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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 28, Folder 7, Interreligious Affairs Commission, 1978-1979.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 18, 1978

ATTENDANCE

Bernard Abrams
Jane Abrams
Mimi Alperin
Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz
Daniel Gersen
Joseph Kaltenbacher
Kurt Kelman

Norma Levitt
Edward Margolius
Annabel Neaman
Dr. Sheldon Sax
Ellen Shapiro
Lawrence Wizel
Richard Zeisler

Staff

Judith Banki
Inge Lederer Gibel
Rita Reznik
Rabbi A. James Rudin
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

Guest: Rabbi Bruce Cohen

BUDGET

Miles Jaffe opened the meeting with a summary and evaluation of IAD budget requirements for 1978-79. Although the IAD is budgeted at approximately 3% of total AJC budget, he said its performance in program and fund-raising is at a much higher level. Furthermore, the proliferation and expansion of interreligious departments in other Jewish organizations, all of whom are spending large sums to carry on similar endeavors, will make it increasingly difficult for IAD to maintain its leadership with the present small number of professional and clerical staff. Mr. Jaffe stated that the high productivity of the department, in spite of being understaffed, is remarkable. Mr. Jaffe added that AJC leadership in this area will suffer if IAD is not enabled to increase its staff and resources through enlarged financial support.

Additional funds are recommended for replacement of a professional for the Evangelical Desk, unstaffed for the past three years, and a professional for religious documentation and research. Mr. Kaltenbacher asked whether we would be able to get qualified help at the low salaries mentioned in the proposed budget, and he was assured that it was possible. The urgent need for additional secretarial help was also stressed. Mr. Abrams said he thought there should be more money allocated for the Visitors to Israel Program. Mr. Gersen felt that IAD had done a magnificent job with such a small staff. The motion to adopt the proposed budget and to propose its adoption by the Budget and Evaluation Committee on October 6 was voted unanimously.

INTERNS FOR PEACE

Rabbi Bruce Cohen, director of Interns for Peace, a project in Israeli-Diaspora relations, was invited to address the group about this program and the possibility of closer affiliation with AJC. As a contribution toward Jewish-Arab

rapprochement, Interns for Peace, he reported, will bring in its first year twelve American Jews to work in Israeli-Arab villages with eight Israeli Jews and Arabs for a period of two years after training at Kibbutz Barkai.

Rabbi Cohen mentioned that he had from the beginning been inspired by AJC resource materials and assisted by AJC staff and lay leaders, citing Miles Jaffe as one of his earliest contacts and advisors, and including on his Israeli and American Advisory Boards Dr. M. Bernard Resnikoff, Ms. Inge Lederer Gibel and Mrs. Norma Levitt. Many Jewish organizations, including Federations, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Givat Hivav Foundation, have indicated support for this program. But Rabbi Cohen feels that a special relationship with AJC would be particularly beneficial. The Commission members viewed his request with great favor and it was moved that Miles Jaffe would appoint a small sub-committee to work with Rabbi Tanenbaum and a staff to follow up in greater detail and for possible approval.

BREAK TO HEAR PRESIDENT CARTER ADDRESS CONGRESS ON CAMP DAVID SUMMIT MEETING

RUTH CARTER STAPLETON

Rabbi Tanenbaum gave background on the withdrawal of Ruth Carter Stapleton from a B'nai Yeshua meeting on Long Island. We contacted her to let her know that B'nai Yeshua was a group proselytizing Jews, using deceptive methods. When she recognized the exploitation of their approach, she decided not to appear.

The Commission was asked to consider a meeting with Mrs. Stapleton. Rabbi Tanenbaum suggested that we should arrange this, at her request, as a matter of courtesy, and with certain ground rules.

Mr. Gersen asked whether our confidence in our identity was so weak that we must be offended by attempts to evangelize us. Rabbi Tanenbaum responded that we do not question the right of such groups in a free society to express their views, but we do oppose their methods. Put simply, we must insist on truth-in-packaging in religion as in other advertising. Mrs. Levitt asked if Mrs. Carter Stapleton had any other Jewish forum. If it is a first, we should keep in mind how it would look to the rest of the Jewish world. Rabbi Tanenbaum suggested that Mrs. Stapleton is in close communication with her brother and should be helped to have a continuously open feeling toward Israel and the Jewish people. Mr. Kaltenbacher asked whether we ought to invite her to the next session of the National Executive Council, and Mr. Zeisler inquired whether she still has ties with B'nai Yeshua. Mrs. Alperin asked whether we might use a meeting with Mrs. Stapleton as an opportunity to explain our position on proselytization.

Mr. Margolius suggested that she be invited to meet with us without the press to avoid headlines. Mrs. Banki said that we should make it clear that we are inviting her in the framework of dialogue. The invitation should make this quite clear, so that other Jewish organizations would know that Ruth Carter Stapleton was invited, as all Christian leaders, for better understanding. Rabbi Tanenbaum suggested we invite her graciously, set some appropriate guidelines to exchange views. Mr. Margolius recommended that the invitation be for her to meet with us privately. Ms. Gibel raised the calls we get from upset parents and that we should

invite her to hear her, but, just as important, for her to hear us. It was the feeling of the meeting that a private, off-the-record meeting with Mrs. Stapleton be arranged.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Miles Jaffe announced future meetings of IAC in other parts of the country to involve Commission members out of the New York area. In 1978-79 there will be the dinner meeting of the IAC at the National Executive Council meeting in Boston on October 26, and in Chicago on March 26.

OBERAMMERGAU

Mr. Jaffe reported that ADL sent a large delegation to meet with the mayor of Oberammergau. He believes they were deceived into believing that the Daisenberger text can be suitably amended so that no Jews can conceivably have any objection to it. In our opinion, he stated, it cannot be done and ADL may have unfortunately undercut a 20-year effort by people of good faith in the Rosner group to work toward the complete elimination of the Daisenberger text and its substitution by a text that is thematically not as offensive. One coming event may make a contribution. The prestigious Bavarian Catholic Academy has invited AJC to participate at a symposium in Munich in November where we will try to give some understanding to the general population as to why we are concerned about the Passion Play.

Mr. Abrams expressed his concern over two major Jewish organizations working at cross purposes; that the heads of each agency did not get together and put a stop to it before it took place. Mr. Jaffe responded that there had been a meeting of Messrs. Gold, Trosten and Rabbi Tanenbaum with top leadership of ADL where they did admit to some understanding of the grave risks to which they exposed themselves.

Rabbi Tanenbaum added that we did have a very thorough discussion with ADL, and it appears that there is now a clearer understanding of the politics of Oberammergau; that AJC is supporting the philosemitic and anti-Nazi forces there. ADL said it will not take any further public steps without consulting us first. Furthermore, an additional achievement did come out of our visit to Oberammergau this summer; that is, an agreement that AJC sponsor a series of lectures there on the history of anti-Semitism in Germany and a course on Judaism, Jews, the Nazi Holocaust and Israel. This has never happened before in Oberammergau.

SOVIET JEWRY

Rabbi Rudin reported that Soviet Jewry has had a very difficult summer, as did Christian dissidents. At a press conference held at AJC, Sister Ann Gillen, just before the trials, reported about the terrible treatment she and her colleagues received in the Soviet Union. This was reported well in the press as were other meetings in Washington with Rabbis A. James Rudin, Marc H. Tanenbaum and Sr. Ann, including Senate and House Committees. Our main concern now is the 1980 Olympics. What can we do about this? The Kemp-Anderson resolution to move the games elsewhere is financially impractical; no other country will take them. Rabbi Rudin said that a boycott is neither practical nor general AJC policy. We can do other things, including the enlistment of important athletes, who are on the National Interreligious

Task Force list of sponsors. They can sensitize the people on the teams who will be going to Moscow to look and see what is going on there, to bring prayer books and shawls. We can contact NBC (where Rabbi Tanenbaum now has excellent contacts due to our collaboration on Holocaust) and ask them to be particularly careful in their reporting on the Soviet Union on the various programs which are going to emanate from the USSR during the games. Local Task Force affiliates should be alerted to our concerns. As many Jews as possible should go to Moscow and Christians who are Task Force members should be involved in meeting dissidents and refuseniks.

Rabbi Rudin suggested that we make it clear to the International Olympic Committee how we feel about Israeli and Jewish athletes and journalists having full and equal participation.



AGENDA

INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMISSION
OF AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1978

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

MILES JAFFE, NATIONAL CHAIRMAN, INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

1. Adoption of minutes of the meeting

2. Introduction of
Dr. Charles Malik

Former Foreign Minister of Lebanon
Former President of the United Nations General Assembly
Former Co-President, World Council of Churches

Topic: "Lebanon and the Dynamics of Peace in the Middle East"

3. Introduction of
Msgr. Elias El-Hayek

Executive Director, American Lebanese League
Professor at Catholic University, Notre Dame University
Lebanese Maronite priest

Topic: "Lebanon and the American Moral Conscience"

DISCUSSION

4. Proposal for a National Conference of Jews, Arab Christians, and Moslems in Spring, 1979



RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

February 23, 1979

Dear Colleague:

My recent recommendation for the establishment of a UAHC Task Force on Outreach continues to receive considerable response and I am pleased by it. A vast preponderance of letters arriving here, while expressing a caution on this or that aspect of my proposal, favors its central thrust. The letters come from every segment of our constituency as well as of the larger Jewish and general community.

As a matter of fact, the debate itself is helpful and has an internal worth. As Harold Schulweis so felicitously put it, "something happens to the student who is called upon to teach - something happens to the self which is open to another - something happens to the Jew who is asked to explain the character of his tradition to one outside the in-born circle."

There is only one untoward development, which gives occasion to this letter, and that is the fact that in some quarters my recommendation has been misunderstood to imply that I seek a reversal of the CCAR's Resolution against rabbinic participation at a marriage ceremony between a Jew and a non-Jew.

My recommendation does not address itself to this specific issue at all. Indeed, my own position opposing such participation has not changed. I speak only of those responsibilities which obligate the rabbinate and the synagogue community once a mixed marriage has taken place, and regardless whether the rabbi did or did not officiate at this marriage. In both cases, it seems to me, it is our task to draw the couple closer to us in the hope that the non-Jewish partner will eventually choose to become a Jew or at least in order to insure that the children issuing from such a marriage will in fact be Jewish.

Indeed, my recommendation is in full harmony with the 1973 CCAR Resolution on Mixed Marriage, which in its second and third paragraphs--little remembered and heeded--calls on the rabbinate (b) "to provide the opportunity for the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse," and (c) "to encourage a

February 23, 1979
Page -2-

creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish community and the synagogue."

I hope that this clarification is helpful to you.

Cordial greetings.

Sincerely,



Alexander M. Schindler



MEMORANDUM

JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

FELLOWSHIP COMMISSION BUILDING, 260 S. 15th STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19102 • KI 5-8430

May 2, 1979

TO : Joel Ollander

FROM: Larry Rubin

Attached is an article that appeared in the April-May edition of Modern Maturity, a publication of the American Association of Retired Persons. You will note that on p. 31 is the assertion that "Christ was executed at behest of Jewish leaders" having been falsely accused of organizing a revolt against Rome.

We have received a number of calls about this statement, including an inquiry from leadership in the Federation of Jewish Agencies. Members of our community find this statement to be offensive and harmful. Since Modern Maturity is published by a national organization and has distribution nationwide, I think that NJCRAC would want to handle this.

I would suggest that perhaps Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the AJCommittee could usefully intercede with the AARP on this matter. Also, many of the national agencies that have programs on the elderly probably have strong contacts in the AARP. I'm sure that you will have some ideas of your own with regard to approach.

Please be sure to keep us informed as to progress on this, for many people in Philadelphia were deeply troubled by the article.

CC: Sylvan M. Cohen
Robert P. Forman
Michael Masch

Larry

LR:asj
enc.

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MAY 9 1979

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FEATURE STORY AND COVERS

In the beginning there was Adam and Eve, above, and their story began The Book of Books, which we feature on pages 29 through 33 as part of our educational miniseries. It's followed by five more pages, in color, of The World of the Bible. But the pictorial part of our lesson begins on our cover with a photo of the road Jesus traveled past the Mount of Olives on His way to Jerusalem. As our eyes follow the rocky path, they reach up to the walls of the Holy City on the far side of the valley. Our inside front cover offers a panoramic shot of the Negev. In the times of Abraham this was a hospitable region, heavily settled, with great cities and ample grazing land for his tribe as it followed a seminomadic way of life. Many centuries of neglect and wars have turned the area into a virtual desert that now covers half of modern Israel.

Erich Lessing, Magnum Photos

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First Israel and then Judah fell to foreign invaders. Jerusalem was left in ruins.

After being exiled in Babylonia, many Jews from Judah were allowed by the Persians to return to Israel.

By the time of the great Jewish patriot Judas Maccabeus, about 167 B.C., the Greek civilization threatened to absorb the Jewish religion and culture. Under the leadership of Judas, his father and brothers, the Maccabees gained independence for Judah and established a dynasty of priest-kings who ruled until 63 B.C., when Rome conquered Judah.

NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

In the half century before the birth of Christ, many Jews in what the Romans called Judea were hoping for a leader who would free them from Roman rule. Others feared that the end of the world was imminent and were anxiously awaiting the coming of the Messiah who had been predicted by the prophets.

In this atmosphere of anxiety and expectation, Christ was born in Bethlehem in about 6 B.C. Judea was under Roman rule, with Augustus as emperor and Herod as king of Judea.

A statesman and architect, Herod had transformed Jerusalem into a city of palaces and citadels, with a theater, amphitheater and public monuments. He started a great temple as a good-will gesture to the Jews. But they hated him as a foreigner. The slaying of boy babies because they might be possible pretenders to his throne was attributed to him.

There were occasional attempts by the Jews to revolt against Rome. After one major outbreak, the Romans crucified 2,000 rebels.

Tried by the Romans on a false charge of organizing a revolt against Rome, Christ was executed at behest of Jewish leaders.

Although Christianity spread rapidly through the Roman Empire, its practitioners were persecuted and many were martyred.

However, by A.D. 313, Christians numbered about half the population of the Roman Empire. That was the year Emperor Con-



The young David plays his harp for Saul in effort to help melancholy king after spirit of God had left him.

stantine granted to "Christians as to all others full liberty of following that religion which each may choose."

BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

The New Testament marks the birth of Christianity and has provided much of its inspiration for nearly 2,000 years. The writings of the New Testament were accepted as inspired from the end of the second century. In the early years, the books were used daily in preaching and missionary work.

By the year A.D. 200 the four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul were widely known. However, the contents of the New Testament were not fully determined until the fourth century.

A considerable number of the early Christian writings were lost, including all the original New Testament manuscripts. Much of the material that had been put into the New Testament was lost because it was not copied again.

NEW TESTAMENT GROUPINGS

A convenient way to study the New Testament is to separate its 27 books into four parts: the four books of the Gospels, the 21 books making up the Letters or Epistles, one book of the Acts of the Apostles, and one book of Revelation.

Christ's life and teachings are described in the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—whose chief purpose was not bio-

graphical but to make the message of Christ persuasive. Most authorities agree that these books were written during the last third of the first century A.D. Meaning "Good News," the Gospels tell of the coming of Christ, His teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Early historical testimony ascribes the authorship of the first book of the New Testament to Apostle Matthew. According to "The Open Bible" edition of the Holy Bible, Matthew was "apparently designed for the instruction of New Christian converts" and "is clearly aimed at Jews, or converts to Judaism." Matthew also is concerned with linking Christ genealogically with the Jewish patriarchs as "The son of Abraham, the son of David."

The second Gospel, Mark is believed by some to have been written by a John Mark, who had been a companion to Paul and Peter. Many scholars believe that this book, perhaps completed in Rome just before 70 A.D., when Jerusalem fell, was the source for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It is generally agreed that Mark was written for Romans. It begins with Christ's baptism by John, and tells nothing of His birth or childhood. Mark describes Christ's ministry in Galilee, His performance of miracles, and it records how some Jewish leaders began to oppose Him.

Some scholars accept the tradi-

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From
William W. Simpson
13 Woodside Road
Northwood
Middx. HA6 3QE
England

9th May 1979

To the friends of James and Dorothy Parkes

I am writing at the request of James and Dorothy Parkes on their behalf to tell you of their present situation. I write also, as most of you who receive this letter will know, as one of their oldest friends. I first met James in 1934 and was responsible a few years later for introducing him to Dorothy. Of the ensuing partnership and all that it has produced we are all of us well aware.

Today, however, they are neither of them 'the strength that once they were'. James is now in his 83rd year. Last summer he spent some weeks in hospital undergoing treatment for a lung condition which was judged to be inoperable. Benefitting from the treatment, however, he returned to Netherton only to face a long and trying winter. Eventually in February last he entered a nursing home in Bournemouth where he spent some four weeks. Then, on the advice of his doctor he moved into a small home for elderly people at Milford-on-Sea (near Bournemouth) where he is happily settled, as I think he himself would put it, pottering about in a garden, going for short walks, reading, reflecting, receiving occasional visitors and letters from his friends who will be understanding enough not to expect replies. But, I can only repeat, he is happy and for that we all have cause to be thankful.

Dorothy for some time past has been coping with a debilitating arthritic condition, and has now reached the stage at which she feels no longer able to carry on alone. On the advice of the doctor who looks after them both, Dorothy will shortly be moving into an apartment in the house of a friend of the doctor's in Bournemouth, where she will be able to get the rest she so much needs, and also be near enough to visit James from time to time.

So far as the future is concerned it seems clear that Netherton can no longer be the home and the centre of enlightenment and inspiration it has been for so many since James and Dorothy moved there from Barley 15 years ago. In reaching this and other decisions they have had the help and advice of a little group of friends who, at their invitation, have met from time to time, and most recently only a few days ago.

One thing is certain. Neither James nor Dorothy would wish you to think of this letter merely as a tale of woe. Rather they would have us share in their gratitude for all that they have been able to achieve together, and to rejoice in the fact that James's work continues to make its mark in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, not only through the Library which bears his name in Southampton University, but also through the ever increasing number of quotations from or references to him in the growing literature in this field.

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It is especially gratifying to know that James is the latest recipient of the Buber-Rosenzweig Medal awarded annually by the West German Co-ordinating Council for Jewish Christian Cooperation. The text of the Citation reads :

The German Coordinating Council of Societies for Jewish Cooperation presents Dr. JAMES PARKES

The historian of antisemitism

The pioneer of Christian-Jewish understanding and the founder of the James Parkes Library

with the

BUBER-ROSENZWEIG MEDAL of the German Coordinating Council

Finally, James and Dorothy bid me assure you of their friendship and affection and their gratitude for yours. You will, I know, have them in your thoughts and prayers, and as opportunity presents itself keep in touch with them. Their present addresses you will find below, but since

it is uncertain how long they will remain where they are I shall be very happy if you care to use mine as a forwarding address. And if I can be of help in any other way please do not hesitate to let me know.

With kindest regards
James Parkes

Addresses

The Revd. Dr. James W. Parkes

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National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council

55 West 42nd Street, New York, N. Y. 10036

(212) 564-3450

May 10, 1979

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th St.
New York, NY 10022

Dear Marc:

Enclosed is a letter I received from Larry Rubin of Philadelphia along with portions of an article in the April-May, 1979 issue of Modern Maturity, a publication of the American Association of Retired Persons.

As Larry's letter indicates, he has received a number of calls from lay leadership registering their unhappiness at an assertion on page 31 that "Christ was executed on behest of Jewish leaders."

Larry suggests, and I concur that it would be appropriate for you to raise the matter with the AARP in whatever way you deem appropriate.

I hope you will agree with us and discuss the matter with the Association. I would be interested, as would Larry, of their reaction.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Joel Ollander
National Coordinator

JO/g1
Enc.
cc: Lawrence Rubin

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Arden E. Shenker, Portland, Ore.

Ned Shulman, Allentown

H. William Shure, New Haven

Hubert J. Sidiow, Detroit

Stanley Sollins, Baltimore

Richard S. Volpert, Los Angeles

Matthew B. Weinberg, San Francisco

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Ben L. Chernow, Milwaukee

Louis J. Cohen, Metropolitan N.J.

Julian Freeman, Indianapolis

Jacqueline K. Levine, AJ Congress

Rabbi Israel Miller, New York

Ann Robison, NCJW

Rita R. Semel, AJCRW

Dr. Lou H. Silberman, Nashville

Norman D. Tilles, Providence

Judge Robert Well, Los Angeles

cooperation in the common cause of Jewish community relations

TO: John Heyman, President
Genesis Project

FROM: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

DATE: May 15, 1979

RE: THE "HAVE YOU SEEN JESUS" FILM

I appreciate your inviting me to see the preview of the roughcut of this film. This memo will detail some of the concerns that I raised during our conversation in your apartment last evening. After you have read this critique, I would welcome our talking again about how best to implement these suggestions.

At the outset, let me say that you have realized marvelously your oft-repeated intention of bringing to life the Gospel story against the background of Jewish Palestine.

There are several crucial problems; let me deal with what I believe is the most serious problem first:

The entire crucifixion episode is bad - very bad and requires radical reconstruction. In its present dramatization of the crucifixion and the Passion according to the literal rendering of the Gospel of Luke, it is not very different in its anti-Jewish impact than the Daisenberger text of the Oberammergau Passion Play. That's hard stuff, but as a friend and great admirer of yours, I owe you nothing less than that quality of honest reaction.

Granted that Jesus says several times that his death is foreordained -- "I will be rejected first, then die and be resurrected on the third day"; "the son of man will suffer much and be rejected by the people of his day;" I will be handed over to the Gentiles; "the son of man must die, but woe unto him who betrays him..."

Each of those statements are made by Jesus but softly, gently; they don't seem to register with major force as the central religious idea they represented in the aspect of Christian tradition, best formulated in the spiritual Fourth Catechesis of the Council of Trent ("Jesus foreordained his death...therefore we who wallow in sin are more guilty for his crucifixion than are the Jews...")

Counterpoised to these gentle assertions of Jesus are the weak mutterings of a marshmallow Pontius Pilate - a characterization that contradicts everything we know from Roman, Christian and Jewish historic scholarship. Pilate was a cruel, ruthless tyrant who lusted in crucifying hundreds of rebels and zealots who defied Roman oppressive rule.

As presently portrayed, Pilate is a weakling who is relentlessly pressed and finally forced by the High Priests and their Jewish followers to crucify Jesus against his (Pilate's will). Pilate's first statement is a timid line thrown away almost as a mumble: "If he (Jesus) threatens the peace, I shall look to you (the High Priests)." Pilate's strongest line is "I see nothing to cause his (Jesus') death."

Earlier, the narration says, "The multitude (obviously the Jewish multitude) arose and led him unto Pilate" Then the same multitude starts with that horrible and (unnecessarily) long screaming scene, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" In response to their incessant clamor for Jesus' death, Pilate reluctantly, seemingly unwillingly says, "Bring me the order" (for Jesus' crucifixion).

The scenario is unmistakably clear -- Jesus weakly says he has to die in order to become the ransom for mankind's sin; Pilate does not want to crucify him; the High Priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the Jewish multitude force him to change his mind and to do the Jewish bidding to crucify him. Bottom line: The Jews killed Christ. After the crucifixion, as if to drive home the point of Jewish culpability of the murder of "the Son of God" (that is, God himself), a Roman centurion standing at the foot of the cross, says movingly, "He has done no wrong!"

Not incidentally, the stage for this Jewish vengeance is set early in the film when Jesus is called to the Torah in the Synagogue, and is then driven out angrily not only by the "Jewish leaders" but by the entire Jewish congregation. The dominant image is set: the Jews versus Jesus.

Frankly, John, I don't know whether this can be revised to remove this poisonous stuff. If it can be at all, I think it will require changes along these lines:

1) Jesus has to make a major point of prophesying his own death as the will of God, without which the whole crucifixion and resurrection make no sense as a theological postulate;

2) Pilate must be portrayed as he actually was historically - a cruel, murderous tyrant who became deeply anxious over Jesus' claim to political leadership, namely, that he saw himself as the "king of the Jews" - a potential political threat to Roman domination, a focal point for fostering uprising and rebellion against Roman Empire;

3) Far less concentration of the centrality of the High Priests, Scribes and Pharisees as demanders, inciters of the decision to crucify Jesus. Without Rome and Pilate, neither the Jews nor their leaders (puppets of Rome) would have crucified him. The Sanhedrin were bereft of the power to carry out capital punishment; only Pilate and Rome had that power.

Another major point: while the Jewish birth and early nurture of Jesus as a son of the Synagogue is clear, there is no connection with the historic reality that virtually all of Jesus' ideas, homilies, parables, beatitudes, images derive from the world of religious ideas of first century Judaism, from the Pharisees' School of Love. His very claim to be the Messiah makes no sense without the Jewish belief in the Messiah which was a widespread idea in first century Palestinian Judaism.

Jesus and the disciples, while mostly Jewish in appearance, speak as if they are third century Christians. They are not. They are first century Jews, and the concrete reality of their Jewishness needs somehow to be made more explicit.

Otherwise the tragic irony becomes all the more manifest; their background is Jewish, everything they speak and think they owe to the Jews, but they become the instruments for hatred against the Jews.

So, in sum, the scenario itself must be recast to take these fundamental concerns into account. The prologue, and perhaps an epilogue too must be added to make sure that this film is not used to foster anti-Semitism.

That's a very tall order, I know, but I'm prepared to do everything I can to help you achieve it.

With warmest best wishes,

Marc H. Tanenbaum

P.S. - A bad film on Jesus could have negative repercussions on the entire Genesis Project, and that's why I am so tough in stating my case.

Secondly, the press release should be rewritten; I will send you some suggestions for revisions shortly. Please don't send it out in its present form.

bcc: Chaim Topol
Michael Manuel

MHT:RPR

Interreligious Affairs Department
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum

You may find
the enclosed
of interest -
Jim Rudin

A large, light gray watermark of the American Jewish Archives logo is visible in the background. It features a shield with a menorah in the center, the words "AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES" across the middle, and Hebrew text at the bottom.

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May 22, 1979

Rabbi James Rudin
American Jewish Committee
165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York

Dear Jim:

I appreciated the chance to meet with you and Marc Tanenbaum last week and found our conversation to be clarifying and useful. Once I hear further from Carl Smith, I'll be back in touch with you. I realize how significant the implications of a Jewish-Presbyterian consultation are and would like to make sure that any effort we make from Bloomington will be successful.

I know that you spent some time in Urbana but perhaps never visited the campus here in Bloomington. To bring you up to date on some of our activities in inter-faith activity, I'm enclosing a few brochures and clippings, which I hope you will share with Rabbi Tanenbaum.

I would appreciate being put on your mailing list and receiving the kinds of publications you were kind enough to give me.
Thank you,

With warm wishes to you both for a pleasant and satisfying Shevuot.

Cordially,

Alvin

Alvin H. Rosenfeld
Director, Jewish Studies

AHR:cc
Enclosures