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*Preserving American Jewish History*

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Box 20, Folder 1, Evidences - Symposium on Jewish-Christian Relations, 1961.

COPY

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations  
145 EAST 56TH STREET NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

PARIS OFFICE

30, rue la Boétie  
Paris VIII

August 30, 1961

MEMORANDUM

To: Foreign Affairs Department  
From: Paris Office  
Subj: EVIDENCES Symposium on Jewish/Christian Relations

Has Christian teaching about Jews contributed to anti-Semitism? Does the anti-Semite who may have been brought up in the Christian tradition identify Jews today with their ancestors of biblical days? Is the picture Christians have of Jews historically truthful and faithful to the spirit of Christianity? How necessary is it to revise certain works of Christian teaching? If necessary, what would be the best means for doing this?

Such are some of the questions posed in recent months to leading Catholic and Protestant churchmen and scholars in Europe in a symposium sponsored by EVIDENCES, the French language magazine issued by the European office of the American Jewish Committee -- questions particularly relevant today in view of the surge of historical research casting new light on the relationship of Christians and Jews, and given a certain soul-searching going on among many Christians as a result of the Nazi holocaust and the Eichmann trial.

Certain of these same issues, also, are now being accorded attention by church bodies, such as the German Evangelical Church Assembly of last July; and, hopefully, may be considered by the forthcoming Ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII.

The list of contributors to this EVIDENCES symposium already includes Monsignor A.C. Ramselaar, a member of the Tenth Preparatory Commission of the Ecumenical Council; English churchman James Parkes, well known for his writings on anti-Semitism and author of "The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue;" Professor Karl Thieme, a Catholic historian and

teacher, professor at the University of Mainz in Germany; Canon Charles Moeller, of Louvain University; Pastor R. Pfisterer, of the Lutheran Church in Germany; André Lecoq, Professor of Biblical Studies at the Protestant Faculty of Brussels; and others. Forthcoming issues of EVIDENCES will include further statements by the Bishop of Strasbourg and the Bishop of Aix.

Responses to the symposium clearly brought out a number of points which it maybe important to take into consideration in any approaches to Christians, or dialogue with them, in an effort to alter the present situation.

First, while the problems raised in the symposium are deeply felt by Christians, they are so felt by an élite. The contributors -- most of whom are already engaged, in one way or another, with trying to establish better Jewish/Christian rapport -- recognize, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, that they are in a minority: that a whole -- Christian public opinion, an entire mentality, remains to be altered.

Second, even these churchmen of good will insist, almost universally, that such anti-Semitism as may exist among Christians is not faithful to the essence of Christianity: rather, that it is the result of error, or bad teaching. They often stress other factors that, in addition, may have fostered anti-Semitism, including, on occasion, tactful hints to the Jew to look to himself. To sum up, in a phrase -- they will accept no theological attack on Christianity, or have it bear any fundamental responsibility. "the only view that an Orthodox Christian can take," as Jesuit Father Riquet points out quite bluntly.

Third, and as a corollary, they make it quite clear that they will not be able to cooperate with anyone who ranges "history against theology," or engages in public campaigns that might be taken to implicate the Church. This is not to say they do not recognize the need for revision as a result of new historical research. They do, and very much so. But, obviously, they wish for the Church to digest the consequences of this research on its own terms, rather than being forced to swallow it down publicly. Hence, quite often, one finds an appeal that the past be overlooked, as it were, and that it would be more fruitful simply to look to the future, on the basis of programs such as the Ten Points of Seelisberg.

These reservations made, however, it is apparent that there is a great reservoir of good will for change, and extensive change, among many influential churchmen. Moreover, these churchmen seem to represent trends that are growing in strength, particularly in France, Holland and Western Germany, but which are by no means limited to those lands.

What follows are summary translations of the various contributions to the symposium to date, some of them quite extensive. In the case of Monsignor Ramselaar, his entire article has been translated, given his

importance as a member of a preparatory commission of the forthcoming Ecumenical Council. Also, the full text of the original English text by Reverend Parkes is forwarded. On the advice of friends of his who read this before publication certain parts of this original -- those attacking the works of Canon Boyer -- were eliminated before appearing in the French translation in EVIDENCES. These parts are indicated in the text sent you herewith. Forthcoming contributions to the symposium will likewise be forwarded to you.

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Slewson  
Mr. Dansig  
Rabbi Tanenbaum





COPY

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 EAST 56TH STREET NEW YORK 22, N.Y.

PARIS OFFICE  
30, rue la Boétie  
Paris VIII

November 13, 1961

MEMORANDUM

To: New York Office

From: Zachariah Shuster

I thought you'd be interested to read a copy of a letter I received today from the Rev. Dr. J. W. Parkes, and his reaction to the EVIDENCES symposium on Christian teaching concerning the Jews.

You will notice, of course, his suggestion that the symposium be published in a separate pamphlet. As you surely recall, the suggestion was made by me before, and I should like to have your reaction to it as soon as possible.

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Slawson  
Dr. Segal  
Mr. Danzig  
Rabbi Tanenbaum ✓

C O P Y

From  
The Rev. Dr. J. W. Parkes

Church End  
Barley  
Royston  
Herts.

9th November, 1961

Dear Mr. Shuster,

I have read with the greatest interest the final contributions to the problem of Christian education concerning the Jews, and I wonder whether you have any thought of putting them all together and making a symposium of them.

I found the contribution of Father Jaeger particularly important. I met him in Oxford in the spring and was very impressed by his clear grasp of the traditional situation and its deficiencies.

I was also very grateful for Poliakov's translation of Baby-Yar. I had not been able so far to get the actual text of the poem in spite of being familiar with the stir which it created.

With all best wishes for your work,

Yours sincerely,

s/James Parkes

Mr. Z. Shuster  
The American Jewish Committee  
30 rue la Boetie  
Paris 8, France



EVIDENCES SYMPOSIUM ON JEWISH/CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

The terrible blood-letting inflicted upon the Jewish people by Nazi furor imposes upon every man, but particularly on the Christian, a loyal attempt to reflect on the causes of such an aberration. How did one get to this point? asks the Revered Father Riquet, an influential French Jesuit. Christian disapproval of the crimes and violence of Hitler anti-Semitism is total and without reserve, he asserts; and the same holds true for the rebirth of any anti-Semitism. This said, however, one cannot fully accept the analysis of Jules Isaac (a Jewish scholar whose "Genesis of Anti-Semitism" has aroused considerable comment). In spite of all precautions that Mr. Isaac takes in order not to wound Christians, his theme, finally, says Father Riquet, is that "the exterminating racism of our epoch, even if it is anti-Christian in its essence, developed in Christian land and carefully gathered up the heritage, the very doubtful heritage, of Christianity."

Denying Mr. Isaac's thesis, Father Riquet goes on to argue that National Socialism was founded on the myth of an Aryan race and, in theory as well as in practice, was a denial of Christianity and, rather, a going back to strong ancient pagan forces in Germany.

From the beginning the opposition between Hitler racism and the Catholic Church was unequivocally set forth, as in the collective letters of the German Bishops of July 1940 and March 1942, and the individual declarations of various German Cardinals. It is thus untrue to present racism and Hitler anti-Semitism as an offshoot of Christianity, or of Christian teaching. In its origin, Jewish/Christian opposition included no racial discrimination, no anti-Semitic prejudice. Rather, it was a drama among Jews, very particularly among Palestine Jews, among men of the same country, the same people, the same language. The question was only one of doctrinal divergence in the interpretation of the same religious tradition, the same bible; it was pure theology.

Quoting from the Evangelies and Paul, Father Riquet asserts that "their Christianity understood itself to be part of the tradition and the continuity of Israel. Not anti-Semitism, but a certain anti-Judaism, that is to say an opposition to those who in the name of Judaism refused Jesus...was their position."

As Christianity gained among non-Jews, the divorce between Church and Synagogue was accomplished, and opposition hardened. "At this moment, in the face of a Christian community where non-Jews form an important majority, the Jewish community appears to be not only anti-Christian, but even foreign to this Roman world, Christianized little by little. It is from this time that the purely theological and religious opposition between Judaism and Christianity risks degenerating into anti-Semitism..."



"Christians alone are not responsible, for Judaism at that time led a bitter and hard struggle against them...but, especially this Judaism hostile to Christians always applied itself to linking up religion, nation and race indissolubly. Whoever is born of a Jewish woman is Jewish, even if he is unfaithful to the prescription of the Torah..."

This is why, (according to Father Riquet,) the essential spiritual and religious conflict between Jews and Christians developed, after the triumph of Christianity, into something more complicated, weighted down by ethnic and political factors. "To the very degree that Jews and Christians permitted the impoverishment of their spirituality and their mystique, so did their opposition degenerate into a confrontation not of two religious conceptions but of two ethical and political groups in rivalry for material and temporal ascendancy. It is thus that Christian anti-Semitism made its appearance in the Middle Ages; but, also, there were in the very heart of Christianity theologians and popes to protest against this unfortunate deviation. "Nobody is contesting anti-Jewish fury, pogroms, etc.,"(says Father Riquet.) "The question is to know whether these are truly theological consequences of the authentic teaching of Christian doctrine or if they were the inevitable sequel of the deviations and corruptions of the message of Jesus and His Apostles. This last hypothesis is the only one that can satisfy Orthodox Catholic theology." (Italics ours.)

Even more important than looking for the origins of anti-Semitism, says Father Riquet, is for men of goodwill to unite to build a brotherly world together, to substitute for sectarian and sterile opposition between Christians and Jews "fraternal emulation in the knowledge and service and love of a single God, that of Israel and of Jesus..." He suggests as working basis for this task the Ten Points elaborated by the Conference of Seelisberg in August 1947.

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(Writes) Professor Karl Thieme, a leading figure in West Germany in efforts to create a dialogue between Christians and Jews: "Ever since 1933 when a new paganism began persecutions against both Jews and Christians -- but particularly of Jews -- thinking Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, began to reflect on their common heritage with Jews. It is that little by little there was understood the part of responsibility of Christian teaching and preaching in hostility to and persecution of Jews, even if this was on the part of Christian apostates who -- like Streicher -- only remembered from their religious instruction the over-simple accusations against 'the Jews'."

There are those Christians who, while not friendly toward "the Jews," at least recognize that racism is a mortal enemy. One must show these people clearly that today religious anti-Judaism inevitably leads to anti-Semitism, and that relationships between Christians and Jews should -- and can -- be radically revised. This does not mean that one has to find a new outlook on Jewish/Christian faith, as certain



seem to think. On the contrary, it suffices to bring out clearly from the New Testament tradition and its prolongations those elements which explain religious anti-Judaism without excusing it, and which, in the last analysis, constitute a basic refutation of it.

The principles on which work is being done by a number of groups in Germany, (Professor Thieme goes on,) are the following:

1. Something that has been forgotten over past centuries must again be inculcated in Christians -- namely that the Old Testament is for Christians as for Jews, without exception or restriction, the holy word, the word of God.
2. The Christian world must understand that the time of Jesus of Nazareth was a time of fecund crisis for Judaism, similar in this way to the Reform movement for Christianity. During such periods one always finds extreme manifestations, in all lands. There must be more objective appreciation by Christians of the Jewish literature of that time.
3. The entirety of the text of the New Testament permits and even calls for a distinction as to responsibility with regard to Jesus and his Apostles, one that would exclude any idea of "collective sin" by the Jews.
4. Jewish suffering should not be explained in terms of the popular schema with regard to their fault and punishment. Christian religious teaching ought to underline the continuity between the Maccabean martyrs and those of Auschwitz, in which those of Bethlehem are included; and Christians should feel a solidarity with this Jewish suffering.

As for practical methods, Dr. Thieme goes on: It remains for the Church, in its teaching, formally to condemn in its widest and most fundamental manner anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish errors about which theologians are today essentially in accord; and should give firm instructions to catechists and to teachers with regard to these errors, not only that they avoid them, but also that they should combat them with energy.

At the same time, one must also work for the progress on as wide a front as possible; on theological works that begin with the revision of the Christian view of the peoples of the ancient alliance. Just as there exist Ecumenical Study Centers for study of relations between different confessions in Christian communities, so the conditions for as deep study of Jewish/Christian relations should also be created.

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For Canon Charles Moeller, Professor at Louvain and author of several important works consecrated to theology, ecumenism, and modern literature: "The essential point seems to me in an exact presentation of



the Jewish milieu at the time of Jesus." One cannot present black opportunistic Jewish plots in contrast to a white Christian faith and recognition of the Messiah. The heart of the tragedy is that it was in the very name of the Jewish religion that some of its best elements thought it was their duty to say "No" to Jesus.

Since the period of 1925-45 the "Hellenization" of the New Testament, the Semitic background of the New Law, is being emphasized. Thanks to this, the almost total negligence on the part of many Christians of the Ancient Testament is disappearing. A Christian teaching centered on such "Semitism" cannot but progressively introduce understanding of eternal Judaism to the Christian. The torture of six millions by Nazi anti-Semites was needed so that Christian people might finally understand something as to the issue posed for more than two thousand years by the Jewish people.

Article by Monsignor A. G. Ramselaar, Member of the Tenth Preparatory Commission of the Ecumenical Council.

The initiative taken by EVIDENCES to have a symposium with regard to Christian religious teaching about Jews on the occasion of the future second Vatican Council is most praiseworthy.

This symposium is, actually, in the form of a dialogue, not a dialogue between Judaism and Christianity as such, but a dialogue on Jewish/Christian relations. However, it is a true dialogue in that it consists of teaching ourselves better to know each other, to arrive at inspiring confidence in one another, in order to respect and to love each other. This is, it seems to me, a unique fact in the history of Christian/Jewish relations. It proves that the return in the Promised Land has already changed something in these relations. It is a dialogue because teaching concerning Jews brings us to the source and, consequently, to the essence of Christianity, born in the midst of and the basin of Judaism.

Christianity cannot understand itself without profound knowledge of the Judaism from which it issues. The initiative of such a conversation should come from Jews, for coming from Christians any initiative along these lines might awaken suspicion of proselytism. There have been too many forced conversions. After the outrages and persecutions Jews have had to suffer on the part of Christians there would be a certain lack of respect and delicacy on the part of Christians in inviting Jews to such a conversation. It would be even less delicate to refuse the invitation; but, also, a dialogue on Christian religious teaching calls for a consciousness as to the great stiffening that grew up between Judaism and Christianity over the centuries. There is a profound reciprocal ignorance with regard to the essentials on each side. Work is necessary on both sides. This is not possible without reciprocity; hence, not possible without a dialogue.



Let me make a remark first about the questions themselves before answering. Too often a question emanates from an already known answer...The first thesis is this one: There is an identification made in the mind of the anti-Semite made of Christian formation -- a passionate or reasoned identification -- between Jews and their biblical ancestors.

I ask myself "What is an anti-Semite of Christian formation?" Is it an anti-Semite who has received a Christian education? Is it a Christian who became an anti-Semite because religious teaching inculcated in him false ideas concerning the Jews at the time of Jesus by suggesting to him an identification of the Jews of then and of now?

Is this distinction too subtle? The causes of anti-Semitism are quite complicated. Although I recognize the deplorable consequences of an identification that is unjust of itself, an identification which, moreover, is based on false ideas about Jewish ancestors, I believe I can affirm that true Christianity excludes all anti-Semitism in principle.

The second thesis is that: the representation given by Christian tradition and teaching as to the role of Jews which is the basis for the identification discussed above does not correspond to historic truth and is not faithful to the spirit of Christianity.

I willingly subscribe to this assertion, but in underlining the reserve "which is the basis for the identification." It is absurd to identify generations separated by centuries. Other causes must have been necessary in order to conserve this absurdity for centuries.

Among anti-Semites, among Christians conscious of their feelings, this identification has often the character of a justification, the justification of an attitude which they feel requires a justification. They neither dare nor wish to avow their true motives. Among most Christians there resides a latent anti-Semitism often nourished by this unjust identification; but one can always see the traces of other influences.

The nature of anti-Semitism goes much further than a simple misunderstanding. One can see this from the numerous examples in which the anti-Semitic image of the Jew in our time is projected on the Jews of Jesus' time. We see this, for example, in the Oberammergau Passion Plays, where Jews are represented in a very simplistic manner. Here we do not have the identification of Jews of Jesus' time with contemporary Jews but, effectively, a stereotype representation of the Jews of today, in which present-day anti-Semitism indulges in order to wipe out its own sentiments of guilt. When one analyzes the judgment that most Christians have of Jews, a judgment stereotyped and charged with passion, one discovers that the image of the Jews of Jesus' time is not a determining element. Contrarywise, it is frightening to see how, in many cases, religious teaching has maintained or even fortified an anti-Semitic attitude. Such teaching is not faithful to historic truths. Not only does it give a false idea of the



attitude of Jews during Jesus' time but, also, of the attitude of Jesus and the Apostles with regard to their contemporaries. It is not faithful to the spirit of Christianity, for it does not know the essential of Christianity, or the most elementary humanism.

One can take the third question (of the EVIDENCES symposium) in positive fashion. Because the image of the Jew given by the Scriptures has been down-graded during the centuries by erroneous or interested interpretations of the text, because this image has been deformed under the influence of prejudice, it is necessary, indispensable, to revise certain forms of teaching which falsify Christian thought and, by this fact, show themselves to be prejudicial to Jews.

What are the points to which should be addressed this revision -- or to employ Jules Isaac's formula -- this correction of Christian teaching with regard to Jews?

Several programs have been put forth (Seelisberg 1947; Bad Schwalbach, 1950; P. Démann, 1952). Cardinal A. Bea, President of the Commission for Christian Unity in the framework of the Ecumenical Council, declared in an interview given to L'Univers that he had received a certain number of suggestions concerning Jews and, in particular, with regard to religious teaching and the liturgy. Jews themselves know well enough, moreover, how much His Holiness Pope John XXIII is receptive toward the Jewish people. It is evident that Catholics desire, above all, extirpation of the most gross errors concerning "the guilt of Jews" in the passion of Jesus; desire the doing away with the supposed rejection of the Jewish people because of its refusal to consider Jesus as the Messiah; to do away with the "malediction" upon this people as a result of the exclamation, in the judgment hall of Pilate, "May His blood be upon you and upon your children."

We are not concerned, however, with just some misunderstanding. In explaining the Scriptures, almost all points of the teaching of the faith concern Jews: giving the exact interpretation concerning the origin of the faith, in the alliance, the law, of justice and peace, of the future of man and of the world and of the presence of God in the world.

The history of Jewry after the year 70 touched upon the entire history of the Church. An objective expose of this history supposes study on both sides. Wiping out of negative elements is not enough. One can only fight anti-Semitism by positive respect and love for Jews because of the fathers whom Christians must also consider as fathers of their faith.

Finally, the question is posed: What would be the most appropriate means to achieve this goal?



An instruction emanating from the Ecumenical Council on the subject can greatly contribute toward making more general the turnabout which has already manifested itself among Christians. One should not, however, over-estimate the influence that such a decision by the central authority can have. More than one decision taken at the highest level has remained a dead letter. It is important to shake a public opinion, a mentality; we are concerned with a purification of the human and Christian spirit. One must not consider as pessimists those who call this utopia. One can understand that, among Jews, there is much skepticism with regard to the disappearance of anti-Semitism in the world and in particular in the Christian world.

It is in anti-Semitism that the iniquity of the human heart shows itself. But this skepticism does not justify defeatism. The history of Jewish/Christian relations from the year 70 justifies the dictum "Let Christians show that they have changed their anti-Jewish feelings."

At present this same history is itself contributing strongly to a change. Anti-Semitism was favored and conserved thanks to political, social, cultural and psychological factors too. Now many of these factors are acting in the opposite direction. The union between Church and State banished Jews from society. Now, true Christianity is everywhere reduced to being a minority. Jews and Christians have been persecuted together. In the State of Israel the Jewish people have again found a new dignity. It is capable of its own new cultural development which doubtless will be connected with its spiritual patrimony and origin. The study of the Bible, archeology and history of the Near East are bringing about the disappearance of misunderstanding.

Jews can make it their task to defend peace in the world and, doubtless, will thus defend justice, peace and dignity of man.

Essentially, they already have become the natural allies of Christians in order to make the name of God respected throughout the world. Finally, in all Christian churches there is to be found a powerful desire for unity. This leads to new thinking as to common origins. Is it not evident that the result of this thinking will also be felt in a revision of Jewish/Christian relationships?

But, above all, confidence must become greater. This cannot be done suddenly; it demands prolonged and personal contacts. Such contacts are difficult for Jews because of the multiple sufferings they have undergone in Christian countries. These contacts are also difficult because they are so small in number. Perhaps it can only be done in Israel. But who will risk anticipating history? Even the prophets have not done this.

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F. Lovsky, Co the author of "Anti-Semitism and the Mystery of Israel" and editor of the section on Jewish studies of the Protestant magazine Faith and Life, declared:

"The EVIDENCES symposium rests on two postulates. The first affirms, admits or deplors that there is Christian anti-Semitism (or anti-Semitism among Christians.) Understood as part of the second postulate is that this Christian anti-Semitism is not without remedy nor



inherent in Christian ways. To my mind, these postulates are both justified, which is why I am answering to this symposium."

One must not get involved with secondary questions, says Mr. Lovsky. For example: in the complaint about anti-Semitism that Jews have with regard to Christians is there not sometimes a Jewish anti-Christian passion to which we, on our side, are just as sensitive as the Jews on their side? Another important but secondary problem: is Christian anti-Semitism the most grave and the most virulent that history has ever known?

Even if one may contend hatreds more intense than those of Christian anti-Semites, yet, so long as there is not an acquittal of the Christians accused by the Jews, Christian conscience must feel heavily responsible, and Christians must combat anti-Semitism. This Christian combat can only be undertaken with Christian arms and according to Christian faith.

It is sometimes useless, even harmful, to mix political considerations, or to make a well-intentioned melange of the Scriptures and democracy in order the better to denounce anti-Semitism. Nor, says Mr. Lovsky, in taking up arms against this anti-Semitism, can we disavow other Christians. "Christian condemnation of anti-Semitism is neither a ready judgment to be passed on Christians of the past nor an act of accusation to be leveled by an elite against the mass, or by the faithful against their leaders. That is why neither manifestos nor meetings nor press campaigns will bring progress in this field."

"A good starting point for progress," according to Mr. Lovsky, "would be the ten points of Solisberg, accompanied by an appropriate commentary so that the principles they enunciate can be adapted to all mentalities. While everybody will be in agreement with this, not everybody will be in agreement with the next point, which arose during the elaboration of the Solisberg points -- the stiffness of which theology has often been accused vis-a-vis the lessons of history."

One cannot warn well-intentioned Jews and Christians too much against the temptation to range history against theology, or constantly to incriminate the latter...Altogether, historical research on anti-Semitism always leads to disqualifying it and to proving its permanent harmfulness. But it is not absolutely certain that historic knowledge of anti-Semitism suffices to understand its nature and, above all, to combat it.

In the last analysis it is theology and theologians and not history which will have the final word in Christian education. "Let us stay away from this false debate," says Mr. Lovsky.

The gravest, the most horrible of wounds inflicted on the Evangile by anti-Semites rests in the sin against love. It is not that the purity of our doctrine interests us more than the tranquillity and honor of Jews. Rather, much more simply, it is sometimes necessary that Christians



better understand not only the dignity of every human being, including that of Jews, but that they tie these truths up with the design of God; and that they hinge the destiny of the church on that of Israel.

In addition to historico-scientific appeals to the heart and compassion, Christians must be shown in terms normal for Christian teaching to what degree the nocivity of anti-Semitism goes hand in hand with mortal heresies. Christians must be shown how much anti-Semitism prepares and maintains not only the secular contest between Jews and Christians but also division among Christians themselves. Mr. Lovsky then goes on to give examples of why he feels that dangerous anti-Semitic theories, such as that of "deicide," can never be uprooted by historical-juridical considerations only but, rather by decisive arguments of a theological and spiritual nature, arguments less directed at the reasoning than at the heart of the Christian.

Mr. Pfisterer is pastor of the Lutheran Church at Schwabisch Hall, West Germany, and is particularly occupied with problems of youth. He has also played an important role in German Protestant circles insofar as relations with Judaism and the fight against anti-Semitism are concerned.

The provincial Synod of Berlin-Brandenburg of 1960, writes pastor Pfisterer, declared categorically: "The hatred, ever reborn, toward Jews is manifest impiety." This declaration, he asserts, with its authority and obligatory force for the Church, shows that from the point of view of the Evangelists there is absolute contradiction and incompatibility between Christian teaching and any form of anti-Semitism. Unhappily, Christian teaching has often been a breeding ground for feelings of aversion and hatred toward Jews, says the pastor. He describes incidents how now, at present, just like when he was a child 40 years ago, Jewish children are mocked by their classmates after religious instruction courses. True Christian teaching would constitute a solid barrier against anti-Jewish hatred.

The Passion story constitutes, in Christian teaching, one of the open, dangerous doors by which hostility toward Jews can be introduced. A survey organized in Munich in 1960 showed horrible results in this regard. One always finds among elementary students the idea, coming from their religious instruction, that Jews crucified Christ and are condemned forever to wander about the world without finding rest.

The opinion that Israel is rejected and accursed is one held with tenacity, even though it be a false thesis. Pastor Pfisterer then goes on to quote numerous Biblical sources to show why this is so:

- Because the idea of collective responsibility throughout the generations is contradicted by Jeremiah XXXI, 29, 30; Ez. XVIII, 2-4; John IX, 1-3.
- Because to accept this thesis would mean that the cry of a crowd in Jerusalem would take precedence over Jesus' own prayer, "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do."



Religious teaching true to its task must also point out something else -- the Alliance concluded by God, who is the God of Jews and Christians, with the People of Israel, for the benefit of all the families on earth.

The pastor also attacks "The root of all discrimination founded on Jewish sufferings." According to the Bible, he says, divine election and the sufferings of the elected are inseparably bound up. Jewish suffering cannot be explained by the popular reasoning with regard to guilt and punishment. (Both with regard to this and other theses the pastor cites the work of the Second Commission at Bergneustadt in June, 1960.)

He concludes: In religious teaching one necessarily speaks about Jews, but this should be done in the light of our common origin and our common goals. Starting from this point it becomes impossible to stereotype and caricature the Jew, and thus prevent all meetings and dialogue with Jews. Whether we can further the means for, and stimulate initiatives toward such a dialogue with Jews will constitute a test of the correctness of our religious teaching.

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For André Lacoque, Professor of Biblical Studies at the Protestant Faculty of Brussels, the secret of better mutual understanding between Jews and Christians is not to be found in the forbidding of certain expressions on one side or the other. Certainly, one must reject with horror, he writes, formulas like "perfidious Jews" or "the delcide people." The question, however, is not one of being polite or respecting the other's opinion. It is certain that there will be misunderstanding so long, he says, as the household "of the Jewish 'mother' and its Christian 'daughter' will be full of traps, of spectres and of phantoms..." Among the gravest of these is that of the interpretation concerning the "servant of the Eternal" in Second Isaiah.

The rest of the article consists of Prof. Lacoque's reflections on this text, object of controversy between Jews and Christians. The fact, according to Prof. Lacoque, is that "on this subject positions have become so hardened that it seems impossible to bring them nearer together."

Even here a dialogue between Church and Synagogue can be fruitful, Prof. Lacoque strives to demonstrate. For, with detailed analysis, one comes to a position whereby Jews recall to the Church that "the actual Jesus" (Martin Buber) cannot be separated from his people, from the Holy Scriptures, from Jewish tradition, from Israel in a word. The Church reminds the Synagogue ceaselessly that the perfect work of the Lord of Heaven and Earth is death before God for "he who wishes to save his life will lose it, but he who loses it because of me shall find it" (Matthew 16:36).

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The article of Louis Martin-Chauffier, a noted Catholic writer and himself a deportee, is primarily an analysis, on the basis of his own experience, as to the reasons for anti-Semitism in France. According to him, Christian teaching *ex cathedra* is not the reason. The fault comes not from the Christian teaching proclaimed by the hierarchy, but by the method of Christian instruction. Thus, according to him, a young man finishing his secondary studies ignores, or practically so, almost anything about the Old Testament. Many of them imagine that Jesus' mission was to wipe out the Bible, instead of its being a prolongation of the Revelation. Here one can see how anti-Semitism has its origins not in doctrine but in history. We note that this "history" is simplified, falsified and really legend -- but that does not prevent legends from being tenacious."

There is no "furious" or active anti-Semitism in France. Rather, French anti-Semitism is essentially bourgeois, that is to say, social and nationalist. It imagines a certain Jewish solidarity in the face of which the Frenchman's "individualism" is troubled. Moreover, the Frenchman, not xenophobic by nature, becomes so as soon as he feels any "competition" to his habits and comfort. The Jewish religion plays very little part in this. Religious wars are long out of fashion.

On the religious plan nothing would be more desirable than that the bonds between the old and new Alliance should be consolidated by spiritual teaching underlining the common sources of the Testaments. Much progress has been accomplished in this line; but, for the moment, much more so in the minds of those who have received the mission of enlightenment than in the minds of those who need to be enlightened, that is to say, young Christians.

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Christian anti-Semitism seems to me to have been a phenomenon of default, writes Pierre Dabosville, National Chaplain of the University Parish in France. Whatever may have been the reasons for the creation of an abyss between the two peoples, the fact is that the Christian today, the lay person of Christian faith, crushed by the revelation of the incomprehensible holocaust, now finds himself empty before the Jew. He no longer dares call upon yesterday's prejudices or simple formulas. The existence of Jews no longer bothers Christians; but Christian thought with regard to Jews remains dominated by stupor. The Jew is as much unknown as badly known by the Christian.

Some Jews and Christians have begun to build bridges across the abyss. They are few. We also know, alas, that sordid anti-Semitism and the vulgar hatred this represents has not disappeared. In France, at least, anti-Semitism is becoming shameful. While minuscule groups are undertaking necessary revision, however, mass opinion, poorly prepared to follow, rests untouched. Let the Jewish people be held responsible for some grave event in Palestine, North Africa or the Soviet Union, and who knows what subterranean passions will come to the surface, with nothing to counterbalance them.



This grave default of Western Christian conscience seems to be essentially characterized by extraordinary ignorance as to the Old Testament and the history of the Jewish people. Certainly, the Christian knows something about Jews, but in terms of myths or fables. Theological and university rationalizations also make the understanding of Israel more difficult. In school, one teaches every literature but biblical literature. The anthropologies of the Ancient and New Testaments both have been taken out of the humanities. Always, no matter what the approach, one is given the same impression, that Judaism is not contemporary. It is almost as if, for the Christian conscience of this century, the ancient Alliance has been transformed so that Israel "according to the flesh" is replaced by Israel "according to the spirit." And when one asks "What is a Jew?" in our times, one may turn to a Sartre, a Drumont (Ed. note: father of modern anti-Semitism), or a Léon Bloy, but nobody goes to St. Paul.

I still remember the catechism of my childhood. "Are the Jews still waiting for the Messiah? Yes, the Jews are still waiting -- so blind are they."

If such formulas have disappeared today, the mentality they represent subsists. For the answer implies that Christians, they, are no longer waiting. One can say that it is not enough to get rid of some unhappy phrases in teaching; rather, a whole way of thinking with regard to the Alliance must be established.

The responsibilities of Christian teaching in the development of anti-Semitism are undeniable. The present lacunae in this teaching, characteristic of a certain emptiness of conscience, are grave and dangerous. For Christian teaching the essential point is to situate the Jew and his entire history, from its origins to our times, in the light of faith and hope. Dare I write that the Jew does not escape from the same obligation. Christians and Jews understand that the word of God is addressed to them together.

I know how difficult, in 1961, it is to define the words "Jew" and "Christian." Who is a Jew today? But who is a Christian? Lack of belief has spread greatly among both peoples. Because of this, the temptation is great to laicize the problem. It should not be so. Anti-Semitism cannot be treated like a variety of racism. The Christian condemnation cannot be based only on rational motives or natural law; he cannot but consider the Jew from the point of view of the moralist.

But how are those who wish to come together, the sons of Abraham by election and by promise, how are they to remain within the perspectives of faith? Will the Christian read the accounts of the Eichmann trial with only a sentiment of horror at monstrosities? And, for the citizens of Israel and for the Jews of the entire world, will the mere condemnation of the guilty party -- and through him all other guilty parties -- be enough? Is this not all the more reason why the faithful Jew should join with the Christian in a dolorous interrogation, in an anxious prayer directed toward God of the Alliance?



November 7, 1961

EVIDENCES Symposium on Jewish/Christian Relations  
(Part II)

The concluding section of the Evidences symposium "Christian Teaching Concerning Jews" has articles by four leading Catholic personalities who, over the years, have demonstrated deep interest and taken action to ameliorate this teaching. They are Msgr. Charles de Provenchère, Archbishop of Aix-en-Provence; the Rev. Fr. Hasso Jaeger, an expert in Roman and Christian juridical thought of ancient times, who is attached to the French National Council of Scientific Research; Msgr. Léon-Arthur Elchinger, Diocese Director for Religious Teaching in Alsace and Bishop Coadjutor of Strasbourg; and Paul Demann, Director of Cahiers Sioniens, and an outstanding protagonist seeking to change Christian attitudes toward Jews. Summaries of their contributions to this symposium follow.

Msgr. de Provenchère's article is, really, merely an expression of sympathy with the work being done to improve Christian teaching. He points out his own role in this: As Archbishop of Aix in 1945 he encouraged the Christian/Jewish friendship body set up by Jules Isaac; as President of the Episcopal Commission for Religious Teaching in France, he paid particular attention to the problem; and, inter alia, he wrote a warm preface to a booklet entitled Jews in the Christian Catechism, prepared a decade ago by Fr. Demann and meant to draw the attention of priests and catechists to errors in Christian teaching about Jews.

Writes the Rev. Fr. Hasso Jaeger: There is a problem weighing heavily on the Christian conscience that we can no longer ignore: the gigantic scale of anti-Jewish persecution by Nazism overwhelmed those circles in the Church conscious of their responsibilities, and provoked a rude awakening among them. It faced them with an urgent task both pastoral and practical in character, and hence subject to their good will -- the task of ridding the Christian catechism of an anti-Semitic poison that it has borne for 2,000 years, thanks to a more or less clandestine "tradition."

This primary and elementary duty not only imposes on educators and teachers a constant effort to try and emphasize Jewish roots of Christianity. It also sets new tasks and new responsibilities for those engaged in research. Where shall we seek out those deep and hidden causes of the systematic non-recognition and the purposeful deformation of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, of Christian morality and of Christian life that have so profoundly influenced



our catechism and our popularization of theologic literature, a deformation due to naïve lack of knowledge as well as hardened prejudice...?

Does there exist a real anti-Semitic doctrine, both coherent and systematic, although the Church has never made such a doctrine its own? That such an anti-Semitic doctrine may actually have existed and still exists, although lacking any theological basis or support from ecclesiastical authorities, at first sight seems contradictory and to pose an insoluble problem.

The search for a satisfactory explanation leads us to a rarely explored level of anti-Semitism itself.

In order to come to grips with this subtle element in the history of anti-Semitism, we must not lose sight of a most important distinction, an element which we take to be known to all interested, even superficially, in the history of anti-Semitism. Ancient and medieval anti-Semitism had a doctrinal content: the divinity of Christ, the claiming of the glorious name "Israel," the death of Christ. Modern and secular anti-Semitism is, on the contrary, without content. It is systematic and abstract in character, and represents the easiest formula for an enthusiastic refusal of reason and law. It should be remembered here that the young Church turned toward that which distinguished it, on the basis of the New Testament revelation, from the specifically Jewish faith, in order to differentiate itself. But -- and this is no less important -- just as much as it stressed the distinctive Christian elements, so, too, it rejected the search for all synthesis of these elements. There did not exist in the ancient Church any coherent and systematic anti-Semitic doctrines which rejected the foundations of the Jewish religion, the Old Testament and its God along with Judaism. It is only as a part of modern anti-Semitism that there has been theoretically elaborated what was thought to be such a doctrinal synthesis in primitive Christian sources.

Of course, even the absence of theoretically elaborated theories did not prevent the wellknown unhappy frictions between the Christian and Jewish communities hardening to a point where they led to a radical separation. This separation was brutal, also, in terms of the rigid legal institutions that gave it legitimacy, from the legislation of the emperors at the end of ancient times to the ghetto of the Middle Ages. In both cases there was at the base the same global motive -- separation of Christianity and Judaism.

On the other hand -- and this is what interests us here -- there already existed in ancient times a theoretically founded and systematized anti-Semitism giving rise to a speculative synthesis, in



what is called the Gnose. But this gnosticism was rejected and fought as a heresy by the primitive Church. That means that the Church rejected the doctrine which denied the Jewish roots of Christianity. We know that the Church condemned without equivocation gnostic teaching like that of Marcion which eliminated the Old Testament, the Jewish God and Jewish morality from Christianity -- and even, because of the gnostic doctrine of the necessity of evil, all morality. In effect, the Church felt itself menaced to its very foundation by gnostic errors. Consequently, from the beginning of its history it implicitly took up a position against any systematically formulated and taught anti-Semitism. What gives this academic gnostic doctrine new relevance is that it has come to the fore again in modern religious philosophy, in the theosophies and the conceptual syntheses to be found in the idealistic German systems, and above all in Fichte, Hegel and Schelling. Here we are in university circles. Henceforth anti-Semitism can call upon the subtle resources of a methodically elaborated doctrinal synthesis. The history of anti-Semitic interpretation of ancient Christian sources -- of the holy writings and those of the fathers of the Church -- begins with modern gnosticism par excellence, the religious philosophy of German idealism.

The Rev. Fr. Jaeger then goes on to cite works by Catholics and Protestants in Germany opposed to this German enthusiastic mysticism, leading to a decomposition of Christian ethics. Nonetheless, Rev. Jaeger goes on to say, this systematically anti-Jewish doctrine was "scientifically" propagated, primarily in German Protestant works. "In our Ecumenical epoch," he adds, "one can no longer pass in silence over the fact that the anti-Jewish climate of gnostic tendency to be found in the Exegesis, the Patristics and the ancient history of dogmas did not remain confined to liberal Protestant circles. Catholic theologians of world reputation entered into this dominant current with a certain naivety, and without making any distinctions whatsoever..."

It is from the Protestant side that has come the first recognition of this theology falsified by gnosticism, according to Fr. Jaeger. He goes on: The duty of the Catholic theologian is to collaborate with his separated Protestant brothers in order to triumph over the neo-gnostic tendencies, secretly acting upon the Exegesis, the Patristics and the history of dogmas, so as to arrive at a deeper meaning, on the basis of a healthy interpretation of primitive Christian sources, rid of anti-Semitic prejudices; even when these interpretations seem to have a backing of university erudition as is the case with the manuals of a Seaberg or a Harnack. From the Ecumenical point of view such action is just as essential, also, with regard to our older brothers in the faith, the Jews.

A common effort to vanquish gnostic and neo-gnostic anti-Semitic influences in Christian teaching will open promising perspectives



of Judeo-Christian collaboration, according to Fr. Jaeger, as it will bring out into the open two truths.

- (1) That so-called religious anti-Semitism has no theologic basis; and
- (2) That modern anti-Semitism when it pretends to be "theologic" can really not base itself upon any doctrine of Church nor any tradition, being only an artificial construction forged on a religious philosophy contaminated by gnostic heresy.

One can add something else to all this. The motives of ancient and medieval anti-Semitism were primitive and crude in nature, and they were translated into action by a violence just as crude and primitive. Despite the extent of anti-Jewish persecution, it had its limits. The motives of modern anti-Semitism were subtle, and had their pedantic side; and in the spirit of pushing to a conclusion so typical of German universities. We find ourselves here facing a significant phenomenon in the history of violence: the more subtle the motives, the more one finds violence without limits. It is because modern anti-Semitism had this "intellectual" doctrine, methodically and systematically elaborated, that it came to massacre millions of men.

One can draw eminently practical conclusions about the Catholic catechism from our present discussion. We must change a Christian teaching which still serves itself of a (gnostic) terminology empty of sense, and which is pseudo-Christian in nature. By positively overcoming gnostic falsification, the Catholic will find himself profoundly united with his separated Christian brethren and his older brethren in the faith, the Jews. Two things are meant thereby.

Christian teaching rids itself of the tendency to depreciate Jewish morality and gives Christian morality its true dimension, bringing it back to its proper patrimony. Moreover, this decisive step is accomplished as the way to a rapprochement with Judaism, where all morality comes from divine revelation...

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Msr. Elchinger, Bishop Coadjutor of Strasbourg, discusses anti-Semitism and Christian teaching in Alsace. According to him, there were traces of anti-Semitism in villages in Alsace, but this anti-Semitism was more folklore in nature than personal; and such opposition as one can note to Jews in certain regions seem rather to be economic than cultural. The Bishop then goes on to a description of how religious teaching in Alsace has sought to achieve a better understanding. He has watched to see, he says, that school manuals should not have equivocal expressions which might foster a pejorative



attitude to the Jewish race in Biblical anthology. The attempt has always been made to show how the books of the Old Testament are a sort of divine pedagogy to the Chosen People from whom Christians descend. The most difficult area is, of course, the drama of the passion of Christ. With regard to this, says Msgr. Elchinger, the teaching was that when the New Testament employs the term "the Jews" it is designating hostile chiefs and not Jews collectively.

The last war, the Bishop feels, has brought about the disappearance in Alsace of anti-Semitism, which could base itself on religious or cultural motives. "The religious teaching given now makes impossible a going backwards....At a time when not so much any particular Christian dogma but the entire faith in God is in danger, it is important that both Jews and Christians should feel responsible for the survival and the spread of the Biblical Message," he concludes.

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The purpose of his article, Fr. Demann says, is to present his reflections on his 15 years of experience in the effort to improve Christian teachings about Jews. He writes:

One can confirm without hesitation that globally, during the past 15 years, and especially since 1947, really considerable, encouraging progress has been made in the manner in which thinking, feelings and attitudes of the Christians of tomorrow have been shaped towards Jews and Judaism by religious teaching. Such progress would have been impossible before the war.

In practical terms, such progress can be seen in the considerably heightened interest and the much more positive attitude toward the Old Testament and towards Judaism, both ancient and modern; in the more exact knowledge of the historical continuity and the intimate tie between Israel and the Church; in the search for a Christian attitude that would be more just and more brotherly toward Jews. This development goes hand-in-hand with the elimination of deformed ideas and prejudice, hateful legends and political caricatures of Jews as the people of deicide and malediction.

This progress is not only the result of recent experiences and events nor of particular initiatives, important as they may be. It is closely tied up to a Biblical revival, to the Ecumenical movement, to deep renewal of the thought and action of the Church in the modern world. This is the source of its force and efficacy of its promise for the future.

One could register progress. One must also recognize that the results are still quite insufficient and constitute, at present, only a beginning. We say a beginning, especially in relation to the whole of the Christian world, and particularly the Catholic world.



If there are certain countries -- like France -- where progress has been considerable, there are others scarcely touched by, or aware of, this problem. There are inequalities and differences of evolution in various countries. Such inequality should be a source of stimulation rather than of impatience or of discouragement.

One may draw two conclusions. In the first place, one must act in every country or every part of the world with methods and means adapted thereto, taking into account the over-all situation. Furthermore, without in any way giving up one's interest in the less advanced regions, it is important to go ahead and exploit to the very limit possibilities of progress in more advanced countries such as France. In such lands already accomplished progress propagates itself with rapidity. With growing exchange of communications between communities moreover, differences between lands will certainly diminish.

One can already see from these general reflections the dimensions of the effort for renewing and bringing up-to-date Christian teaching regarding Jews. One can see immediately that it is not just the question of rooting up some bad weeds, teachings deformed by ignorance. Such work, certainly, is far from superfluous. One must even recognize that most initiatives undertaken since the end of the war have begun in this field... But it cannot suffice, for its impact is often superficial, and its efficiency limited. There is nothing less gratifying than pulling up weeds; they come up again easily. In fact, the major obstacle that we have met in doing work of this kind is not bad will -- rather almost always we have met with great good will -- but the force of inertia, habit, routine and human stupidity, to which one may add the predominance of other preoccupations. In other words, we are not here concerned just with correcting theses or manners of speech. We have to awaken consciences, open up minds, form them and inform them and infuse them with positive intelligence as to the exigencies of full Christian teaching concerning Judaism. As in medicine, we must combat the symptoms; but the essential thing is to get at the root of the evil itself, to establish the healthy functioning of the organism. As we progress in this so, too, does the need for weeding out become less and less.

This fundamental work cannot be carried on by isolated efforts on the margin of the great currents of the life of the Church. These efforts must be integrated and become as organic as possible; on the one hand by becoming part of these great currents to which they are naturally allied (to the Biblical and liturgical movements, to the renewal of the forms of pastoral action and of the catechism, to the Ecumenical movement, etc.). Moreover, they must likewise become part of the normal structure of the life of the Church, at the diocese and parish level, and in teaching institutions, from the teaching of catechism to infants to faculties of theology.



Frequently, most important initiatives are taken outside such structures, as occurred at the Seelisberg Conference of 1947...It must be understood, however -- and perhaps it is not always sufficiently understood -- that in order to act efficiently and on a large scale, groups and personalities must seek to work not only on Christian teachers and people, but must make their views penetrate into the organic structures and life and teaching of the Church.

The feeling of urgency, and of change still necessary may bring about legitimate impatience in the face of the slowness and the limits of progress. Yet, if one wants to act efficiently in an immense organism, one must envisage long-term action, broken down according to the different levels of the structure of Christian teaching...Ideas rooted for whole generations are not transformed overnight.

Such a vast and fundamental organic effort cannot be negative in its nature...It can only take on its full value to the measure in which it is founded on a positive effort, on Biblical and doctrinal research, on historic and present-day information (on Judaism, its tradition and its spiritual values) and on Christian thinking. A negative mentality can only be combatted if one substitutes for it an attitude with positive content.

The necessary insertion of these efforts into the structures of the Church can only fully be carried out with the approval and encouragement of the hierarchy. This is not only an affirmation of principle, but an evident fact founded on direct experience. To the extent that efforts to change have solidly based theological foundations, are positive, and are judicious in form and expression and action (this does not mean timid), the more change they will have of obtaining hierarchical approval.

Fr. Demann then reviews certain specific actions taken by Church authorities within the last decade to improve Christian teaching with regard to Jews, and concludes as follows:

"The great new fact to stress here...is that of the Ecumenical Council...now in preparation. It is no longer a secret for anybody that the question of Judaism figures among the elements being studied in preparation for the Council by the Secretariat for Christian Unity headed by His Eminence Cardinal Bea. From various declarations and Catholic news articles it comes out that these preparations, insofar as they concern the teaching of the Church with regard to Jews, are in good hands, and arise manifestly from the same state of mind as that which has marked the transformations...that we have indicated in the post-war Christian world.

We have in this connection a very great hope. One cannot yet envisage what form it may yet take, but it is certain that any gesture of encouragement, approbation or initiative that may come from the Council with a view to improvement of Christian teaching concerning Jews will bring strength and inestimable authority to the efforts now being undertaken..."



## The Jews as Presented in Roman Catholic Education

James Parkes, January 1961

The opportunity of dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church opens such vast perspectives that it is not surprising that responsible Jewish organisations and individuals should go out of their way to welcome it. Moreover, even though religion occupies a less dominant position than it used to, the draining away of a perennial source of anti-Jewish sentiment would be a very great achievement. But, just because the possibilities are so great, there needs to be great realism about the manner and substance of the dialogue. It is no good for either side to enter it at a point where reservations and distortions make real dialogue impossible.

There is no question but that the original and prime responsibility for antisemitism lies squarely on the Christian Church. This is not a statement that all Jews are saints, or that in all disputes the fault lies on the non-Jew. Jews have been directly responsible for as many of their normal misfortunes as any other people. Long before the Church entered on the scene relations between the Jews and their neighbours ranged from violent antipathy and mutual dislike to mutual acceptance and friendship. That is the normal range of human relationships. But it is a mistake to call the unfriendly attitudes to Jews one encounters in Greek cities, in Alexandria, in Roman satirists or elsewhere 'antisemitic.' For the attitudes arise out of identifiable causes, and are limited to the effect of those causes. But, in contrast, there were no local causes, social or economic, which led to the appalling massacres in 1096 and 1099 which accompanied the First Crusade in Northern France, in the Rhineland, and in Jerusalem. They were the direct result of a long tradition of Christian preaching and teaching, and of nothing else and the line from those massacres to the six million dead of our own day is an unbroken one. Other factors, economic, social, and political, enter in during the Middle Ages or later, but at no point does the Christian Church by any action or atonement acknowledge its responsibility for the evil which it has created. There have been many expressions of sympathy for Jewish victims; there were many heroic actions of individual Christians during the Nazi terror.



But they in themselves are not enough.

The Church could only divest itself of its responsibility by a deliberate, sustained and official change in its teaching, and we are still far from that. But a beginning has been made by individual scholars, Catholic and non-Catholic, and we can thankfully accept as an earnest of good will that the present Pope has ordered the exclusion from the Mass of certain phrases and actions which have been particularly hurtful to Jewish susceptibilities. A way is therefore opened for a Jewish-Christian dialogue in a new atmosphere. But that atmosphere may very quickly and tragically be dissipated if on both sides there is not a clear and charitable recognition of the lines which are likely to be creative, and the lines which can lead only to disappointment and embarrassment.

The dialogue is limited especially by the fact, unfortunate but inescapable, that matters which either side hold to be part of direct divine revelation are not appropriate for this type of discussion. For neither side can be asked to make concessions in this field. In so far as there is matter for discussion, it can be only within either religion. Catholics may and should discuss among themselves the presentation of Judaism and Jews arising out of the Catholic doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of the text of the Scriptures. They may discuss among themselves the nature and implications of the prophecies in which they see a direct pointing forward to the messianic claims of Jesus of Nazareth. But both these are fields in which Jewish participation could only lead to mutual embarrassment or mutual frustration. They would involve the kind of 'disputation' which the medieval Church forced on the medieval rabbi with such unpleasing results.

The argument that matters on which divine authority is claimed cannot readily be made the subject for fruitful dialogue, does not condemn either side to silence. The immense field of historical research remains open to all. Moreover both sides are separately entitled to express with charity and scholarship their own opinions and beliefs; and it is to be hoped that the other side will read and meditate upon these contributions, and be ready to discuss them each within their own field. In fact, unless they are prepared to do so, the area of any fruitful



actual discussion shrinks almost to nothing. For all the fundamental claims of the Christian tradition, as a result of which it has become responsible for antisemitism, come within the definition of matters on which the Roman Catholic Church claims a divine authority (and therefore inerrancy) for its views.

Antisemitism owes its origin to the way in which the Church has formulated and maintained its claims:

- a. that Torah was a temporary revelation which has been replaced by the Incarnation.
- b. that, as a result of their rejection of the claims of Jesus to be Messiah, Jews have ceased to be the 'true' Israel.
- c. that all the promises of the Old Testament have been transferred from the Jews to the Christian Church.

It is the implications that the Church fathers drew from these claims, and the way in which they developed them, which provide the tap-root of antisemitism. For they so presented them to Christians that they made the Jews appear corporately and individually a detestable and reprobate people. The Old Testament contains denunciation as well as promise. If you take all the promises and allot them to the Christians, right from the time of Abraham, and then take all the denunciations and allot them to the Jews, and present the result as a divinely drawn picture of Jewish character, you cannot be surprised if ordinary people come to believe that Jews are hateful people. Indeed one famous preacher of the fourth century says roundly that he hates the Jews because God hates, and has always hated, them. Another says that God gave them the Torah in order to deceive them.

As soon as the Church had the power, it embodied its hatred in legislation. Not only were Jews steadily deprived of their rights, but the laws in which they were deprived used abusive and contemptuous language in speaking of both people and religion. Ordinary Christians were taught by their leaders to view the Jews with hatred and contempt. The very first law of the Christian empire which refers to a synagogue, describes it in the word which is military slang for a brothel. It is the repetition of statements of this kind over the whole field which the influence of the



Church could reach and over century after century, which lies behind any economic, social or political cause of antisemitism. It is the Church which first created the abnormality which bred, or appeared to breed, economic, social and political problems for later ages. And this is something quite distinct from normal likes and dislikes, deserved and undeserved.

It may seem unnecessary to bring up again these references to speeches and writings of a remote past, but I am convinced that this is not so. Not only is the chain of evidence unbroken from these early patristic, or even New Testament, writings down to modern antisemitism, but it is precisely this basic Christian responsibility which Jews are entitled to insist that Christians shall recognise and not try to evade.

I note with regret in the Jewish Chronicle of 11.11.1968 that in an interview about the possibility of discussing Jewish views at the forthcoming Council, Father Boyer S.J., who is stated to be Cardinal Bea's chief adviser on Jewish affairs, is said to have made a number of statements which are totally inaccurate. It is reported that he

'described as "exaggerated and false" the theory, propounded by Jules Isaac, that antisemitism derived from the Christian teaching which attributed the death of Jesus to the entire Jewish people. He stated that Christians did not object to Jews because of Jesus's death but because they refused the New Testament. He said that in the past Popes and Bishops had often manifested friendliness towards the Jews. They kept them apart for protective reasons, not because of hostility. Both sides had historical responsibility for antisemitism, he added. The Jews practised usury which was sometimes excessive and provoked violent reactions.'

As there has been no denial of the accuracy of this report, I fear that it reflects the actual opinions of the Jesuit father. I have no doubt he believes himself to be objective, and I should be very surprised if his remarks were based on ignorance; but they are so inaccurate and disingenuous that I would myself seriously doubt the value of any discussion in which he was a leading participant. His remarks c

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too close to that opening gambit in which one side makes claims which it knows to be false, in order that it may subsequently make an apparently handsome concession to the other 'for the sake of good-will,' and withdraw them. The other is expected in return to surrender some genuine claim of his own. That is not the spirit in which a fruitful dialogue can take place.

The attack on Jules Isaac is totally unjustified; for not only does Jules Isaac document most carefully everything which he says, but his conclusions in this field are amply borne out by Father Demann in La Catéchèse Chrétienne et la Rôle de la Bible, a work which bears the imprimatur. For a Roman Catholic priest to dare to allege calmly that 'Both sides had historical responsibility for antisemitism,' and then to go on to justify this claim that wolf and lamb had equal responsibility for the death of the latter by citing medieval acury, is no beginning for a fruitful dialogue.

The opinions of Father Boyer are no reason for us to doubt or deny the sincerity of the Pope himself, but they are a good reason for asking seriously whether this basic topic is one which Jews and Catholics could profitably enter upon together. It could, of course, be said that it would be safe if the Jewish participant kept his eyes very wide open and his reference books handy, but that is not the spirit in which fruitful discussion could take place. I would prefer to say that the remarks of Fr. Boyer show that there is still need for a great deal of research, study and discussion within the Church itself, before profitable dialogue can take place with those outside. It is true that the Church does not claim infallibility for every statement of its theologians, past or present, but that is not enough. If the Roman Catholic side of the dialogue is going to begin with this kind of attitude, then it could lead to nothing fruitful. For it must be remembered that, though it is the manner in which the Church treated the Jewish rejection of Jesus that created antisemitism, yet behind this there is the description of that rejection in the New Testament. A great deal of good will would be needed for a

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fruitful discussion of the amendment of the gospel. But by itself even this would produce no decision in which Jews could profitably participate. For behind the manner in which they are presented lie the statements themselves which the Roman Church believes to rest on divine authority, and which Jews must, by the mere fact of being Jews, categorically deny. They can be discussed between Jews and Christians who do not assert on either side the inerrancy of the Scriptures, but that is not the case here.

But, I repeat, though I do not believe that this is a fruitful field for dialogue, it is a field in which every effort is to be welcomed which is made either by a Roman Catholic, or by a Jew, or by a scholar like myself who is neither, if it be based on charity and be a real search for truth.

The field for dialogue must be a field in which neither side is compelled to break off the discussion with a non possumus based on belief in a divine imperative. Even with this limitation it is a wide and profitable field.

It covers a very large part of the historical presentation of the Jews of the first century in Christian teaching. A great deal of accurate knowledge comes from sources outside the Bible, and is therefore not entangled by any doctrine of Biblical infallibility. But Christians are usually painfully ignorant of it, and so get the New Testament story into a quite false perspective. The historical fact is that a very large percentage of the Jewish people lived widely dispersed in different countries, and cannot have ever heard of Jesus of Nazareth during his life time. They cannot have been involved one way or another in his death. A great deal is known about the different religious parties of the time, and about the worship of the synagogue, which is at least a supplement to what is written in the New Testament.

Since no Christian is obliged to claim that his Christian ancestors never made mistakes and never committed crimes, it can be profitable to discuss the presentation of the separation of the two religions. For this did not happen during apostolic times but afterwards, and neither Jew nor Christian can be particularly proud of all the actions of his ancestors during that troubled and troubling period. A more objective view of the passions of that period can of itself help to



undermine the picture of the 'deicide people' which Christian teaching, too ignorant of all post-biblical Jewish history, will so easily present. For dialogue on such a subject is bound to cover a good deal of discussion of the nature of Judaism, which sets the New Testament denunciations into perspective without raising the issue of the divine authority for such passages as the denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew xxiii.

In addition to these subjects which arise out of past history, there is a very wide field within which dialogue can be fruitful in joint examination of the contemporary world. Both Christians and Jews face the world today as members of minorities, whatever official statistics may claim. There is no 'Christian' country, and Israel is not a living exhibition of Torah. Both religions, whatever their mutual relations, face the fact that they have many common interests in confronting contemporary secularism, materialism and plain 'don't-care-ism.' There are many occasions when rabbi and priest belong to the same side, and each strengthens his own hand by appearing side by side with the other, and their common stand is itself of profound educational value.

Closely allied with this situation are those others, fortunately few, where local representatives of either side are behaving with an intolerance or hostility to the other which does not fairly represent the policy of either 'at the top.' Neither Church nor Synagogue are as monolithic as they are sometimes represented to be, and neither side can entirely prevent such manifestations of intolerance. But it would help if both sides knew how and where to seek a remedy. And again disapproval of intolerance or hostility is itself of educational value.

It is in these ways, as it seems to me, that dialogue can be fruitful; and it may well be that each field, genuinely explored together, may open the way to deeper and more profitable exploration.