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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

AMERICAN JEWISH A R C H I V E S

REPORT

on the

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE DELEGATION TO LATIN AMERICA

August 2-22, 1964

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INTRODUCTION AMERICAN JEWISH

Founded nearly six decades ago in response to a crisis situation in Russia, the American Jewish Committee has pioneered in programs of assistance to Jewish communities abroad. A major activity has been the program in Latin America, the fourth largest center of Jewish population in the world.

Since 1948, when the Latin American Office was opened in Buenos Aires, the AJC has worked with the Jewish communities of Argentina and Brazil toward four major goals: preventing the spread of anti-Semitism, securing equality of opportunity for Jews, encouraging wholesome integration, and perpetuating the religious and cultural heritage of Judaism.

A small staff of AJC representatives cooperates in a variety of ways with key leaders and organizations in these and, occasionally, in other countries. A steady stream of information, ideas, action plans and reports flows between the offices in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo and the Foreign Affairs Department in New York. The AJC foreign affairs counsel in Washington provides guidance and makes necessary contacts with U.S. Government officials and representatives of Latin American countries.

Supplementing this regular interchange over the years have been meetings and discussions with important Jewish and non-Jewish personalities. The AJC has been host at its Annual Meetings to officers of its "sister" organizations, the Instituto Judio Argentino de Cultura e Informacion and the Instituto Brasileiro Judaico de Cultura e Divulgacao, and of other Latin American organizations and institutions. Special receptions have been given for such men as General Pedro Aramburu, Provisional President of Argentina following the overthrow of the dictator Juan Peron, in which he was a leading figure; Dr. Alberto Gainza Paz, publisher of the influential Argentine newspaper, La Prensa; a group of eight committee chairmen in the House of Deputies of the Congress of Argentina; Brazilian Ambassadors to the United Nations Oswaldo Aranha and Carlos Alfredo Bernardes, Foreign Minister Horacio Lafer of Brazil. Informal visits by individuals from the U.S. to Argentina and Erazil -- and, in much larger numbers, by persons from those countries to ours -- have helped to open further channels of communication.

MISSIONS OF STUDY AND GOODWILL

In 1958, the bonds of friendship and cooperation which had been developed during the previous decade were strengthened

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by the first visit of an AJC officers' delegation to Argentina and Brazil, at the invitation of the Institutos, and to Chile and Peru. Led by President Irving M. Engel and Honorary President Jacob Blaustein, the group spent three busy weeks meeting, conferring, exploring, analyzing the situations in each place. The impact of this visit at the time and thereafter was outstanding on practically every count -- in closer relations with Latin American Jewish communities; useful contacts with government officials, Catholic dignitaries and other important personages; public relations advances for the AJC and the two Institutos; and some expansion of the AJC program.

By 1964 it was clear that the time was ripe for another journey of study and goodwill by a group of AJC officers. In the intervening years, many major changes had taken place in both the general and Jewish communities.

Within the Jewish community, there had been varying degrees of progress in meeting challenges and needs -- and sometimes setbacks had outnumbered advances. The need for AJC guidance and assistance, in ongoing fields of activity as well as new ones, was as great -- indeed, greater -- than ever. Only through an on-the-spot study by AJC leaders could the full picture be encompassed, the needs evaluated, and AJC effectiveness in meeting those needs judged. The two Institutos warmly invited a visit by the AJC; the AJC equally warmly accepted. Community leaders in Chile and Peru also sent messages of welcome. Plans were therefore made for visits to those countries.

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The members of the delegation were: Morris B. Abram, President, and Mrs. Abram; Harris Berlack, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Mrs. Berlack; Philip I. Berman, member of the Executive Board, and Mrs. Berman; Martin Gang, member of the Board of Governors; Richard Maass, Vice-President, and Mrs. Maass; Joseph Ross, Vice-President; Theodore Tannenwald, Jr., chairman of the Committee on Israel, and Mrs. Tannenwald; Simon Segal, dimector of the Foreign Affairs Department; and Mrs. Hanna F. Desser, AJC Latin American specialist.

Their objectives in the three-week, 15,000 mile mission ranged the spectrum of AJC interests on the continent:

1. To explore with Jewish community leaders areas of particular concern and ways in which AJC can be of maximum service in the future.

2. To meet with Catholic dignitaries, for three purposes -to encourage support for the decree on the Church and the Jews subsequently considered at the third session of the Ecumenical Council in September; to lay groundwork for cooperation in a program of information and education; and to stimulate closer ties between Latin American Catholics and Jews.

3. To consult with government leaders on the status and security of the Jewish communities and where necessary, as in Argentina, to express concern about the rise of neo-Nazi, antidemocratic and anti-Semitic groups, both native and foreign.

4. To confer with U.S. Government representatives on the situation of the Jewish communities and on subjects of

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interest to us as American citizens.

5. To discuss with intellectuals and opinion molders possible areas of cooperation by the AJC through its Latin American Office in combatting anti-Semitism, creating greater understanding of Jewish history and culture, advancing intergroup amity, and promoting democratic ideals.

6. To seek support for guarantees of human rights for all peoples, through the United Nations and in other ways in each country.

7. To investigate presently pertinent subjects, including research into anti-Semitism, Catholic attitudes toward Jews, and other areas; and the extent of Jewish integration into the general communities.

8. To confer with representatives of the Israel Government on relationships of Latin American Jewish communities to Israel, emigration to Israel, and other matters.

Before taking off for Brazil, the delegation spent a day in briefing and discussions with State Department experts. Many hours were also devoted to study of the background data provided by the Latin American Office and the Foreign Affairs Department, in preparation for the journey.

Following is a report on the group's activities, findings and recommendations.

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BASIC BACKGROUND

The Jews of South America, whose total number is about 685,000, are a miniscule part of the population of approximately 154,000,000. (An additional 40,000 within a total population of 69,202,000 are in Mexico, Central America and the West Indies, which are included in the complex known as "Latin America.") The largest Jewish community, in Argentina, contains 450,000 persons; the nation's population is 21,418,000. In Brazil, home of the second largest community, the proportion is 130,000 to 77,521,000 -- and in Chile, 30,000 to 8,001,000 and Peru, 4,000 to 10,365,000.

Whatever their origins, their faiths or their color, the peoples of Latin America are generally affected by the same basic factors. In most places, while religious devoutness is manifested primarily by women and young children, the conservative spokesmen of the Catholic Church are still an important force -- though encouragingly liberal elements have begun to speak out and to act in recent years. The armed forces often play a major role, even in countries where democratic procedures are prescribed by law, in deciding how nations shall be ruled and by whom. Such changes in government frequently are sudden, sometimes violent, and always hold the seeds of future conflict among clashing factions.

The vast inequities in land ownership that stem from the colonial era, with a tiny percentage of "old families" owning the bulk of the best land, continue to plague much of the continent;

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the pace of land reform is agonizingly slow. This and other injustices create increasing bitterness among the millions of poor, ignorant and submerged Indians, mestizos, Negroes and mulattoes who face a daily struggle to remain alive. Between the two extremes is a relatively small middle class -- in which members of the Jewish community are usually found -- that is growing wherever industrial progress exists, but just beginning to be really significant in economic and political circles. Everywhere the populations mount, at the fastest rate in the world, outstripping food production and impeding development.

Economic bright spots illuminate some areas, but mainly the picture is one of increasing inflation, rising prices, labor unrest and serious unemployment, especially of great numbers of the illiterate and unskilled. "Single-crop" countries dependent on world market prices are especially vulnerable. The flight from the land to the city, typical of so many parts of the world, is now almost endemic in most of Latin America; unrest breeds on the lack of sufficient homes, jobs, educational and other facilities in the metropolitan centers. Corruption in both public and private sectors is a continuing evil.

Wherever such conditions prevail, totalitarians of the left and the right foment disquiet and disorder -- and Latin America is no exception. Communism and Castroism enlist enthusiastic adherents, prepared to triumph in "the final encounter." Nationalists, "Nasserists" and neo-fascists --

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practically all strongly anti-Semitic -- also labor to destroy the democratic fabric. The Arab League's current campaign of virulent anti-Semitism has introduced a new divisive trend in Argentina, and to a lesser extent in other countries.

The propaganda appeals of these groups are aimed at the poor and jobless, and at the youth -- particularly students -who today make up more than half the population in many places. In the present circumstances of many Latin American countries, their appeal is potent. Unless conditions improve appreciably and soon, it will be dangerous.

After years of comparative neglect, the U.S. Government is deeply aware of the problems of the southern continent, which President Kennedy described as "the most critical area in the world." American aid programs tailored to the various needs of different countries are under way or being planned. The Food for Peace program has scored important successes. The Alliance for Progress -- designed, in the words of Vice-President-elect Hubert H. Humphrey, "to be a peaceful alternative to violent revolution in meeting the challenge of an unjust socio-economic order" -- is beginning to produce real accomplishments. Loans by the Agency for International Development, encouragement of loans by the Inter-American Development Bank, "program loans" along Marshall Plan lines (now going to Colombia and Chile), and encouragement of increasing private investment in several countries -- these and other moves have helped prime the economic pump.

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Despite U.S. declarations of good intentions and concrete assistance, doubt and suspicion of "the colossus of the north" still cloud the attitudes of many Latin American leaders. Workers' groups continue to brand this country as a supporter of the privileged classes. The privileged classes in turn, stung by charges of resistance to any change in the status quo, criticize the United States for aiding underdeveloped nations elsewhere and denying sufficient help to Latin America. On the other hand, President Charles de Gaulle's efforts to reinstate French influence and stir up "third force" sentiment have met with general disinterest.

During their travels, the members of the AJC delegation were acutely aware of these factors and, as American citizens, were concerned about their impact not only on the Jewish community but on all the peoples of the continent.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Certain salient facts hold true for the Jewish communities of the countries visited by the delegation, as for others in Latin America.

While historically they can relate themselves to the early days of settlement -- primarily Spanish in origin -several centuries ago, today these communities are comparatively young ones. Their development took place mainly in the 20th Century, and their original numbers were greatly increased by refugees from Hitler's tyranny and the emigration that followed

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the two World Wars. They came first largely from Eastern and Central Europe and then from North Africa, the Near East and Western Europe. They brought with them the traditions of their ancestors, the energy and drive of newcomers eager to settle and "make good," and a deep desire to live in freedom and peace.

Everywhere they established communal organizations to provide for the religious, educational, cultural and welfare needs of the communities. The buildings and facilities they created to further these activities are concrete evidence of their sense of rootedness and their determination to be selfsufficient. Their schools -- both those offering inclusive all-day instruction and those providing supplementary religicus education -- are mostly of a high calibre. The all-day sencel in Lima, an outstanding example, provides training to the college level; another, in Chile, serves a number of non-Jewish children. The network of hospitals, children's and old people's homes, summer camps, community and sports centers has grown steadily in numbers, scope and usefulness. Several are noted for service to the general as well as the Jewish community.

In most places the establishment of a religious congregation and then a synagogue and the founding of burial society were the first communal activities. These were generally followed by the organization of religious classes for children, which eventually became the schools of today. But this vital area is suffering from a shortage of rabbis and teachers to educate and guide the youth; paralleling it is a lack of

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adequate and sufficient educational materials of all kinds for all age groups. The danger of assimilation through lack of knowledge of Judaism, and thus of interest in maintaining Jewish life and Jewish identity, is ever-present in the minds of community leaders.

Many of the organizations and congregations reflected the places of origin and the special customs of their founders. This tendency to maintain separate identities along such lines still persists. But there is a growing trend toward amalgamation, and several coordinating bodies have been formed to handle community problems and meet future needs.

Stemming from a variety of cultures and possessing diverse skills, Latin American Jews have made many contributions to the countries of their new citizenship. Wherever it is legally possible -- for certain laws discriminating against all naturalized citizens limit such activity in some countries -- Jews, especially those of the second and later generations, participate actively in public and professional life. They sit in legislatures and sometimes in cabinets, hold important posts in the mass media, and are among the intellectual leadership. They are distinguished lawyers, physicians, scientists, engineers, architects, professors. They have helped to develop new industries and to expand trade and commerce.

While discrimination exists, especially on the social level, it is not a major factor. The extent of organized, overt and Semitism varies from place to place, with Argentina the chief

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center for propaganda, terror tactics and violence. Native necfascists, former Nazis and Arab League agents have fomented or conducted several serious anti-Jewish campaigns in that country in the past few years; sporadic incidents of unknown or unclear origin in other countries have kept the Jewish communities on the alert. Publication of sizable quantities of anti-Semitic literature, again largely in Argentina but also in Mexico, for distribution throughout the continent has been a key source of concern.

Anti-Semitic manifestations, which bring back memories of past suffering, plus the feeling that a worsening of the economic and political situation may cause such attacks to mount, have caused some members of the older generation to be fearful and suspicious of the intentions of non-Jews. Thus, even as they play useful roles in the general community, these men and women avoid becoming an integral part of it. Young people, on the other hand, tend to mingle comfortably with their Christian peers, and regard anti-Semitism as an evil alien to the essentially democratic outlook of most of their fellow citizens.

Young and old alike, with few exceptions, are pro-Zionist and enthusiastic supporters of Israel. The Ambassador of Israel in each country is an influential figure who cooperates closely with communal leaders in planning and arranging many cultural, fund-raising and other activities. Teachers and community and youth workers from Israel often fill the posts that otherwise would be empty for lack of trained personnel. Individually and

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in groups, Latin American Jews visit Israel and return with glowing accounts of the progress and achievements of the young state. But, except for an occasional spurt when major anti-Semitic attacks occur, emigration to Israel is slight in proportion to the Jewish population as a whole.

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY

The keynote of the trip was sounded by AJC President Abram in talks to Jewish community leaders, when he said:

"We have come here because we felt it was time to renew personal contacts. We want to learn about your problems at first hand, and how we can cooperate in overcoming them. We believe that, as a result of our face-to-face meetings and exchanges of communal experience, we will be able to work togethem more closely toward creating in this Western Hemisphere a better era -- not only for ourselves but for our brethren the world over, and for our respective countries.

"It is essential that we all do everything we can to promote understanding between the Latin American nations and the United States, that we help our countries in the development of genuine devotion to good inter-American relationships. As regards North and Latin American Jewish communities, we believe that voluntary cooperation between us is indispensable for the sake of all. Our agreements are much more important than any alleged differences. "Our presence here is proof of how earnestly we, as Americans and as Jews, desire to cooperate -- how earnestly we desire to march together side by side with you toward that better world for which we all yearn."

During its action-packed days, the delegation was received everywhere with cordiality, interest, personal friendship and warm hospitality. Even among some of the Jewish leaders whose organizational philosophies differ from those of the AJC, there was a genuine effort to find a common meeting-ground in the search for means of solving community problems.

In each of the four capitals, one of the first items on the delegation's schedule was a meeting with the American Ambassador and a briefing by experts on his staff. These highly productive sessions usually took several hours. From them came capsuled but comprehensive pictures of the political, economic and social conditions, the extent of democratic principles and practices, and the status of the Jews. These initial discussions not only were most helpful but gave every member of the group a feeling of pride in the high quality of the U.S. diplomatic service and the capability and efficiency of its operation.

The delegation paid its respects to and visited with the Presidents of three of the four countries. (Chile was excepted, because a Presidential election was scheduled shortly thereafter and the incumbent Chief Executive was retiring.) Aside from Peru, discussions were also held with other top-level government officials. While the subjects taken up varied

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according to the situation in each place, the questions of democracy vs. totalitarianism, anti-Semitism, and human rights were always considered.

Meetings were held with four Cardinals and one Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church. The major topic was the forthcoming third session of the Ecumenical Council in Rome, and especially the schema on the Jews which, it was expected, would be taken up there. Another important theme was the development of closer interfaith ties to promote understanding and fellowship, and to join forces against anti-democratic and anti-religious elements.

The Ambassadors of Israel conferred with members of the delegation in their offices, and also offered their hospitality for informal at-home gatherings where many of the outstanding figures in the Jewish community were fellow guests. From these well-informed officials, the AJC group gained much insight into the history, the present organization, the problems, the hopes and the relationship to Israel of the Jewish communities -- as well as the attitude toward Israel of the host countries, which generally appeared to be one of respect and esteem.

Jewish community groups and leaders, especially the Institutos in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires gave generously of their time to detailed analyses of the situation of the Jewish communities, the extent of anti-Semitism today and the likelihood of its spread in the future, specific problems and needs, and past, present and projected areas of cooperation

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with the AJC.

In their homes and in more formal surroundings, Instituto officers introduced the delegation to outstanding non-Jewish leaders of the intellectual, business and political worlds and to liberal figures in the Church. Meetings held under the aegis of the Portuguese-language and Spanish-language magazines published by the respective Institutos of Brazil and Argentina, each titled <u>Comentario</u>, brought together with the delegation some of the most distinguished thinkers and writers in Latin America today. When time permitted, special events arranged by the Institutos and the AJC's Latin American Office provided swift but penetrating views of the countries, the peoples and the cultures.

Everywhere the press exhibted keen interest in the delegation and its mission, and lively press conferences were held in each city. Front-page articles of considerable length, usually accompanied by photographs, gave tangible evidence of the news value of the delegation's activities and views. Several radio and television programs also carried extensive reports and interviews.

BRAZIL

More than three centuries ago, there was a community of Jews in Brazil, most of whom had emigrated from Portugal. The first Jews to land on these shores, in what is now New York.

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came from this group. There are few traces of those who remained, most of them having assimilated into the general community. In Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, the bulk of the Jewish immigrants arrived after World War I, with a heavy influx during and after the Hitler era. Following the 1956 revolt in Hungary and the expulsion that year of many Jews from Egypt after the Israel expedition against Sinai, Brazil opened its doors to thousands of Jewish newcomers, most of whom have already become integrated members of the Brazilian community. Today, Jews live in practically every city and town, with the largest number in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

A land of vastly differing races and cultures, Brazil has a tradition of democracy and non-discrimination. Anti-Semitism has been comparatively rare, although in the past few years there have been a number of synagogue and cemetery desecrations, daubing of walls with anti-Jewish slogans and the placing of bombs in synagogues and schools. While there is a large population of Arab origin, the Arab League apparently has not so far fostered any noticeable anti-Jewish sentiment -- but the delegation was told that this is no guarantee that such efforts may not be made, and successfully, in the future. Since many Brazilians are illiterate and easily led, it is possible that adverse economic, social or political conditions could give rise to anti-Semitism, even in this usually tolerant country.

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The delegation visited three cities: the new, ultra-modern capital of Brasilia; the former capital and one of the world's most beautiful harbors, Rio de Janeiro; and the bustling, skyscraper-dotted industrial city of Sao Paulo.

In Brasilia, the AJC group witnessed the "birth" of the Jewish community of some 200 persons who, galvanized by its visit, decided to create a formal organization. The leaders of the community -- highly-educated, thoughtful men and women, many engaged in such professions as architecture, education and the law -- met with the delegation at a reception arranged by the American Embassy in its headquarters.

The great need, as they described it in sober and moving terms, is for Jewish education. They are building a combination religious and community center, but it cannot truly come to life until it houses a rabbi-teacher, books, materials and a program of religious observance and teaching which will give Brasilia's Jews a sense of identity and "belonging." The delegation promised that the AJC would provide what help it could to reach these objectives, beginning with the donation of basic books for a community library.

In Rio de Janeiro, the Jewish community is also faced with the problem of insufficient religious leaders, teachers, community workers, schools and community centers. Dynamic leadership has not developed to the extent required for the 50,000 Jews in the city and, though there are a number of Jewish organizations, a sense of community seems to be lacking. To

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some extent, this apparently is due to the lack of interest among persons who neither involve themselves in Jewish life nor contribute funds to encourage its survival.

Those who do so, some of them officers of the Instituto, are seeking to attract others to this cause and to build a program that would meet the major needs. Deeply cognizant of the fact that Jewish young people are beginning to drift away and to lose their ties with Judaism, these leaders believe their primary task is to find means to keep the community alive and vigorous. The AJC is committed to help them in this urgent endeavor.

An important event in the Rio program was the participation of members of the delegation in the organization convocation of leaders of the newly-formed Brazilian Conference of Christians and Jews. In the past, efforts to establish such an organization had foundered on the rock of Catholic opposition, but recently --and Instituto leaders ascribed this to the spirit of the Ecumenical Council -- the Church took the initiative and indicated its readiness to move forward. The AJC representatives, two leading Rio rabbis, representatives of the Protestant and Catholic clergy, Brothers of the Jesuit and Benedictine Orders and Sisters of Our Lady of Zion met at the Convent of the Sisters for an amicable interchange of information and ideas about the Brotherhood movement and its founding in Brazil. Here again, as in other places on the continent, a gift of books on Judaism and Jewish values was promised to the library.

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The Sao Paulo Jewish community reflects the energy and enterprise of its home city, notably in the number and variety of the organizations it supports. Some, especially those engaged in welfare work, are making notable contributions.

The delegation was particularly impressed with OFIDAS (Organizacao Feminina Israelita de Assistencia Social), a 50year-old agency directed by a group of Jewish women volunteers, whose main function is the care of underprivileged children. Its efficient administration and the competence and devotion of its medical, technical and social workers earned it such respect that several Catholic organizations requested OFIDAS to take the lead in establishing the first Council of Social Agencies in Brazil -- which is now in successful operation. As is the policy of other Jewish organizations in Sao Paulo, OFIDAS does not confine its services to Jewish children and their families, nor does it keep records of the races and faiths of its clients -- but the proportion of non-Jews is believed to be at least half.

The community has also pioneered in the establishment of the partially-completed Albert Einstein Hospital. This first-rank care, medical training and research center, which promises to be one of the finest institutions of its kind in Latin America, will be another Jewish agency that draws no lines of color or creed among those it serves.

In this area, the delegation learned again that -- even though trained, hard-working volunteers manage to fill some gaps --there is a great need for community and social workers. This

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perennial question was discussed with Instituto leaders and the idea of creating a training school for young Brazilian Jews was put forward.

Other major needs analyzed by the delegation and Instituto leaders were: 1. Broader participation by Jews in political and civic affairs, to demonstrate their involvement in the nation's life. 2. A carefully planned educational and public relations campaign to acquaint the general public with the contributions of Jews to Brazilian society as a whole. In this context it was recommended that the Portuguese-language Comentario, which has become a potent spokesman for the Jewish community in intellectual circles, should be transformed from a quarterly journal to a bi-monthly. 3. Improved cooperation and coordination of the activities of Jewish organizations, to make more effective use of available resources and to advance present and future programs.

Among the leading personalities in Brazil with whom the delegation conferred were: President Humberto Castelo Branco; The Hon. Alvaro Moutinho Ribeiro da Costa, President of the Supreme Court of Brazil; The Hon. Auro de Moura Andrade, President of the Senate; The Hon. Paschoal Rainieri Mazzini, President of the House of Representatives; U.S. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon; His Eminence, Jaime Cardinal de Barros Camara; and Israel Minister Avigdor Shoham, in Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro. His Excellency, Most. Rev. Don Antonio Maria Alves de Siquiera, Archbishop of Sao Paulo; Congressman Antonio Cunha Bueno; Israel Consul-General Leon Feffer; and former Foreign Minister Horacio Lafer, in Sao Paulo.

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ARGENTINA

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In Argentina, where Jews have lived since Spanish colonial days, barriers to Jewish immigration and freedom of religion ended with the proclamation of the National Constitution in 1853. The first communal organization -- the Congregacion Israelita de Buenos Aires -- was established in 1870. Seventy-five years ago, the Jewish community began to grow in earnest with the launching of the first of a chain of cooperative agricultural settlements by the Jewish Colonization Association which was founded and financially supported by the noted philanthropist, Baron Maurice de Hirsch. Twothirds of the present community live in Buenos Aires, and the balance in some 600 towns and cities throughout the country; some 70 per cent are native-born.

The largest Jewish community in Latin America today, it is also the most beleaguered by anti-Semitic forces. Since the visit of an AJC delegation in 1958 -- a period which included the capture of Adolph Eichmann in Argentina and his subsequent trial and execution by the Government of Israel -each year has witnessed more vicious propaganda campaigns and more violent attacks, some supported openly or covertly by religious and military figures. By 1964, the poison had penetrated to the halls of the national legislature where some members of the Chamber of Deputies publicly questioned the patriotism of Argentine Jews and the propriety of Jewish members of the Chamber serving there, and one deputy proposed an investigation of "Zionist" activities in which the AJC's Latin American Office director was named as a potential subject for such inquiry. The report of <u>The New York Times</u> about the latter noted "a striking similarity in language as well as in arguments between Mr. Cornejo Linares' proposal and the early anti-Semitic edicts of Nazi Germany."

One of the alarming aspects of the situation was that, although two of the most active anti-Semitic groups, the Tacuara and the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista, had been legally outlawed in 1963, the police and the courts appeared to be almost completely uninterested in enforcing this decree, emboldening not only these subversive elements but encouraging others. Meanwhile, Arab League agents with vast financial and other resources at their disposal had been fomenting further divisive hatred against Argentine Jews and supporting the neo-fascists in a variety of ways, under the transparent guise of "anti-Zionism." The delegation learned that some 150 incidents of violence had occurred in the previous three months, without any arrests and with scant notice by the press.

These developments were a source of serious concern to the Instituto leaders and others with whom the AJC group conferred. They felt that the recurring terrorist drives could be checked only if there were first a real awareness by government officials of the danger to the country's democratic system and the security of its citizens, and then a determined

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effort by the forces of law and order to use every legal means to end them. They expressed the hope that the new administration of President Arturo Illia would take appropriate and continuing action, and that it would be firmly supported by those churchmen and other influential persons who have spoken out against anti-Semitism.

The ever-present dangers confronting Argentine Jewry and the anxiety expressed by many community leaders were in the forefront of the delegation's discussions with Jews and non-Jews, private individuals and government and church officials. The assignment of a police escort to the AJC group during its stay in Buenos Aires, on the grounds that its safety required such precautions -- and the armed attack by terrorists on former President Frondizi which occurred at the time -served to underline the gravity of the situation.

The delegation spoke at length with Jewish community leaders about ways and means to counter the threat, and left the city determined to provide as much AJC assistance as possible. One of the first steps, it was agreed, would be to create a fact-finding service to determine the scope and depth of anti-Semitic activity in Argentina and other Latin countries. Another would be to conduct a campaign of information and education, to reach the people at large as well as those in positions of power and authority. In addition to exposing the divisive tactics of the anti-Semites, such an effort would aim at encouraging the concept of a pluralistic society

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in which many diverse elements are bound together by a sense of national unity and motivation. It would also seek to improve the "image" of Argentine Jewry by publicizing its useful contributions, past and present, to the country's life.

Exploration of the structure and patterns of community life revealed many of the same problems as in Brazil -- and to be found later in Chile and Peru. There are numerous organizations but no true sense of unified purpose. The allegiance of many people to "parties" similar to those in Israel further complicates the situation. The older and younger generations do not see eye to eye with regard to the perpetuation of Jewish life -- and, to the concern of the elders, a small number of the youth are becoming attracted to leftist movements and are spurning Judaism. Educated, active community leadership is scarce, as are trained professional community workers. There is no clear-cut, ongoing program of public and community relations.

An effort to overcome the shortage of qualified community workers is the relatively new School for Community Leadership in the Sociedad Hebraica, the comprehensive community and cultural center in the heart of Buenos Aires. This School and its Library of Jewish Documentation -- both of which the AJC helped to establish -- now provides part-time training to a small group of young people who are considering careers in community work. As of now, this is essentially a "pilot project" designed to inspire young Argentinians to enter this field. One day, it is hoped, it will be a major Jewish institution,

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capably serving its own community and sparking the creation of similar schools elsewhere.

In Buenos Aires, as elsewhere, the delegation sought to secure the background, the facts and the opinions of Jewish leaders and informed non-Jews, to determine where and how the AJC can serve best.

Among the leading personalities in Argentina with whom the delegation conferred were: President Arturo Illia; Vice-President Carlos Perette; Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Zavala Ortiz; Minister of Economy Juan Carlos Pugliese; Congressman Oscar Murmis; U.S. Ambassador Edward M. Martin; His Eminence Antonio Cardinal Caggiano; and Israel Ambassador Joseph Avidar.

CHILE

The Jews who lived in Chile in the 17th Century suffered sorely under the Inquisition, and many took refuge in the silent world of the <u>marranos</u>, the secret practitioners of Judaism. It was not until the end of the first decade of the 20th Century that an official Jewish community was born. The great majority now lives in Santiago, with a relative handful of families in other parts of the country. Many originally settled in Argentina and thus came to Chile with some experience in living in a Latin culture.

Today, except for the sporadic efforts of a few neo-Nazis -which are usually swiftly ended by government authorities acting

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according to Chilean law -- there are no signs of overt anti-Semitism. On the social level, nationality groups tend to have their own clubs, such as the British Club and the French Club, and there is also a Jewish Club. Generally, Jews are respected and participate in many aspects of Chilean life. The spirit of the country is essentially democratic, as was demonstrated in the free and quiet Presidential election which took place early in September.

In talks with the Ambassador of Israel, community leaders and others, the delegation once more heard about the great unfilled needs in religion and education. The concept of a "Jewish Peace Corps" of rabbis, teachers and community workers, to be recruited mainly from the important seminaries in the United States for brief terms of "sacrificial service" in such places as Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, was discussed at some length. The AJC officers agreed to explore the possibility of mobilizing American Jewish organizations to act in this area,

The lack of basic materials such as publications, tape recordings, exhibits and slides, which are urgently needed for Jewish survival in the smaller and more isolated communities, gave rise to the idea of a Community Service Program in cooperation with local organizations. This, it was agreed, should be patterned on the program carried on successfully by the American Jewish Committee, the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Europe, with local modifications as needed.

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The delegation found that Santiago's alert and progressive leaders are greatly concerned about the future of the community, and eager to work with the AJC in developing new programs. They expressed particular interest in having AJC cooperation in a scientific study of the composition, outlook, relationships and aims of Chilean Jewry, to be conducted by volunteers working under expert supervision. They consider this an essential first step in determining future action in solving major problems.

Among the leading personalities in Chile with whom the delegation conferred were: Minister of Foreign Relations Julio Philippi I_zquierdo; Minister of Labor Miguel Scweitzer; Senator Angel Faivovich; Deputy Jacobo Schaulsoln; U.S. Ambassador Charles W. Cole; His Eminence, Raul Cardinal Henriquez Silva; Israel Ambassador Uri Naor; and Israel Consul Samuel Goren.

PERU

Peru's capital, Lima, was also the capital of the Inquisition under the Spanish rule. Many Jews lost their lives to the religious fanaticism of that time, while others -- as in Chile and other lands -- joined the ranks of the <u>marranos</u>. In 1870, the community was reorganized by a small body of Jews from Germany and Alsace. Today there are some 1,350 families in Lima and a few in Arequipa. As in most other Latin American countries, the largest proportion is of Ashkenazi origin;

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about one-seventh is Sephardi, and a slightly larger number of German origin.

Latent anti-Semitism exists, especially among the ignorant and downtrodden masses, but so far has not been manifested in any serious form. Arab League propaganda is beginning to be disseminated, and the community is maintaining a vigilant watch to determine its impact.

The major Jewish groups work together in harmony; the presidency of the community organization is rotated among them. They cooperate in maintaining the Leon Finelo School, which is outstanding of its kind on the continent and the main instrument of Jewish survival in Peru. Some 85 per cent of the Jewish child population, the largest proportion of any community, attend the school.

While the education picture is bright, Peruvian Jewry faces the same arid areas in religion as other communities -and its thoughtful leaders are equally concerned. It also requires an infusion of books, publications and other materials. And finally, like so many Latin American Jewish communities including even the largest ones, it needs the reassurance that it is not forgotten -- that larger and stronger communities are interested in its welfare, are ready to come to its aid when threats arise, are willing to give of their bounty and show the way to a better life as Jews and as citizens.

Among the leading personalities in Peru with whom the delegation conferred were: President Fernando Belaunde Terry:

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U.S. Ambassador J. Wesley Jones; His Eminence, Juan Cardinal Landazuri; and Israel Ambassador Netanel Lorch.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The American Jewish Committee delegation is convinced that there must be a significant expansion of the program in Latin America to meet urgent needs.

Prime among these is the challenge posed by the rapid growth of anti-Semitism in Argentina, involving violence against the Jewish community by neo-Nazi and neo-fascist elements, which has been aggravated by **subversive** activities of Arab League agents. The Committee's know-how in this field must be applied with greater depth not only in Argentina but in other parts of the continent, where political and economic instability may open the door to anti-democratic and anti-Jewish forces.

Of equal importance is the need to strengthen the fabric of community life, in order to create a true sense of identity and continuity, and to enable Jews throughout Latin America to attain a more vital role in the countries in which they live. The American Jewish Committee must therefore expand its currently limited educational, scientific research and intergroup relations programs beyond Brazil and Argentina into other places where the need is enormous and the resources few.

Whether they be menaced by physical attack and vicious propaganda or by the slow decay of ignorance of Jewish

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tradition and learning, the fate of Latin American Jewry is of deep moment to us all. Our organizational strength has been often marshaleddto aid fellow Jews confronted by crisis situations in other parts of the world. It must be so marshaled now.

The American Jewish Committee delegation recommends that the following major activities be initiated or broadened in 1965:

 Creation of a fact-finding service on the scope, extent and significance of anti-Semitism, the activities of anti-Semites and anti-Semitic organizations and related matters throughout South America.

2. Creation of a follow-up program to the action of the Ecumenical Council with regard to the schema on the Jews, including especially areas of cooperation with liberal Catholic elements. Preliminary to developing such activity, it would be necessary to make a careful study -- primarily in Rome but also on the local scene -- of Catholic attitudes, publications, educational approaches, etc. concerning Jews.

3. Establishment of a social research division in the Latin American Office for scientific research into Jewish attitudes and integration, and self-studies and censuses of Jewish communities.

4. Establishment of a Community Service Program for most of the countries in Latin America, especially those with small and isolated communities. This would be similar in scope and objectives to the program now operating in Europe,

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but tailored to local needs. It would be conducted in cooperation with other leading American Jewish organizations and Latin American Jewish groups.

5. Assistance to the newly-organized Jewish community of Brasilia, which has requested help specifically for the development of the youth center and a small library, plus aid in establishing educational and cultural projects for young people. This would be carried out in cooperation with the Brazil Instituto.

6. Establishment of and aid to special libraries, such as the Interfaith Library of the Christian-Jewish Brotherhood of Rio de Janeiro, the Library of Judaica of the University of Sao Paulo, the Chair in Hebrew Studies of the University of Rio de Janeiro, and the Human Relations Library of the Rabbinical Seminary of Buenos Aires.

7. Assistance in the expansion of the two <u>Comentario</u> magazines, in Portugese and in Spanish, to enable them to publish bi-monthly and to circulate more widely among intel-lectuals and opinion molders.

8. Creation of a Seminar for Jewish Community Leadership in Santiago, along the lines of the School for Community Leadership in Buenos Aires, to serve as a pilot project for similar undertakings in other countries.

9. Assistance to smaller communities in Uruguay, Peru, Chile and countries in the northern part of South America, through the services of a professional person working out of

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an office in Santiago.

10. Exploration of available resources in the United States to provide much-needed rabbis, teachers, community workers and others, for service to the entire community and especially to the youth.

This program can be successfully carried out only if the skills and experience of the entire American Jewish community are enlisted, and the AJC should seek to do so as swiftly as possible. Similarly, AJC cooperation with local Jewish bodies in Latin America should be intensified.

HFD:FAD

November, 1964

Report on Argentine Anti-Semitism Subsequent to AJC Delegation Visit in August, 1964

There is no question about the fact that the visit of the American Jewish Committee delegation to Argentina has been effective on different levels.

The visit 1) focussed world attention on the growing anti-Semitism there, which is embarrassing to its democratic government, and 2) as a result, the Argentine leaders are examining the situation more closely in order to learn the dimensions of the problem and what means can be taken to subdue and discredit the irresponsible groups who have been inciting anti-Semitism.

AJC's Foreign Affairs Department reports the following developments:

. Hussein Triki, director of the Arab League's South American office located in Buenos Aires, has left Argentina, and the League publication, <u>Arabe Nacion</u>, has not been issued since he left. (We understand there is a new director with a large staff. Experts say activity will take a new direction going underground--possibly working through the Peronists.)

--Argentine President Arturo Illia sponsored a bill inter the Chamber of Deputies that provides prison terms for persons convicted "of attacks or segregation in social acts because of religion or race."

--On October 26, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jewish settlers from Russia, President Illia warmly praised the contribution of the Jewish community to Argentina's growth. Other members of the Argentine cabinet, notably, Vice-President Carlos H. Perette and Interior Minister Carlos S. Palermo, have utilized every occasion to comment favorably on the Jews.

--Officials of the Argentine Embassy in Washington, D.C. have met with leaders of the AJC to keep them informed of the government's actions to control anti-Semitism.

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REPORT TO THE PRESS

ON LATIN AMERICA BY

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE DELEGATION

"Argentina's 450,000 Jews feel more insecure today than they did six years ago," AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE leaders reported at a press conference on their return from a three-week, 15,000-mile goodwill and study mission to four South American countries. The situation among Jews in Argentina appeared much more uncertain now than during the last visit there of the Committee leadership in 1958, the delegation said.

"While we do not doubt the goodwill of the Argentine leadership in government, of the Catholic Church and of the press, their techniques in opposing anti-Semitism are ineffective," Committee President Morris B. Abram, who headed the delegation, asserted. Mr. Abram went on to point out that:

--Although the Argentine Penal Code outlawed the neo-fascist, anti-Semitic <u>Tacuara</u> and <u>Guardia Restaurandora Nacionalista</u> in May 1963, there has been a proliferation of such groups and increased violent activities, with ineffectual enforcement of the law. More than 150 incidents of violence against Jews involving death, bombings, etc., have been reported in the last three months without any arrests. Yet the newspapers have underplayed these stories.

--Some members of the Chamber of Deputies have publicly questioned the patriotism of Argentine Jews and the propriety of Jewish members of the Chamber serving in such national positions. One deputy has even proposed an investigation of Zionist activities in the country.

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--Subsequently, in August, Deputy Juan Scaliter introduced a resolution stating "...that in Argentina it will not be permitted to allow questions relating to differences in race and religion." The resolution has not been passed.

Mr. Abram said that Argentina was a democratic country, not ordinarily given to violence, and therefore the increasing incident of violence toward the Jews were of serious significance. He stressed the importance of government and church leaders taking affirmative action to deal with the potentially explosive situation Mr. Abram stated that the delegation emphasized to these leaders the critical importance of translating their views, as privately expressed to it, through affirmative public action and follow-up.

Further, the delegation pointed out to Foreign Minister Zavala Ortiz of Argentina that his earlier statements to the American press, drawing a parallel betweel Jewish and Arab communities in Argentina and the Arab-Israeli situation, created great misunderstanding and played into the hands of extremist elements.

Mr. Abram and the delegation, which visited six major cities in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru, reported that the more than 600,000 Jews in those countries are participating in various aspects of national life and are contributing to economic and intellectual progress everywhere.

"But," Mr. Abram stated, "if economic conditions continue to deteriorate as they have been doing in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, reactionary elements from within and outside the South American continent would find it relatively easy to use the Jews as scapegoats."

This is especially true in Argentina, according to Mr.Abram. "There," he said, "the situation is potentially grave because neo-fascists have been encouraged and financed by agents of the Arab League.

"For their own political reasons," the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE president continued, "these agents are spending enormous sums of money to set group against group and divide the Argentine people. They have adopted the outworn cover of anti-Zionism as a way of expressing anti-Jewish sentiments and are using this tactic in an attempt to promote hatred against the Argentine Jewish - more -

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community, as well as against other Jewish communities in South America."

Mr. Abram noted that Jews and Arabs have lived harmoniously together in Argentina and that these new tensions are the result of Arab League provocation. He added:

"The struggle for order and stability now being waged by President Arturo Illia and other supporters of demccratic government in Argentina is being increasingly complicated by sowers of hatred and disunity."

Concerning the general situation in the four countries, Mr. Abram stated that, with the exception of Peru where the economy seems to be fairly stable at present, the delegation found widespread inflation, rising prices, unemployment and evidence of increasing unrest among poorer elements of the population in some places.

"We met with President Humbert Castelo Branco in Brasilia, Fresident Arturo Illia in Buenos Aires, and President Fernando Belaunde Terry in Lima, and with foreign ministers and other govern ment officials," Mr. Abram said. "Our overwhelming impression was that these civic leaders are struggling to satisfy the pressing present needs of their people and to meet the pressures of the expectations for a better future which are evident everywhere in South America, in an orderly and democratic fashion. They are in a race against time, and some are facing determined and vicious attacks from extremists of various political shadings. In terms of aid from outside the continent, there is still much to be done by government agencies and private investors."

The delegation found what Mr. Abram termed "a critical" shortage of qualified rabbis, teachers, social workers, youth leaders and other professional persons whose services are greatly needed by Jewish communities everywhere in South America.

Mr. Abram said the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE was going to seek the active cooperation of Jewish educational, religious and social welfare organizations in the United States to meet this need. This would be similar to the Peace Corps, he said.

"These communities," he said, "are in a condition similar to - more -

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that of the European Jewish communities after World War II. The resources of trained man- and woman-power, bocks and other essential publications, educational aids and guidence in organizing communal activities are almost everywhere wholly inadequate."

"The AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE," Mr. Abram asserted, "pioneered in establ ishing a community service program to help meet a similar situation in Europe. We hope to do likewise in South America in the years ahead. We will also make every effort to brin the needs of our co-religionists in this fourth largest concentration of Jews in the world -- after the United States, the Soviet Union and Israel -- to the attention of American Jews, and to serve as a catalyst in mobilizing assistance on a scale commensurate with the challenge."

The delegation was heartened, according to Mr. Abram, by its meetings with Jaime Cardinal da Barros Camara in Rio de Janeiro and Archbishop Antonio Maria Alves de Siqueira in Sao Paulo, both in Brazil; Antonio Cardinal Caggiano in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Raul Cardinal Silva Henriques in Santiago, Chile, and Juan Cardinal Landazuri Ricketts in Lima, Peru.

"All these distinguished leaders of the Roman Catholic Church," he reported, "expressed great interest in the delegation's mission, and indicated their support for the decree on the Jews which is expected to be on the agenda of the Ecumenical Council in Rome in September."

In each country, the delegation met with the American Ambassador, leaders of the Jewish community, the Israel Ambassador, and top-level figures in intellectual and cultural circles. The Instituto Judio Argentino and the Instituto Judeo Brasileiro, "sister" organizations of the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, were hosts at events in Argentina and Brazil sponsored by the widely-known Spanish-language and Portugese-language <u>Comentario</u> magazines published by the Institutos.

Members of the delegation, in addition to Mr. Abram and his wife, were: Harris Berlack of New York City, Chairman of the AJC's Foreign Affairs Committee, and Mrs. Berlack; Philip I. Berman of Allentown, Pennsylvania, member of the Executive Board, and

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Mrs. Berman; Martin Gang of Los Angeles, California, member of the Board of Governors; Richard Maass of White Plains, New York, Vice President, and Mrs. Maass; Joseph Ross of Detroit, Michigan, Vice President; Theodore Tannenwald, Jr. of Scarsdale, New York, Chairman of the Committee on Israel, and Mrs. Tannenwald; Dr. Simon Segal, Director of the Foreign Affairs Department, and Mrs. Hanna F. Desser, AJC Latin American specialist.

The AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, pioneer human relations agency in the United States, maintains an overseas program for the advancement of human rights. It has offices in Paris, Buenos Aires Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Tel Aviv. Founded in 1906, its program is devoted to combating bigotry, protecting the civil and religious rights of Jews and advancing the cause of human rights

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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y. • PLaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom, New Oficina Latinoamericana • Libertad 773, Buenos Aires • 44-9929 • Cable Wishcom, Ba U(WGVA-) October 23, 1964

TO Dr. Simon Segal

FROM Buenos Aires Office

RE: <u>Report on Anti-Semitism in Argentina worked out by the B.A. staff</u> and printed in a widely circulated magazine.

The real big highlight of our public relations work through the whole year has been the publication of a well documented report on anti-Semitimism, for public consumption, in the last issue of the widely circulated Time-Life Publishers sponsored general magazine <u>Panorama</u>. The article embraces eight pages of the weekly and a dozen of photographs. Main subjects are heavily headlined.

It was consistently and thoroughly worked out for weeks by our staff and it finally appeared under the responsible signature of Carlos A. Velazco, current staff-member of <u>Panorama</u> as well as steady contributor to <u>Comentaric</u> (where he also wrote an article on the former Arab League representative Triki's anti-Semitic tricks - see issue # 39). Of course, it demanded a big effort and unusual carefulness in order to be as objective as possible and to show the readers a real picture of the anti-Semitic affaire in Argentina.

The report is naturally centered around the Arab League's campaign against Zionism that conceals their aims to poison the Argentine people's mind with anti-Jewish hatred. Statements by Mr. Jose Isaacson, Editor of "Comentario", and Dr. Mario Schteingart, President of the Instituto, as well as Mr. Eugenic Hendler, professional head of the Instituto, are repeatedly quoted. The conclusions of Prof

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Germani's study on anti-Semitism are brought over with explicit reference to "Comentario". The stories about Tacuara, Father Meinvielle and the youngsters trained to become Jew haters, are carefully analyzed.

10-23-64

We don't think necessary to translate it in full since the subjects dealt by the article were exhaustively reported and commented by this office on due time along the past two years.

Big space is devoted to the machinations of the Arab League in B.A. and its overt attacks against the Jewish community through <u>Nacion Arabe</u>, in the best old tradition of Goebbels-and its system of slander and lie. (In this connection, <u>Nacion Arabe</u> once said among its "truths" that during his electoral campaign the recently elected President of Chile, Mr. Eduardo Frei, had expressed himself as.an anti-Zionist, when being especially interviewed. You'll see that we got to carry in the article of <u>Panorama</u> a photostatic of a letter by Mr. Frei to the Editor of "Nacion Arabe" stating that he did not remember neither having had interviews such as the mentioned by the Arab magazine, nor having made any judgements on that matt i.e. showing that it was a fake of Triki's propaganda.)

There are ample references to the inter-faith action of organizations like the Jewish-Christian Fraternity and a group of good-hearted Catholic priests and the efforts being made to promote better relations between different groups and brush off so many steretypes around the Jewish image that the anti-Semites try to stir up

"When the Government and the religious organizations are against -both in theor and practise- anti-Semitism, this problem never reaches big proportions", said Mr. Abram, President of the AJC. The article ends with a quotation of one of Mr. Abram' interviews here and briefly summarizes the work being done in this field in the U.S.

It is worthwhile to mention that the cover of <u>Panorama</u>'s issue advertises only a few articles, among them this one about anti-Semitism in Argentina and another or devoted to the Argentine Army (showing Commander in Chief Ongania's face). It has

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Dr. Segal 10-23-64

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been really a gain to succeed in getting both articles together. Since the issuo will have to be read by the whole brass of the Army, they'll necessarily look also into the report on anti-Semitism. And this fact could be of great help for the sake of our enlightening efforts.

If you need more issues of <u>Panorama</u>, just let us know. I count on your discretion in handling the information on our part in the crystallization of this article.

P.S. Please, have Mr. Abram sending an official letter to the Editor of <u>Panorama</u>, praising his excellent report on anti-Semitism and adding that he is flattered by the fact that the report ends by quoting him. It is advisable not to mention our B.A. Office nor our services to the magazine.

The address is as follows:

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To the Editor of "Panorama", Mr. Jorge De Angeli Alem 884 Buenos Aires, Argentina

With all the best,

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Under separate cover we senderyou à copy of the above mentioned issue of PANORAMA pagest 100-110.

The American Jewish Committee

DATE: TO: FROM: For approval For your information Please handle Please talk to me about this Read and return ___Reply for my signature Returned as requested Your comments, please

Remarks:

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Excerpt from letter of Abraham Monk, dated Sept. 2, 1964, Buenos Aires

We are sending to you the English version as well as the original one of an article published by the leading Catholic monthly <u>Criteric</u>. It is signed by Father Jorge Mejia, who attended the party offered by Dr. Schteinbart at his home. Father Mejia, who speaks a fluent British English, held a lengthy conversation with Martin Gang and Harris Berlack - if I recall correctly.

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<u> Criterio</u> - Aug. 27, 1964 - Buenos Aires

"REVIEW OF THE ECOMMNICAL COUNCIL"

THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS, by Father Jorge Mejia, Editor of Criterio.

The visit recently made by the "American Jewish Committee", an outstanding organization concerned, among other noble ends, with "Sighting against discrimination and prejudice in all its forms", reminded us of the Holy Father's address to the same group in a meeting with them last May 29th which up had not been able to review yet. The text of his address is in some way a foreverd to the statement on the Jews to be discussed and voted by the Council in its coming cossion. It can be read in Spanish in <u>Osservatore Romane</u> (Argentine edition, issue 615, Ame 16th, p.1). The English version was distributed during the visit of the "Somrittee" in a photostatic of the Roman Osservatoro dated May 31st.

The Pope said that he was glad of the opportunity he was given sto confirm what is already well known concerning the attitude of the Catholic Church, and in particular of the Holy See, towards the Jews". Later on he distinguished three questions that are easily and conctimes inextricably mixed up by no few Catholics. And first is the racial question; in this regard, the Holy Father repeated the heartfold will expressed "on numerous occasions" by His voncrated Producessors; namely, "that the racial question should never be for you, or for any other ethnic group, a reason for undergoing any diminution in your human rights, which every civilization truly worthy of the name cannot avoid recognizing." The conclusions of his short address were cvidently based upon this clear stand; "No therefore ... deplore the horrible ordeals of which the Jews have been the victims in recent years." The English text is even more expressive: "We strongly deplore ... " The adverb is missed in the Italian version which we used for our Spanish translation.

The second question is a political one concerning the State of Israel although the lattor is not being mentioned by its mane. In this connection the Pope said "it is not our business to pronounce ourselves upon, especially at this time", when the opposition between Arabs and Israelies is still strong. But he desires that "just and peaceful solutions should be found", both for the "populations" who have suffered, i.e. refugees and immigrants, as well as "the interests which the Catholic Church and the other Christian churches may have therein", thus discreetly referring to the problems of religious freedom that arise from time to time in Israeli society.

The third question is a religious one and touches deeply the Hely Father who did not neglect the occasion for stating, as he just did in his encyclical "Ecclesian Suam". that he feels a "particular consideration for the Jewish religious tradition" so

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intimately linked with ours, which allows us to hope for "trusting relations" between BRAM, President JACOB BLAUSTEIN, Honorary President LOUIS CAPLAN, Honorary President LOUIS CAPLAN, Honorary President HERBERT B, EHRMANN, Honorary President IRVING L GOLDBERG, Dallas, Vice-President IRVING L. GOLDBERG, Dallas, Vice-President JACK A. GOLDFARB, New York, Vice-President DAVID LLOYD KREEGER, Washington, Vice-President JULIUS S. LOEWENTHAL, New York, Vice-President RICHARD MAASS, White Plains, N. Y., Vice-President EARL MORSE, New York, Vice-President NORMAN S. RAEB, Eoston, Vice-President JOSEPH ROSS, Detroit, Vice-President MELVIN M. SWIG, San Francisco, Vice-President

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both faiths and "a happy futuro".

Thus, the short address of May 29th gives us an hint on which frame the expected statement of the Council is going to be inscribed within. The starting point is the original unity of our religious traditions in God's scheme, as it has been repeatedly explained by St. Paul. A strictly, dutifully special appreciation for the historical and contemporary Jewish people should thus follow as well as a consistent condemnation of every form of anti-Semitism. The establishment of a part of the Jewish people in a State and on the land of their fathers (and curs) is no subject for the statement, but one may feel very happy that it happened and share the Pope's hope's for a quick solution of the problems involved.

If anybody still wonders whether this is the true tradition of the contemporary Church, since anti-Semitian is becoming a sort of sinister malady even among Catholics, he may find useful to know a paper of the "Santo Oficio" which we do not believe has been spread out enough. In the decree of March 25th, 1928 (AAS, vol.20,1928, ps.103-4) suppressing the association the association known as "Friends of Israel" for reasons one must naively ask oneself whether they are still worthy (us are not able to get now the texts and publications of that association). In this context, that could be deemed as less favourable, there is cointained is of the most explicit statements on anti-Semitism ever produced by the Holp Sate. It meads: "The Holy See, out of love, has always protected that people (Section) against unfair voxations and insofar as it disapproves any kind of envy and aversion among peoples it also utmortly(vol maxime) condemns (dannat) hatred against the people formerly chosen by Ged, the same hatred that is being known today as <u>anti-Semitian</u>. It should be born in mind that the date of this paper is 1928, when worst discriminatory measures and persecutions started in nazi Germany.

Catholics should go over these taxis and think over them in the light of the coming statement of the Council. Then, after celf-commination they possibly might add to their list of sins this certainly no slight one of anti-Semitism.

As to the local aspects of the "American Jouish Committe's" visit, it should be noted the cordial volcome the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires gave to them and the wonderful speech of the President of the delegation, Mr. Morris B. Abram, a member of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations (the same that produced a draft Convention on Religious Freeden; <u>Grite-</u> <u>rio</u>, issue 1454, June 25, 1964, ps.474-5), closing the banquet at the Alvear Palace Hotel on Thursday 13th. Hearing him one could think of the principle of immanent justice: a Christian who denies the Jew's rights is sconer or later being deprived from those of his own.

MORRIS B. ABRAM, President

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The American Jewish Committee 🔍

Institute of Human Relations + 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y. + PLaza 1-4000 + Cable Wishcom, New York

Buenos Aires, April 17, 1964

MENCRANDIM

To: Mrs. Hanna Desser

From: Buenos Aires Office

Subject: ECUMENICAL COUNCIL'S SCHEME REGARDING JEWS

Two weeks ago Catholic priests Father Jorge Mejia, editor of "Criterio", the most important Catholic periodical, and Father Alfredo Trusso, of the Argentine Episcopacy, held a meeting with the Instituto leaders Dr. Schteingart, Dr. Kurchan and Messrs. Korimblum, Liebeschutz and Hendler. Mr. Monk was unable to attend this meeting because he had at the same time another very important appointment. What follows is a brief resume of the discussion which was provided by Mr. Hendler.

The meeting was for discussing matters about the forthcoming session of the Ecumenical Council, particularly Chapter 4 regarding the Jews. Eoth priests agreed that the scheme should be - as a matter of justice - approved and they personally are convinced that there will not be difficulties in this sense, as Cardinal Caggiano, the Buenos Aires Archbishop, stated recently when a delegation of the Instituto and the Jewish Congregation met with him a few weeks ago.

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- 2 -

April 17, 1964

In their view there wouldn't be objections of a theological nature but rather those aroused by political reasons or as a product of regional problems. During the discussion there was coincidence about the need that Christians and lews take the responsibility in promoting a better understanding between both faiths and a greater coming together in social life.

It was also agreed that an active educational campaign especially among children and youngsters is needed in order to put an end to stereotypes and prejudices. In this connection a very interesting point appeared to be a proposition to revise the elemental texts of the Christian Catechesis in such a way that the religious knowledge given to Catholic boys should be inspired by the winds blowing now from Rome. Fathers Mejia and Trusso suggested to write to the General Secretariat of the Argentine Episcopacy in this connection as well as to the Bishops and the Latin American Episcopal Council with quarters in Bogota, Colombia.

It was held as very important to make contacts with the people responsible for the primitation given to those who are in charge of building up the mind of Catholic youngsters. The subject would be to meet with them, exchange views and make them know the expectations and the certainty of the Jews that strong efforts both from Jews and Catholics should be made for a better understanding, for overcoming differences and integrate into a wide spirituality upon the basis of the common origin of their religions and away from a luring growing Macrandum to Mrs. Hanna Desser - New York

With Warmest regards,

AMERICAN

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April 17, 1964

publicities and atheism without perality.

According to these suggestions, first contacts were already made and drafts of letters were discussed.

We will keep you well informed about further developments on this subject.

Japlet

Mi/cm

[end]

Original documents faded and/or illegible



September 1, 1964

The President, The White House, Washington 25, D.C.

My dear Mr. President:

I have had the pleasure of leading a delegation of the American Jewish Committee on a 14,000 mile mission to South America. We visited Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru. We met with the Presidents of Brazil, Argentina and Peru, the Foreign Ministers of Argentina and Chile, the Cardinals of all four nations, and other leaders of government, industry and society. We also had extended conversations with each of the four American Ambassadors.

We went to study the conditions of the Jewish communities in South America and of course the general political, economic and social situations from which the welfare of Jewish citizens is inseparable.

Our conversations gave us a detailed insight into the manifold political economic and social problems, which these countries are facing - problems which go far beyond the particular issue of anti-Semitism as serious as it is. With respect ' to the latter, it was vividly apparent that anti-Semitism was closely linked to anti-democratic patterns and has a direct impact on the relations between the United States and countries where these patterns exist.

The government leaders in all four countries spoke to us with obvious frankness and in several instances asked us to convey their views to our Government.

Our trip just concluded has been an experience in depth. Many of the things we have learned have application to the policies of the United States; others lie within the orbit of your personal leadership of forces working for good human relations. We would be honored to report our experiences, findings and suggestions to you at your convenience.

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MBA/a

Yours respectfully,

Morris B. Abram President

BRAZIL CITIZ-J REL

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York 22, N. Y. • PLaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom, New Yor

Rio de Janeiro, August 10, 1965

Dear Hanna,

I acknowledge receipt of your Memos dated 20 and 30 July past. I din't answer your before for lack of time, since Rabbi Agus arrived and this had, of course, burdened us more than normal times.

Re the first letter , nothing to answer. All OK now.

Re the second, I also received aletter from Mr. Harry J. Alderman, dated July 27, on the same subject and asking me samples of the mentioned books. I answered him on third, this month, and sent the books, by air mail, some days after.

The story is the following : In 1961, Prof. Monk made a research of the religious teachings in the schools in order to supply material to the Ecumencial Council. As I see from the copies of it, there were 12 pages analysing several books of catechesis, among them Priest Negromonte's also. Since I wasn't working with the AJC-Instituto on that time zax I don't know how this research came to your knowledge. The years passed over our lifes.

And, now, the brazilian-jewish weekly magazine, written in Portugueso " Acnde Vamos ? ", whose editor is Mr. Aron Neumann, published in his issue of the 17th. July, a story that in the publich schools of the Guanabara State there beeing distributed pamphlets containing anti-jewish teachings in the catechesis and used the books by Father Negromonte, which contain anti-Semitic allegations. Dr. Eskenazi and I had a conversation with Father Bertrand De Margerie, which you know from his article in our Comentario issue of the first triestre 1964. Father De Margerie agreed that Mr. Heumann's plea is right but we have not to fight in this aggressive manner(we, i.e. the jews). He added more, that there is really a need of change in the books utilised in the schools but since the only one fit to the children is Negromonte's, one use them. As to change their content, it is necessary to wait to the fourth session of the Ecumenical Council which will give the final decision. So we received an answer from a catholic clergyman that they have not, by now, other books.

But, Mr. Neumann, in the following edition wrote that in plans of work to the teachers, sent to them by the Secretariat of Education of Guanabara, beside advising to adopt Negromonte's books, they by themselves,

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put some christian anti-jewish statements. Mr. Neumann showed to Dr. Eskenazi some samples of these plans of work to the teachers but couldn't get these other which the mentioned anti-jewish allegations, but he assures they exist. I, asked some friends of mine, who are teachers in the publich schools to find them for me. Till this moment I have not nothing.

Anyhow, we continued in another field. The Secretary of Education of Guanabara, till two months ago was Prof. Flexa Ribeiro, an old friend of jews and now president of the Erazil Israel Centre of Culture. He left the office to run as candidate to Governorship of this State. Dr. Eskenazi is a friend of him and X is helping him in his capaign. He told him about this affairs and convinced him that such things could damage his election, specially in the jewish area, since all the time people knew he was the Secretary.

In this political climate, Pro. Flexa Ribeiro agreed , naturally, with Dr. Esterazi's pleas and put him in contact with officers dealing with these departments and telling them Dr. Eskenazi is authorized to ask them the necessary steps. They answered Dr. Eskenazi that they can't censor Negromonte's books. And the catholics can't change the book before the Ecumenical Council. So , Dr. Eskenazi asked the Secretariat to suspend the distirbution to the teachers of that plans of work and to bring them back from the schools. The acting Secretary of Education promised to do it and Prof. Flexa Ribeiro authorized her to sign a statement announcing that the Secretariat of Education will take measures to delete this anti-jewish teachings who are not in the spirit of a democratic society, etc. etc. This statement his ready to be signed but was not yet.

The reason why are Father Negromonte's book been utilised at first is, in my opinion, because he was the Director of Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro. He was really an anti-Semite but not a " notorious " as it was told by the JTA bulletin. I met him in 1956, during a meeting in the Embassy of Israel, discussing about catholics cooperation to Second International Bible Contest.

His books are used in the first four grades of the primary publich schools. I sent to Mr. Alderman only the first, second and fourth, but I found underlined onti-Semitic allegations only in the second and fourth, which I translate thim now and enclose here . I spoke by telephone to São Paulo, to Mr. Salomão Schwartzman, who helped on that time in the research, and he told me the third book was then out of printing and he don't know wether there are anti-jewish concepts in it.

The religious education in the publich schools is ruled by a specific law passed not long ago. The Governor Lacerda vetoed it but the House of Representatives put down the veto and maintained the law.(At this moment I have not a copy of it. Since I have one I send for you). The law says it is not obligatory religious teaching. I know there are schools where there is no religious education anyway. When the director of a school wants to give such education, the State gives him such a teacher. Also the teachers of general matters, if they want they are permitted to teach religion.

Accordingly to " Aonde Vamos ? " the prejudice phrase he found is: " The jews saig He lied when he declared himself son of God " As you can see, we, the Instituto had four years ago initiated a work in this field. Now, no other organization took any spep. I think that if we will succeed in taking off these circular plans of work and get the official statement of the Secretariat of Education, it will be a good begining.

We ask you, not to take any action, specially in the international world, publicity, should, and so on , till we inform you on the development of the matter.

In my next letter I will inform about Rabbi Agus' visit which was a success with a big visibility. By now, I asked him a favour to send to you, as he arrives in New York, the tape of his ydish radio interview. You will note that I am translating and this is because now it is forbidden to speak a foreign language in a broadcast without immediate translation.

Kind regareds Jose Steinberg

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Leu Catecismo, Nº 2, Monsenhor Alvaro Negromonte :

page 49: Jesus saved us

.......

1. On the holy thursday, after the supper, Judas delivered Jesus to the jews. They arrested Our Lord, tied his hands, put a crown of thorns on him, beated to the minh spited on the faces.

2. Jesus was God. He could kill all of them with one single word. But, in order to save us, he wanted to suffer and die.

4. They put the cross on his shoulders and have gone to the mount Calvario . At noon they crucified Our Lord. He Suffered too much. But didn't complain. He even was not hateful to the jews. He even prayed for them . At 3 p.m. Jesus inclined his head and died .

page 50 : Questions :

1. Waht did the jews to Jesus ? Why didn't Jesus escaped from the jews ?

page 55. (this page deals with the Ascension day and Pentecost) .

3. They were locked and affraid of the jews. But, receiving the Holy Spirit, they became courageous.

page 57 : Questions :

4. How were the Apostles after they received the Holy Spirit ?

Meu Catecismo , Nº 4, Monsenhor Alvaro Negromonte :

page 16 : The Church recommends the reading of the Bible, forbiding only the protestant Bibles, because they are falsifyed .

Questions :

12. What are the Bibles the Church forbids ?

page 34 : 1. The jews liked to discuss which was the most important of the commandments .

page 38 : God himself ordered to make images. By His order , the Tabernacle Moses built to keep the commandment's was completely embellished by cherubims' images and in the Ark of the Covenant there were wo golden angels - each side one .

page 76 : And Jesus felt a great sadness , previewing that his homeland would be ruined fot the lack of faith of the jews .

page 101 : The jews gave false testimony , charging Josus for telling he was king .

And Peter lied, saying he didn't know Jesus, for he was affraid of the jews.

page 120 : Questions :

1. Did the jews contributed to the worship ?

Clinest dew.

The American Jewich Committee

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S.Paulo, Caixa Postal 5491 August 11, 1965

Mrs. Hanna F. Dossor Institute of Human Relations Now York 22, N.Y.

Dear Hanna: MERICAN IEWISH

- This refers to your memorandum of July 30, caused by the JTA - of July 26.

I asked Steinberg to look into the files whether the textbooks in question have been examined when Monk and I, in 1961, looked through many dozens of books of this type.

If this were the case, the reply to you would be greatly facilitated.

With warm regards,

Yours,

Dr. Alfred Hirschberg

cc: José Steinberg, A. Monk.

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