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Preserving American Jewish History

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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 27, Folder 3, International Jewish Committee for
Interreligious Consultations, 1987.

NEWS

LYNNE IANNIELLO
Director, Communications Division

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York, NY, Jan. 5....Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, made the following statement in response to the announcement from the Vatican that Pope John Paul II will meet with Kurt Waldheim during his visit to Austria June 23-27:

"It is to be hoped that in light of new sensitivities stemming from the Pope's recent meetings in Rome and in Miami with Jewish leaders, he will use the announced visit as a new and different opportunity to confront the issues of the Holocaust in the presence of Kurt Waldheim on Austrian soil."

AJ, CP, IP, LAJ, RE-I, MPC, MP, BHFOR, BHR-87



CONFIDENTIAL

PROPOSED AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH POPE JOHN PAUL II,
VATICAN SECRETARIATS OF STATE AND RELIGIOUS RELATIONS
WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THE INTERNATIONAL JEWISH
COMMITTEE FOR INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

BACKGROUND: The worldwide spontaneous controversy that emerged in the wake of the June 25th audience between Pope John Paul II and Dr. Kurt Waldheim, former Nazi army officer and now president of Austria, has focused dramatic attention on at least five critical issues that will affect the future unfolding of Catholic-Jewish relations throughout the world:

I - REVISIONISM AND THE NAZI HOLOCAUST - Pope John Paul II has made several moving statements reflecting his deep understanding of the uniqueness and the magnitude of the tragedy suffered by the Jewish people who were singled out by Hitler and his Nazi regime for total extermination. While millions of Christians and other human beings tragically were destroyed by the Nazis, only the Jewish people were targeted for the "Final Solution."

In his pilgrimage to Auschwitz in 1979, the Pope movingly declared: "I pause with you before the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of a people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination...It is not permissible for anyone to pass by

this inscription with indifference."

It is difficult to reconcile these sentiments with the reality that when Pope John Paul II visited Majdanek in Poland last May, he mentioned fourteen nationalities but made not a single reference to the murder of several hundred thousand Jews in that place of killing.

Earlier in April, when the Pontiff visited the Federal Republic of Germany, he began the process of beatification of three German Catholics who were upheld as martyrs or as resisters to Nazism. It is self-evident that such beatification rites are internal Catholic matters and no one would presume to judge those spiritual actions. The issue is not what was said, but what was left unsaid.

To speak of German Catholics only in terms of martyrs and victims of Nazism, and to avoid acknowledging the role of the German Catholic hierarchy in mobilizing total obedience and loyalty to Hitler and the Nazi regime between 1930 and 1933 (see the text of the Vatican Concordat with Hitler, July 1933) suggests a form of revisionism of the truth of history. What moral lessons can the next generation of young German Catholics (and Christians) learn if that history is denied or repressed?

In 1975, the Catholic Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany promulgated a statement of profound moral and spiritual importance in which they declared:

"Our country's recent political history is darkened by the systematic attempt to wipe out the Jewish people. Apart from some admirable efforts by individuals and groups, most of us during the time of National Socialism formed a church community preoccupied with the threat to our own institutions. We turned our backs to this persecuted Jewish people and were silent about the crimes perpetrated on Jews and Judaism. Many became guilty from sheer fear for their lives. We feel particularly distressed about the fact that Christians even took active part in these persecutions. The honesty of our intention to renew ourselves depends on the admission of guilt, incurred by our country and our church...On our church falls the special obligation of improving the tainted relationship between the Church as a whole and the Jewish people and its religion."

The erection of Catholic churches and convents on Nazi concentration camps - such as, in Sobibor and Auschwitz (subsequently removed) - appear to be tendencies to minimize or obscure Jewish martyrdom in these chambers of hell and torment, while transforming them as sites primarily of Christian memorial. These actions would contradict the penitential spirit of the German Catholic hierarchy as articulated in the above statement.

The audience granted Kurt Waldheim on June 25, 1987, elicited such widespread horror among Jews, as well as among many Christians, in part because it appeared to be the capstone of such revisionist tendencies. How was it possible to receive with honors a former Nazi officer, who

lied about and denied his Nazi involvement, and not make a single reference to that horrific past? Is it not possible that such silence is a message to the world that the Nazi holocaust - is so trivial and irrelevant that it was not worthy even of a mention?

Inevitably, Waldheim appeared to be absolved of sin without ever confessing a single evil deed against human life.

Our first issue, then, is to raise a profound concern about such recent tendencies toward apparent revisionism of Nazi history in the Catholic church and to curtail its development before it becomes truly destructive of truth and justice. It is more than onerous for the Jewish people to have to struggle against revisionist tendencies carried forward today by neo-Nazis as well as by the atheist forces in the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

Given Pope John Paul II's magnificent affirmations of respect and friendship for the Jewish people and his awareness of their history of suffering, prejudice, and anti-Semitism in the Christian West, we have every reason to trust that he will make clear his unambiguous understanding of the terrors of the Final Solution, and his unequivocal rejection of any efforts toward revisionism or trivializing of that frightful historical record.

II - CONTEMPORARY ANTI-SEMITISM - Since the promulgation of Nostra Aetate on October 28, 1965, Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, Pope John

Paul I, and especially Pope John Paul II, have been in the forefront of repudiating anti-Semitism throughout the world. Much progress has been made in uprooting the sources of the "teachings of contempt" in Catholic textbooks, homilies, liturgy, and generally in Christian culture. These achievements have been warmly welcomed by Jewish religious and communal leadership in many parts of the world.

The purification of Catholic teaching and preaching about Jews and Judaism has resulted in genuine mutual respect and a growing pattern of friendships and fraternal dialogue between Catholics and Jews in major cities of the Western world, in Latin America, Israel, and especially in the United States and Canada.

Yet, as one historian has testified, "the bacillus of anti-Semitism resides in the subconscious of a great many Christians" to be activated particularly in times of social stress and economic crisis. Thus, we have witnessed that political and economic crises, for example, in Panama and Mexico, have led to scapegoating of Jewish people with anti-Semitic threats. Following the Waldheim audience and the ensuing turmoil, polls in Austria revealed a doubling in the public expressions of anti-Semitic attitudes. In Germany, observers reported a heightening in anti-Jewish manifestations. Even in the United States, where Catholic-Jewish solidarity is probably the most advanced in the world today, there was an increase of Catholic hostility toward the Jewish people.

Without entering into the question of moral responsibility for the anti-Jewish consequences of the Waldheim audience, it is evident that the important leadership given by the Pope and the Catholic Church during the past two decades in proclaiming anti-Semitism and Christianity as incompatible requires a fundamental and dramatic reaffirmation in our times.

Beyond such an immediate proclamation by Pope John Paul II, the idea of a Papal Encyclical on the relationship of the Catholic Church towards Jews and Judaism in which anti-Semitism is stigmatized as permanently unacceptable to the Church would constitute an historic contribution to the future improvement of Catholic-Jewish relations.

III - CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF JEWS AND JUDAISM - Pope John Paul II has made significant contributions in a number of declarations regarding the permanent validity of Judaism. In his October 29, 1985, audience with IJCIC, he affirmed that "God does not reject His people." He advocated "the freeing of our catechetical and religious teaching of a negative or inaccurate presentation of Jews and Judaism" that will "help to promote respect, appreciation and indeed love for one and the other."

There have been other homilies which have contradicted these crucial affirmations. There have been references to Jews as having killed Christ; of the Church as the "new Israel" having succeeded the "old Israel."

Such lapses create great confusion, and tend to undermine the power and integrity of the other Papal declarations made to numerous Jewish groups in many parts of the world.

We respectfully submit that it is critical to the future stability of Catholic-Jewish relations that these confusions and contradictions be resolved in a fundamental way that will never allow bigots or anti-Semites to select or manipulate phrases from Papal homilies for their anti-Jewish purposes. We sincerely believe that the vast majority of our Catholic friends and neighbors in many parts of the world would welcome such clarity and unambiguity on these central theological issues today.

IV - ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST - We sincerely believe that the greatest single obstacle to the establishment of peace and justice in the Middle East for all its inhabitants is the illusions harbored among extremist, rejectionist Arab states that Israel is only an "entity" that is destined to disappear. The singular contribution that the Pope and the Holy See could make to the promotion of peace and coexistence between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle East is to help undermine that dangerous illusion which inhibits nations from coming to the negotiating table.

While de facto diplomatic relations have been developing quietly between the Holy See and the State of Israel, the absence of full de jure diplomatic relations continues to feed the extremists' illusions

and fantasy that Israel is a chimera that will not survive. A morally courageous act, undertaken with due discretions and adequate preparations, that would result in the normalization of relations between the Holy See and Israel would constitute an historic Vatican contribution to world peace.

We are fully aware of the legitimate Vatican concern for the safety and security of Christians in the Arab-Muslim world and the fear of possible reprisals should that diplomatic action be taken. We believe, however, that the example of Spain is worthy of study and emulation. The Arab League and its member nations threatened Spain with a whole arsenal of reprisals against persons and property should the Gonzalez government establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

Spain informed the Arab nations in the Middle East, with whom it has extensive commercial, trade and cultural ties, that it was going to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and would not tolerate having anyone dictate its foreign policy. The diplomatic ties were established and there were no reprisals of any kind of any Arab nation.

We believe that the time is past due for the Holy See to separate bluster and blackmail from reality, take the necessary moves to protect Arab Christians and Christians in the Muslim world, while asserting the autonomy and independence of its own foreign policy.

V - HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOVIET JEWRY - Pope John Paul II is undoubtedly one of the most forceful advocates and champions of human rights in the world today. We share with him the profound biblical and humanistic affirmations of the sacredness of every human life, of every child created in the sacred image of God.

We pledge our cooperation to join with the Pope and the Catholic Church in the struggle to uphold the dignity of every human life and to seek to realize the human rights of every member of God's human family. We feel particular anguish over the special suffering of our Jewish brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union who have been denied the elemental right to leave, as well as the rights of religious liberty and the freedom to nurture their Jewish religion and culture.

We appreciate greatly the moral support and solidarity of many leaders of the Catholic Church in the United States, Western Europe and Latin America who have stood by our side in the struggle to liberate our co-religionists in the Soviet Union. We sincerely welcome the augmentation of that support from the Holy See.

At the same time, we wish to affirm our support of many Catholic believers who suffer from discriminations and denials of religious liberty and their God-given human rights. We stand ready to be of assistance to them in their struggle to be free peoples.

CONCLUSION - While we believe these five central issues are vital to the future flowering of Catholic-Jewish relations, we are convinced there is need for us to face together in the most fraternal spirit the overriding need for improving our methods of communication between the Holy See and the world Jewish community as represented through IJCIC.

While we deeply appreciate the inspired and dedicated leadership of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, President of the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations with the Jewish People, we feel that the great strides forward in Catholic-Jewish relations that he and the gifted members of his secretariat have helped make possible are compromised from time to time by "surprise" events. The Waldheim audience and the earlier Arafat audience are the most troublesome of such episodes. They occurred without any advance notice to any of the Jewish partners in our Catholic-Jewish relationship, and distressed that relationship in many parts of the world for months on end. These unfortunate episodes, if repeated, can lead to the mocking and distrust of the entire development of Catholic-Jewish relations.

It is essential that we seek to learn a deep lesson from this present turmoil and find ways to seek to prevent its repetition. As a first suggestion, we urge that a process be set up for the regular joint consultation between key personalities in the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations with the Jews, the Vatican Secretariat of State, and IJCIC.

The present consultation involving Cardinal Willebrands, Cardinal Casaroli, and IJCIC leaders suggests an appropriate model for consultation at least once or twice a year during which views could be exchanged that would help sensitize each other to our respective situations. Clearly, no one wishes to have the power of veto or censorship over the other, but being conscious more fully of each other's sensibilities, problems, and hopes could help forestall unnecessary strains.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
August 12, 1987



6511-IRD-1
August 13, 1987/smm



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

United States Office

475 Riverside Drive, Room 1062
New York, New York 10115
Tel. (212) 870-2533

REV. JOAN B. CAMPBELL
Executive Director

Cable Address: Oikoumene New York
Telex: 234579

20 November 1987

The Rev. M. T. Hilhorst
Kantoorgracht 9
2611 PE Delft
The Netherlands

Dear Mr. Hilhorst:

During 9-12 May 1988 the World Council of Churches and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations will jointly sponsor a consultation on the theme: "The Mending of Creation." This meeting will be the most recent in a series that has been so sponsored over a number of years. The proposed agenda for the consultation is enclosed.

The purpose of this present correspondence is to invite you to read the Christian paper on "The Earth is the Lord's" at the Wednesday, 11 May, session. As the agenda indicates, the hope of the consultation planners is to enable the some forty participants to engage in a Jewish-Christian discussion of the widest range of meaning for the Hebrew term, *tikkun olam*. Your paper, which will focus on environmental issues, should do so from within a Christian theological context. You will have a Jewish counterpart, whose name I will send to you as soon as it is available. Should you have specific questions concerning this consultation, let me suggest that you contact Dr. Simon Schoon, who is a member of the Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People of the World Council of Churches.

Please know that, although we are not able to offer an honorarium, all travel and entertainment expenses will be covered by the World Council of Churches. The language of the consultation will be English. In order for there to be time for translation, we would be grateful if you could provide your written text, preferably in English, no later than 15 April 1988.

In the sincere hope that you will be with us in April, I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Cordially,

Allan R. Brockway
9900 Blundon Drive, #101
Silver Spring, MD 2090
USA

✓ cc: Prof. Jean Halpérin



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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Executive Director

Cable Address: Oikoumene New York
Telex: 234579

20 November 1987

Dr. Robert Everett
2218 Stecher Avenue
Union, NJ 07083

Dear Bob:

The consultation, sponsored jointly by the World Council of Churches and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, about which I spoke with you in Minneapolis has run into a date conflict. It seems that the Polish Jewish community is organizing a commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto revolt that comes precisely when we had originally scheduled the consultation on "The Mending of Creation."

All of that is to say that the WCC/IJCIC meeting is now scheduled for 9-12 May 1988 instead of the April date I indicated to you. I trust that this change will not cause you any difficulty in agreeing to read a paper on "The Quest for Social Justice."

I have enclosed a copy of the agenda as it now stands. You will have a counterpart (yet to be named) who will approach the topic from a Jewish perspective. I will let you know who it will be as soon as possible so that you may, if you wish, be in communication. The focus of these papers should be on how the "quest" for social justice is an integral part of the religious (in your case, Christian) effort at mending the creation. Please do not hesitate to employ illustrative material from your own experience and/or that of the American churches. If it is possible -- or even if it isn't! -- I'd like to have your text by 15 April so we can get it back from the translators in time for the meeting.

The World Council will, of course, be responsible for your travel and entertainment expense for the Geneva meeting. Perhaps it would be a good idea for you to check into air fares to Geneva and let me know what is the most advantageous price.

I hope we will have an opportunity to talk in person before next May. Let me know should you be in the Washington area and I will do the same should I come your way.

Cordially,

Allan R. Brockway
9900 Blundon Dr., #101
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Tele: 301-587-5019

cc: Prof. Jean Halpérin ✓



To figure to see

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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REV. JOAN B. CAMPBELL
Executive Director

Cable Address: Oikoumene New York
Telex: 234579

20 November 1987

Prof. Wolfgang Huber
Wissenschaftlich-Theologisches Seminar
Kisselgasse 1,
D-6900 Heidelberg

Dear Dr. Huber:

You will recall that Prof. Rendtorff spoke with you recently about a consultation on "The Mending of Creation" that will be held in Geneva, 9-12 May 1988. Jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the meeting is one of a series that have been so sponsored over a number of years.

The purpose of this present correspondence is to invite you to read the initial Christian paper on "Redemption of Creation." As you can see from the enclosed agenda, the first papers by Jewish and Christian scholars will "set the stage" for the ensuing discussions of social justice, economic justice, and environmental concerns. Your paper, of course, should attempt to isolate a specifically Christian understanding of what our Jewish colleagues understand as *tikkun olam*.

Please know that, although we are not able to offer an honorarium, all travel and entertainment expenses will be covered by the World Council of Churches. The language of the consultation will be English. In order for there to be time for translation, we would be grateful if you could provide your written text, preferably in English, no later than 15 April 1988.

In the sincere hope that you will be with us in April, I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Cordially,

Allan R. Brockway
9900 Blundon Drive, #101
Silver Spring, MD 2090
USA

✓cc: Prof. Jean Halpérin

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Saturday, November 21, 1987

The Dallas Morning News

47 A

Jewish leaders delay meeting with Vatican on Holocaust

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jewish leaders are postponing a much-publicized meeting with officials of the Vatican to discuss Catholic actions during the Holocaust, but they differ on the reasons for the delay.

"There is widespread concern that the Vatican is approaching this meeting without an honest assessment of its own actions during the Holocaust," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, of the gathering that was to have taken place Dec. 14-16 in Washington.

The Washington meeting between the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations and the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews probably will be held early next year.

But Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee,

said the postponement was not meant to show displeasure.

He said the controversy over the September meeting of Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II in Miami had "siphoned off so much attention and energy" that more time was needed to prepare for the gathering in Washington.

Steinberg said Wednesday that the Jews called for the delay because they were unhappy with several developments:

- What they regard as an effort by the pope to play down Pope Pius XII's inaction during the Holocaust.

- The failure of the Vatican to make progress in honoring a commitment to move a convent at the former concentration camp at Auschwitz.

Jews had threatened to cancel the Miami meeting because the pope received Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, accused of complicity in Nazi war crimes.

DEC 8 1987

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
SECRETARIAT FOR CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS

IJCIC

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FYE

December 2, 1987

Mr. Michael Lerner
TIKKUN
5100 Leona Street
Oakland, CA 94619

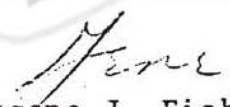
Dear Michael:

Thanks for your letter of November 12. I take your point, but I think you may have been misinformed on what actually went on in Rome. The "photo opportunity" you scorn came at the end of a tough, no-holds-barred day and a half of deeply substantive exchanges in Rome. All, and I repeat, all of the central issues you may have felt needed to be raised in your demonstrations had already been raised and honestly and frankly discussed.

Wolfe, Kelman (who was not there) notwithstanding, the Jewish delegation went right to the heart of things, as the enclosed UAHC memo illustrates. Nor, it might be added, has or does the Catholic Church seek to "select" for itself representatives of Judaism. Kelman's own organization, World Jewish Congress, has been at the center of IJCIC since its beginnings.

I believe that your continued trashing of the Jewish delegations in Rome and Miami is not only false but pernicious. These people served the Jewish people superbly in exceedingly difficult circumstances, said what needed to be said and made sure it was heard by exactly the right people in the Church. Your own efforts, on the other hand, have only succeeded in muddling the issues and making substantive understanding between our communities that much more difficult.

Yours in Shalom,


Eugene J. Fisher

EFJ:lm
Enc. (1)

cc: Msgr. Higgins
Annette Daum

TIKKUN

A BI-MONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE, & SOCIETY

Editor: Michael Lerner
Publisher: Nan Fink

5100 Leona Street
Oakland, CA 94619
(415) 482-0805

November 12, 1987

Dear Eugene Fisher:

You misunderstand the position we took if you think we want to boycott any further dialogue with the Holy See. I am a strong believer in dialogue. In order for dialogue to be effective, however, you must create conditions in which people speak their real feelings--and sometimes dialogue is served by silence or moments of withdrawal. When the Pope stepped on our feet, it was appropriate to scream: "This hurts, stop doing that." When, after the first screams, he didnt seem to care, and continued to justify his audience with Waldheim, then I think it was appropriate for people to boycott the Miami meeting and not give him honor during his US visit. For me, that would have been enough--I probably would have thought twice about doing a demonstration had the IJCIC people been leading their own form of dignified protests. When they did not, demonstrations were the only way our voice could be heard, so that it would be clear that the IJCIC position didnt represent everyone. The overwhelming turnout for our demonstration in SF, coupled with the strong support we received in Jewish newspapers around the country, convincingly demonstrated that it was not we but the IJCIC that was unrepresentative of the Jewish world. This is no big secret: the "major organizations" of Jewish life have been losing membership dramatically, and tend to represent primarily the generation of Jews over 50 (those who are still so afraid that they dare not protest in public--except about Soviet Jewry, where they can feel safe because they are flowing with the general anti-communist paranoia of American society). I hoped to deliver a strong reprimand to the Church, to stir some of those who remain morally sensitive in the Church to question the Pope's position on Waldheim and Israel, and to make the Church pay a certain public relations price for being so insensitive to Jewish sensibilities. I think some of this was in fact accomplished.

But all this is, in my mind, consistent with an ongoing dialogue. I think if one party to a dialogue

does something like meeting with Waldheim which is perceived as a slap in the face, it ill behooves them to warn the other party that any slap back will endanger the dialogue. Rather, the dialogue is hindered until a slap back has been given. Now it can proceed, I believe, though I think its a big mistake for both Christians and Jews to only dialogue with the safest and most respectful elements on each side. That's why I mentioned to Msgr. Higgins that I thought it might be a good idea to include representatives from Tikkun and Wiesenthal Center in further dialogue. My guess is that such a suggestion would not be resisted by you as much as by the established Jewish organizations. Here you face a problem: we dont have a hierarchy in the Jewish world, so you have to select for yourself, who you think are the real people who represent something. I can imagine that that's an uncomfortable position, but you are doing it willy nilly so I suggest you expand your definition of whom you should be speaking to. As for myself, I would be very happy to have Tikkun be part of further dialogue with the Church and can say for sure that those who the Church has so far chosen to talk to do not speak for me or for the many tens of thousands of our readers who have responded enthusiastically to our stand on the pope. Like my good friend Wolfe Kelman of the Rabbinical Assembly, I am not primarily interested in photo opportunities like the meeting in Rome, but rather with more substantive gatherings at which the dialogue is deeper and more straightforward (I'll leave the big press events to those who need them to impress their own constituencies in the Jewish world about how important they are). But if such opportunities arise, I'd be happy to be part of them if substantive discussion is about to take place.

I hope this will show that there is nothing ironic in my interest in consultations and dialogue with the Church. Despite my anger at this pope and what he has done, despite my lingering feeling that the Church still has not taken adequate steps to compensate for its dreadful and immoral history of dealing with the Jews, I still have a great deal of respect for Catholicism, feel very close to the magazine The New Oxford Review and some of its religious seriousness, and believe that through its connection to liberation theolo the Church is in a position to make important contributions to the quest for peace and justice in the world. Precisely because I take you seriously, I have engaged in struggle (Hochiach-tochiach et re-echa!). Greetings of Peace.

Michael Jensen

P.S. Please show this to Msgr. Higgins!

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRÈS JUIF MONDIAL

CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

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TELEPH. 341325	TELE X 23 61 29	TELE X 2 16 33	TELE X 6 50 320	TELEPH. 635546-635544
TELE X 28 98 76	JH/ra 19310			

Genève, le 3 décembre 1987

Monsieur Charles Bertschy
Chef de Réception
Hôtel Mon Repos
Rue de Lausanne 131
1202 Genève

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Cher Monsieur,

En réponse à votre lettre du 25 novembre, je peux maintenant vous confirmer que la conférence organisée par le Conseil oecuménique des églises et le Congrès juif mondial aura lieu à Genève du 9 au 12 mai 1988 et que nous aurons besoin de 35 chambres individuelles (avec petit déjeuner) pendant cette période. Une partie des participants arrivera à Genève dès le dimanche 8 mai.

Comme vous me l'avez demandé, nous centraliserons les réservations et les dates d'arrivée et de départ de chacun des participants et nous vous en ferons part en temps utile.

Nous aurons besoin aussi du 9 au 12 mai d'un salon pour la conférence (une quarantaine de participants) et, si possible, d'une pièce pour le secrétariat.

Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur, avec mes remerciements, l'assurance de mes sentiments dévoués.

Jean Halpérin

cc.: Dr. Allan R. Brockway
Prof. Leon Feldman ✓
Ms Audrey Smith

Interreligious Affairs Department
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

You may be
interested in the
attached.

Judith Banki

Mrs Judith B a n k i
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 th Street
New York, N.Y.
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs Judith Banki,

I thank you very much for the book: "Twenty Years of Jewish-Catholic Relations", which you sent me through Mr S. Krajewski. It includes very interesting material which will be useful for me in preparing to the Jewish-Catholic Symposium planned for April 1988.

I'm sorry I couldn't take part in the symposium in Buckow. As I heard from the participants it was well organised and very interesting.

I have good memories about the ICCJ Colloquium in Fröbourg and our personal conversation, especially on the ship. Someone took a photograph of us reflecting the situation. It is a nice souvenir for me.

I remember the story you told me about the child saved from the Jewish Ghetto in Cracow. I couldn't believe it then. In the meantime I got some evidence based on the documents kept in the Wiesenthal-Center in Los Angeles where concrete names and dates are given and this shows the whole situation in a new light, no longer unbelievable.

In friendship and prayer, I remain

Bp Henryk Muszyński

Bp Henryk Muszyński
Chairman of the Committee for the Dialogue
with Judaism of the Polish Episcopate

International Jewish Committee
ON
Interreligious Consultations

FROM: GUNTHER LAWRENCE
(212) 686-8670

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS (IJCIC)

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Synagogue Council of America
327 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

World Jewish Congress
1 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

NEW YORK -- The International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations (IJCIC) has elected by unanimous vote Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee as its chairman. He succeeds Rabbi Mordecai Waxman of Great Neck, L.I., who served as Jewish spokesman during the meetings with Pope John Paul II and Vatican authorities in Rome on September 1, and later in Miami, September 11.

IJCIC is the coordinating body of major Jewish religious and communal groups in their relationships with the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and other international religious bodies. The member agencies of IJCIC are the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith International, the Synagogue Council of America, the Israel Interfaith Committee, and the World Jewish Congress.

Founded in 1969, IJCIC has been centrally involved in implementing programs with the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations with the Jewish People, headed by Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, President. Parallel programs are carried on by IJCIC with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, the World Lutheran Federation, the Anglican Communion in London, the All-African Council of Churches, and Eastern Orthodox churches.

For 25 years, Rabbi Tanenbaum served as national inter-religious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, pioneering in advancing relationships with Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Greek Orthodox, Black Church, Hispanic, and Muslim bodies.

He was the only rabbi invited as guest observer at Vatican Council II, and participated in the first official audience of world Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II in Vatican City. Rabbi Tanenbaum, who has been an active member of IJCIC since its founding, played a key role as one of the nine-member delegation of IJCIC leaders who met with Pope John Paul II and Vatican authorities in Vatican City and Castel Gondolfo on

August 31-September 1.

In a recent national poll, Rabbi Tanenbaum was designated as "one of the ten most influential and respected religious leaders in America." A cover story in New York magazine described Dr. Tanenbaum as "one of the foremost Jewish ecumenical leaders in the world today."

The new IJCIC chairman has had a long and distinguished career in international human rights, world refugee and hunger problems, and foreign relations concerns. He has served as a member of the prestigious Human Rights Research Committee of the Foreign Policy Association's Study of Priorities for the 1980s and as consultant to the Council of Foreign Relations. He is a member of the executive board of the International Rescue Committee, the Overseas Development Council, the Bretton Woods Committee, the National Peace Academy, and the American Jewish World Service.

At the invitation of the International Rescue Committee, he joined delegations of prominent American leaders to carry out three separate fact-finding investigations of the plight of the Vietnamese "boat people" and Cambodian refugees, which contributed to the saving of tens of thousands of lives of Indochinese refugees. He has organized many relief efforts for victims of war and conflict, including the Black Jews of Ethiopia, Lebanese, Nigerians, Ugandans, Haitians, Afghanis, Central Americans, and Polish refugees.

Rabbi Tanenbaum serves as a member of the Advisory Committee of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, and is a founder and former co-chairman of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.

Rabbi Tanenbaum has directed the landmark religious research studies examining intergroup content in Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish teaching materials in the United States, Italy, Spain, French-speaking countries, Germany and South America. These studies have been the basis of the revision of negative stereotypes in the textbooks produced in the 1970s.

A religious historian and authority on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations, he has written and lectured extensively on the history, theology, and sociology of Judaism and Christianity. Rabbi Tanenbaum is the author, editor, or co-editor of seven books, among them, "Twenty Years of Catholic-Jewish Relations," (Paulist Press), "Evangelicals and Jewish in Conversation," and "Evangelicals and Jews in an Age of Pluralism," (Baker Book House), "Speaking of God Today - Jews and Lutherans in Conversation," (Fortress Press), "The Greek Orthodox-Jewish Consultation," "The International Colloquium on Religion, Land, Nation, and Peoplehood," and "Vatican II - An Interfaith Appraisal," (University of Notre Dame Press).

A prize-winning weekly radio commentator over WINS-Westinghouse, he has served as a consultant to the NBC-TV nine-hour special "Holocaust" and earlier was consultant to the New Media Bible project.

He has lectured at major universities, seminaries, religious and educational bodies in the United States, Europe, Israel, and South America, and at numerous national and international conferences.



El Comité Judío Americano (AJC) defiende los intereses judíos en todo el mundo; combate la intolerancia y el fanatismo y promueve los derechos humanos universales; sostiene el pluralismo; promueve la vitalidad creativa del pueblo judío y contribuye a la formulación de la acción política norteamericana desde la perspectiva conjugada como judíos y norteamericanos. Fundado en 1906, el Comité es la institución pionera en el campo de las relaciones humanas en los EE. UU. de N.A.

PARA PUBLICACIÓN INMEDIATA

COMITE JUDIO INTERNACIONAL PARA CONSULTAS INTERRELIGIOSAS

El rabino Marc H. Tanenbaum fue elegido presidente del
Comité Internacional para Consultas Interreligiosas (IJCIC)

- - - -

(Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum elected chairman of International
Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC))

NUEVA YORK, Diciembre 17 . . . El Comité Judío Internacional para Consultas Interreligiosas (IJCIC) eligió por votación unánime como su presidente al rabino Marc Tanenbaum, director de relaciones internacionales del Comité Judío Americano. Sucederá al rabino Mordecai Waxman de Great Neck, Long Island, quien se desempeñó como vocero judío durante las reuniones con el papa Juan Pablo II y las autoridades vaticanas en Roma el 1 de septiembre, y posteriormente en Miami el 11 de septiembre.

IJCIC es el organismo que coordina los principales grupos religiosos y comunales judíos en sus relaciones con el Vaticano, el Consejo Mundial de Iglesias y otros cuerpos religiosos internacionales. Está integrado por el Comité Judío Americano, B'nai B'rith Internacional, el Consejo de Sinagogas de América, el Comité Interreligioso de Israel, y el Congreso Judío Mundial.

Fundado en 1969, el IJCIC se ha dedicado especialmente a poner en práctica programas conjuntamente con el Secretariado del Vaticano de Relaciones Religiosas con el Pueblo Judío que encabeza su presidente, el cardenal Johannes Willebrands. El IJCIC también desarrolla programas paralelos con el Consejo Mundial de Iglesias en Ginebra, la Federación Luterana Mundial, la Comunión Anglicana en Londres, el Consejo Panafricano de Iglesias, e Iglesias ortodoxas orientales.

Durante 25 años, el rabino Tanenbaum se desempeñó como director nacional de asuntos interreligiosos del Comité Judío Americano, organización pionera en el desarrollo de relaciones con organismos católicos, protestantes, evangélicos, ortodoxos griegos, musulmanes, negros e hispanos.

Fue el único rabino invitado como observador al Concilio Vaticano II, y participó en la primera audiencia oficial de los líderes mundiales judíos con el papa Juan Pablo II en el Vaticano. El rabino Tanenbaum, que ha sido miembro activo del IJCIC desde su fundación, desempeñó un papel clave como uno de los nueve miembros de la delegación de líderes del IJCIC que se reunieron con el papa Juan Pablo II y autoridades vaticanas en el Vaticano y Castel Gandolfo el 31 de agosto y 1 de septiembre últimos.

En una reciente encuesta nacional, el rabino Tanenbaum fue designado "uno de los diez dirigentes religiosos más influyentes y respetados en Estados Unidos." Una nota de tapa en la revista New York describió al doctor Tanenbaum como "uno de los dirigentes ecuménicos judíos más prominentes en el mundo actual."

El nuevo titular del IJCIC ha cumplido una prolongada y distinguida carrera en derechos humanos internacionales, problemas mundiales de refugiados y del hambre, y cuestiones de relaciones exteriores. Se desempeñó como miembro del prestigioso Comité de Investigación sobre Derechos Humanos y como consultor del Consejo de Relaciones Exteriores. Es miembro de la junta ejecutiva del Comité Internacional de Rescate, el Consejo de Desarrollo de Ultramar, el Comité Bretton Woods, la Academia Nacional de Paz y el Servicio Mundial Judío Americano.

A invitación del Comité Internacional de Rescate, se incorporó a delegaciones de prominentes líderes norteamericanos para llevar a cabo tres distintas investigaciones sobre la suerte de los refugiados vietnamitas y camboyanos, que contribuyeron a salvar decenas de miles de vidas de indochinos. Ha organizado numerosos programas de socorro para víctimas de guerras y conflictos, incluyendo refugiados judíos negros de Etiopía, libaneses, nigerianos, ugandeses, haitianos, afganos, centroamericanos y polacos.

El rabino Tanenbaum se desempeña como miembro del Comité de Consulta de la Comisión Presidencial sobre el Holocausto, y es fundador y ex copresidente de la Fuerza Nacional Interreligiosa para el Judaísmo Soviético.

El rabino Tanenbaum ha dirigido los históricos estudios de investigación religiosa que examinaron el contenido de materiales de enseñanza católicos, protestantes y judíos en Estados Unidos, Italia, España, países de habla francesa, Alemania y Sudamérica. Estos estudios constituyeron la base para la revisión de estereotipos negativos en los libros de texto producidos en los años setenta.

Historiador de religión y autoridad sobre judaísmo y relaciones judío-cristianas, ha escrito y ha disertado profusamente sobre la historia, teología y sociología del judaísmo y el cristianismo. El rabino Tanenbaum es autor, editor o coeditor de siete libros, entre ellos "Veinte Años de relaciones católico-judías" (Prensa Paulista), "Conversación entre evangelistas y judíos" y "Evangelistas y judíos en una era de pluralismo" (Baker Book House), "Hablando de Dios hoy día -- Conversación entre judíos y luteranos" (Fortress Press), "La consulta grecoortodoxa-judía," "El Coloquio Internacional sobre Religión, Tierra, Nación y Pueblo" y "Vaticano II -- Una evaluación interreligiosa" (Prensa de la Universidad de Norte Dame).

Comentarista de un premiado programa semanal de radio por WINS-Westinghouse, ha sido consultor del programa televisivo especial de nueve horas de NBC "Holocaust", y anteriormente fue consultor del proyecto "New Media Bible."

Ha disertado en importantes universidades, seminarios, organismo religiosos y educativos en Estados Unidos, Europa, Israel y Sudamérica, y en numerosas conferencias nacionales e internacionales.

* * *

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Dec 17

Dear Marc,
Delighted to note your
unanimous election as chairman
of IJCIC. May you
continue to find joy and
fulfillment in all your
fine efforts on behalf of
better understanding and increased
cooperation.
As Pgh's loss Philadelphia's gain??

*Love
Steve*

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Let us go into the house of the Lord
PSALM 122:1

A125

R I ZUTBYLWYF

EEUU-JUDIOS-VATICANO, 0194

ORGANISMO JUDIO QUE COORDINA RELACIONES CON EL VATICANO ELIGE PRESIDENTE

NUEVA YORK, 18 (AP)-EL COMITE JUDIO INTERNACIONAL PARA CONSULTAS INTERRELIGIOSAS ELIGIO POR VOTO UNANIME COMO SU PRESIDENTE AL RABINO MARC TANENBAUM, DIRECTOR DE RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES DEL COMITE JUDIO AMERICANO, INFORMO EL CJIC.

EL CJIC ES EL ORGANISMO COORDINADOR DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES COMUNALES Y RELIGIOSAS JUDIAS EN SUS RELACIONES CON EL VATICANO, EL CONSEJO MUNDIAL DE IGLESIAS Y OTRAS INSTITUCIONES RELIGIOSAS INTERNACIONALES. INTEGRAN EL CJIC EL COMITE JUDIO AMERICANO, B'RA B'4ITH INTERNACIONAL, EL CONSEJO DE SINAGOGAS DE AMERICA, EL COMITE INTERRELIGIOSO ISRAEL Y EL CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL.

FUNDADO EN 1969, EL CJIC HA LLEVADO A CABO PROGRAMAS JUNTAMENTE CON EL SECRETARIADO DEL VATICANO SOBRE RELACIONES CON EL PUEBLO JUDIO, QUE ENCABEZA EL CARDENAL JOHANNES WILLEBRANDS. ASIMISMO REALIZA PROGRAMAS CONJUNTAMENTE CON EL CONSEJO MUNDIAL DE IGLESIAS EN GINEBRA, LA FEDERACION LUTERANA MUNDIAL, LA IGLESIA ANGLICANA EN LONDRES, EL CONSEJO PANAFRICANO DE IGLESIAS E IGLESIAS ORTODOXAS ORIENTALES.

TANENBAUM FUE EL UNICO RABINO INVITADO COMO OBSERVADOR AL CONCILIO VATICANO II, Y PARTICIPO EN LA PRIMERA AUDIENCIA OFICIAL DE LIBERES JUDIOS CON EL PAPA JUAN PABLO II EN EL VATICANO.

JC

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NN

Tanenbaum, as new head of IJCIC, faces internal Jewish rifts

By Darrell Turner
RNS Associate Editor

NEW YORK (RNS) — Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum says he wants to try to "close the gap" in the Jewish community that has erupted in the past year over how to respond to tensions in Jewish-Catholic relations.

In terms of background, this veteran activist in interreligious affairs would appear ideally suited for such a challenge. And now, as newly elected chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), he may have the ideal forum.

Rabbi Tanenbaum, 62, has been a participant in the historic breakthroughs in Catholic-Jewish relations during the last 25 years. He was the only rabbi invited as a guest observer at the Second Vatican Council, has been active in IJCIC since its founding in 1969, and was interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee from 1960 until 1983, when he assumed his current post of international affairs director.

During the past year the Conservative rabbi has been involved in helping to ameliorate the tensions that erupted between Catholics and Jews over Pope John Paul II's Vatican audience with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim and a published interview with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's doctrine office, in which he said "the faith of Abraham finds its fulfillment" in Jesus Christ.

Rabbi Tanenbaum visited Rome in July as a representative of several American Jewish organizations in the wake of the papal audience with Mr. Waldheim, who has been accused of involvement in Nazi war crimes during World War II. He helped to arrange an historic meeting between Jewish leaders and the pope and Vatican officials Aug. 30-Sept. 1. The meeting resulted in a Vatican commitment to draft an official Roman Catholic statement on the Holocaust.

An example of the kind of problem Rabbi Tanenbaum wants to solve as head of IJCIC came about in the wake of Cardinal Ratzinger's interview, which was given to an Italian Catholic weekly and published in October. On Nov. 16, IJCIC sent a telegram to Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, head of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With Judaism, asking for a postponement of an interreligious dialogue scheduled for Washington in mid-December "in view of recent complex developments."

Four days later the New York Times quoted Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress and a participant in the IJCIC meeting, as having said the Jewish leaders "were not at all satisfied that the Vatican was approaching this meeting with an honest assessment of its actions during the Holocaust." Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, who was then the head of IJCIC, sent a telegram to Cardinal Willebrands saying the Times story did not "properly reflect the tone, intent and consensus" of the IJCIC meeting.

"We simply cannot afford to go on with that kind of disparity," Rabbi Tanenbaum told RNS in a Dec. 18 interview. "If there is going to be dissent, then we should find a way to make public a majority and minority view."

Rabbi Tanenbaum was elected chairman of IJCIC in early December by a unanimous vote of its five constituent agencies — the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, the Israel Interfaith Association, the Synagogue Council of America and the World Jewish Congress. He said he considered it "a vote of confidence" and reported that the group held "a very productive and encouraging meeting" under his chairmanship for the first time Dec. 15.

He said IJCIC is now "trying to bring about a coherent and disciplined relationship between all the member Jewish agencies so that we can try to speak if possible with a single voice on all the issues." Rabbi Tanenbaum added that the challenge is "a matter of establishing the credibility of IJCIC" in the wake of the turmoil of the past year.

Some Jewish activists had been critical of the leaders who met with the pope in Italy in early September and in Miami during John Paul's U.S. trip Sept. 11, saying they had been placed in a position of humbling themselves to ask the Vatican to make concessions. Rabbi Tanenbaum said one reason for such disagreements is the emergence of a new generation of Jewish leaders who were not involved in the Vatican II era and are not aware of how much the Roman Catholic Church has changed its thinking on Jews and Judaism since the Holocaust.

"We have a massive internal job to do in the Jewish community to close the gap," the IJCIC leader said, adding that there is a "substantial informational and educational task" to make the new Jewish leaders aware of the positive aspects of interreligious relations in the past 25 years.

"If we can't put our house in order and agree among ourselves, how can we talk to the Vatican responsibly?" Rabbi Tanenbaum asked.

International Jewish Committee

IJCIC

on

Interreligious Consultations

December 21, 1987

The following items are of interest and are brought to you attention.

AMERICAN SECRETARIAT:
Synagogue Council of America
327 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016
Tel.: (212) 686-8670

EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT:
World Jewish Congress
1 Rue de Varembe
1211 Geneve 20, Switzerland
Tel.: (022) 34 13 25

CONSTITUTENT AGENCIES:
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

B'nai B'rith
1640 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

**The Israel Interfaith
Association**
P.O.B. 7739
Jerusalem 91.077, Israel

Synagogue Council of America
327 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

World Jewish Congress
1 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

1. "Jewish Groups in Disarray"
Miami Jewish World, November 20-26, 1987
2. "Christian-Jewish Relations: A Year of Wild Gyration:
Religious News Service, December 7, 1987
3. "Friendship Nurtures Jewish-Catholic Dialogue"
Letter to Editor, New York Times, December 8, 1987
4. "American Jewry: the View from Israel"
Sh'ma, December 11, 1987
5. "Cardinal Repeats, explains Statement that Holocaust was 'gift' of Jewry"
The Jewish Week, December 11, 1987
6. "In Rome with the Pope: a Private View"
Sh'ma, December 11, 1987
7. Press release on Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum's election as Chairman of
IJCIC, December 15, 1987

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman

Dr. Leon A. Feldman
Consultant

'Ill-prepared' Jews put off Holocaust dialogue with Vatican

Miami Jewish World, Nov. 20-26
1987

Jewish groups in disarray

By Larry Cohler

Jewish leaders will seek postponement of a crucial dialogue with Catholics on the church's role during the Holocaust and in the history of anti-Semitism because of disarray and ill-preparation within Jewish ranks, according to informed Jewish sources.

The dialogue, set for Dec. 14-17, was to follow up on issues raised during recent meetings between the Pope John Paul II and Jewish leaders, though it was scheduled before those meetings. But with just one month to go, Jewish leaders have not yet settled on the scholars who will represent the Jewish view.

The Vatican, in contrast, has been preparing for the event since the beginning of last summer, according to Dr. Eugene Fisher, director of the Secretariat on Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Catholic Bishops Conference.

At a meeting last Monday, Jewish leaders involved in the dialogue voted unanimously to postpone the December symposium and instead seek a smaller meeting with Vatican leaders to set a new date and "a better defined agenda," according to Elan Steinberg.

Steinberg attended the meeting as executive director of the World Jewish Congress (WJC). Other groups represented at the meeting of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Affairs (IJCIC), the Jewish umbrella group for dialogue with the Vatican, included the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the Synagogue Council of America (SCA) and B'nai B'rith International.

Steinberg and others said a letter would be sent to Vatican officials citing "recent developments" that require postponing the December meeting and possibly revising its agenda. But Steinberg and most other informed sources contacted added bluntly that the developments highlighted IJCIC's lack of readiness to confront the issues involved.

Prime among the new developments was John Paul's staunch defense of Pope Pius XII, the Church's leader during the Nazi era, in his September address to Jewish leaders in Miami. This both raised the stakes of the December meeting and increased Jewish uncertainty on how to



Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of
American Jewish Committee.

respond, according to insiders.

Several of those involved also cited a recent statement by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a top papal aide, on Edith Stein as having further roiled the current atmosphere. In the statement, Ratzinger praised Stein, a Jewish-born nun who died in Auschwitz, as having "entered into the very heart of Judaism" through her Catholic conversion.

IJCIC also faces a crisis of leadership. Its chairman, Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, is overdue to give up his position. Under a rotation agreement, the American Jewish Committee is next in line to lead the group. But some members adamantly oppose turning the reins over to the AJC's designated representative, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, asserting he is too accommodating to Vatican concerns. A vote on this issue was put off until Dec. 1.

Steinberg said, "These guys are totally unprepared. The Vatican is very prepared. The dialogue is a very serious thing, and the Jews have not prepared any documents or papers. Meanwhile, the Vatican's concerted defense of Pius is especially disturbing."

Rabbi Leon Klenicki, who is in close contact with IJCIC as director of interreligious relations for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, concurred that the group was ill-prepared. "They didn't take seriously enough the importance of this

meeting," he said. "This lack of preparation is something unbelievable."

Waxman also supported postponement. But he expressed more concern about pressure by European Jewish leaders to shift the venue of the meeting to Europe, where media attention and the consequent public impact might be less.

Tanenbaum, in an interview last week, blasted the suggestion that the Jewish side was not ready. "I can name a dozen scholars who could walk in and do a fine job with just five minutes' preparation," he said. "You think these guys need to bone up?" Citing academics such as Raul Hilberg, Saul Friedlander and Emil Fackenheim, Tanenbaum asserted that their long years of research on the Holocaust obviated any need for special preparation.

But contacted after the Monday meeting, Tanenbaum conceded that "a number" of the scholars contacted by IJCIC said they needed more time.

Among IJCIC participants contacted, only Rabbi Wolfe Kelman of the World Jewish Congress wholly rejected the lack-of-readiness charge. New developments, such as the pope's defense of Pius and Ratsinger's comments on Stein, were the sole cause, he said. In their wake, he said, "There is no consensus that [the Holocaust] is what we want to give priority to in these discussions now."

Others spoke of the need to "refine" the agenda because of these events.

A high-stakes encounter

The theme of the dialogue, one of a continuing series of Catholic-Jewish meetings, was set in 1985 after a flap over notes the Vatican issued on how to present Jews and Judaism in its teachings. Jewish groups claimed the notes failed to acknowledge the Jews' spiritual link to the land of Israel and the significance of the Holocaust. The Vatican and IJCIC agreed then to hold a dialogue on the Holocaust, including the Church's own role and policies during that period.

"I think in 1985 all they had in mind was to get together and issue a nice statement condemning the Holocaust," said one IJCIC source.

But the dramatic events since then have catapulted this dialogue out of the usual low-key academic mode of such get-togethers into a high-profile, high-stakes encounter.

The pope's controversial meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim last June, at which he praised the former U.N. secretary-general as a "man of peace," outraged many Jews.

American Jewish leaders then threatened to boycott the pope's upcoming tour of the United States unless he met with them in Rome to discuss the matter and other issues troubling them. That meeting, which occurred in early September, was hailed as a success by IJCIC participants despite their failure to obtain

an apology on Waldheim or any movement towards Vatican diplomatic relations with Israel.

Instead, the Jewish delegates pointed to a Vatican commitment to produce a comprehensive study dealing with the Holocaust and the historical and contemporary background of anti-Semitism. The IJCIC representatives said this would necessarily include an unprecedented self-appraisal by the Vatican of the Church's own role in this history. But Catholic leaders were ambiguous on this point.

Ten days later in Miami, the pope highlighted this question during his address to a large Jewish audience when he unequivocally defended the performance of Pius XII during the Holocaust.

Many Jews and a significant number of scholars have scored Pius for faint efforts to save Jewish lives or to publicly condemn the Holocaust while it was happening. But speaking before Catholic scholars had begun their study, John Paul touted the "strong unequivocal efforts of the popes against anti-Semitism and Nazis at the height of the persecution against the Jews.... I am convinced that history will reveal ever more clearly and convincingly how deeply Pius XII felt the tragedy of the Jewish people and how hard and effectively he worked to assist them during the Second World War."

Then, earlier this month, in a discussion with the conservative Italian Catholic publication *Il Sabato*, Ratsinger praised Stein, the Jewish-born nun who died in Auschwitz, for having said of her conversion, "Now I've returned to the true Judaism."

"She devolved her inheritance as a Jewess in order to have a new and different inheritance," said Ratsinger. "But by entering into unity with Christ, she entered into the very heart of Judaism...."

Ratsinger, who is head of the Vatican's Council on the Doctrine of the Faith, later claimed the magazine's quote failed to fully and accurately convey his meaning. Through a spokesman, he reaffirmed the Church's commitment to mutual theological respect and integrity in the dialogue with Jews. But at its Monday meeting, IJCIC resolved to send the Vatican a letter terming this explanation "unacceptable."

In the wake of these developments, IJCIC members are increasingly divided over the success of their efforts to date and the best tack to take in coming months, according to one IJCIC source. "The Jews are not really ready to bite the bullet," he said, "and the goyim aren't either, though they won't admit it."

None of those contacted could give a clear explanation, on-the-record, of why IJCIC had done so little planning for a meeting scheduled for so long. One source, speaking on background, said the secretariat of the SCA had been charged with contacting and confirming the participation of scholars for the Jewish side

but had failed to do so in a timely manner.

Who represents the Jewish view?

Another source, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the problem went much deeper. Noting that the dialogue was supposed to address not just the history in question but also its religious implications, he said, "We are in a vise.... We don't have any consensus because theologically we don't have any Jews who really represent the Jewish view. We have a spectrum from right to left.... Frankly, I don't see how in six months' time we'll be any more ready.

"In contrast, the Catholics are under discipline."

Blaming the lack of preparation, this source also said, "We don't have enough material to counter the pope's defense of Pius."

Steinberg said one of the prime Jewish demands should be that the Vatican open up its archives to scholars and researchers. Though it has issued a series of edited volumes of documents from the archives, he said, the Vatican has so far refused to open the archives themselves. Issues such as this should have been discussed long beforehand, he said.

Israel Singer, secretary general of the WJC, accused Waxman, the JJCIC chairman, with failing to attend any of the meetings leading up to Rome and Miami, a failure that he said contributed to the Jews' lack of preparation for those encounters.

"I was abroad on vacation," said Waxman when asked to respond. "The meetings held subsequent to my departure didn't substantially alter the preparations.... Some of the negotiations were conducted in Rome by [WJC official] Gerhardt Riegner and myself."

Waxman, asked if the pope's comments had prejudiced the promised

study, replied, "There is supposed to be Jewish input into it, so I think there will be every opportunity to validate positions.... They said they will abide by the truth, and I think they will."

The pope's remarks, said Waxman, were not issued under the aegis of papal infallibility. "There are opinions, too," he said. "The church is capable of expressing hopes without saying this is the party line."

Fisher, of the National Catholic Bishops Conference, concurred in this view, saying the pope's comments had to be seen as a reaction to the "absolutist view" put out by groups such as the American Jewish Congress against Pius XII. "He made clear his comments were pending future research," Fisher said.

The Catholic official said also that the now-postponed dialogue was to have been one of the "very important" opportunities for obtaining Jewish input for the Vatican study.

12-07-87

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Christian-Jewish relations — a year of wild gyrations

By Darrell Turner
RNS Associate Editor

NEW YORK (RNS) — For interfaith relations, the year 1987 recorded gyrations as wild as those of the stock market.

June 25, the date of Pope John Paul II's reception of Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, might be considered "Black Thursday" for Catholic-Jewish relations. It was preceded by controversies over an American cardinal's visit to the Middle East and the pope's beatification of a World War II martyr, and was followed by historic meetings between Jewish leaders and Vatican officials and a new flap over a Vatican cardinal's comments.

But while 1987 was a year of turmoil in Catholic-Jewish relations, it was a high point in Protestant-Jewish developments, with the adoption by two mainline U.S. denominations of statements affirming that God's covenant with the Jewish people has never been abrogated.

At the beginning of the year, New York's Cardinal John O'Connor was visiting the Middle East. He announced plans to meet with Israeli government officials at their offices in Jerusalem but then canceled them because the Vatican does not have diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

Following criticism from Jewish leaders, the cardinal met with President Chaim Herzog at the Israeli leader's official residence in Jerusalem Jan. 4. Six days later, when he returned to New York, the prelate was greeted with news accounts of a statement released by several Jewish organizations objecting to statements he had made while in Jordan and Israel.

Setting a pattern

Although the controversy was resolved by public expressions of reconciliation between the cardinal and eight Jewish leaders, it set a pattern for what was to follow. Besides the public airing of differences between Catholic and Jewish leaders, there were also indications of infighting among the Jewish leaders involved over what the proper strategy should be. This intra-Jewish disagreement came into play in other interfaith disputes events this year.

On May 1, in Cologne, West Germany, Pope John Paul II beatified Edith Stein, a Jewish-born nun who was killed at Auschwitz during World War II. The step was criticized by Jews who charged that Ms. Stein was killed by the Nazis because of her Jewish birth, although the church said she was killed because she was a Catholic.

The outpouring of controversy over the pope's audience with Mr. Waldheim in June came because the Austrian president had been implicated in crimes against Jews during his service as a Nazi officer in World War II. The Vatican stressed that the papal audience simply recognized Mr. Waldheim as a head of state, but the criticism from both Jews and Christians over the event continued.

Jews threaten boycott

When several Jewish organizations threatened to boycott a scheduled public meeting with Pope John Paul II in Miami on Sept. 11, there were several rounds of talks and communications between American Jews and Vatican officials, culminating in an announcement that the Vatican would prepare an official Catholic document on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism.

Jewish leaders generally gave the pope good marks for that development and for his use of the Hebrew term "shoah" to describe the Holocaust at the Miami meeting. But that event was also marked by John Paul's defense of the actions during the Holocaust of a predecessor, Pius XII, who has been faulted by Jewish leaders for not having spoken out publicly against the Nazi persecutions in the 1930s and 1940s.

In October an Italian magazine quoted Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as having said "the faith of Abraham finds its fulfillment" in Jesus Christ. That led to a new round of criticisms from Jewish leaders, coinciding with the postponement of a Catholic-Jewish dialogue that had been scheduled for Washington in December.

The meeting was postponed at the request of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, but Jewish participants disagreed on the reasons for the action. It was clear, however, that a good deal of work needed to be done to bring Catholic-Jewish relations back to the high point they had achieved in the late 1960s in the wake of the Second Vatican Council.

Good job of creating confusion

One Jewish weekly seemed to sum up the perplexity of Jews over the Roman Catholic Church's attitudes when it published an editorial in early July titled, "Will the real Pope John Paul II please stand up?" It commented that "if the Catholic Church is trying to confuse the Jewish people, it is doing an excellent job."

But the year was not without progress in interfaith relations. The 1.7-million-member United Church of Christ became the first major U.S. Protestant denomination to affirm the continuing theological validity of Judaism when it adopted a document to that effect June 30. That event was preceded on June 16 by approval of a study paper with similar statements by the 3.1-million-member Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The permanence of God's covenant with the Jews has long been a thorny issue in Christian-Jewish relations, based on the self-understandings of the two faiths and the fact that Jews, unlike Christians, are defined by both their religion and their ethnicity.

In summing up the interfaith scene for 1987, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee cited the Protestant statements as "strong, steady ascents in overcoming theological misunderstandings," while he described the papal audience with Kurt Waldheim as a "serious and potentially damaging threat" to Jewish-Christian relations.

For Rabbi Tanenbaum, the "most apt metaphor" to describe the state of Jewish-Christian relations this year "would have to be that of a roller coaster."

Letters

Friendship Nurtures Jewish-Catholic Dialogue

To the Editor:

All who consider the new encounter of Roman Catholics and Jews that was ushered in by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) a gift that enriches us all, ought to be grateful to Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, for not taking the ill-reported remarks of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as a reason for considering interreligious conversations impossible (letter Nov. 26). The partners in any dialogue have to accept each other, as each knows him or herself.

Mr. Siegman testifies to the fruitfulness of the international meetings of Jews and Catholics. He acknowledges that these dialogues have "shown so much progress and continue to hold so much promise." Strange, then, he would demand a declaration by the Vatican that dialogues not be turned into a forum for bearing witness to convert Jews to

the Christian way. Mr. Siegman's own experience should have told him that such a demand is unnecessary.

I do not wish to imply that Jews or any partners in a dialogue may never voice their requests or complaints. All I wish to say is that participants in an amicable conversation must never air their concerns in public, without having tried to resolve problems in face-to-face meetings. Catholics have brought to them good will, respect, indeed, a sense of kinship, but made no demands. Should that ever change, should Jews and Catholics face one another like fencers, it would kill all meetings of minds and hearts. Let us be on guard, then, that we not lose the great opportunity of an age of friendship between Christians and Jews.

(Msgr.) JOHN M. OESTERREICHER
Director, Institute
of Judaean-Christian Studies
Seton Hall University
South Orange, N.J., Nov. 30, 1987

Sh'ma

a journal of Jewish responsibility

18/343, DECEMBER 11, 1987

American Jewry: the view from israel

Daniel J. Elazar

Whether viewed from close or from afar, American Jewry, like the United States itself, is a bundle of contradictions. But, unlike the Marxist meaning of that phrase which suggests that the contradictions must be resolved if life is to go on, Americans and American Jews seem to be indefinitely capable of living with the strangest contradictions.

In my encounters with American Jewry over the past year, I have found members of Orthodox synagogues who believe that Orthodoxy is the only way to be Jewish but who not only continue their touring of foreign parts on Rosh Hashanah, but do not even know that it is Rosh Hashanah. I have followed events at one rabbinical seminary where the year began with an official congratulation to a young couple giving birth to their first son — a couple of lesbian graduates who used artificial insemination. It continued with another graduate leaving his wife and children for a sex change operation, and concluded with one of the institution's students brought before a disciplinary committee on charges of worshipping idols in her room. I learned of a member of a Brooklyn Hassidic community who earns his living as a juvenile worker, who enters the subway station every day in his black uniform, changes into his working costume, the garb of the New York City streets including a long-haired wig (which keeps his head covered as a good Jew should) and on his way home every evening changes back into his regular clothes.

I Love it; I Hate it

Of course there are the usual statistics and examples of intermarriage, Jews for Jesus, and cults, but there

DANIEL J. ELAZAR who heads the Center for the Study of Federalism at Temple University also heads the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and is a Sh'ma Contributing Editor.

is also the productivity of the over 1000 scholars of Jewish studies holding appointments at American universities. There is the revival of the Hebrew Colleges in Baltimore, Philadelphia and perhaps in Boston, that had long since been defined as obsolete and given up for dead, and the death of Dropsie University as it was transformed into the Annenberg Center for Advanced Study whose purpose is yet to unfold. There was the 40th anniversary reunion of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, the first of the Ramah camps, for which 250 people paid \$300 a couple for a *Shabbaton* at a posh hotel near Chicago's O'Hare Airport and 400 more joined them for the party Saturday night, including 10 of the 90 original campers of 1947.

There was the American Jewish reaction to the Pollard case, blown all out of proportion by American Jews in the media, and the community leadership making clear how awful they thought it was, looking at Israel as if it were American Jewry's faithful dog that had just soiled the rug and asking "how could you do this to us?" It was the embarrassing spectacle of Jewish leaders falling over their feet to be photographed with the Pope in the Vatican and getting little in return, a very successful exercise in publicity, but one rather short on statesmanship. It was Jacob Neusner ranting against his usual enemies and some new targets as well, and being given inordinate attention, especially by the non-Jewish world as a result, and Arthur Hertzberg remaining the fair-haired Jewish boy of the Times Op-Ed page.

I saw struggles in certain Conservative synagogues between *havurot* trying to breathe a new spirit into a tired ritual and rabbis afraid that they would thereby undercut the centrality of the pulpit. On another level, there are the power struggles between UJA, UAI and CJF at a time when the total dollar amount of the contributions to the Federation/UJA campaigns have essentially plateaued and continue to decline in real value. All the established institutions feel threatened by the Simon Weisenthal Center and AIPAC, the two Jewish fundraising phenomena of the decade, that capitalize on the appeal of Jewish survival, while Jewish education remains a poor cousin and tuitions to Jewish schools continue to rise, making the cost of living Jewishly ever higher.

Like the Bee, it Shouldn't Fly—but Does

These are only a few of the contradictions that I encountered as I wandered across the American Jewish scene over the past year. To me, they and others add up to a great deal of momentum and a community which survives and even thrives on that momentum. Again, like America itself, were American Jewry to become static, the weight of its weaknesses and defi-

ciencies would drag it down and the "gevalt" predictions over its demise would be on target. But as long as there is momentum in positive directions, American Jewry remains lively, bubbling and creative, even as it is assimilationist, non-observant, Jewishly ignorant and more than occasionally vulgar.

It is well to remember in this year of the bicentennial of the Constitution of the United States that 200 years ago the Americans, following Newtonian physics, sought to build a social perpetual motion machine that would keep the country in orbit even though it was populated by imperfect people in an imperfect world. American Jewry, which for the most part has abandoned *halacha* as a vehicle for Jewish continuity, seems to have implicitly adopted perpetual motion as its method for remaining in orbit. It is a fascinating experiment, fascinating to watch from afar, and fascinating to be part of—and almost impossible to convey to Israelis or Jews from other lands.



Cardinal repeats, explains statement that Holocaust was 'gift' of Jewry

By TRACY EARLY

John Cardinal O'Connor of New York has reaffirmed and expanded on his controversial reference last January to the Holocaust as a "gift" of the Jewish people to the world.

At the invitation of Rabbi Leon Klenicki, interreligious affairs director of the Anti-Defamation League, the cardinal explained his statement in an article for the winter issue of the ADL quarterly, *Face to Face*.

"In my perspective," O'Connor wrote, "if the suffering of the crucifixion was infinitely redemptive, the suffering of the Holocaust, potentially conjoined with it, is incalculably redemptive."

"If suffering with patience and resignation and hope and faith and love inspires others, and simultaneously gives the sufferer a sense of compassion and new understanding toward others, then Jews must be perceived as grace-filled models. If suffering can ennoble,

then Jews offer the world a nobility unsurpassed by any other people."

O'Connor made his statement following a Jan. 2 visit to the Israeli Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem. It apparently aroused little if any concern in Israel. But many American Jews, who heard about it through the U.S. media and were already upset by the Vatican's refusal to let the cardinal meet with Israel's leaders in their Jerusalem offices, protested his choice of words.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations issued a statement Jan. 10, the day of the cardinal's return, saying it was "disquieted and distressed" by reports of his comments in Jordan and Israel. The statement listed endorsements by the heads of 53 Jewish organizations, but the ADL and Agudath Israel later said they had not authorized listing of their presidents as endorsers.

"We note that the cardinal clearly was profoundly moved by his visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust

Museum in Israel," the statement said. "However, we found disturbing and painful his statement that the greatest tragedy in Jewish history 'may be an enormous gift that Judaism has given the world.'"

O'Connor's article in *Face to Face*, part of a special issue devoted to Jewish-Catholic dialogue papers, begins and ends with references to Elie Wiesel, cites several of Wiesel's books and quotes a Wiesel lecture dealing with Jewish suffering. O'Connor notes, however, that he reads Wiesel "through the prism of my own theology," and "one face of that prism is the potential of suffering."

Suffering has "a purpose and an effect" if it is "offered up" and united with Christ's suffering, O'Connor wrote. "It is thus that I see suffering—or the 'offering up' of suffering—in union with the 'continuing' crucifixion of Christ as a tremendous gift to the world."

O'Connor said he was writing "as word comes to me of the death of my friend, Nate Perlmutter," the

(Continued on page 47)

Cardinal

(Continued from page 4)

ADL director. "He was but one of many I have seen whose patience with life has seemed to intensify in direct proportion to their suffering," he said. Such individuals, he said, influence others in ways that show "the unlimited potential of suffering to effect good."

After confronting the "unspeakable anguish" of the Holocaust at Yad Vashem, O'Connor said, he intended to say nothing to the press, but decided that would have been "selfish."

"Whatever the part of wisdom, I could not bring myself to remain silent," he wrote. "I was too sad and too grateful. So I said what was intended to convey the depth of sadness and the height of gratitude: 'The Holocaust is the greatest gift the Jewish people could give to the world.'"

"At the time, I could not have imagined extending a higher accolade. I have learned much since,

but I have yet to be able to suppress either my sadness or gratitude."

The cardinal's article was read orally Nov. 29 at a one-day interreligious conference on suffering that had been organized to explore issues raised by controversy over his statement.

The conference was sponsored by Paulist Press, an agency of the Catholic Paulist Fathers, and Stimulus Foundation, an ecumenical agency that serves as co-publisher with Paulist Press of works on Jewish-Christian relations. The article was read by the Stimulus Foundation founder and president, Helga Croner, a New York resident who left Germany as a Jewish refugee in 1937 and later became a Catholic.

Speakers at the conference were Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger, spiritual leader of Shaare Tefila Congregation in Lawrence, N.Y., and Passionist Father Carroll Stuhlmüller, Old Testament professor at the Catholic Theological Union

in Chicago.

Wurzbarger said he had not been disturbed by O'Connor's comment about the Holocaust because he knew the Christian perspective from which the cardinal was speaking and knew the statement was not meant to suggest it was a good thing the Holocaust happened.

Sh'ma

a journal of Jewish responsibility

18/343, DECEMBER 11, 1987

In rome with the pope—a private view

Gunther Lawrence

The meeting held in Rome on August 31 and September 1 was not the usual one between a delegation of Jews and Vatican officials. A private discussion with the Pope had been promised. In previous audiences, beginning in 1972, speeches were exchanged at the conclusion of meetings between the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and the International Jewish Committee on Inter-religious Consultations. But the Pope-Waldheim audience, making this tainted Nazi "kosher," angered world Jewry and catapulted the late summer meeting into world news headlines. The Pope had offended Jews, an apology was called for and until this happened Jewish leaders would not meet with the Pontiff in Miami during his scheduled American tour in September, 1987. A huge press corps gathered in Rome to watch the meeting of the Pope and the Jews. Also for the first time in many years the man in the street became involved in Catholic-Jewish relations.

As the press interest in this meeting mounted, an atmosphere of confrontation began to build. As public relations officer of the Jewish delegation, my assignment was to interpret these meetings to the press, but in the context of the entire historic perspective of Catholic-Jewish relations.

My job began on the Rome-bound TWA flight, sitting next to a veteran Catholic reporter from a New

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York daily and opposite a young Jewish journalist. "Is the Pope going to apologize to the Jews?" "Will he recognize Israel as a quid pro quo?" they asked. In typical Jewish fashion I countered with a question, "Does one expect an apology from the President of the United States?" "No," I answered, recognizing that most people forget that in the Pope one is, in effect, dealing with the head of a state and a faith simultaneously. "You take advantage of the opportunity to express your views, the deep hurt engendered by the Pope's meeting with an alleged Nazi, and to emphasize that recognition of Israel represents a high priority for the Jewish people." During the next days this guiding of the press became an essential ingredient of my work. And despite the press blackout, traditional at these meetings, the atmosphere was tense and took on the aura of a summit meeting.

It had been clear before our meeting that the Vatican would have preferred no meeting at all, and specifi-

cally, one where Waldheim was not an agenda item. Therefore I should hardly have been surprised when I received a call on Friday morning before the meeting from Father Jack Radano, expressing the irritation of Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, President of the Vatican Commission, at my advance press release. Apparently, the problem was that the word "Waldheim" appeared in the headline. "We are not discussing Waldheim," he told me. Father Radano was correct; the subject of Waldheim had been carefully placed by the Jewish delegation under the rubric of "Holocaust" to indicate its proper context. The next objection was to the phrase "unprecedented discussion with Pope John Paul II." "Not so," my critic told me, "there had been many meetings with the Pope since the IJCIC (International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations) conferences started in 1972." "Perhaps the word 'meeting' might be more appropriate," he suggested.

In the Beginning there was Waldheim

The scenario for this historic direct encounter actually began right after the official Vatican announcement that the Pope would be seeing Waldheim. The IJCIC leadership conveyed its protests and hoped that if the meeting were not cancelled then at least the Pope would say something about the Holocaust and the evils of Nazism to effect a balance. That did not happen. The Pope made matters worse; in his public concluding comments he made no reference to the Holocaust, but instead he praised the Austrian president as a "man of peace."

Therefore, on June 19, an angry Jewish leadership met at the offices of the Synagogue Council of America and sent a telex to the Vatican expressing "shock and dismay" at the Waldheim encounter and asking for an immediate meeting with the Pope "to clarify for us the motivation imparting the granting of a papal audience with Kurt Waldheim." At a press conference that day, representatives of the SCA, World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council put on hold the meeting with the Pope in Miami scheduled for September 11, until a meeting to clear the air could take place.

Months earlier the National Conference of Catholic Bishops had asked the Synagogue Council, American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and the American Jewish Congress (agencies maintaining full-time program activities with the Catholic Church in America) and the Vatican to coordinate a meeting with the Pope on Friday morning, September 11 at 8:15 a.m. at the Miami

Cultural Center. The site was selected as the location of a Vatican Memorabilia exhibit mounted by the Union of American Hebrew congregations, an SCA constituent agency which also maintains a full-time department of interreligious affairs. We were told that the meeting would take place in a converted exhibition hall seating 196. A platform would contain two chairs for the Pope and the Jewish spokesman and these would be flanked by 10 chairs for Catholic and Jewish VIP's (later extended to 12), facing the audience. Security was to be very tight since President Reagan was arriving the night before, making the city of Miami a security controlled metropolis. The seats were divided among the sponsoring agencies and dais seating was determined collectively. I was in charge of the seating and the press.

This Catholic *fait accompli* ruffled many Jewish leaders at that time. They felt that the Pope was dictating to the Jews the site, format, etc. The need to sustain the current good American-Catholic relations prevailed, however. After numerous animated meetings, these agencies selected Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, the SCA president, to serve as the Jewish spokesman. But after the Waldheim audience, the only solution to salvage Miami appeared to be a special meeting to "clear the air."

Opening a Way to Talk

Since IJCIC had been the regular Vatican dialogue partner, this agency instrument took over from the groups handling the American visit. It was determined that the American Jewish Congress would be present as part of the World Jewish Congress and that the ADL, which had withdrawn two years earlier from IJCIC, would attend as part of B'nai B'rith. The UAHC exercised its right of individual agency representation as part of IJCIC's constitution that, since they functioned with a full-time inter-religious professional, they could be represented individually, rather than under the Synagogue Council umbrella. Thus the posturing for representation to Rome began even before a meeting had been set.

American Catholic leaders were caught in a difficult position. They privately disagreed with the Pope-Waldheim meeting, wanted to maintain their good relations with American Jews and above all did not need another obstacle to the Pope's American tour by confronting a boycott from the Jews. Thus Bishop Keeler, Cardinal O'Connor, Bishop Hoyer, and Dr. Eugene Fisher of the Catholic Bishops Conference became key players in trying to convince the Vatican that a pre-Miami meeting with the Pope should take place.

On Wednesday evening, July 8, Bishop Keeler called Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, IJCIC chairman, and told him that Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, in the

U.S. on a personal visit, could meet with an IJCIC delegation the next morning at the Vatican's U.N. residence. In this opulent private westside brownstone, Rabbi Waxman and Rabbi Klaperman (SCA), Rabbi Wolfe Kelman (Chairman, American Section, World Jewish Congress) and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum (American Jewish Committee) met for ninety minutes expressing the serious grievances of the Jewish community regarding Waldheim and other issues. Klaperman said, "We were frank and sometimes undiplomatic." It was at this meeting that Rabbi Kelman advanced the suggestion for a Papal encyclical on anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and the church's role during the Nazi period as one answer to the Waldheim audience. Cardinal Casaroli, the architect of Vatican foreign policy, was impressed by the many arguments presented by the rabbis and promised to discuss these conversations with the Pope. This encounter turned out to be the key meeting, for, on August 6, Cardinal Willebrands called Rabbi Waxman and issued an invitation to come to Rome at the end of August with members of IJCIC. Willebrands suggested to Waxman that the delegation be limited to five people. This was urged to facilitate better exchanges in a private meeting with the Pope, preceded by an all day IJCIC-Vatican Commission meeting with an open agenda. The Vatican, to avoid further outside pressures, for what the press and many perceived as a special meeting, categorized this conference as a planning session for a long-scheduled December 1987 IJCIC-Vatican Commission meeting on the Holocaust in Washington, D.C. And according to previous precedent, such a planning session would include five people from each side to prepare the agenda.

Who is a Leader? One who Meets the Pope

During the meeting to discuss the Willebrands invitation, arguments ensued as to the value of such a meeting on such short notice. In effect, the Jews were shocked that the Vatican had acceded to their demand to a pre-Miami meeting, prompting one veteran participant to say, "You guys are crazy. First you *schrei* bloody murder at Rome and now you're arguing whether to say 'yes' to their 'yes.'"

The agenda items—anti-Semitism; the Holocaust and Waldheim; recognition of the State of Israel; and confusing statements by the Pope and the Vatican about Jews and Judaism—were the easy part. The impossible assignment became the selection of those going to Rome. To begin with, Casaroli had reported the fruitful July encounter with four rabbis and felt that a continuation of these exchanges should be limited to, at best, five, to permit open discussions. However, with the worldwide attention the press had focused on the meetings, every Jewish leader sud-

denly became an expert on Catholic-Jewish relations and wanted to go—e.g., "How dare you leave out a Zionist representative?—after all you're discussing Israel."

The worst feature of these backroom political battles was that they reached the public press and the Jewish community lost stature in some Vatican eyes—no way to go into a delicate meeting. It also raised a more serious criticism by some unofficial Catholic friends, "How can you hold meaningful, sensitive discussions when immediately the press finds out the content of the meetings? This is hardly the way of diplomacy."

As the delegation left for Rome, no one knew if the Pope would meet with a basketball or baseball team of Jewish players. Perhaps the wisdom of some like Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, UAHC president, prevailed, when during the preparatory sessions in Rome, he said, "We are not here for ourselves but to represent the Jewish people." Yet, no one would question that once at the Vatican, the delegation rolled up their sleeves and worked together from early to late on position papers and common agenda objectives. The friendships grew even closer as they walked 45 minutes on *Shabbat* morning to the Sephardic Orthodox congregation for services. The next day they enjoyed a brief breakfast in the magnificent garden of Ambassador Maxwell Rabb's suburban Rome residence. This friendly (though frank) atmosphere continued with the Catholic participants. It was especially evident at the kosher luncheon hosted by the Vatican Commission, replete with *ka-shered* Vatican plates bearing the sign of the cross, and the kosher evening dinner at our hotel which we hosted.

Progress, Yes, Capitulation, No

On Saturday afternoon, Bishop Keeler came to our hotel and met privately with Rabbis Waxman, Klaperman and me, to iron out the loose ends of the meetings, the number to speak and meet with the Pope, and to hear from us a suggestion that the Pontiff at least respond to Waldheim by indicating that the hurt of the worldwide Jewish community was understood. Perhaps this was achieved when the final communique said: "*In the context of the discussion on the moral implications of the Shoah, the delegations explained their different perception of the papal audience with President Kurt Waldheim. The Jewish delegation expressed its dismay and concern over the moral problems raised for the Jewish people by the audience. The Catholic delegation acknowledged the seriousness of and the church's sensitivity to those Jewish concerns, and set forth the serious reasons behind the judgment of the Holy See.*" (It should be noted that the Waldheim affair and all of its ram-

ifications consumed four and a half hours of the Vatican meetings.)

Saturday evening, Rabbi Waxman and Dr. Gerhart Riegner of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva—perhaps the number one specialist in this field—met with Cardinal Willebrands and his colleagues. They agreed to a joint communique and press conference, that nine members would meet with the Pope and that the Commission was prepared to announce at the conclusion of their exchanges the launching of a document on the Holocaust. The initial proposal advanced at the Casaroli meeting in New York had been accepted. While the Church and the Pope were unprepared to express regrets over Waldheim, their answer was the promise for thorough exploration with, and teaching to their flock, about the Nazi horrors against Jews.

The atmosphere on Monday morning became tense as we arrived in taxis at the offices of the Vatican Commission. A tremendous press corps awaited with TV cameras, still camera, tape recorders and pads and pencils, seeking any word at the beginning of the news blackout. I was not permitted to participate in the talks since Vatican rules prescribed that only official members of the delegation could do so. As I came out of the building lobby, I was surrounded by the press—cameras and tape recorders stared me in the face. During the next twenty-five minutes I answered questions. A journalist friend paid me a high compliment afterwards. "I've never heard so much nothing said so well," he said.

The Important Something Achieved

On Tuesday morning the Jewish delegation arose for a 7 a.m. working breakfast to review the final communique before the draft was completed together with the Catholics. This was followed by a meeting, for the first time officially with the Vatican Secretariat of State and Cardinal Casaroli. The arguments favoring recognition of Israel received strong pleas. It should be emphasized that now they were being heard by the *political* arm of the Vatican. The communique also achieved the one possible accomplishment on relations with Israel attainable by Jewish religious and secular representatives—a clear-cut statement that: "*The Holy See declared that there exist no theological reasons in Catholic doctrine that would inhibit such relations, but noted that there do exist some serious and unresolved problems in the area.*"

In this presentation, conflicting signals from Jerusalem to various members of the delegation did not help. Neither did certain significant silences or criticisms from the Israeli press and government spokesmen. Simply put, Israel desires relations with the

Vatican but will not pursue recognition. They did stress via private communications that one should protest loud and clear on the Waldheim issue and ask for Israel-Holy See relations, but above all they desired that the exchanges between Jews and Catholics be continued. It seems to me that the political leadership of Israel, surrounded by Arab enemies, is ambivalent in this area because it fails to comprehend the importance of good relations between U. S. Catholics and American Jews.

The meeting with the Pope at Castel Gandolfo was mesmerizing. You arrive in a small village set on a hill forty minutes outside of Rome, are confronted by colorful Swiss Guards who stand at the entrance of the castle, while outside it there are quaint shops and outdoor cafes. Inside the castle courtyard paved with cobblestones, limousines and Mercedes Benz cars arrived first with prelates bedecked in their colorful trappings, followed later by the Jewish delegates and their Catholic counterparts. I had been given permission to be part of the press pool—a TV crew, a still camera, two reporters, and, at my request, an additional Jewish journalist. We went up in an elevator—four at a time—into long corridors and paneled rooms covered with religious objects and huge portraits of Popes and church scenes. In the room adjacent to the Pontiff's chamber, we waited for the delegation to arrive. The press would be able to watch the Pope greet everyone and then say goodbye at the end. During the 75 minute dialogue we cooled our heels outside. It was warm and without air conditioning—but when I asked for a glass of water, it was given to me by a butler in gray livery.

Significance—in Institutional Terms

At the conclusion of the meeting we saw the Pope hand medals to both the Jewish and Catholic delegates, pausing to say a warm goodbye to each participant. As we walked out together with the delegation, I learned that during the first few minutes many had been stage struck by the pomp and circumstance. In the gold paneled room, chairs were set in a semi-circle, with a small table at its center, the papal throne was at the head of the semi-circle. The nine Jewish delegates all asked Jewish-style questions (i.e., a statement ending with a question-mark.) This consumed almost forty minutes, prompting Marc Tanenbaum, one of the most experienced people in this field, to say to the Pope, "We want to hear from *you*." The Pontiff's answers in halting English were carefully measured and not always to the point. Tanenbaum told me that in the haste of arranging these meetings perhaps a mistake had been made in not asking the Pope to speak in a language more comfortable to him and to speak through an in-

terpreter. As a result, the papal responses were stilted and perhaps rehearsed.

As the Jewish delegates left the castle gates hordes of press people grabbed them. Tanenbaum appeared live on the "Today" show, Klapperman on "Good Morning America," and others on different TV stations. The world soon heard the final communique at a Vatican press conference led by Rabbi Waxman and Father Pierre Duprey (vice president of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews).

What did Rome (and Miami) achieve?

1. Acceptance to produce a major church statement on the Holocaust.
2. A crystal clear statement eliminating once and for all any church objections to Israel on theological grounds in Catholic teachings.
3. The state-side of the Vatican and Cardinal Casaroli will henceforth meet with Jewish representatives on a regular basis to discuss concerns relating to political issues. This is the first time this has been agreed upon.
4. Worldwide press attention catapulted Catholic-Jewish relations to a new interest. This means that the man and woman in the grass roots on both sides must be educated to fully comprehend the issues. But such understanding can lead to greater cooperation between Catholic and Jewish neighbors.
5. American Jewish-Catholic relations reached a new high level. Without the help of U. S. Catholics these talks would never have taken place. In addition, a new Bishops Committee here, on relations with the Jews, has been reactivated and held several working meetings with representatives of the Synagogue Council of America.

Jewish leaders did not go "hat in hand" to Rome but only went after insisting on a direct series of discussions during which all agenda items could be on the table without any restrictions. The delegation of nine can be proud of their accomplishments. It is another small step in reshaping the thousands of years of negative teaching against our people by the church. The exchanges between Catholics and Jews on all levels must continue, not as *the* important part of our Jewish communal agenda, but as *an* important part. □

International Jewish Committee
ON
Interreligious Consultations

FROM: GUNTHER LAWRENCE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12/15/87

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RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS (IJCIC)

NEW YORK -- The International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations (IJCIC) has elected by unanimous vote Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee as its chairman. He succeeds Rabbi Mordecai Waxman of Great Neck, L.I., who served as Jewish spokesman during the meetings with Pope John Paul II and Vatican authorities in Rome on September 1, and later in Miami, September 11.

IJCIC is the coordinating body of major Jewish religious and communal groups in their relationships with the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and other international religious bodies. The member agencies of IJCIC are the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith International, the Synagogue Council of America, the Israel Interfaith Committee, and the World Jewish Congress.

Founded in 1969, IJCIC has been centrally involved in implementing programs with the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations with the Jewish People, headed by Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, President. Parallel programs are carried on by IJCIC with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, the World Lutheran Federation, the Anglican Communion in London, the All-African Council of Churches, and Eastern Orthodox churches.

For 25 years, Rabbi Tanenbaum served as national inter-religious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, pioneering in advancing relationships with Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Greek Orthodox, Black Church, Hispanic, and Muslim bodies.

He was the only rabbi invited as guest observer at Vatican Council II, and participated in the first official audience of world Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II in Vatican City. Rabbi Tanenbaum, who has been an active member of IJCIC since its founding, played a key role as one of the nine-member delegation of IJCIC leaders who met with Pope John Paul II and Vatican authorities in Vatican City and Castel Gondolfo on

August 31-September 1.

In a recent national poll, Rabbi Tanenbaum was designated as "one of the ten most influential and respected religious leaders in America." A cover story in New York magazine described Dr. Tanenbaum as "one of the foremost Jewish ecumenical leaders in the world today."

The new IJCIC chairman has had a long and distinguished career in international human rights, world refugee and hunger problems, and foreign relations concerns. He has served as a member of the prestigious Human Rights Research Committee of the Foreign Policy Association's Study of Priorities for the 1980s and as consultant to the Council of Foreign Relations. He is a member of the executive board of the International Rescue Committee, the Overseas Development Council, the Bretton Woods Committee, the National Peace Academy, and the American Jewish World Service.

At the invitation of the International Rescue Committee, he joined delegations of prominent American leaders to carry out three separate fact-finding investigations of the plight of the Vietnamese "boat people" and Cambodian refugees, which contributed to the saving of tens of thousands of lives of Indochinese refugees. He has organized many relief efforts for victims of war and conflict, including the Black Jews of Ethiopia, Lebanese, Nigerians, Ugandans, Haitians, Afghans, Central Americans, and Polish refugees.

Rabbi Tanenbaum serves as a member of the Advisory Committee of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, and is a founder and former co-chairman of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.

Rabbi Tanenbaum has directed the landmark religious research studies examining intergroup content in Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish teaching materials in the United States, Italy, Spain, French-speaking countries, Germany and South America. These studies have been the basis of the revision of negative stereotypes in the textbooks produced in the 1970s.

A religious historian and authority on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations, he has written and lectured extensively on the history, theology, and sociology of Judaism and Christianity. Rabbi Tanenbaum is the author, editor, or co-editor of seven books, among them, "Twenty Years of Catholic-Jewish Relations," (Paulist Press), "Evangelicals and Jewish in Conversation," and "Evangelicals and Jews in an Age of Pluralism," (Baker Book House), "Speaking of God Today - Jews and Lutherans in Conversation," (Fortress Press), "The Greek Orthodox-Jewish Consultation," "The International Colloquium on Religion, Land, Nation, and Peoplehood," and "Vatican II - An Interfaith Appraisal," (University of Notre Dame Press).

A prize-winning weekly radio commentator over WINS-Westinghouse, he has served as a consultant to the NBC-TV nine-hour special "Holocaust" and earlier was consultant to the New Media Bible project.

He has lectured at major universities, seminaries, religious and educational bodies in the United States, Europe, Israel, and South America, and at numerous national and international conferences.

12/9/87

IMPACTO
N.Y. Diciembre 23-29, 1987

Organismo Judío que Coordina Relaciones con el Vaticano Elige Presidente

NUEVA YORK, (AP).- El Comité Judío Internacional para Consultas Interreligiosas eligió por voto unánime como su presidente al Rabino Marc Tanenbaum, Director de Relaciones Internacionales del Comité Judío Americano, informó el CJIC.

El CJIC es el organismo coordinador de las organizaciones comunales y religiosas judías en sus relaciones con el Vaticano, el Consejo Mundial de Iglesias y otras instituciones religiosas internacionales. Integran el CJIC el Comité Judío Americano, B'Na B'Rith Internacional, el Consejo de Sinagogas de América, el Comité Interreligioso Israel y el Congreso Judío Mundial.

Fundado en 1969, el CJIC ha llevado a cabo programas juntamente con el secretariado del Vaticano sobre Relaciones con el Pueblo Judío, que encabeza el cardenal Johannes Willebrands. Asimismo realiza programas conjuntamente con el Consejo Mundial de Iglesias en Ginebra, la Federación Luterana Mundial, la Iglesia Anglicana en Londres, el Consejo Panafricano de Iglesias e Iglesias Ortodoxas Orientales.

Tanenbaum fue el único rabino invitado como observador al Concilio Vaticano II, y participó en la primera audiencia oficial de Líderes Judíos con el Papa Juan Pablo II en el Vaticano.

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TANENBAUM 12-21 NLS++

--TANENBAUM PRESIDIRA ORGANO DE CONSULTAS JUDEO CRISTIANAS--
NUEVA YORK, DIC. 21 (UPI) -- EL RABINO MARC. H. TANENBAUM FUE
ELEGIDO POR UNANIMIDAD PRESIDENTE DEL COMITE JUDIO INTERNACIONAL PARA
CONSULTAS INTERRELIGIOSAS, UNA DE CUYAS PRINCIPALES MISIONES ES EL
DIALOGO CON EL VATICANO.

EL CJICI, FUNDADO EN 1969, HA JUGADO UN PAPEL CLAVE EN EL
DESARROLLO DE PROGRAMAS CONJUNTOS CON EL SECRETARUADO DE RELACIONES
RELIGIOSAS CON EL PUEBLO JUDIO, ORGANISMO VATICANO QUE PRESIDE EL
CARDENAL JOHANNES WILLEBRANDS.

EL COMITE TAMBIEN LLEVA ADELANTE PROGRAMAS JUNTO CON EL CONSEJO
MUNDIAL DE IGLESIAS EN GINEBRA, LA FEDERACION LUTERANA MUNDIAL; LA
COMUNIDAD ANGLICANA EN LONDRES, EL CONSEJO DE IGLESIAS DE AFRICA Y
LAS IGLESIAS ORTODOXAS ORIENTALES.

EL RABINO TANENBAUM HA SIDO DURANTE 25 ANOS DIRECTOR NACIONAL DE
ASUNTOS INTERRELIGIOSOS DEL COMITE JUDIO AMERICANO, TOMANDO
INICIATIVAS NO SOLO EN LAS RELACIONES CON OTRAS RELIGIONES SINO
TAMBIEN CON LAS COMUNIDADES HISPANOAMERICANA Y NEGRA EN LOS ESTADOS
UNIDOS. HA VISITADO LA AMERICA LATINA EN NUMEROSAS OCASIONES
DESARROLLANDO LA POLITICA DEL CJA DE PROMOCION DE LOS DERECHOS
HUMANOS Y DE LA TOLERANCIA RELIGIOSA.

TANENBAUM, ADEMAS, FUE EL UNICO RABINO INVITADO COMO OBSERVADOR AL
CONCILIO ECUMENICO VATICANO, HA DIALOGADO VARIAS VECES CON EL PAPA
JUAN PABLO II Y EN UNA ENCUESTA RECIENTE SE LO CONSIDERO COMO UNO DE
LOS 10 LIDERES RELIGIOSOS DE MAYOR INFLUENCIA Y RESPETO EN LOS
ESTADOS UNIDOS.

UPI 12-21-87 11:26 AES



El Derecho de Israel a Resistir

Con una patente simplicidad respecto a asuntos israelíes, el diario "The New York Times" y otros críticos estadounidenses del acosado Estado judío exigen el uso de "control" para hacer frente a los levantamientos árabes en la margen occidental y en la franja de Gaza.

Seguramente refugiados en estos felices Estados Unidos, a salvo de militantes que buscan la destrucción de su nación, estos sabios están bien alejados de los temores que diariamente persiguen a los ciudadanos de Israel. Rodeado de Estados hostiles, Israel tiene a su favor un margen muy pequeño de error.

Hay causas legítimas para lamentar la suerte del pueblo palestino, que tiene motivos para estar enfurecido contra un mundo que aparentemente se ha olvidado de sus aspiraciones nacionales. Pero no debemos darles crédito a las lágrimas árabes.

¿Cómo puede detenerse la violencia y satisfacer las válidas exigencias árabes? Si existe una solución, corresponde a los funcionarios israelíes y a los palestinos responsables comenzar un diálogo racional y entrar a un proceso de negociación y compromiso, de la misma manera que lo hicieron exitosamente hace años el

Israel's Right to Resist

With an almost patented simplicity in matters Israeli The New York Times and other American critics of the beleaguered Jewish state are demanding the use of "restraint" in dealing with the Arab uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Safely ensconced in these revelling United States, untroubled by militants seeking the destruction of their nation, these sages are far removed from the fears that must daily haunt the citizens of Israel. Surrounded by hostile states, Israel has a tiny margin of error.

There is legitimate cause to weep for the Palestinian people who have ample cause for anger against a world apparently oblivious to their national aspirations. But we should give no credit to Arab tears.

How can the violence be stopped and valid Arab demands be met? If there is a solution, it is for Israeli officials and responsible Palestinians to begin a rational dialogue and enter a process of negotiation and compromise, much as

prime minister Begin and the president Sadat of Egipto.

Sin embargo, dada la suerte que corrió Sadat y otros moderados que desafiaron el consenso árabe y reconocieron el derecho de Israel a existir como Estado, esto es esperar mucho de parte de los árabes.

Por su parte, los israelíes —a pesar de las acusaciones estadounidenses de falta de sensibilidad a las exigencias árabes— deben estar listos para realizar ajustes.

Pero la paz debe restablecerse antes de que Israel haga concesiones. Como hizo notar el ministro de Defensa, Yitzhak Shamir, su gobierno no puede doblegarse ante las amenazas o la violencia. La paz debe venir primero. Luego, Israel "debe continuar buscando los caminos y los esquemas para sostener negociaciones con aquellos que quieren la paz".

Desafortunadamente, sólo un esfuerzo quijotesco de ambas partes podría producir una solución a largo plazo. Entretanto, los críticos estadounidenses de las tácticas israelíes para contener las protestas violentas deberían descartar sus pantuflas y probarse los zapatos de Israel.

Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat of Egypt successfully did. Given the fate, however, of Sadat and other moderates who defied Arab consensus and recognized Israel's right to exist, this may be too much to expect from the Arab side.

For their part the Israelis, despite American charges of lack of sensitivity to Arab demands, may be ready to make adjustments.

But before any Israeli concessions can be made, peace must be re-established. As Defense Minister Yitzhak Shamir noted, his government cannot bow to threats or violence. Peace must come first. Then, Israel "must continue to seek paths and frameworks to hold peace negotiations with those who want peace".

Unfortunately, nothing short of a Quixotic effort by both sides will suffice as a long-term approach. In the meantime, American critics of the Israeli tactics in containing violent protests should discard their slippers and try on Israel's shoes.

Translated from Polish

The Minister
Chief of Department of
Religious Affairs

Warsaw, 31 December 1987

Dear Sir,

With reference to our meeting of 10 November 1987, I would like to state once again the positive attitude of the Ministry of Religious Affairs with regard to the project of erecting at Oswiecim - outside of the territory of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps - a "centre of information, education, meeting and prayer", in accordance with the plans and the aims of the centre as jointly formulated by the representatives of the Catholic Church and Jewish organizations in the Declaration adopted and issued at the end of the meeting which took place in Geneva on 22 February 1987.

We hope that the implementation of that initiative will definitively put an end to the disagreement that had arisen between the Catholic Church and the Jewish organizations with regard to the places of worship on the grounds of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps.

This centre will promote a climate of reflexion and deep respect for all victims of the Nazi extermination and for their sufferings which will for ever remain symbolised by Auschwitz. On this subject, ever since the beginning of Liberation, the position of the Government of the People's Republic of Poland has always been and will always remain unchanged.

I know that exchanges of views have taken place about the "centre of information, education, meeting and prayer" at Oswiecim between the representatives of the Archbishopric of Krakow and of the Woyevodia of Bielsko-Biela. Possible suitable locations for the centre have been reviewed. These specific sites have been retained pending a final choice.

According to the information which I have received, the authorities of the Woyevodia are ready to take immediately the decisions required as soon as they will have received the final organizational and investment plans.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Wladyslaw Loranc

Dr. Gerhart M. RIEGNER
Co-chairman of the Governing Board
of the World Jewish Congress
Geneva

Copy to:
H.E. The Cardinal
Franciszek Macharski
Archbishop of Krakow



Warszawa, 1987-12-31

Wielce Szanowny Panie,


Nawiązując do naszego spotkania w dniu 10 listopada 1987 roku chcę raz jeszcze potwierdzić pozytywny stosunek Urzędu do Spraw Wyznań do inicjatywy budowy w Oświęcimiu - poza terytorium obozów Auschwitz i Birkenau "centrum informacji, wychowania, spotkań i modlitwy", którego założenia programowe wypracowane zostały wspólnie przez przedstawicieli Kościoła katolickiego i środowisk żydowskich w deklaracji przyjętej i opublikowanej w wyniku spotkania w Genewie w dniu 22 lutego 1987 roku. Ufamy, że realizacja tej inicjatywy stanowić będzie definitywne zakończenie sporu między Kościołem katolickim i organizacjami żydowskimi w sprawie ulokowania na terenie obozów Auschwitz i Birkenau obiektów kultowych. Centrum przyczyni się do stworzenia klimatu skupienia i głębokiego szacunku wobec cierpień wszystkich ofiar hitlerowskiej eksterminacji, której symbolem jest i na zawsze pozostanie Oświęcim. Intencje i stanowisko rządu PRL w tej sprawie były od pierwszych dni po wyzwoleniu jednoznaczne, są niezmiennie i takimi pozostaną.

Szanowny Pan
Dr Gerhart M. RIEGNER
Współprzewodniczący Komitetu
Dyrektorów Światowego Kongresu Żydów

GENEWA

Wiem, że w sprawie budowy "centrum informacji, wychowania, spotkań i modlitw" w Oświęcimiu miały miejsce rozmowy przedstawicieli Kurii Krakowskiej i Urzędu Wojewódzkiego w Bielsku-Białej. Odbyła się też wspólna wizja lokalna potencjalnych miejsc lokalizacji centrum. Przedmiotem dalszych rozważań są trzy konkretne lokalizacje. Z posiadanych przeze mnie informacji wynika, że władze wojewódzkie są gotowe do podjęcia niezbędnych decyzji niezwłocznie po przedstawieniu ostatecznych założeń organizacyjno-programowych inwestycji.

Łączę wyrazy szacunku i najlepsze pozdrowienia.


dr Władysław Loranc

Otrzymuje:

Jego Eminencja
Ksiądz Kardynał
Franciszek MACHARSKI
Metropolita Krakowski

IJA RESEARCH REPORTS

Institute of Jewish Affairs in association with the World Jewish Congress

Summary

ALAN MONTAGUE

THE CARMELITE CONVENT AT AUSCHWITZ

A DOCUMENTARY SURVEY

OCTOBER 1987 No. 8

During the autumn of 1984 a small group of Carmelite nuns founded a convent in the old theatre building on the site of the former Auschwitz concentration camp. A year later news of the convent's existence reached Jews in Europe and a protest campaign was immediately launched. A dispute lasting eighteen months followed with Jewish groups calling for the convent's removal and Polish Catholics defending the nuns' action. The affair was only resolved after representatives from both sides had met twice in Geneva to negotiate a compromise solution.

Prominent in the convent's defence was the Archbishop of Cracow, Cardinal Macharski. He explained that the nuns had been inspired by a Papal sermon given at Birkenau in 1979 in which the Pope had spoken of Catholic martyrdom at Auschwitz and described Polish sufferings under the Nazis. The Carmelites wanted to commemorate all Auschwitz victims by celebrating two Catholic martyrs, Father Maximilian Kolbe and Edith Stein. Through expiation and prayers the nuns intended to demonstrate the possibility of charity and hope in the face of evil. Their presence would also help to preserve the symbolic value of the camp for the Polish people.

Jewish objection to the convent was based on the idea that Auschwitz is primarily a symbol of Jewish genocide. The establishment of a place of Catholic worship at the camp would appropriate this symbolic significance and obscure the memory of the Jewish Holocaust. Jews were also angered by the fact that the Polish Church had not consulted them before setting up the convent. Instead Jews were being forced to accept Christian concepts of expiation and repentance. The commemoration of Father Kolbe and Edith Stein also caused offence. Father Kolbe had indulged in antisemitic activities before the war and Edith Stein was a Jewish convert to Catholicism. Naming the convent after her particularly incensed Jews.

The possibility of conciliation became evident early on in the dispute. In February 1986 Cardinal Macharski met Belgian Jewish leaders for the first time and indicated that the question was open to negotiation. Persistent Jewish protest together with the general improvement in Catholic-Jewish relations during the spring of 1986 produced a climate whereby dialogue

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could take place. In July Jewish and Catholic leaders met in Geneva where it was agreed that building work on the convent would be suspended pending further talks. At a second meeting in Geneva in February 1987 the dispute was resolved. A compromise was worked out which involved the removal of the convent and the setting up of an ecumenical centre for prayer and education in its place.

ALAN MONTAGUE is archivist and researcher at the Institute of Jewish Affairs.

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

Recalling 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.

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**Origins of Contemporary
Catholic-Jewish Relations**
**The Second Vatican Council
and the Statement on the Jews**

Alan Mittleman



ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND THE STATEMENT OF THE JEWS: AN INTRODUCTION

What is a Council?

In order to understand Vatican Council II, it will be useful to discuss the idea of councils in general and the background of Vatican Council II in particular. According to Catholic tradition, there have been 21 ecumenical councils in the history of the church. The word "ecumenical" means universal. An "ecumenical council" is one that has binding significance for the universal church. All of the leaders of the church need not be present, nor is the designation "ecumenical" given in consequence of geographic or numerical representation. It refers to the authority of such a council. An ecumenical council represents the highest authority in the church. In a Catholic view, the Holy Spirit is present at an ecumenical council, guiding the deliberations of the council fathers. Pope John Paul II, which bishop of Cracow, attended the Council and wrote of his belief that it was guided by the Holy Spirit:

Through the whole experience of the Council, we have contracted a debt towards the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ which speaks to the churches (cf. Revelations 2:7). During the Council and by way of it, the word of the Spirit became particularly expressive and decisive for the Church.¹

It is clear that the declarations of the Second Vatican Council, such as Nostra Aetate, are regarded by the Church as inspired and of the highest authority.

Church Councils and the Jews

Throughout history, councils have often had a significant impact on the Catholics' relations to the Jews. The first council - the model for all others - met in Jerusalem under the direction of Peter before Christianity separated from Judaism. The apostles, including Paul, convened to discuss the question of whether it was necessary for gentile believers in Jesus to keep Jewish law. Apparently, some members of the Jerusalem church who were Pharisees (cf. Acts 15:5) taught that all Christians must follow the current rabbinic interpretation of the Torah. The apostles decided not to insist on the maximalist version of observance, but instead agreed upon a minimum standard. They ruled that gentile Christians must not eat non-kosher meals, especially those taken from animals sacrificed to idols. Furthermore, Christians must avoid adultery and other unchaste sexual relations. Thus, the very first council was devoted to defining the relationship between the emerging Christian

movement and the Jewish tradition. The Council of Jerusalem set Christianity on a different track from Judaism by discarding the rigorous observance of the ceremonial law for gentile converts - who were soon to become the dominant force in the church. Functionally, the first council brought the church to a new level of self-definition through its collective resolution of problems; in this case, the problematic relationship of the church to its Jewish roots.

Of course, the problem presented by the ongoing co-existence of Christian and Jew was not as central to the subsequent councils of the church as it was to the first council. As formative Catholic teaching asserted that the Jews were rejected by God and that the church was the "new Israel," Judaism was stripped of any abiding theological value for Christianity. At most, the Jews remained as a threat to Christian truth; a perennial "return of the repressed." Ancient and medieval Christians feared that some heresies were caused by the perverse desire to imitate Judaism. Many writings against Judaism were intended, in fact, to discourage Christians from having interest in Judaism. One of the most anti-Jewish of the Church Fathers, John Chrysostom, fulminated against Jewish religion because so many of his fellow Christians in fourth century Antioch (Syria) attended synagogues to hear Jewish sermons! Given the concern for safeguarding Christian orthodoxy, church councils often enacted measures to minimize Christian contacts and exchanges with Jews.

As the Jewish situation in Europe declined during the Crusades, and as the Church felt threatened by Islam and by new heresies within, the severity of these legal measures increased. A leading example of this phenomenon is provided by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), called by Pope Innocent III. This council was to have decisive and disasterous implications for medieval Jewish life. Christendom was troubled by heresy in the South of France, the Albigenses, and by the Muslim reconquest of the Holy Land. The Fourth Lateran Council was called to repudiate the Albigenses, held to be influenced by Jews, and to call for a new crusade. Against this background of preoccupation with the enemies of Christendom, the Council promulgated decrees against the Jews. Innocent III introduced new measures to isolate and discriminate against the Jewish "enemy," including distinctive clothing, a special badge and restrictions of their basic rights. The Fourth Lateran Council spurred the process of excluding the Jews from medieval society. In the first council, Christian ties with Judaism were weakened, and the Fourth Lateran Council, Judaism was legally suppressed. The issue of the church and the Jews was to surface again in the 20th century and be treated in an entirely new way and the Second Vatican Council.

How did the Second Vatican Council come about?

The great issue which moved the pope to call for a council was how the church should understand herself in relation to the modern world. A world ravaged by two world wars and threatened with nuclear destruction confronted the Catholic church with unprecedented challenges. What should be the role of the church in the world and how should it meet its challenges?

Three months after his coronation, John XXIII had a captivating thought. In a discussion with his secretary of state about the great problems of modernity,

the words "ecumenical council" suddenly came to his mind. He wrote in his diary, "Without ever having thought of it before... the term "Ecumenical Council" (was) contrary to all my suppositions or imaginations on the subject. The first to be amazed by this proposal of mine was I myself, without anyone's ever having given me a hint of it."² The date of his inspiration was January 20, 1959. John referred to the idea as "a little holy madness."

Why should the idea of a council have been so radical as to be deemed madness? The answer is to be found, in part, in the fact that less than one hundred years had elapsed since the last ecumenical council, Vatican I. That council had set the Catholic church on a course of resistance to modernity. Before the Council met in 1896, the Vatican had promulgated a "Syllabus of Errors" in which it condemned such modern conceptions as religious toleration, socialism, the theory of evolution and political liberalism. The Vatican took a defiant stand against many of the leading intellectual currents of the day. Branding them as heresies, it reserved the full truth for itself. At the First Vatican Council, the church strengthened its defenses even further by promulgating the doctrine of papal infallibility. Although the bishop of Rome had special authority in matters of faith and practice from ancient times, it was also believed that an ecumenical council was invested with equally high or greater authority. After the First Vatican Council, the pope alone was to be considered supreme and any Catholic who did not acknowledge his authority when he spoke ex cathedra would be anathematized. With this decision, it was widely thought that the age of councils had come to a close, given the superior authority of the pope.

The policies of the first Vatican Council had the advantage of tightening the discipline of the Church in a threatening age, but they had the disadvantage of truncating creative, intellectual dialogue with the world. A contemporary Protestant student of Vatican I wrote, "We do not condemn Catholicism for failure to adjust to the spirit of the age. Fidelity to ancient truth in the face of modern temptation has often been its strength. But we lament lost opportunities the First Vatican Council had made a decision that cut off conversation with other Christians and marked the Roman Catholic Church as outmoded in the eyes of many perceptive and honest men."³

The desire to renew an open dialogue with the world, to initiate a new conversation with the "many perceptive and honest men" was Pope John's fervent hope. He believed that in order for the Church to serve the world, it must be in dialogue with the world. In order for the Church to give of itself to the world, it must live within it and not despite it. The accent was to shift from being a triumphal church to being a pilgrim church; from confrontation to conversation with other faith communities. The call was for dialogue with the world and especially a dialogue with other Christians. Pope John Paul II situated this concern for dialogue at the heart of the Council. He referred to the large sections of contemporary humanity with whom the church wishes to be in conversation as "circles of dialogue:"

It would be possible to separate ourselves from these men and these circles by giving our own personal answer to God through faith in the Church, but the Council has adopted a different position. If in the

past there was a tendency to use the method of separation to preserve the purity of the faith, Vatican II has indicated a different way of enriching it.⁴

Thus, one of the chief tasks of the council would be to enrich Catholic faith and to renew Catholic theology by a reorientation towards non-Catholic humanity. With an ecumenical orientation of this kind, it was natural for the Church to consider anew its relationship with the Jewish people. John XXIII summed up the goal of his "holy madness" in a homey phrase, what was needed he said was "a gust of fresh air in the Church because we need to emerge from our ghetto." Did he know that he had initiated a process whereby the Jews would soon emerge from a theological ghetto of contempt and irrelevance to which the Church had long ago consigned them?

He did Nostra Aetate, number IV.: The "Jewish statement" come about?

The statement on the Jews does not stand alone, it is point number IV in a document entitled, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions." This document is generally known by its Latin title, Nostra Aetate ("In our age..."). The Church's relation to the Jews is treated in the context of its relations to members of other world religions. How did the statement originate, and how did it arrive at this literary and theological location?

After John XXIII expressed his desire to convene an ecumenical council, he established a preparatory commission which solicited suggestions from the Catholic hierarchy regarding the agenda of the proposed council. A number of respondents asked that the issue of anti-Semitism - so terrible and constant in this century - be on the agenda. Much of the impetus for this desire came from the recognition that the devastation of the Holocaust was related to centuries of Christian hostility to and contempt for Jews. One of the leaders in bringing this "teaching of contempt" before the eyes of the Church was the French-Jewish historian Jules Isaac. Isaac's powerful writings on Christianity and anti-Semitism came to the attention of John XXIII, who invited him to the Vatican. As a result of an audience with Isaac on June 13, 1960, the pope came to believe deeply in the necessity of eliminating all traces of anti-Semitism from church life and doctrine. Henceforth, Pope John and his successor, Pope Paul VI, would take a personal interest in the issue of Catholic-Jewish relations.

In the second stage of preparation for the council, the pope established several commissions and secretariats charged with the task of formulating the suggestions into proposals and principles of discussion. The German biblical scholar, Augustin Cardinal Bea, was appointed to direct the Secretariat for the Promoting of Christian Unity. After the meeting with Jules Isaac, the pope directed Cardinal Bea to prepare a statement on the Jews. As Cardinal Bea's office was to formulate the new approach to ecumenism in general, it seemed to be the appropriate place under which the problem of Catholic-Jewish relations and anti-Semitism should fall.

Immediately, however, two problems with this arrangement called forth criticism from both Catholics and Jews. The first problem was the inclusion of

Catholic-Jewish relations in the framework of the problem of Christian unity. Should the Jews be included in the framework of ecumenism? Does the oecumene (the "household" of faith in Greek) include those of other faiths? Previous usage had limited "ecumenism" to intra-Christian relations. For this part, Jews were understandably disturbed by the implicit suggestion that they be included in a grand design for Christian unity. Some reasoned that the proper setting for a discussion of anti-Semitism was under the rubric of social problems or of religious freedom. Yet others felt that to limit the Church's discussion of Judaism to "the Jewish problem" avoided the basic issue, that is whether Judaism - contrary to traditional Christian teaching - has enduring worth as a religion. To treat the Jews only as a problem would be demeaning. A repudiation of anti-Semitism would indeed be valuable, but could not the Church also say something positive about Jewish existence? Thus the second problem following on the first was that of the scope and goal of any statement. Many felt that the council should affirm the value of Judaism in addition to repudiating anti-Semitism.

The original statement drafted by Cardinal Bea's Secretariat did in fact address the positive and the negative and it was placed in a document on Christian unity, the Schema on Ecumenism. As is well known, an intense controversy over the document during the four session of the Council altered and weakened the statement. The protracted attempt to subvert the statement by conservative prelates, convinced anti-Semites, and the representatives of Arab states both subjected the statement to four revisions and removed it from the Schema on Ecumenism. The statement was eventually developed into an independent document on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, "Nostra Aetate." the long peregrination of the statement evoked much disappointment and cynicism among both Jews and Catholics during the three years of the Council. During that uncertain period, the AJC played a major role in helping a shape public opinion in support of a statement.

The AJC and the Council

That the statement did pass was due in no small measure to the activism of the American bishops and to the pioneering effects in Catholic-Jewish relations made by the American Jewish Committee. As bishops in the country where the largest number of Jews reside, the American prelates were keenly aware of the need for a full and honest confrontation with the issue of anti-Semitism. During the course of the Council, while conservative forces sought to eliminate or eviscerate the statement, the American bishops spearheaded the effort to adopt a strong, explicit text. In addition, the gains made by the AJC in the preceding decade to advance Catholic-Jewish relations in the U.S. helped to create the climate for the bishops' activism.

Well before the convening of the Council, the American Jewish Committee had assembled a body of a major research documenting the extent of negative and distorted images of Jews and Judaism in Christian religious teaching materials. This information, derived from self-studies of religion textbooks initiated by the AJC and carried out at Protestant and Catholic universities in the late 1950s and 1960s was eventually used by Cardinal Bea in his preparation of the Statement.

During the Council, leaders of the AJC such as John Slawson, Executive Vice President, David Danzig, Associate Director, Zachariah Shuster, Director of the European office, and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Director of Interreligious Affairs, played crucial roles in communicating Jewish concerns and perspectives to the Vatican. The door for such interaction was opened by Cardinal Bea, not forced - as some critics alleged - by the Jewish leaders themselves. Cardinal Bea asked for memoranda from Jewish agencies in the preparatory stages of the council. The AJC responded in 1960 and again in 1961 by submitting the research coordinated by Judith Hershcopf Banki on the image of the Jew in Catholic textbooks and on anti-Jewish passages in Catholic liturgy. These studies were to provide Bea's Secretariat with important desiderata for future statement.

The original memorandum was supplemented by documentation, requested by Cardinal Bea and provided by AJC offices abroad, regarding Catholic textbooks used in Europe and South America, which also revealed that teachings of contempt were widespread.

The "Jewish issue" was not discussed at the first session of the Council (October - December, 1962). Between the first and second sessions however, the AJC devoted much effort to insure that the Jewish issue not be lost at the Council. One key effort was a meeting at AJC headquarters in New York between Cardinal Bea and Jewish civic and religious leaders from the several Jewish denominations. Bea was able to hear the diversity of Jewish concerns and propose his thoughts on a statement to living dialogue partners. The discussion helped to define the content of the statement.

In the arduous period of controversy and opposition to the statement on the Jews during the second, third, and fourth sessions, the AJC pursued a two-front strategy. AJC leaders such as Dr. John Slawson met with Pope Paul to clarify ongoing Jewish concerns for him. Zachariah Shuster arranged a dramatic meeting between the Pope and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel on the opening day of the third session (September 14, 1964). Heschel and Shuster left the meeting reassured at a time when much apprehension about the future of the statement had developed.

On the domestic front, Rabbi Tanenbaum worked indefatigably to defend legitimate Jewish concern for the passage of the statement against those Jewish critics who accused the AJC and other agencies of undignified meddling in Catholic affairs. For these critics, it was illegitimate for Jews to become involved in what appeared to be a purely internal affair of the church. The AJC however recognized from the beginning that the Council provided a unique opportunity for the improvement of Catholic-Jewish relations - a matter of obvious and legitimate concern to Jews. History would appear to vindicate this perception. The American bishops, although independently committed to a statement on the Jews, were undoubtedly strengthened in their resolve by the support of the AJC.

Conclusion

Over twenty years after the promulgation of conciliar decree Nostra Aetate

it is difficult to appreciate the intensity of the controversy which surrounded the statement on the Jews and the role of diplomacy and crisis management played by the AJC. The deep tensions between progressives, moderates and conservatives in the Church were revealed by the controversy, as was a persistent residue of classical Christian anti-Semitism. Divisions within the Jewish world were also revealed: those who saw interreligious relations as a legitimate and productive field of Jewish endeavor were opposed by those favoring insularity. But the future seemed to belong with the former group. Nearly two millenia of "official" Catholic antagonism was coming to an end. Two decades later, what is of final importance is not the controversy or intrigue, but the fact that a Declaration was adopted was ushered in a new era. Nostra Aetate initiated a process of critical reflection within the church. In the more than twenty years since its adoption, Catholics and Jews have learned greater mutual respect and understanding than had been possible in the past two thousand years. Although not without birthpangs, a new age had begun.



Notes

1. John Paul II, Sources of Renewal, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 10.
2. Vittorio Corresio, The New Mission of Pope John XXIII, (New York: Fund & Wagnalls, 1970), p. 231.
3. Arthur Gilbert, The Vatican Council and the Jews, (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1968), p. 43.
4. Sources of Renewal, p. 29.

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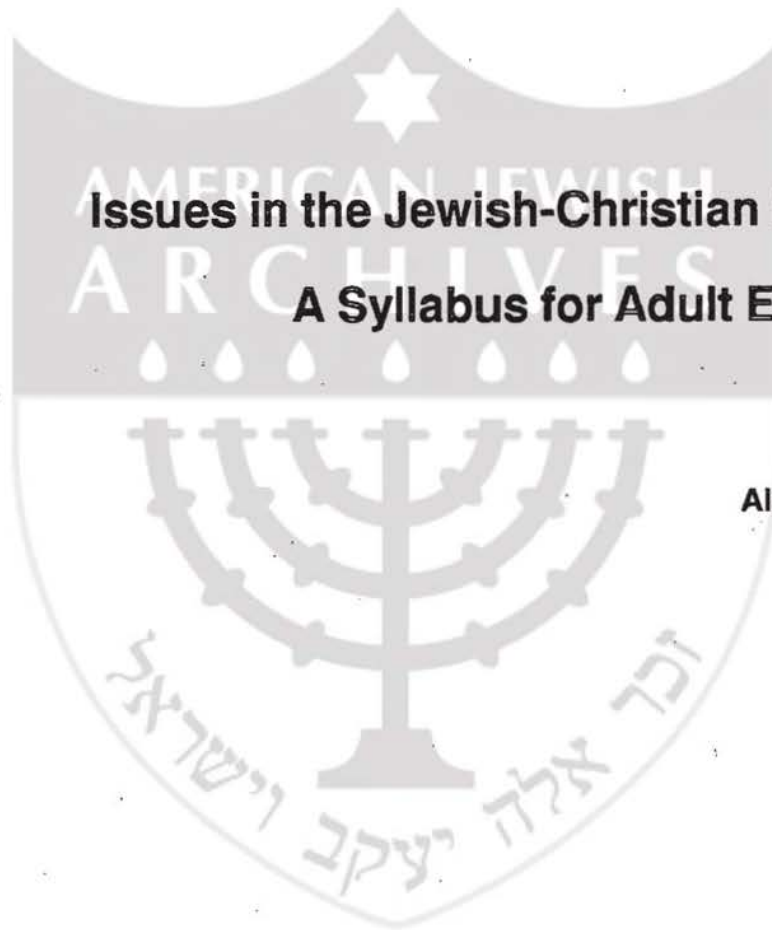
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Issues in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue
A Syllabus for Adult Education

Alan Mittleman



ISSUES IN THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE:

A Syllabus for Adult Education

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Purpose

Jews and Christians are related to one another. For Christians, the people Israel are, in the words of the Apostle Paul, the rich olive tree onto which they have been grafted as a wild branch. Christianity grew out of the historical soil of Judaism and preserves in its rituals, practices and doctrines a Jewish heritage. In the theological sense, Christians are those who have been brought to the worship of the God of Israel by following a Jew from Nazareth. It is natural therefore for Christians to have an abiding interest in Judaism and the Jewish people. This interest has intensified in the two decades following the second Vatican Council.

Jews have always recognized in Christianity a version of their own faith and teaching "through a glass darkly." The sages of antiquity and of the Middle Ages understood the Jewish roots of Christianity. However perplexed - and, indeed, persecuted - Jews were by the institutional church, they did not doubt the monotheistic, Biblical core of the Christian message. Having seen some light in the other faith and having known much darkness in their experience of it as well, Jews are curious about the religion that is both familiar and strange. In a free and pluralistic country where few traces of religious coercion exist, this curiosity is maturing.

This course will put the relationship between the two great traditions into perspective. Our purpose is to understand the new relationship of respect that is supplanting the old relationship of contempt and, frankly to foster that relationship. We will focus on the great themes which have divided Jews and Christians, for example, the issues of Jesus, messiah, the Law, "old" versus "new" covenants and responsibility for the crucifixion, and assess the contemporary state of discussion of these issues. It is hoped that the course will both inform the participant of current learned discussions and serve as a stimulus to individual and communal theological reflection.

Format

The course is divided into eight units, each devoted to some historical or theological theme in Jewish-Christian relations. Each unit may be treated in one class session of approximately 1 1/2 hours duration.

The style envisioned for the course is that of a seminar. Each participant must read the material pertinent to the unit in order to derive benefit from the discussion. The group will be led by a resource person who need not teach, but must take responsibility for guiding the discussion. No special expertise is required for this role. Participants may elect to take responsibility for sessions on an individual basis.

This course can serve as either a preparation for dialogue or a vehicle for dialogue, that is, Jewish groups and Christian groups can take the course in isolation from one another or can study together. Clearly, the composition of the group will be decisive for the nature of the discussion and of the group-dynamics. Group leaders must take care to be attentive to this issue insofar as the course intends to be more than an academic experience. Whether as a course about dialogue or a course in dialogue, the material covered is of more than antiquarian or sociological interest. It precipitates an encounter with the other and with oneself as persons of faith working towards a mature theological perspective on the relationship of Judaism and Christianity.

Required Texts

What are they saying about Christian-Jewish Relations, John T. Pawlikowski, Paulist Press (1980)

We Jews and Jesus, Samuel Sandmel, Oxford University Press (1973) selected official statements of the Roman Catholic Church

Readings

- Unit I: Approaching the Other in light of Centuries of Estrangement
Sandmel: ch. 1
- Unit II: Jesus in his Jewish World*
Sandmel: chs. 2, 3, 4
- Unit III: Jesus in the sight of Christians and Jews*
Sandmel: ch. 5
Pawlikowski: ch. 4

*It is recommended that all read one or more of the Gospels as additional background for these units.

- Unit IV: Crucifixion and "Deicide"
Pawlikowski: ch. 1
- Unit V: Law and Covenant
Pawlikowski: ch. 2
- Unit VI: The Holocaust and the State of Israel
Pawlikowski: chs. 5 and 6
- Unit VII: Jewish Views of Christianity
Sandmel: ch. 6
Pawlikowski: ch. 3
- Unit VIII: Christian Views of Judaism
Nostra Aetate, with commentary and
other documents

Background Issues and Discussion Questions

Unit I. Tension arose between the followers of Jesus and other Jews about the meaning of their master's life. To first century Jews, accustomed to much religious diversity and ferment, Jesus' teachings were not unusually controversial. The claim that Jesus arose from the dead was also well within the imagination of a people who believed in resurrection. Although relatively free in their interpretation of the law, Jesus, and his followers were no different from other Jews in that respect. Jesus' or his followers' belief that he was the awaited messiah was also not strange to a people who daily anticipated deliverance from Roman subjugation. How then did tensions arise? Part of the reason was theological. Although Jesus was at home in Judaism, he did speak in his own name and either claimed - or had attributed to him by his disciples - a special authority and relation to God. The decisive theological tension was probably introduced by Paul. Paul cast the validity of all of Jewish belief and practice into doubt by his assertion that God has acted in a new way through Jesus. Guided by a certain interpretation of Paul's writings, some Christians began to believe that the Jews were rejected by God and that they were the sole inheritors of the ancient divine promises.

The crucial parting of the ways occurred as Paul's gentile followers came to outnumber the Jewish followers of Jesus, many of whom had actually known him. Soon a passionate argument between Jews over the meaning of faith and Torah grew into an ominous confrontation between Jews and gentiles. When the Jews of Palestine revolted against the Romans, shockwaves swept the diaspora. After the destruction of Jerusalem, during which the Jewish followers of Jesus were decimated, many gentile Christians disassociated themselves from the vanquished Jews in order not to incur the wrath of Rome. The Gospels reflect this movement in attitude from solidarity with the Jews to ambivalence about and finally repudiation of the Jewish people. The Gospels reflect as well the perception of

some Christian communities that they were expelled from the Synagogue. While the history of this expulsion is not clear, it is certain that leaders of the developing rabbinic movement found reason to reject Christian interpretations of Torah. The excommunication of Christians from the Synagogue did not occur in the first century, nor was it uniform in the Jewish world.

With the end of the Jewish-Christian majority and the repudiation on both sides, the "Jesus movement" and emerging normative Judaism split into distinctive groups. Within two centuries, after surviving successive waves of persecution, the Christians "conquered" the Roman Empire. The Jews became an even more vulnerable minority in the new Christian state. As a complex history of social, political and economic factors intervened, tension and estrangement hardened into law and doctrine. With the outbreak of physical violence during the First Crusade, shadows lengthened across the Middle Ages.

1. What are the classic Jewish "grievances" against Christianity?
What are the classic Christian "grievances" against Judaism?
2. To what extent has the Jewish/Christian estrangement been caused by theological differences and to what extent has it been caused by socio-economic problems?
3. What socio-economic conditions encouraged the teaching of contempt for the Jews? What new social conditions have worked to encourage better relationships?
4. Is fundamental theological change possible in our attitudes towards one another? That is, can Jews and Christians affirm the value and integrity of the other's tradition out of the resources of their own tradition? Is theological re-thinking necessary or is democratic pluralism enough to foster mutual respect?
5. The Jewish thinker Franz Rosenzweig wrote of a divinely ordained design in the Christian "yes" and the Jewish "no" to Jesus. Briefly, Christianity calls us to recognize the possibility of eternity and salvation now, while Judaism calls attention to the tragic and unredeemed character of our world. Do you think that Jewish/Christian estrangement serves such a purpose in God's world or was - is - this estrangement simply a tragic human error?

Units II & III.

Modern historical research has shown that the Jewish world of first century Palestine was alive with many currents of belief and faith. It has become much easier to place Jesus in an appropriate context; that of the progressive Jewish movements of his day. In particular, Jesus seems close to the Pharisaic movement. Like the Pharisees - forbears of rabbinic Judaism - Jesus emphasized inner holiness, return to God, moral righteousness, prayer and discipleship. Scholars today understand that the harsh depictions of Pharisaic Judaism in the New Testament are caricatures rather than neutral descriptions, produced by Jewish-Christians engaged in a family quarrel with other Jews. From what is known of early rabbinic Judaism from other sources, it has become clear that

Jesus occupied a place in the rabbinic world. Our new appreciation of the complexity and diversity of that world has led Jews and Christians to rediscover the Jewishness of the man, Jesus.

1. What changes have taken place in the ways we think about religion and history which have enabled Jews to inquire into Jesus?
2. While modern Jews have taken an interest in the "Rabbi from Nazareth," their understanding of him is, of course, quite different from that of the Christians. Are the newer approaches to Jesus good grounds for dialogue? Is Jesus a "bond or a barrier?"
3. Recent Catholic theologians have argued that Christology, that is, formal, systematic thinking about the meaning of Jesus for Christianity, must be done "from below." They mean by this that the Christian must learn what God has done in Jesus by studying Jesus' life and his humanity, rather than approaching the problem with preconceived ideas about Jesus' divine nature. Jesus' divinity is to be discovered in the midst of his humanity and from the vantage point of his humanity ("from below") rather than as something superimposed upon humanness. Are Jewish understandings of Jesus' humanity of interest to Christians in this undertaking or must these understandings be fundamentally incompatible with a Christian's theological needs?
4. What are your views of the "Jesus of history?" As a Jew, does Jesus seem to be a fellow Jew - perhaps, as Martin Buber wrote - an older brother?
5. As a Christian, what does Jesus' Jewishness mean to you? Does it imply any consequences for your feelings, attitudes and relations concerning contemporary Jews?

Unit IV. No other theological issue has so painfully divided Jews and Christians as the charge of "deicide"; that is, that the Jewish people willfully executed the son of God and bear an eternal guilt therefrom. This false dogma was a principal cause of Jewish disabilities throughout the centuries. Although rejected by the Council of Trent (1545-63), it was not until the Vatican Council II that the false teaching was fully identified as such and repudiated. In Fr. Pawlikowski's words, this repudiation was "the greatest single achievement" of the Council. Sophisticated modern research into the character of the New Testament documents and into the historical situation of the Jews under Roman rule tends to support the thesis that Jesus was killed because he was seen as a political threat to Rome, by Romans, albeit with the complicity of a corrupt Temple establishment. Some historians shift all of the blame onto the Romans, others hew to the traditional attribution of primary guilt to the Jews. Most agree that the documents cannot be read as factual descriptions of a trial, but rather reflect the memories, theologies, conflicts and purposes of different Christian communities, generations after the event.

This issue however transcends the scope of history. It is, in a sense, irrelevant what the historian decides actually took place. The relevant issue is whether the highly charged story of the last days of Jesus will continue to be used to legitimate anti-Semitism or whether deeper and truer uses will be realized.

1. Christians see in Jesus' death a willing sacrifice which enables the human person to once again be reconciled with God. What meaning - if any - could Jews find in the death of this one Jew?
2. What reasons can be given for the Roman opposition to Jesus? For the Temple priesthood's opposition?
3. The New Testament pictures the "Last Supper" as a Passover meal. To mark this, some Christians hold a Passover seder during Holy Week. Do such ceremonies enhance or impede interreligious understanding?
4. The dramatization of the last days of Jesus, a genre known as the "passion play" has existed since the Middle Ages. The best known of these, held at Oberammergau, Bavaria, continues in the medieval tradition of contempt for and rejection of the worth of Judaism. Many passion plays represent the stories of Scripture as if it were certain that the Jewish people un-animously condemned Jesus and bore an irremediable guilt in consequence. Would it be possible to write a passion play that makes use of contemporary scholarly insights, or must the Jews always appear as the villains?

Unit V. Jesus' attitude towards the ceremonial and ritual laws of Judaism was complex. While relatively free in his practice of some commandments, he was quite strict in following others. Indeed, Jesus urged his disciples to do all of the commandments and to exceed the standards of piety set by the Pharisees. Given the fluidity and ferment of Second Temple Judaism and the complicated character of the Pharisaic revolution, Jesus' attitude towards the law fits in well with the times. We must not imagine that Jesus was a lone dissenter against a world of "orthodox" Jews: that world had not yet come into being. Jesus and others, who passionately taught different interpretations of the Torah, were laying the groundwork for future orthodoxies.

It was Paul, not Jesus, who gave to Christianity a rather negative appraisal of Jewish law and an orientation which militated against the adoption or recognition of it. It is difficult to distinguish what Paul meant from the traditional interpretations given to his ambiguous thought. Increasingly, scholars believe that they have found a deep vein of conservative and positive appreciation for the law in Paul, despite what countless generations of Christians have read in his letters. The original context of Paul's letters increasingly clarify his intent. He did not address the significance of the Law for Jews, but for gentiles who would become Christians. They did not first need to become Jews and adopt the Law. Faith in Jesus sufficed to bring them to God. Thus the old opposition between Law and love, works-righteousness vs. grace, self-justification vs. divinely given reconciliation can no longer describe the relationship of Judaism to Christianity. The old stereotypes have been exposed as caricatures by sensitive scholars.

1. If Paul did not reject Judaism and its Law, but continued to affirm the integrity of both, what is the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection?

2. If it is not true that God made a new covenant with those taken from among the gentiles which replaced the older one concluded with the Jews, what sort of relationship does God have with the gentiles who have come together in a church?
3. Can there be two covenants? One expanded covenant? What happens to Judaism's claims of having a special, "chosen" relationship with God if the Christians are also included; in some sense, in the covenant?
4. The traditional distinction among Christians regarding the "Law" is that the "moral" precepts are to be observed but not the "ceremonial" commandments. Is this a useful distinction today?

Unit VI. The Jewish people have experienced two "alpine" events in this century: the unspeakable destruction of over six million European Jews and the rebirth of a Jewish commonwealth in the land of Israel. By pairing these two colossal events, we do not mean to reduce or distort the singularity and meaning of each one in isolation. Nonetheless, they seem to follow one another as day follows night. Indeed, most theologians consider them in this fashion. The Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel pose fundamental and inescapable questions to Jew and Christian alike. They cause persons of faith in both traditions to abandon theological abstractions, riveting attention back to the terror of history and the crucial variable of human responsibility for history. Although there is no consensus among thinkers who have exposed themselves to the uncertain lessons of Auschwitz, the conviction has emerged that theology and philosophy cannot go on as if nothing had occurred: the very ways in which we think about humanity and God change in the shadow of this event. Similarly for Jews, and perhaps also for Christians, the reality of the Jewish state has changed fundamental categories. No longer are the Jews of necessity a people living in exile. Nor are they only a powerless minority, exposed to the arbitrary whims of often hostile majority populations. This new status has caused a seismic shift in Jewish moral, religious and political consciousness. Correspondingly, the change of status has challenged classical Christian conceptions of the role of the Jews in history and has introduced blatant and subtle challenges to Christian theologies of Judaism.

1. The leading Christian scholar of the Holocaust, Franklin Littell, refers to that event as a "credibility crisis" for Christianity. In his view, the fact that the Holocaust occurred in the heartland of the Reformation calls into question the very validity and coherence of the Christian faith. Is this indictment, by a Christian, cogent?
2. Irving Greenberg has written that any theology after Auschwitz which could not be heard by burning children is obscene. Richard Rubenstein has called for the repudiation of the Biblical God of justice and mercy who could allegedly punish his people for their sins in death camps and for a return to a paganism whose only god is "omnipotent Nothingness." Such views attest to the radical character of post-Holocaust thinking. Can Jews and Christians continue to think in pre-Holocaust patterns about the great themes of their faith and about one another? Must they modify their thought? Must they abandon former beliefs?

3. Christians and Jews have different approaches to the Land of Israel. For Christians it is "holy" through association with Jesus, and the events of Sacred Scripture which took place there. For Jews, it is holy because God promised it to them through Abraham and that therefore their destiny is caught up with it in a present and future way. Can Jews articulate their love for the Land of Israel in categories Christians can comprehend?
4. Can Christians discover the radical significance for Jews of the earthly Jerusalem from their own hopes for a "heavenly Jerusalem?"
5. Is Zionism a religiously authentic development in Judaism? Is anti-Zionism another form of anti-Judaism, of anti-Semitism?

Unit VII. The Jewish people began their career with a sense of their own uniqueness. A "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," they differentiated their beliefs and worship from those of other peoples. Against the successive backdrops of Canaanite idolaters, Greek philosophers, Roman political and mystery religions, and the daughter faiths of Christianity and Islam, the Jews believed themselves to be uniquely loved and blessed by God. While not denying some measure of worth to certain aspects of pagan and Christian/Islamic religious life, they were certain that their own tradition, Torah, most perfectly enunciated God's will for humankind. Recent shifts in perspective have shaken this certainty. On the secular side, there has been an explosion of knowledge about the sociology and history of religions which has changed the ways in which religious traditions are understood. Both scientists of religion, who stand outside of any tradition, and those committed to belief, understand that there are broad areas of commonality between traditions. For those who stand within the Jewish tradition, there is a growing awareness of the value of Christian faith within a secularized and materialistic world. Jews have been moved to a new appreciation of Christianity in light of this awareness and in recognition of the stirrings going on in the churches to forever purge the faith of its anti-Judaism. In view of these changes, Jews have asked themselves whether the traditional categories for interpreting the meaning of other religions are still valid.

1. How have Jewish thinkers typically understood Christianity? Have they considered it a form of idolatry or of monotheism?
2. What is meant by the concept of "children of Noah?" Are Christians "children of Noah?" Is this concept adequate to categorize the Christian believer in terms of a contemporary Jewish theology?
3. The way in which a religion conceives of the other mirrors its conception of itself. Think about how the Jewish sense of self is changed by the various theological approaches to Christianity outlined in Pawlikowski.
4. Classical Jewish thinkers such as Maimonides were willing to grant that Christianity had value insofar as it spread a version - albeit a distorted one - of Torah to the gentiles. Such tolerance, welcome and rare as it was, still did not grant to Christians an authentic revelation. That is, Christianity was an entirely human thing. We modern Jews must wonder, paradoxically, whether Christianity is also a divine thing. Is Christianity a place where God has been active?

Unit VIII. The momentous events in contemporary Jewish history have caused a ferment in the long-stagnant Christian perspective on the Jews. Christian reflection on the Holocaust has led theologians to assess the dark tradition of anti-Judaism, the "teachings of contempt," and to work on purging Christianity of this negative dimension. An ecumenical spirit within Catholicism opened the Church to encounter with other Christian denominations and this new openness enhanced relations with Judaism as well. Thus, out of her own resources, the Church has been led to ponder anew the "mystery of Israel" upon which her own mystery is grounded. Where formerly there was exclusivity and condescension, there is now dialogue and respect. Against this background of exploration of, and respect for Judaism, numerous social contacts, dialogues, and study groups, theologians are seeking to develop the proper language to conceptualize the Jewish-Christian reality. The Vatican "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" ("Nosta Aetate," 1965) and the subsequent "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate" (1974) provided Catholics with a beginning for this long, difficult process.

1. What new ground was broken by Nostra Aetate? What teachings were implicitly declared false therein? To what did the Catholic Church commit itself in the Declaration?
2. The final version of the Declaration was weaker than the various draft versions on the issue of Jewish guilt for the crucifixion. Would a stronger statement have substantially improved Jewish-Christian relations beyond what was already secured?
3. What are the strengths of Nostra Aetate? What are its weaknesses?
4. On the basis of your study of developments in Christian theology since Vatican II, how have theologians incorporated the concepts in the Declaration into their work? How have they moved beyond the Declaration?
5. What remains to be done on the Christian side? On the Jewish side?



**John Paul II and the Jews:
A Paradoxical Relationship**

Alan Mittleman



John Paul II and the Jews: A Paradoxical Relationship

Alan L. Mittleman

Pope John Paul II is a paradox for the world Jewish community. More than any of his predecessors, he has taken seriously the words of the Second Vatican Council's, *Nostra Aetate*: "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogues." He has been a practitioner of the "brotherly dialogue," having met with Jewish representatives on over 20 occasions. He has addressed the Jews as "beloved brothers" and "dear friends." In virtually every country this globe-trotting pope has visited, wherever there exists a Jewish community, he has invited them to meet with him.

Yet, he has also met with controversial world figures such as Yasir Arafat (1982) and Kurt Waldheim (1987), whom he praised without qualification. These meetings have outraged Jewish sensibilities, contributing to a sense of ambivalence about him. Is John Paul for us or against us, Jews ask. "Why does he make remarkably positive statements about us, our religion, our history and then act in ways that deeply offend us?"

The ostensible contradiction between positive utterances and perceived, negative actions is one dimension of the paradox. Another level has to do with this pope's doctrinal conservatism. Advancing a positive theology of Catholic-Jewish relations, reversing the "teaching of contempt" for Jews and Judaism, exploring basic scriptures and convictions in the light of an affirmative orientation toward Judaism are all progressive initiatives. One would have expected that in a pontificate marked by an emphasis on tradition and discipline, Catholic-Jewish relations would simply receive the same criticism as feminism and other liberalizing trends. But that has not occurred, at least not publicly. The Catholic-Jewish relationship proceeds, from breakthrough to dramatic breakthrough, punctuated just as regularly by destabilizing crises.

In order to evaluate John Paul's record in Catholic-Jewish relations, it is important to note that he has been subject to criticism in this area from the very beginning. While some of his actions, the meeting with Arafat, e.g., have been unambiguously negative from a Jewish point of view, other actions, hailed by some Jews, have been criticized by others. These mixed reactions have to do not merely with the broad range of Jewish opinion, but with real ambiguity about what the pope means.

As early as 1979, the pope returned to his native land and journeyed to Auschwitz. He spoke of all of those who died there, reading the names of the languages they spoke from a memorial plaque. Then he added: "In particular I pause with you, dear participants in this encounter, before

the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination. This people draws its origin from Abraham, our father in faith (cf. Rom 4:12), as was expressed by Paul of Tarsus. The very people who received from God the commandment 'thou shalt not kill' itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing. It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference." Immediately, the question arose, why he did not use the word "Jews" instead of the circumlocution, "the people [that] ... draws its origin from Abraham." Was this deliberate? Would the word "Jews" have upset his listeners? Furthermore, the pope specifically singled out Edith Stein (since beatified) as a Catholic martyr. Stein, a Jewish convert to Catholicism, was, of course, killed for her Jewish birth not her Christian faith. The appropriation of her death by the Church was unacceptable for many Jews. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the pope did underscore the uniqueness of Jewish suffering under the Nazis and reminded his countrymen that they may not consider that tragedy with indifference. The event remains ambiguous.

A constant source of Catholic-Jewish tension is the lack of formal diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel. In John Paul's own writings, one detects an evolution from imbalance toward balance in the consideration of Jewish and Arab rights and claims. In the early years of his pontificate, he spoke predominantly of the rights of the Arabs, especially of the Palestinians. Their welfare cannot "be sacrificed to the destiny of others." (quoted in New York Times, 3/26/79). They must be enabled to "preserve their own identity and aspirations." (New York Times, 6/14/82). He did not speak of the legitimacy of Jewish aspirations, nor did he use the term "Israel" until 1980. In his homily at Otranto, Italy, he linked Jewish suffering in the Holocaust with the establishment of the "State of Israel." Immediately however, he asserted "At the same time the painful condition of the Palestinian People was created, a large part of whom are excluded from their land." John Paul spoke as if the creation of Israel were the sole cause of the Palestinian problem. Later in the homily, he refers to the territory of Israel as "Palestine." Indeed, the Holy See calls its delegate to the region the "apostolic delegate to Jerusalem and Palestine," (Religious News Service, 3/23/84). In his apostolic letter of April 20, 1984, however, the pope achieved greater evenhandedness than either he or the Vatican had earlier attempted. After enumerating the religious and political concerns of Christians and Muslims for Jerusalem and the region as a whole, he also made a very frank and positive statement about Jews: "For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies to their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and the due tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress for every society." At the same time that the pope gave this verbal support to Israel, however, he continued to suggest vague ideas about an international statute that would end Israeli control of Jerusalem.

Thus, a pattern of ambiguity if not to say, ambivalence, pervades most of the major encounters between John Paul and the Jews. The great breakthrough of his 1986 visit to Rome's Grand Synagogue was preceded by a negative incident which the visit was designed to correct. In a Lenten homily on February 16, 1986, the pope referred to the Jews in a way out of keeping with post-Vatican II norms.

"In the confusion, because of the many transgressions of the Covenant, God promises his chosen people a new Covenant, one that shall be ratified with the blood of his own Son Jesus, on the Cross. The Church, expression of the New Covenant, represents the continuity of Israel, which had "wandered" in search of salvation. It is the new Israel; it presupposes the old and goes beyond it, to the extent that it has the necessary strength to live in accordance with the requirements of the divine Covenant, not through obedience to the ancient laws that gave knowledge of God but not his salvation, but through faith in Jesus the Saviour..." (L'Osservatore Romano, March 3, 1986)

The pope, in another passage, urges his audience to "avoid the sin committed by the people of Israel who refused Jesus." These views radically undercut the entire development of the new Catholic theology of Judaism. They subordinate Jewish self-understanding to classical Christian definitions of what Judaism is (namely, a failed religion) and so transgress a principle often enunciated by the pope himself, that Christians should learn by what "essential traits the Jews define themselves." They also evoke images of collective Jewish guilt.

Was this pre-Vatican II construction a lapse of memory or a clear statement of what the pope really believes about Jews and Judaism? Two months later, John Paul came to Rome's Grand Synagogue and delivered a quite different oration on the respect in which Christians must hold Jews. "You are our dearly beloved brothers," he said "and, in a certain way, it could be said you are our elder brothers." The address clearly laid out, in a tone of deference and understanding, the great differences between the two religions, the progress achieved in Christian-Jewish relations and the difficulties which remain. The synagogue address enunciated a theology 180° distant from the Lenten homily. Clearly, the Vatican was providing a course correction for the pope's navigation error.

Seen in this light, the pope's cordial reception of Kurt Waldheim was another swing toward the negative pole of a dipolar, ambiguous relationship. It was not out of character. Nor will any future gestures which will aim at getting Catholic-Jewish relations back "on track" be out of character. Both of these trends have been present from the beginning of his pontificate.

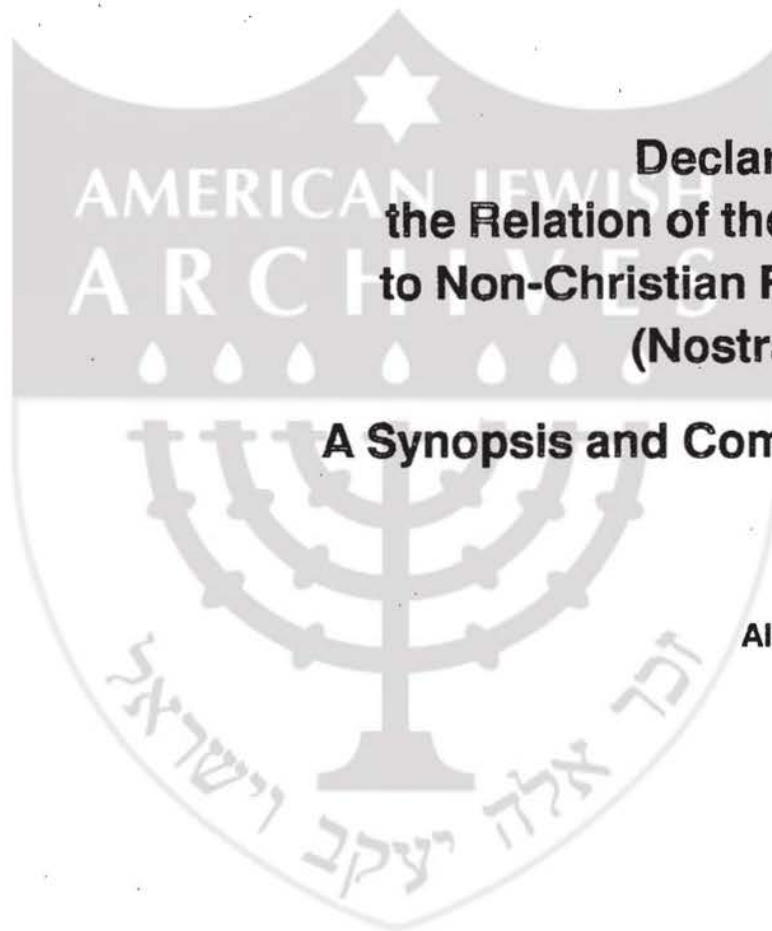
It may well be then that there is no paradox regarding Pope John Paul II and the Jews. The relationship simply has been one of mixed feelings, mixed reviews, positive moves, negative moves and ambiguous moves from the start. The tension may be explained by reference to our earlier observation: creating a new mode of Catholic-Jewish relations is a

progressive endeavor that is now occurring within a conservatively oriented church. The goals and the context for action may simply be incommensurable. It may also be true that this incompatibility is alive within John Paul himself. He might both desire a deepened, renewed relationship with the Jewish people and yet hold to a religious world-view that makes no space for that new relationship. Catholic-Jewish relations is a mirror in which the tensions and paradoxes of the modern church and its pope appear.

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87-700
6547-(IAD-4)
8/12/87: smm



**Declaration on
the Relation of the Church
to Non-Christian Religious
(Nostra Aetate)**

A Synopsis and Commentary

Alan Mittleman



THE DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
(Nostra Aetate): A Synopsis and Commentary

I. Synopsis: Nostra Aetate begins with the recognition that humanity is being drawn together in our time. The world has grown smaller, the fathers seem to say. The Church recognizes the common interests of humanity and wishes to work within it to foster fraternal relations among all peoples and faiths. To this end, the Declaration will explore and emphasize what all persons have in common.

Commentary: * The point of departure is felicitous. In former times, the Church bemoaned the great diversity of religions and emphasized those factors which distinguish Catholics from all others. The value of diversity lay only in the opportunity it presented the Church for mission. The Declaration's emphasis on the oneness of the human community under God - while yet preserving the Church's own sense of election - reinstates a more Biblical perspective. It returns to the Hebraic concept of a humanity made in God's image (Gen. 1:26). All of human life is sacred. Subsequent documents, which developed out of Nostra Aetate, such as the German Bishops' Declaration (1980) express gratitude to Judaism for its discovery of this profound insight. Pope John gave primary consideration to the solidarity of humankind throughout his pontificate.

The Declaration affirms that a deep universal bond exists between all persons not only on account of their origins, but also on account of their destiny. The end of all human beings is God.

* The Declaration gives new prominence to the universalism of the Hebrew prophets. As in Zechariah's vision (Zech.9:22), all men will come to the Holy City to worship the Lord. The prophetic emphasis on a universal return to God balances the classical and much misunderstood Catholic doctrine of "no salvation outside of the Church." After the Council, Catholic theologians Karl Rahner and Hans Kung developed this emphasis into a positive theology of salvation for those who are outside of the Church.

The common elements of the world religions are described in the form of questions about the ultimate nature of life. The religions answer the "unsolved riddles of the human condition," which "stir the hearts of men."

* The world religions are characterized as arising from human needs. Responding to a restlessness in men, they offer answers to life's eternal questions. This view reflects the famous expression of St. Augustine: "Our hearts are restless and they will not rest until they come to rest in Thee." Although there is undoubtedly truth in this, notice that the Declaration avoids ascribing a supernatural source to the non-Christian religions. They are human projects rooted in man's searching nature. One might conclude that the search comes to an end in the Church whose faith alone is supernaturally disclosed. In its specific treatment of the world religions (nos. II and III), the Declaration is consistent in interpreting them only as products of human insight and activity. It is important to realize however that it acknowledges the divine origins of Judaism and in this way marks Judaism off from the others, drawing it into a special relation with the Church.

II & III. In these sections, Nostra Aetate speaks of the tribal religions, and of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The Declaration acknowledges that in all of these faiths human beings have been moved to contemplate God and to perform godly acts. The text shows sensitivity and knowledge of the distinctive features of each religious path; Hinduism is praised for its philosophical acumen, Buddhism for its insight into the ephemeral nature of reality and Islam for its monotheistic faith and practice. The Church declares her esteem and reverence for all that is "true and holy in these religions." She urges her sons to enter into dialogue with the practitioners of these faiths and to further moral cooperation with them. Additionally, it calls Christians and Muslims to forget their troubled past and work together for a peaceful, human future.

* The Declaration makes clear that while these faiths often do reflect a ray of truth, the Church is bound to proclaim its truth which, finally, holds forth the "fullness of religious life." The Church indeed acknowledges truth outside of her own - an important step forward - but ranks that truth below her own. She thus reserves the right to witness to the nations, but confesses that she must do so in a truly humble and open way. She declares herself to be open to learning the truths of the other faiths and earnestly wishes to enter into dialogue with their adherents. This openness should not be construed as a devious new strategy for proselytization - precisely the opposite is intended, but neither should it be assumed that the Church has renounced witnessing to others.

IV. Section number IV, the statement on the Jews, is a dense and in places a difficult document. Some of its complexity stems from the fact that it has so much negative teaching to overcome but cannot do so all at once. It is therefore a product of many compromises.

It begins with the Church's rediscovery of Judaism in her own origins. Since the Council's basic mission is to come to a new understanding of the Church, this rediscovery is crucial. In searching for herself, the Church finds the Jewish people.

* John XXIII urged that the Council explore the meaning of the Church in terms of Biblical categories rather than in terms of the technical expressions of canon law. Hence, the documents of the Council refer to the Church as "the people of God" or as "the people of the New Covenant." The Jews are referred to as "Abraham's stock." These concrete, Biblical images of the Church already reflect the leavening influence of a return to Hebraic roots.

Since the Church believes herself to have been formed by God (she has sometimes called herself the "mystical body of Christ") her origins are not only in history, but in a "mystery" as well. Thus, she looks into her own supernatural origins and discovers a mystical relation, a "spiritual bond" with the Jews. The Church acknowledges that her own beginnings are linked in a mysterious (and not simply historical) way with Israel's beginnings. Accordingly, the Church cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people of the Covenant, nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the Jews, whom the apostle Paul likened to the root of an olive tree on to which the Church, like wild branches, has been grafted. Furthermore, as Paul reminds her, the Jews are still beloved by God and are heirs of divine promises. Jesus was born a Jew.

* The Declaration says that the Church has both a spiritual and a temporal, historical relatedness to Judaism. It reminds all that Jesus and the disciples were Jews and that these facts must ever be borne in mind. Although this may not seem controversial or startling to us, we must remember that traditionally the Church minimized the importance of these Jewish origins. There have always been movements in Christian theology which tried to "gentilize" Jesus. In the background of the Church's affirmation of his Jewishness, lies the memory of groups such as Nazi Germany's "Deutsche Christen," who taught that Jesus was an "Aryan." The Council means to put an end to these heresies forever.

The Declaration also speaks about the spiritual relatedness of the Church, "the people of the New Covenant" to "Abraham's stock." Much of this text derives from the complex theology of the apostle Paul. Paul agonized about the relation of the gentiles who believed in Jesus to his own kinsmen who did not. He was convinced that these new believers shared in Israel's ancient promises because he was convinced that God had acted through Jesus to save His creation. But he was also convinced that Jewish existence had continuing value and he was greatly troubled and concerned for his people. Paul conceptualized the relationship between the Jews and the gentile Christians in several ways. In one figure, he called the Christians "Abraham's children according to the spirit." The Jews were Abraham's children according to the

flesh (Gal.3:7-9, Rom.4:13ff). In another figure of speech, the Church is the wild olive branch which God has grafted on to the Jewish root.

The ancient church fathers read Paul to mean that the spiritual children of Abraham displaced and supplanted his physical children, the "spiritual" being more greatly valued than the "physical" in the late Hellenistic world. A doctrine of the Jew's rejection by God, based on a distorted reading of Paul, took hold. Today a growing number of scholars recognize that Paul did not say this. He holds the relation of the Jews to the Church in tension; he does not resolve it in favor of the Church! Rather, Paul believes that Jews and Christians are meant by God to coexist until the end of days, when God will wed them together. Mysteriously, God will be "all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). The resolution of the Jewish-Christian tension will occur in the "fullness of time," which Paul expected in his lifetime. Unlike the classical Christian tradition, modern scholarship emphasizes that Paul continued to love his people and give them a role in the mysterious schema of salvation.

The Declaration anticipates this interpretation of Paul to a certain extent. In that the Church "draws sustenance from the root" (present tense), the council fathers acknowledge the on-going value of Judaism and not merely its historical value. There are, however, problems. The Declaration considers Judaism primarily under its aspect as a prologue to Christianity. Biblical history is understood as a foreshadowing of the Gospel. Thus, the deliverance from Egypt anticipates typologically the deliverance mediated by the cross. Abraham becomes something of a proto-Christian. In this respect, the Declaration fails to confront directly certain aspects of ancient tradition: "Old Testament" as a prelude to "New Testament," the Hebrew prophets' words as fulfilled in Jesus' career, etc. What is new is the tone of respect and esteem for Judaism. We could say that the Council did not live up to the full potential of Paul's thought, but in all fairness the new exploration of Paul, although indicated in certain preconciliar scholars such as Jean Danielou and Jacques Maritain, only began in earnest after the Council. Perhaps the new search into Paul was inspired by the prominence the Declaration gave to the key Pauline passage, Romans 9-11. Subsequent documents are, thankfully, much more explicit in spelling out the contemporary value and divine significance of Judaism, continuing the renewal of Catholic thought definitively and irreversibly begun by the Council.

Thus the Church is bound to the Jewish people for historical and spiritual reasons. Her faith derives externally from ancient Judaism and internally from the God who gave the Jews the revelation of Torah. This bond is of enduring value. Given this affirmation of Judaism, the Declaration now raises two difficult issues which have troubled relations over the centuries and all but obscured the existence of the bond. Following each issue, the Declaration mandates "remedial action."

1. The Jews did not accept the Gospel and even opposed its dissemination. Yet despite the Jewish "no" to Jesus, God still holds the Jews most dear "for the sake of their fathers." (An earlier draft expressed hope for the conversion of the Jews at this point. The final version wisely leaves that out, implying instead that God alone knows the day - which the Church awaits - when all men will serve him "with one accord.")

Due to the richness and complexity of the spiritual bond between the Church and the Jews which endures despite their opposition to the Gospel, the Council calls for brotherly dialogues and joint scholarly undertakings. The fruit of these will be enhanced understanding and mutual respect.

2. The Jewish leaders and other Jews pressed for Jesus' death. However, what happened in Jesus' passion cannot be charged to the Jews in a collective sense. Neither all of the Jews alive at that time (c. 33C.E.) or subsequently can be blamed. The commonly held but false teaching that the Jews as a people are eternally guilty for their crime is decisively rejected. Although the Church is indeed the "new people of God," the Jews must not be presented in a pejorative or degraded manner in any Catholic teaching or preaching. The traditional manner of representing Jews as rejected and accursed is repudiated. Furthermore, no one can henceforth use the Bible as a basis for this "teaching of contempt." The false presentation of the Jews does not follow from Holy Scripture.

* The inclusion of these two negative statements aroused much controversy and misunderstanding. The first statement, "Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation..." seemed to many to introduce a discordant and unwelcome intrusion of precisely the theology that ought to be overcome. It was the second statement however, that all Jews without distinction ought not to be blamed for the crucifixion, that evoked the strongest criticism. This text was widely misunderstood as a pardon; the Church, many thought, was forgiving the Jews for their alleged crime. Many Jews were outraged. They need not be forgiven for a crime they did not commit! It is clear however that the text says no such thing. First, it is not addressed to Jews but to Christians. Second, its point is not to forgive anyone but to lay down an authoritative teaching and to repudiate a false one. The statement repudiates the pseudo-theology that the Jews are collectively guilty of "deicide" and doomed to wander and suffer for their sin.

Earlier drafts of this statement were stronger in their repudiation of the false teaching. The term "guilty of deicide" - the ancient accusation against the Jews - was used. Much to the disappointment of many Catholics and Jews, the phrase was deleted in the final version because some fathers thought it was ambiguous. Critics of the decision discerned the influence of Arab governments in this weakening of the Declaration.

These two negative issues do introduce discordant notes into the Declaration's harmonious overture, but it is appropriate, after all, that the document faces these problems squarely. Silence on

the flashpoints of the historical Jewish-Christian confrontation would have been unsettling. What many Jews and Christians would have liked to see at this point was a confession that Church teaching led to anti-Semitism and even a request by the Church for forgiveness. Far from having done so however, the document cites those alleged actions of the Jews which have given Christians offense.

The Declaration is less than thorough in its treatment of past wrongs but that is balanced by a very positive orientation toward the future. By this Declaration, the Church made a commitment to improving the image of Jews and Judaism in her teaching and preaching. It is a commitment which has been ignored in some parts of the world but pursued with sincerity and vigor in others. As a direct result of the call for dialogue and the rejection of any negative teaching, the Church initiated text book studies and reforms, revisions of liturgy, joint projects of study and social action, the establishment of national commissions to further Catholic-Jewish relations, and an International Vatican-Jewish Liaison Committee. The provisions of the Declaration have been realized in innumerable, tangible programs over the past twenty years. (See the chronology in the kit on AJC's post-conciliar initiatives, e.g.)

In final section of the statement on the Jews, the text explicitly repudiates anti-Semitism. Following Pope John's wish that the council not engage in condemnations, the Statement decries (reprobat) anti-Semitism, rather than condemns it (damnat). Anti-Semitism at any time, by anyone, is firmly repudiated as incompatible with the Gospel. The true Christian teaching is that Jesus went to the cross freely to atone for the sins of all. Human sin per se, not the specific guilt of any one group, led to the crucifixion. The Church's duty is to proclaim God's love and gift of reconciliation offered by the cross.

* Although critics have charged that the forceful word "condemn" should have been used to reject anti-Semitism, the Declaration could hardly have been more forthright. Anti-Semitism will no longer find shelter in the Church. And in fact the 1975 Vatican Guidelines did use the word "condemn." This means not only that the Church will no longer tolerate popular anti-Semitism in her midst, but that nothing in the Christian tradition, for example the Scriptures, shall be used to support anti-Semitism. The Church has agreed upon a powerful criterion here to delegitimize Christian anti-Semitism. By repudiating the anti-Semitism of the past in addition to that of the present ("...at any time and by anyone.") the Church implicitly rejects centuries of antagonism to Jews. Subsequent statements of the Church explicitly reject anti-Semitism and acknowledge past injustices to the Jews. The tragic canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, mentioned above, are here rejected even though they have long ago fallen into desuetude.

The last teaching of the Declaration reiterates the underlying theme of Nostra Aetate as a whole; the commonality and solidarity

of the entire human community. Although it does so now in an inverted way. All persons are sinners and for their salvation Jesus died. The positive implication of this teaching is that the Jews are not greater sinners than anyone else. Although this doctrine was fully enunciated at the Council of Trent (1566), it was insufficiently stressed in the long eras of fervent anti-Semitism. This new emphasis underscores the Church's commitment to correct its teaching on the Jews.

V. The final section of Nostra Aetate draws one great conclusion from the foregoing essay on human solidarity; no foundation remains for any theory or practice that sanctifies discrimination, prejudice and racial hatred. The Christian faithful are exhorted to live in peace with all persons and religious groups, for only by so doing can they truly enjoy the Fatherhood of God.

* This conclusion was apparently added to broaden the context of the rejection of anti-Semitism lest someone conclude that the Church decries this form of hatred more strongly than other forms.

87-700
IAD-R059(2)
July, 1987





**Landmark Statements in
Catholic-Jewish Relations
1967 - 1986**

A Synopsis and Commentary

Alan Mittleman



LANDMARK STATEMENTS IN CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS, 1967-1986

AMERICAN JEWISH

North and South

Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate inaugurated a new era in Catholic-Jewish relations. During the next two decades, many national hierarchies, regional synods and local dioceses in Europe and America issued statements which interpreted and applied the Declaration. These statements, reflecting the new atmosphere of dialogue and collegiality between Catholics and Jews, often reflect a greater enthusiasm and openness than do the restrained formulations of Nostra Aetate. They testify to the progress of the vital and positive encounter between members of the two religious communities initiated by the Second Vatican Council. Furthermore, they build a tradition of normative Catholic interpretation of Nostra Aetate. These authoritative documents make explicit the implicit promise of Nostra Aetate.

Some of the statements are highly theological, others are more practical in nature. All offer specific guidelines and programmatic suggestions for the implementation of Nostra Aetate. In addition to the national and regional statements, there have also been two study papers and an important set of guidelines emanating from the Vatican. In all, these documents form an impressive body of scholarly and action-oriented interpretation of Nostra Aetate. They are a testimony to its historical influence and to the deep process of renewal that it initiated in the life of the Church.

A chronological list of some leading documents follows with selections from their texts.

1967 - The newly established "Sub-committee (now called, "Secretariat") for Catholic-Jewish Relations" of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.A.) issues Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations.

Its purpose is "to assist all levels of the Church to put the Council's directives into action." Among its many provisions, it called for "a frank and honest treatment of Christian anti-Semitism in our history books, courses and curricula" and "an acknowledgement of the living and complex reality of Judaism after Christ and the permanent election of Israel." (Notice how much more explicit this is than was Nostra Aetate.)

- 1968 - **Latin American Bishops' and Jewish Leaders' Joint Statement.** This brief document emphasized the need to initiate practical, cooperative work to eliminate prejudice and promote greater mutual knowledge and respect.
- 1969 - Vatican study paper: "**Reflections and Suggestions for the Application of the Directives of Nostra Aetate, IV.**"

Unlike Nostra Aetate, this document addresses the problems posed for Catholics by the existence of the State of Israel. It does so in a very positive fashion. "Fidelity to the covenant was linked to the gift of the land, which in the Jewish soul has endured as the object of an aspiration that Christians should strive to understand." "The existence of the State of Israel should not be separated from this perspective..."

The document applies the directive of Nostra Aetate that nothing should be taught about the Jews which does not conform to the truth of scripture with new precision and sensitivity: "With respect to Bible readings, much care should be taken in the homily with respect to right interpretations, especially of those texts which seem to put the Jewish people in an unfavorable light."

The document also teaches that Jesus was a Jew - a point on which Nostra Aetate did not dwell - and draws an important lesson from that fact: "Jesus, as also His disciples, was a Jew." "The points on which He took issue with the Judaism of His time are fewer than those in which He found Himself in agreement with it. Whenever He opposed it, this was always from within the Jewish people, just as did the prophets before Him." This is a very powerful and radical statement which curtails the ancient practice of severing Jesus from his Jewish milieu and seeing nothing but conflict and opposition between him and his countrymen.

- 1970 - "**Pastoral Recommendations**": the statement of the Dutch Bishops. The statement speaks of the duties of Catholics, including: "The Church has the duty to reflect on the entire history of the Jewish people before and after Christ and on their self-understanding." It makes clear that Christian scripture - and consequently, Christian self-understanding - can become fully intelligible only in dialogue with Jews. "A thorough knowledge and correct understanding of the Bible... cannot be fully attained without familiarity with Jewish awareness of God and Jewish understanding of biblical terms."

- 1973 - "**Eighteen Theological Theses**," a study paper of the National Catholic Commission for Relations with the Jews, Belgium. This very substantial and progressive analysis of the meaning of Jewish existence combined new theological insights with corrections of ancient teachings. Here are three theses:

(10) "To insist that the Church has taken the place of the Jewish people as salvific institution, is a facile interpretation... The Church may call herself 'people of the covenant' only to the extent that she lives... according to the message of Jesus. She will not be that people

fully until the end of time." (This effectively overturns the entire theological tradition in which the church claimed to have displaced the Jews in God's plan.)

(13) "The Jewish people is the true relative of the Church, not her rival or a minority to be assimilated." (The church affirms the divinely ordained permanence of Jewish existence and embraces a pluralistic co-existence.)

(18) "To the extent that Christianity rediscovers in Judaism the roots of her own faith and no longer considers Judaism an errant or obsolete religion, the missionary witness of the Church will no more attempt a 'conversion of the Jews' in the current sense of the term, that is, annexation or proselytism."

1973 - "Pastoral Orientations on the Attitude of Christians to Judaism" a statement by the French Bishops' Committee for Relations with Jews. The statement explores the profound spiritual meaning of ongoing Jewish existence for the Church and also calls Christians to reform their views of Jews.

"It is most urgent that Christians cease to represent the Jews according to cliches forged by the hostility of centuries. Let us eliminate once and for all and combat under any circumstances those caricatures unworthy of an honest man and more so of a Christian... We strongly denounce and condemn these defamatory designations which are still, alas, current among us, openly or in disguise."

1974 - The Swiss Bishops asserted the need for sensitive and informed preaching and teaching about Judaism in a statement issued by the Synod of Basel.

"Reviewing the past, we must confirm with regret that an often faulty and hard-hearted presentation of Judaism led to a wrong attitude of Christians towards Jews. Hence great care must be taken in religious instruction, liturgical services, adult education and theological training, to offer a correct interpretation of Jewish self-understanding. The exposition of conflicts, as they present themselves in the New Testament, must conform to recent developments of our insight."

The tenth anniversary of Nostra Aetate, 1975, witnessed a number of significant developments.

1975 - The Vatican's newly established Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews issues, "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate." This benchmark document "condemns" anti-Semitism as a heresy.

The American Bishops issue an expanded treatment of their 1967 paper. "Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations" commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Council and the leading role the American hierarchy played in working for the ratification of Nostra Aetate.

German Bishops' Statement: A Change of Attitude Towards the Jewish People's History of Faith. This brief but moving document confesses responsibility and guilt for the Holocaust and affirms the special burden of the German church to work for improved relations with the Jews.

"Our country's recent political history is darkened by the systematic attempt to wipe out the Jewish people. Apart from some admirable efforts by individuals and groups, most of us during the time of National Socialism formed a church community preoccupied with the threat to our own institutions. We turned our backs to this persecuted Jewish people and were silent about the crimes perpetrated on Jews and Judaism... The honesty of our intention to renew ourselves depends on the admission of this guilt... On our church falls the special obligation of improving the tainted relationship between the Church as a whole and the Jewish people and its religion."

1977 - Second Vatican study paper by Prof. Thomasso Frederici renounced proselytization and spelled out the church's commitment to dialogue.

1980 - Second statement of the German Bishops: "On the Relation of the Church to Judaism." This statement is perhaps the most elaborate and ramified theological analysis of any of the "official" documents. The bishops consider all of the classical Christian arguments against Judaism and gather evidence for entirely new perspectives.

"The positive assertions of the New Testament about the Jews and their salvation must be considered more strongly in Christian preaching and theology than they have been in the past. The second Vatican Council explicitly accepted this mission."

Pope John Paul II addressed the Jewish community of Mainz, Germany --

1982 - Pope John Paul II addresses representatives of Catholic Bishops' conferences from around the world assembled in Rome on the importance of Jewish-Christian dialogue and continuing to improve Catholic teaching on Jews and Judaism on all levels.

1983 - The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops publishes a statement, "Orientations for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue," after two years of study. This statement is especially noteworthy given the fact that Brazil is the world's most populous Catholic country. The document amplifies the basic insights of Nostra Aetate but also makes explicit the Jewish right to a secure and peaceful existence in the State of Israel.

1984 - John Paul II issues an apostolic letter, Redemptiois Anno ("Year of Redemption") in which he discussed the meaning of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic faiths and urged that their common faith in one God serve as a basis for Middle East peace. The pope went further than he or any other pontiff had previously done in affirming Jewish rights in Israel.