican sees no special advantage in a speedy establishment of relations with Israel. To the contrary, it is very alive to the dangers inherent in such a step to its relations with the Arab and Moslem worlds. One can still recall the warm welcome extended to the PLO's Yasser Arafat during his 1982 visit to the Vatican and the pope's gesture in support of the Moslem stand on Jerusalem during his visit to Morocco.

"None of this should denigrate from the importance attached to a Catholic-Jewish dialogue, which is important to a number of Jewish communities in the Diaspora. But one should refrain from the illusion of the possibility of an imminent breakthrough in those relations. It will continue to be important to counter negative influences in the Curia and to foster contacts with local bishops in the U.S. and some European countries, whose attitude is often much more sympathetic than that of the Holy See."

Shmuel Schnitzer writes in Ma'ariv (Sept. 4): "It would be hard to assert that those Jewish communal activists who met this week with the pope in his summer residence at Castel Gondolfo did a wise or honorable thing. They got nothing from the head of the Catholic church; but they themselves took a step which could be seen as a form of Jewish legitimization of the pope's refusal to recognize the reality of the existence of Israel, and of his meeting with that little Nazi, Kurt Waldheim, who is now president of Austria...A dialogue has meaning when there is a modicum of symmetry to it. The trouble is that while the Catholic church is a highly structured hierarchy, in which it is absolutely clear who is subservient to whom, and who represents whom, the Jews have nothing that even comes close to it: no representative organization, and no one who is authorized to speak in the name of the Jewish people and of Judaism. The Jewish delegation to the meeting with the pope, in effect, nominated itself, and no one can answer the question, as to whom and what they represent. Even American Jewry did not entirely support their initiative.

"What the pope got from the meeting is clear: his visit to the U.S. will not be marred by hostile Jewish demonstrations, since a number of Jewish dignitaries held formal conciliatory talks with him. What the Jews are supposed to gain from that meeting is more questionable. The pope's legitimization of Waldheim continues to stand. Anyone who attaches any importance to the pope's declaration that Israel is a vital value, and that some day he would want to visit Jerusalem, purposely ignores the point that this empty statement does not commit the pope to any action, and that its true worth can only be judged by the absence of relations between the Vatican and the Jewish State.



"The formula for such meetings is very simple: any Jewish leader who is ready to forego Israel's honor and to conduct a friendly dialogue with anyone who refuses to recognize the State of Israel will always be a welcome guest in Rome. The most important Cardinals will join him in staging "an unprecedented" meeting with the Holy Father, and will plan the details of the pointless conversation, in which not a new word will be said, and no obstacle to understanding between Jews and Christians will be removed. It will be clear to both sides -- both before and after the meeting -- that the Holocaust, which saddened the Catholic Church, could possibly serve as a basis for the issuing of declarations of condolence. What it cannot change is the basic attitude of the church to the Jews as a people, who have now organized their own political framework. The church is ready to forgive individual Jews who survived; it is not ready to forgive the Jews as a people and as a state.

"In the past, when life in the galut was dark and foreboding, and constant fear served as a goad to the Jews' natural sense of survival, Jewish delegations, with their rabbis, Tora scrolls and flags, would go out to welcome a new pope on his coronation. Here and there, special prayers for his well-being were even included in the Jewish prayer book. We had thought that those days were gone, and that that sort of galut was fading away. It turns out that we were mistaken. That sort of galut still lives in the hearts of a small number of fawning pleaders (shtadlanim)."

Dan Margalit writes in Ha'aretz (Sept. 4): "It is under the pope's leadership that the Vatican continues not to recognize Israel. When Israeli diplomats asked when such recognition would be accorded, the Holy See replied that Israel's final borders had not yet been set. As if the pope extends recognition only to states who have already settled their border disputes. The Vatican has also adopted a discriminatory stance [toward Israel] in regard to the question of Jerusalem. During the 19 years in which the city was administered by Jordan, the Vatican accorded it unstinting recognition. Not so with Israel. In private conversations, leaders of the church will often praise the attitude of the Israel government towards the church and the modus vivendi in the city. But in the open, the relationship is one-sided and expresses itself in an unwillingness to recognize Israel and its sovereignty, even in Western Jerusalem.

"American Jewry, which lives in a country with a large Catholic minority, obviously has a legitimate interest in maintaining contacts with the Holy See. But such contacts require a revamping of its leadership and its rejuvenation, a sense of its own dignity and of its institutional power. Above all, what is needed is a perspicacious perception of what the Jews want from the pope and what it is feasible to get from him. In that light, one should ask who do Rabbi Mordechai Waxman and Henry Siegman represent? Who, even in American Jewry, knows what they are, whom they represent, and who is prepared to be represented by them towards the Holy See?

"American politics has invented the term 'photo opportunity'. That is exactly what the Jewish leaders who bothered to come to Rome for a dialogue between the deaf were engaging in. The pope got his photos and smiles, to ease his way on his visit to the U.S. Perhaps, the Jews at that meeting got what they had wanted, too, 'a photo opportunity'?"

Ma'aariv writes in its editorial (Sept. 3): "In the classic world when one wanted to say that something was progressing at a snail's pace, one said, 'On the wings of Jesus' apostles'. The Jews who met the Vicar of Christ on earth this week discovered that if any progress was being made in winning Vatican recognition of Israel it was advancing on the wings of Jesus' apostles. The leaders of American Jewry should have made their meeting with the pope conditional on an advance commitment that the pope would say something binding on the need to establish relations with Israel. A mere hint that the pope was considering issuing an important statement on the relations of the church with the Jews was not enough. The only way the Catholic church can even begin to atone for its historic sins against the Jewish people is by according full recognition to the State of the Jews. But when Rabbi [Marc] Tanenbaum [of the American Jewish Committee] reports that 'the pope expressed the name Israel with great warmth' all we could hear was the echo of fawning Jewish pleaders returning to their ghetto from the meeting with the Polish poritz (landed magnate)."

[Editor's Note: While some of the press accounts of the meetings reported also on the positive aspects of the discussions, the negative character of these editorial comments underscores how much additional work needs to be undertaken within Israel to promote understanding of the long run benefits to Israel and the Jewish people of sustained ecumenical efforts.]

Edited by George E. Gruen

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