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Marc T.

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Rome. Dinner with Cardinal J.M.G. Willebrands and Father C.A. Rijk --- Messrs. Hoffman, Bergreen, Gold, Shuster and Karlikow.

Conversation proceeded informally with several subjects of concern to us answered in the course of the exchange, in dispersed fashion. These included:

- Vatican Relations with Israel - Reference was made to the visit to the Pope of Mr. Eban. Father Rijk said he knew no more than the newspaper reports and rumors about this, but that apparently it had gone off quite well; and he noted --- as had been generally commented upon --- that this was the first time that there was such a visit. He said he did not know if there was any truth to reports in Israeli papers that the Lebanese Ambassador immediately had asked to be received on behalf of the Arab States, but had been refused. Ambassadors, the Cardinal pointed out, could not be refused, though one might hold off on time; but in any event there had been no meeting. Conversation turned to general support in the West for Israel and Father Rijk noted that this support, in general, had declined, pointing to the usual and obvious reasons for this: refugees, occupants, etc.. The growing difficulties being encountered in Jewish-Protestant relations because of the refugee problem (as evidenced at the Canterbury Conference) was pointed out by the AJC delegation, and the necessity to create greater understanding about this situation as well as for intensified efforts to help the refugees themselves. AJC pointed out, describing some of its conversations in Israel, that there was serious intention and concern to deal with this issue.

- The Christian Population in Israel - The Cardinal was asked whether there were any areas where, in his view, the situation of the Christian minority in Israel was unsatisfactory. He said that the question of the Christians in Israel had to be considered from a different viewpoint: namely, that the Christian minority in Israel had to be educated to the fact of living in Israel; and also, from a Christian point of view to come to an understanding that Israel's role in Christian salvation obviously had not ended with the coming of Christ, but was something real and contemporary for our times into which they had to insert themselves. The problem, there, was one of Christian education of Christians. He also made mention of various differences of attitudes among Christian elements in Palestine --- e.g., differences between those who had lived in the State before the June, 1967 war, and those who came under Israeli jurisdiction afterwards. Certain Christian groups in Israel as result of background differences, were more ready to accept anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish stereotypes, and that there was a major human relations job to be done. AJC mentioned what it was seeking to do in its human relations program in Israel between Jews and Arabs.

- Implementation of Vatican II Decree - Queried as to when one might expect central Vatican implementation of the decree concerning Jews adopted at Vatican II, Father Rijk referred to the work done by

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the group of theologians who met in Rome last spring at the invitation of the Secretariat to give their views about this; and continued that the matter is being pursued actively so that one might hope for evident results this coming November.

- Cooperation - Various forms of possible cooperation briefly were touched upon. Father Rijk mentioned the new Institute being set up in Jerusalem, for which he obviously had great hopes in terms of Christian-Jewish relations work. There was brief favorable reference to the Biblical Project in Holland of Dr. van Praag. Mention was made of the suggestion to the AJC group in Israel that there should be a study of how Israeli texts look upon religions and cultures other than Judaism; this being seen as a logical corollary to studies such as that of Louvain, Yale, etc., and paralleling that undertaken at Dropsie.

- Church Help in Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish action - The AJC thanked the Cardinal and Father Rijk for their personal role and that of the Vatican in interceding on behalf of Jews in Iraq and other countries. The new Libyan situation was then discussed and Father Rijk described how the Secretariat, after being contacted by the president of the Union of Italian Jewish communities, Dr. Piperno, in turn contacted the Italian Ambassador in Libya and the head of the Franciscans there. They were glad to do what they could but really did not think they had much influence with the new Libyan government, and obviously felt that the Church would have its own difficulties there too. The question of the Anti-Semitic propaganda coming out of the Egyptian embassy in Spain to Mexico was referred to as one which could have consequences for them too in that and other Latin American countries. Also, mention was made of the case of Father Menvielle and Father Rijk made it quite clear that they would continue to do what they could.

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