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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
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SECRETARIAT FOR CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS

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January 21, 1986

Dr. George Friedman
Political Science Department
Dickinson College
150 S. College Street
Carlisle, PA 17013

Dear Dr. Friedman:

I write to you personally rather than through the New York Times because of my conviction that the "Op-Ed" pages of newspapers are not the best place to carry on meaningful dialogue over complex and sensitive issues. As do many Catholics in the U.S. and around the world, especially those of us exposed to the Jewish-Catholic dialogue you so disparage, I share with you a deep sense of support for the State of Israel and also an awareness of the moral implications of the tragic history of Christian persecution of the Jewish people over the centuries. Indeed, I have dedicated my life to bringing about this reconciliation between our two peoples which, on the Christian side, must begin with repentance -- a process begun for the Catholic Church with the historic declaration of the Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate, no. 4.

This affirmed, there remains, in that very spirit of dialogue, the necessity of attempting to communicate to you personally something of my own reaction and that of many fellow Catholics to your letter in the Times.

Perhaps you are not aware, but Msgr. Oesterreicher's letter was written in reaction to an Op-Ed piece in the Times by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, who was himself reacting to statements made by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, who was reacting to statements made by Edgar Bronfman and Israel Singer of the World Jewish Congress who were in their turn attacking the views of the World Jewish Congress' own official representative (Gerhard Reigner) at a meeting of the International Vatican-Jewish Liaison Committee in Rome held in October. Interestingly, Bronfman, Singer, and Hertzberg did not attend the meeting though Gerhard Reigner and Rabbi Tanenbaum did.

The above represents, of course, only the barest outline of the events leading up to the Hertzberg piece to which Msgr. Oesterreicher replied. Suffice it to say that both Msgr. Oesterreicher's and your own letter

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intervened in a chain of events involving Catholic-Jewish relations on the one hand, and an internal Jewish difference of viewpoint on the other. Hence my reserve about adding yet another too brief op-ed piece to an already somewhat confused scene.

The Bronfman/Singer/Hertzberg views on the meeting in Rome have been characterized more recently by Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, the chairperson of IJCIC (the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations) as "ill-informed, ill-timed, and ill-conceived" (Congress Monthly, Jan. 26; p. 86); so the story may not be finished yet.

Whatever one's views, it is important to note that Msgr. Oesterreicher was reacting to what he honestly perceived as a misconstruction of the record by Rabbi Hertzberg. Thus, it was Hertzberg, not Oesterreicher, who first had "recourse to a pitiful handful of obscure statements," to use your words. Oesterreicher, in the first part of his response, was merely attempting to fill in the picture with statements Hertzberg had left out.

Hertzberg, for example, states that "Pius X opposed the return of the Jews to the Holy Land." This is false. Pius X simply declined at the time to give official support to Zionism, as Hertzl had asked. The difference, of course, is crucial, especially since Hertzberg's argument is based on a dangerously misleading interpretation of Vatican policy toward Israel. The Holy See's present attitude toward the State of Israel is to be found in Pope John Paul's 1984 Good Friday message, as Msgr. Oesterreicher rightly points out:

For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies to their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and the due tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress for every society.

Frankly, neither this nor the subsequent statement in the 1985 Vatican "Notes" affirming the "religious attachment" of people to Land and the existence of Israel on the basis of international law are at all adequately summarized in Hertzberg's assertion that the Church wants to treat Jews "as a purely spiritual entity." In my opinion, the Bronfman/Singer/Hertzberg thesis seeks to create a straw image of Vatican policy in order to denounce it. This does a grave disservice to Jews and Catholics alike.

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There do remain serious difficulties standing in the way of an exchange of ambassadors, as I understand it. But these must be accurately stated for our discussions to shed light rather than heat.

The second part of Msgr. Oesterreicher's letter, then, sought to clarify the actual state of the question on the issue of exchange of ambassadors between the Holy See and Israel. Here, he said perhaps too much and too little to do full justice himself to the Vatican stance, and was therefore open to criticism.

But your own letter, I would respectfully submit, did not help to further the discussion, descending as it did to argumentum ad hominem, complete with insinuations of "a darker meaning." Did you really wish to accuse Msgr. Oesterreicher of antisemitism for his view that diplomatic relations with the Holy See would not solve all of the problems faced by Israel? One could, I think, call his point a non ad rem to the discussion, since no one has claimed that an exchange of ambassadors would solve all of Israel's problems, only that, as you yourself urge (and I personally agree) it would be the right thing morally and diplomatically for the Holy See to do.

On such a point Catholics can validly disagree. But to call Msgr. Oesterreicher an antisemite can only be regarded by any Catholic who knows the man or his record as a flight into the far reaches of absurdity. No person has had more impact in moving the Catholic community to a positive appreciation of Judaism and of the State of Israel than Msgr. Oesterreicher.

An equal non ad rem to the discussion, of course, is your own analogy with the issue of U.S. - Vatican relations, which was, in point of fact, President Reagan's own initiative not that of the American Catholic community as you erroneously imply. So the analogy limps a bit, even at its best.

I would, along with you, reject the imposition of any sort of double standard on the State of Israel or its actions, or any sense in which an exchange of ambassadors would be "a reward for Jewish efforts at moral improvement." Re-reading Msgr. Oesterreicher's letter, I don't really think that that was what he was trying to say, though I can understand, given the brevity of the piece, how such an impression could be gained whether rightly or wrongly.

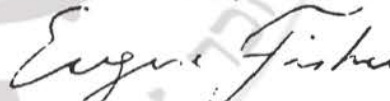
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In any event, I would equally oppose the implication in your letter that the dialogue between American Jews and American Catholics should be held hostage to a decision that is not that of American Catholics to make, but properly the decision of the Vatican Secretariat of State and of the Pope. The Holy See is well aware, I am sure, that the vast majority of American Catholics would welcome such a move, especially given the strong public support for Israel by the American bishops over the years (and also the voting patterns of American Catholics in Congress). But the Holy See does have its own agenda to pursue.

It would seem to me that the proper setting for discussion of the issue of Vatican-Israeli relations (which is not, after all, co-terminous with Catholic-Jewish relations, nor even with American Catholic-Jewish dialogue about the State of Israel and joint action in support of it) is first of all the above-mentioned International Vatican-Jewish Liaison Committee.

The dialogue between our two peoples is very new, very fragile, and with a long way to go on both sides before we can begin to be sanguine even about our ability to understand fully what we are trying to communicate to one another. The series of statements and counter-statements in which you became a perhaps unwitting participant is just the most recent case in point. I can only pray that as the dialogue continues we will all learn better the essential art of listening.

Yours in Shalom,



Eugene J. Fisher

EJF:lm

bcc: Bishop Keeler
Rabbi Waxman
Rabbi Tanenbaum ✓
Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg
Fr. Hotchkin
Msgr. Mejia
Advisory Committee
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DOMESTIC NEWS

12-09-88

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Vatican and Jews to start on anti-Semitism document in February

By David Crumm

Special to Religious News Service

DETROIT (RNS) — Preparation of a long-awaited Vatican document on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust will begin in February with a historic gathering of Jewish and Catholic scholars in Zurich, Switzerland.

"This is something that will directly and profoundly challenge the church's teaching on all levels around the world for years to come," said Eugene Fisher, head of Catholic-Jewish relations for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the only American Catholic on the Vatican committee planning the new study. Both Mr. Fisher and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee heralded the new study, which will rely, in part, on Vatican records from the World War II era.

The final Vatican document, which may take several years to complete, "will establish the tone and style and depth of the church's teaching on this well into the next millennium," said Mr. Fisher. "As people read it and contemplate it, it will have an impact on Catholic textbooks wherever they are used and teaching and preaching."

Pope John Paul II promised a document about anti-Semitism in September 1987 at an unprecedented summit meeting with Jewish leaders. At that time, Jews around the world were outraged that the pope had agreed to permit a visit from Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, who had served during World War II as an officer with a Nazi army unit. The Waldheim visit reignited perennial concerns that the Vatican did not do all it could to help Jews during the war.

"I know some Jewish leaders are asking why we have not seen a document already," said Rabbi Tanenbaum, who heads an international coalition of Jewish leaders conducting an ongoing dialogue with the Vatican. "But I wouldn't trust an encyclical that was produced in a year."

"For this document to be taken seriously and not to be seen as merely a public relations ploy, it needs a meticulous background study and we want this study," the rabbi said. "We don't want a quick fix. This study could result in an apostolic letter that would be of supreme importance."

Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, the 79-year-old head of the Vatican's interfaith activities, has helped plan the series of scholarly meetings, said Mr. Fisher and Rabbi Tanenbaum.

The new study will be sponsored by the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, a standing group of Jewish and Vatican leaders who promote interfaith dialogue, said Mr. Fisher and Rabbi Tanenbaum. The Zurich meeting will run Feb. 20-24.

Each side in the dialogue will name a panel of scholars and other religious leaders to participate in what is likely to extend through several meetings following the Zurich session before Vatican officials finally draft a document for their church, the men said.

Rabbi Tanenbaum said both Catholics and Jews "will be selecting first-line authoritative academic and religious scholars in these fields to participate. We seek to explore in depth the history of anti-Semitism in the western world over the last 1900 years with particular emphasis on how the Christian teaching of contempt (for the Jews) contributed to the Holocaust."

"We want to explore the role of the church in the Holocaust, the role of the Vatican in the Holocaust, the role of various other countries and the role of Pius XII," he said.

The scholars' research will include a comprehensive examination of 11 volumes of Vatican records from 1939 to 1945 that have been exempted from the normal 70-year waiting period for release of Vatican documents, said Mr. Fisher. The volumes have been released gradually over the past two decades, he said.

The subject is vast and the conclusions will be similarly complex, said Mr. Fisher. "Some people say the church was absolutely silent about the Holocaust, but that is false," he declared. "And other people say the church did all it could to help the Jews, and that is false, too."



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January 22, 1986

Editor

B'nai B'rith Messenger

2510 West 7th Street

Los Angeles, CA 90057

To the Editor:

In response to your editorial, "Civility Is For Us," I need to make the following clarifying statement:

I have served in Jewish public life for some thirty years. My commentary on "The New Jewish Revisionists of History" which appeared in the B'nai B'rith Messenger was the second or third time during the past three decades that I have blown my gasket publicly over what to me became an absolutely morally intolerable episode. Like the news-commentator in Paddy Chayevsky's film, "Network," I felt the human need to open the window and cry out, "I'm madder than hell, and I just ain't going to take it anymore." (Rabbis occasionally should also be allowed to act humanly.)

Contrary to your judgment, my column was not directed against Edgar Bronfman, Word Jewish Congress president, whom I respect, nor even against Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a childhood friend and colleague with whom I differ over some issues.

My anger was directed against another Jewish functionary who impetuously and recklessly -- in my judgment -- carried out a series of actions that were terribly destructive of Israel's and world Jewry's interests in relation to the Vatican and the movement of growing Catholic-Jewish solidarity in many parts of the world.

The person in question -- whom I prefer not to name in order not to prolong the heedless controversy -- participated fully in careful preparations for the Vatican meetings, agreed to the strategy that six major International Jewish organizations had worked out, and then betrayed that agreement by arbitrarily attacking all other Jewish leaders -- including three Chief Rabbis -- who took part in the October 1985 deliberations with the Vatican and Pope John Paul II.

.../

Editor
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In interviews which he (or his staff) initiated with the New York Times, the Jerusalem Post, and other publications, he publicly reviled all Jewish leaders -- including his own professional colleagues -- who were representing Jewish interests in Rome; he called the Vatican representatives (including several Cardinals, Archbishops and major theologians) "second-rate;" absurdly demanded that the Israel Cabinet "instruct" Jewish religious leaders as to what to think and what to say to the Vatican, as if Rabbis, all the elected Jewish leaders and Judaism itself were merely puppets of Israel's foreign policy.

As a result, Vatican officials demanded an official apology from that person's organizational representative in Rome. The Vatican also requested that the Israeli Embassy in Rome inform them if the Rabbis and other Jewish officials came to the Catholic-Jewish dialogue "instructed" as political representatives of the Israel government.

To say it plainly, this was the worst and most damaging experience I have had in my 25 years of work in Catholic-Jewish relations. While struggling to contain my genuine outrage, I had a rational intention in writing that column: I believe that people, especially people who presume to leadership, must be responsible for their words and actions. If there is no accountability for such absurd behavior, impetuous -- and, indeed, narcissistic -- people take encouragement from silence to repeat their tantrums.

We have real issues regarding Israel and Jerusalem to continue to resolve with the Vatican. But if this pattern of irresponsibility is allowed to continue, it will preclude any further advances in realizing the goals that all of us, including the Israeli officials I have spoken with and who share my feelings, want to achieve; namely, to bring about the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel, and to maintain and enlarge the friendship of some 800 million Catholics throughout the world for Israel, Soviet Jewry, countering anti-Semitism and other vital Jewish interests.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director
International Relations Department

MHT:RPR

VATICAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS AFFECTED BY ISLAMIC FANATICS

(An International Relations Department Background Analysis)

By Marc H. Tanenbaum

(Rabbi Tanenbaum, director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee, is an authority on Vatican-Jewish relations. He was the only rabbi present at Vatican Council II, and has just returned from a mission to Israel, Italy, and the Vatican where he participated in an audience with Pope John Paul II.)

Expectations that Pope John Paul II will visit Israel or that formal diplomatic relations will be established between the Holy See and Israel are not in the cards. Not in the near future.

I have come to that sobering conclusion after a recent three-week mission to Israel, Italy, and the Vatican. I was part of a leadership mission of the American Jewish Committee that met with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and other foreign ministry officials; Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti and Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini; U.S. Ambassador to Italy, Maxwell Rabb; and, finally, Pope John Paul II and a number of Vatican officials.

Extended conversations on the complex Middle East situation with these key actors in the Mediterranean world yielded some fresh insights:

First, contrary to public perceptions, the Vatican maintains de facto recognition of the State of Israel. When Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres met with the Pope in February he was given red carpet treatment, the full protocol accorded a head of state. That has been true of the diplomatic visits made to the Vatican earlier by such Israeli governmental leaders as Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, the late Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan, Abba Eban, among others.

On a day-to-day basis, the Israeli Embassy in Rome is in regular communication with the Vatican Secretariat of State, and other Curial officials. On a cultural level, hundreds of Catholic priests and nuns -- with Vatican approval -- study regularly in Israel.

Second, Pope John Paul II, I am persuaded, is personally friendly toward Israel and acknowledges her right to exist as a sovereign nation. In a little-noticed Apostolic Letter issued by this Pope last Easter, entitled, Redemptiois Anno, he wrote the following about Israel and Jerusalem.

"For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel, and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies to their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and the due tranquillity that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress for every society...

"Jews ardently love her (Jerusalem), and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David who chose her as the capital (my underlining), and of Solomon who built the Temple there. Therefore, they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as the sign of their nation."

Those are the most forthcoming acknowledgments of the centrality of Israel and of Jerusalem in Jewish consciousness made by any Pope in recent memory.

Third, when our AJC delegation asked of Vatican Secretary of State authorities why the Holy See does not establish de jure diplomatic relations with Israel, we were given at first the usual explanations. "It is not the policy of the Holy See to enter into diplomatic relations with a nation when it is in a state of belligerency with its neighbors, or when its borders are not established by international agreements. That is why the Holy See does not maintain diplomatic relations with Jordan as well," we were told.

But as the conversation continued, it became clear that that was the given reason, not the real reason. After all, the Vatican has diplomatic ties with some 112 countries, many of which are involved in belligerency, civil wars and border disputes -- Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola, Nicaragua, among others. And those relations are sustained even though the Vatican does not approve of many of their ideological policies.

The real reason, it seems quite clear, is that the Vatican profoundly fears that should she move from de facto recognition to establishing full diplomatic de jure recognition of Israel that Arab-Muslim fanatics in the Middle East and in Africa will launch a wave of reprisals against millions of Arab Christians and African Christians in predominantly Islamic countries. Over and again, Vatican authorities kept referring to the precarious plight of Catholics in Lebanon who suffer daily violence at the hands of fanatic Shiite and Sunni Muslims, and the virtual impotence of the Vatican in helping to protect them. (Christian groups have reciprocated violently as well.)

The Holy See officials also described in painful detail for us the horror stories of more than a half million Christians who were killed in the south of the Sudan by the northern Arab Muslims, and the half million Christians killed by the Muslim leader Idi Amin when he was president of Uganda.

So great is this preoccupation over the threat of Islamic fanaticism to the security of Christians that Pope John Paul II in a recent address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See berated those Muslim countries whose citizens have come to Europe in the millions and have been assured religious liberty while Muslim countries have denied those same human rights to Christians living in their midst.

Thus, it is far more the fear of Muslim reprisals than antipathy toward Israel that has thus far precluded de jure diplomatic ties between the Holy See and Israel. There are, of course, contested issues between the Holy See and Israel -- the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian self-determination, and holy sites. But those are negotiable issues whereas fear of Islamic reprisals are not subject to rational compromises.

Finally, these conversations have convinced me that Italian foreign policy plays a far greater influence in Vatican affairs than is generally recognized. In recent years, Italy has been trying urgently to emerge as one of "the big five" European powers on the international scene.

As the one truly Mediterranean nation in the European Community, Italy is now heavily engaged in commercial and trade relations with Arab countries. Italy is dependent for 85 percent of her oil supplies on Arab nations. The present Italian government is jockeying to win nearly \$1 billion worth of contracts from Egypt for building that country's first nuclear power station and the second stage of Cairo's metro system. And some 20,000 Italian workers are now serving in Libya. Libya's Central Bank owns 17% of Fiat, and Italy exports large amounts of arms to Arab countries, including Libya despite her role in exporting terrorism.

Italy has a troubled economy -- continuing high inflation (12-13%), high unemployment (10%), and a massive state budget deficit on the order of 17% of the country's gross domestic product. (The U.S. federal budget deficit amounts to about 4% of the GDP.)

That economic pressure has led the Italian government to become increasingly dependent on Arab nations for economic relief. Those obdurate survival needs have influenced a pro-Arab, pro-PLO tilt in Italian foreign policy far more than some ideological vision.

At the same time, Italy has been friendly toward Israel. Prime Minister Andreotti told us, "One point is firm for us -- Israel's right to security and sovereign existence. Our Parliament is unanimous on that. There was never any doubt on this issue." In December 1983, Israel and Italy signed a broad agreement covering economic, agricultural, scientific, technological and cultural relations.

Italy is thus engaged in a geopolitical trapeze act in the Middle East, being supportive of Israel while cultivating her economic and political ties with the Arab world whom she seeks to influence to adopt a moderate stance leading toward peaceful negotiations between Israel, the Palestinians, and other Arabs.

Beneath the theological rhetoric, that is essentially the same stance adopted by the Holy See. While the Holy See clearly has universal interests, its daily existence is profoundly affected by its relationship with the Italian government and Italian domestic politics. On February 18th, the Vatican and the Italian government signed a new concordat that stipulates that Roman Catholicism will no longer be the state religion and that Rome's status as "a sacred city" is ended.

The 14-article concordat also establishes a mixed church-state commission which has been given six months to draw up regulations governing the controversial question of taxation of religious institutions of Italy. The Vatican bank, known as the IOR (Istituto per le Opere di Religione) was deeply implicated in a far-reaching scandal that involved loans of about \$1.3 billion to shadow companies directly or indirectly owned by the IOR. Those loans are believed to have caused the bankruptcy of Banco Ambrosiano, Italy's largest private banking institution, and the mysterious death of its president, Roberto Calvi.

A separate Vatican-Italian commission has been set up to sort out the Vatican bank's role in the collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano more than two years ago. In the meantime, the Vatican has denied responsibility in the crash but reportedly has agreed to pay some \$250 million towards a general settlement with the more than 100 creditors of the Ambrosiano bank group.

Those weighty, intricate ties between the Holy See and the Italian government have inevitably sensitized Vatican policy makers to the domestic and foreign policy directions of the Italian government. Reinforcing that alignment is the fact that Italy serves from January to June 1985 as president of the European Economic Community. Italy's political stance toward Israel and the Middle East is in fact shared by most of the ten-member nations of the EEC who are also engaged in a trapeze act of seeking to reconcile Israel, the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab nations.

Thus by aligning itself with Italian foreign policy, the Holy See also identifies itself with the main lines of the European Community's foreign policies.

Given those realities, it is clear that Pope John Paul II, notwithstanding his personal sympathies toward Israel and the Jewish People, will not shortly be visiting the Jewish State, nor will de jure diplomatic relations be established in the near future between the Holy See and Israel. But I will go out on a limb and predict that once peace is established between Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan, the Holy See will change its course and will move quickly to make de jure what is now de facto.

MHT/sm

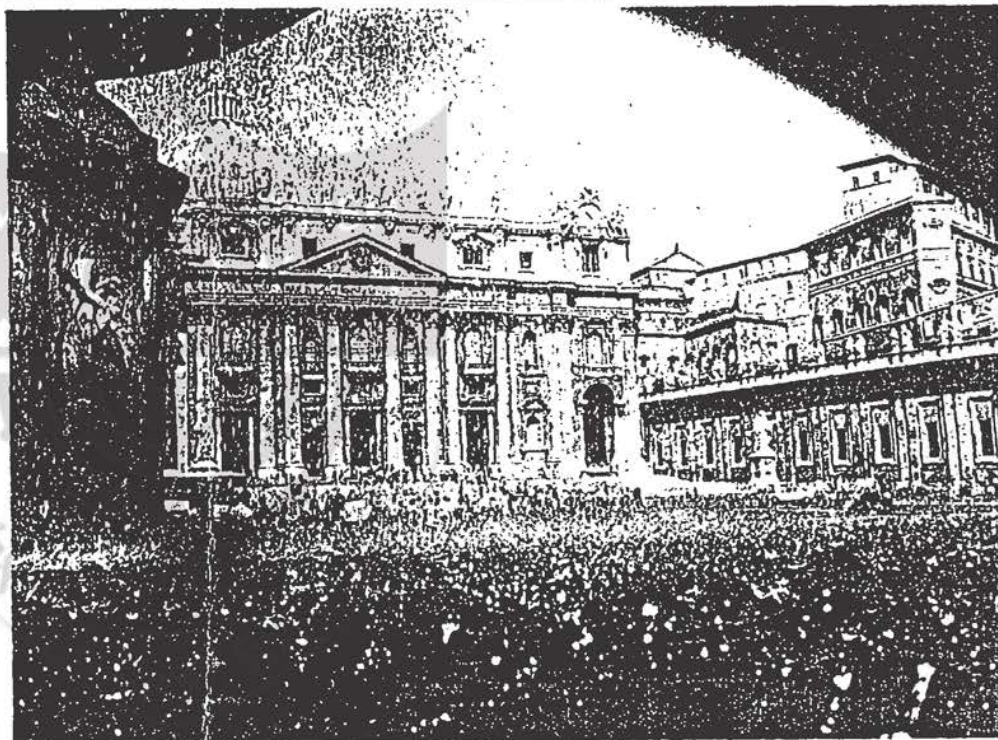
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H043-Vatican Backgrounder
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The Post's Walter Ruby reports on the debate between American Jewish officials over relations with the Vatican

Dialogue and dispute

Context



AN ACRIMONIOUS dispute has erupted between some of the top leaders of Diaspora Jewry on whether international Jewry should carry on a dialogue with the Catholic Church before the Vatican recognizes Israel.

Israel Singer, general-secretary of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) told *The Jerusalem Post* that a meeting in the Vatican earlier this month between Pope John Paul II and other high Vatican officials and an International Jewish Committee on Inter-religious Consultations (IJCIC) was "demeaning for the Jews."

The meeting between the pope and the IJCIC was held on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of "*Nostra Aetate*" ("In Our Time") a papal document that denounced all forms of anti-Semitism and declared that the Roman Catholic Church does not believe that the Jews as a group can be held responsible for the death of Jesus.

Singer charges that the meeting of the IJCIC with the pope and the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was "completely on the Vatican's terms," and did not deal with issues such as the Vatican's continued non-recognition of Israel, and the pope's meeting with Yassar Arafat two years ago. He adds that he has appealed to the Israeli cabinet to look into the question.

MEANWHILE, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a WJC vice president and founding chairman of the interreligious consultations body, says he believes "nothing further can fundamentally be gained" from the dialogue between the IJCIC and the Vatican.

"The Roman Catholics want us to agree that Jesus Christ and Christianity are part of Jewish religious history, which is something we cannot deal with, whereas we want from them recognition of the State of Israel, which they theologically cannot give," Hertzberg says.

"I have not been to the Vatican in eight years and I am not terribly lonely for it," Hertzberg says. Jewish leaders who have taken a leading role in promoting interfaith dialogue with the Vatican, "are people who run speciality shops with a vested interest in this kind of meetings," he says.

Hertzberg charges that some of the Jewish organizations represented in the IJCIC "have to come up with an issue to use to raise dollars every year, so they need to get in the papers showing they are doing something to lessen anti-Semitism and increase our connection with the non-Jewish world."

Organizations represented on the consultations committee include the WJC, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith, the Israel Jewish Inter-religious Council and the Synagogue Council of America.

"We will never be able to make clear to the Vatican our displeasure over their attitude toward Israel as long as there are some highly-placed Jews who are always ready to run to Rome to have their pictures taken with the pope," Hertzberg says.

Singer says his and Hertzberg's stand has won support from WJC President Edgar Bronfman, who is expected to make a statement on the subject in the near future.

RABBI MARC Tanenbaum, director of the international affairs department of the AJC, a participant in the Vatican meetings last week, and a longtime proponent of interfaith dialogue, remarks, "I am fed up with the narcissism of both Singer and Hertzberg, who seem to believe that the only time that interfaith dialogue has any worth is when they are directly involved."

Tanenbaum labelled as "non-sense" and "ignorant drivel" Hertzberg's contention that Catholic-Jewish dialogue is "stuck in a groove and not moving forwards." He says the continuing willingness of the pope and other high Catholic officials to denounce anti-Semitism, "is of critical importance." He added, "The greatest threat we face today is political anti-Semitism from the Soviet Union, the Arab world, the PLO, and many Third World nations. To have the pope saying to 800 million Catholics that anti-Semitism is unacceptable is one of the most powerful resources we have to fight the 'Zionism is racism' slander."

Tanenbaum says the pope has gone forward with the dialogue with the Jews despite admonitions from some "ultraconservatives" in the Vatican to slow down the dialogue.

"I think it is outrageous that (Singer and Hertzberg) would seek to sabotage what we have developed over 20 years and to play directly into the hands of those in the Vatican who would prefer to slow down this developing dialogue with world Jewry and instead perhaps move closer to the Moslem world," he says.

Both Tanenbaum and Consultations Committee chairman Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, the president of the Synagogue Council of America, say they were satisfied that the pope and Vatican leadership understood the impatience of the world Jewish community with the Vatican's continued non-recognition of Israel and are moving behind the scenes to broaden contacts with Israel.

Waxman and Tanenbaum say they were also impressed with the under-

standing the Vatican leadership had displayed concerning Jewish objections to recently promulgated Vatican notes on the Jews and Jewish-Catholic relations.

SINGER SAYS he cabled both the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Ministry to urge that the meeting

in Rome be discussed at this week's cabinet meeting.

"I want to know how the Israelis feel about a group of unadvised Jewish delegates agreeing to go through with a meeting that was clearly demeaning for the Jewish people," he says. "I call on the Government of Israel to give us some guidance on how to order our relationship with the Vatican and with the Christian world."

Singer stressed that he, along with most Jewish leaders, were enthused by what he calls the "quantum leap of *Nostra Aetate* away from 2,000 years of anti-Semitism and persecution of Jews by the Catholic Church."

However, he adds, the Vatican notes on the Jews published in June had been "the second recent instance of really bad news in the

Jewish-Catholic dialogue after the pope's meeting with Arafat." He says "despite the fact that the consultations committee criticized the notes, they chose to go ahead with the 20th anniversary celebrations, instead of calling for a reassessment."

The committee stated in June.

"there is much of positive value in the notes," such as those sections "on the Jewish roots of Christianity," but noted, "the document itself reflects little recognition of how Jews conceive of themselves."

The committee also called the notes "totally inadequate" in their treatment of the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel. The panel was particularly critical of a paragraph in the notes which said that the existence of Israel "should be envisaged not in a perspective which is itself religious."

The IJCIC said the Vatican's notes deny the religious significance of Israel for Jews, and noted that "nothing is said about Israel's right to exist or of the justice of her cause."

"THE VATICAN simply informed

us they were going to release these notes without consulting with us," Singer says. "A deeper problem is that in our meetings with the Vatican, we are shunted off to a special Jew bench, the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, which is rather like going to the White House to speak to the hymie liason

office. If there is to be a true dialogue, we want to meet with the principals."

Singer says prior to the pope's 1982 meeting with Yasser Arafat, the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews had at first assured its Jewish counterparts that there would be no such meeting. Later, the commission reported that Arafat would meet the pope as part of a general audience and that there would be no photographs of the

meeting. In fact, the pope met Arafat alone and allowed photographs to be taken.

"I don't think the Jewish office lied when they gave us these assurances. I just think they don't know what is really going on," Singer says.

? "In fact, during this conference last week there was no dialogue, but rather a meeting with this commission on the Jews and then a ceremonial meeting with the pope, where he condemned anti-Semitism. There was a complete asymmetry here."

Singer says after the Vatican made clear to the IJCIC this summer that it had no intention of revising its notes to respond to Jewish objections, the consultations committee ought to have refused to go ahead with the scheduled 20th anniversary celebrations of *Nostra Aetate*.

✓ "I considered coming along to Rome to break up the proceedings, but decided to do it from home," Singer says. "I became alarmed in part because many of the sections of the WJC - such as the Dutch and Belgian sections - were asking how we can go and meet with the pope when he will not discuss Israel."

"It was not an issue of our being opposed to dialogue, but rather a sense that this was not a true dialogue. Our side was giving much more than the Catholic side."

? Singer says he objected to the fact that the Catholic-Jewish dialogue had focused almost entirely on theological issues. "Jewish organizations should be raising the issues of social and political relations between us. We should be talking about what pains us and them."

These concerns include the Vati-

can's continued non-recognition of Israel, and the pope's meeting with Arafat two years ago, and failure to mention the Achille Lauro incident or to have condemned terrorism.

"I WOULD HAVE thought a subject such as the rise of fundamentalism around the world would have been the most important item on the agenda. Why was there no discussion of racism - which we have seen in both Jewish and Christian forms?" he says.

Singer says he was also concerned that, "with the exception of Cardinal (Johannes) Willebrands, who is retiring, only second-rate Vatican dignitaries met with the Jewish group. I thought the meeting with the pope was perfunctory. Rabbi Waxman read his remarks and the pope read his in return, without an opportunity for dialogue."

"I say that this is far too little to be acceptable from them at this stage, 20 years after *Nostra Aetate*."

Tanenbaum notes that Singer had criticized the Rome conference in an interview with *The New York Times* "without even checking with his own people to find out what the pope or Cardinal Willebrands had said." He adds, "It is apparent that Israel Singer desperately needs his daily publicity fix."

Tanenbaum says Singer "succeeded in enraging every member of the Jewish delegation, including the chief rabbis of Venezuela, Panama and Belgium."

Tanenbaum, who was scheduled to meet with Brazilian bishops this week, remarks "Do you have any idea how important the process that began with *Nostra Aetate* and continues today is for the small Brazilian-Jewish community, who live among five million (Brazilians of Arab ancestry)? They are ecstatic. The Catholic bishops recently made similar statements in Argentina and Uruguay."

The Catholic Church's movement against anti-Semitism has also had a dramatic effect in the U.S., he says. "All anti-Semitic references have been wiped out of Catholic textbooks. Catholics and Jews have held interfaith meetings in every state in the union...Catholic clergy have marched in the thousands on behalf of Soviet Jewry and Syrian Jewry."

TERMING THE controversial notes an "interim document," Tanenbaum says, "Overall, despite the problems, I think the notes represented a very positive statement."

Noting that the Vatican had agreed that a joint committee be set up to try to come up with a statement on the Holocaust acceptable to both sides, Tanenbaum said, "I think their willingness to set up this committee shows that the notes were not a final statement, but part of a continuing process."

"The relationship that has developed is Talmudic and evolving. There is constant reflection and modification."

*I have not been
to the Vatican in
eight years and
I am not terribly
lonely for it*



Arthur Hertzberg

(Benzian)

Amidst a furor over Catholic-Jewish relations, AJC Execs meet in Miami to discuss religious pluralism, extremism and Middle East

Debating "The Vatican"

By Martin Pomerance

MIAMI—Leaders of the American Jewish Committee, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel here last week for a four-day meeting of the organization's national executive council, lashed back at World Jewish Congress leaders Edgar Bronfman and Israel Singer who two weeks ago started what AJC officials describe as a campaign challenging the authenticity of a long-standing Jewish dialogue with the Vatican.

Referring to a conference this past October between Vatican officials and a 22-member delegation of Jewish leaders, Israel Singer, WJC's secretary general, charged that the conference was "held completely on the Vatican's terms" in that it did not deal with important Jewish issues such as the Vatican's continued failure to "normalize" relations with the state of Israel.

Singer said the conference was "de-meaning for Jews."

Meanwhile, WJC president and head of the Seagram company, Edgar Bronfman, speaking last week in New York at a dinner honoring Archbishop John Cardinal O'Connor, accused the Jewish delegation to the Vatican of being "too polite" to Pope John Paul II and urged the cardinal to "convey a message to Rome" that Jews are "interested in having a conversation" about the Vatican's failure to formally recognize Israel. (See related story, Page 11)

Bronfman's remarks, quoted widely in the press, touched off a furor among the top leadership of the AJC during the Miami meeting. The AJC has been a major participant in the Jewish-Vatican talks.

While nearly 500 members of the AJC's executive council were hearing staff reports on the rise of political extremism in America, the state of Mideast peace initiatives, and the progress of Jewish talks with the Vatican—the main scheduled topics of the Miami conference—high-level AJC leaders were meeting privately, behind closed doors to draft a response to Bronfman.

Several AJC officials said they were particularly worried about Bronfman's apparent effort to support Singer because of the high standing that Bronfman enjoys in the Jewish community and the likelihood that his remarks, which were pictured here as a veiled effort to pressure Cardinal O'Connor, would be taken seriously by Catholic officials and could therefore undermine Jewish-Catholic relations.

Singer and Kahane

In a carefully worded statement drafted by Marc Tanenbaum, AJC's director of international affairs and a participant in the October meeting with Vatican officials, the AJC declared that while "Mr. Edgar Bronfman is a respected figure in the Jewish community," his remarks "contain a

number of serious errors of fact" about the Vatican meetings.

Detailing Bronfman's "errors of fact," the statement points out that the Jewish delegation did in fact "forcefully" urge the Pope and other Vatican officials to establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

"We do not understand what purpose is being served by distorting the factual record which the minutes of these meetings clearly document," the statement concludes.

In an interview with *Jewish World* last Friday, Tanenbaum, clearly angered by the remarks of WJC leaders, was outspokenly critical of Singer and Bronfman.

"It's now clear that there is a pattern on the part of Israel Singer to create the impression that before him nothing happened in Jewish life," Tanenbaum declared.

While Edgar Bronfman must be held accountable, Israel Singer is using Bronfman for a cover.

Referring to President Reagan's controversial trip to the military cemetery at Bitburg, Germany, last May, Tanenbaum added, "During the Bitburg episode, Singer made a series of scathing denunciations of every Jewish organization outside of the World Jewish Congress for having betrayed Jewish honor and Jewish dignity in the way we reacted to the president's Bitburg visit... There is a kind of narcissism at work, a condition in which he associates all honor and all achievement with himself—a kind of extremism, a kind of mild version of Meir Kahane."

Referring to Singer as the "new boy on the block," Tanenbaum also said, "The record must be made clear. Israel Singer personally has had nothing whatsoever to do with the course of Vatican-Jewish relations over the past 20 years. And just when Gerhart Reigner (the former head of the WJC and a member of its governing board) was in Rome with us making an impressive case for changes in the Catholic Church's attitude, Israel Singer, Reigner's boss sitting in New York, called the Rome bureau of the *New York Times* and told them that the meeting was useless and that nothing has happened of any worth in Catholic-Jewish relations for 20 years... In effect, he's saying now—as he did during the Bitburg affair—that no one has done anything until Israel Singer came onto the scene."

Bronfman Manipulated

Asked why he thought Bronfman was supporting Singer on this issue,



AJC's Marc Tanenbaum



AJC's David Gordis

Tanenbaum replied, "The truth is that Singer writes all of Bronfman's speeches... Unfortunately, Bronfman, who is a very influential and important businessman, has had very little experience in Jewish communal life and is totally dependent on Israel Singer to tell him what to say and what to do. So, while Bronfman must be held accountable for his words, I would guess that Singer is using Bronfman for a cover—that Singer has manipulated Bronfman."

Tanenbaum also pointed out what he sees as an "irony" in Bronfman's and

Singer's attack on the Jewish delegation and in the WJC's role on behalf of Soviet Jewry.

Referring to rumors of "secret" visits by Bronfman and Singer to Moscow to work out a deal to free Soviet Jews, Tanenbaum said, "They have been trying to create the impression that they are the saviors of Soviet Jewry... All the talk and all the hype that's been going on for the past year about their meetings in the Kremlin—about a secret airlift of Soviet Jews—has not been questioned by any Jewish... Please turn to AJC, Page 19.

organization, because we've been willing to accept the talk and hype in the hope that something is going to happen... But the logic of Singer's and Bronfman's position on the Vatican would lead the Jewish community to expect a full accounting of their actions in Moscow... After all, if they want us to account for the Vatican talks, it's only fair that they account for their Moscow talks."

Asked whether in his view, Bronfman's remarks would adversely affect Jewish-Vatican relations, Tanenbaum responded, "We're at a very sensitive point right now. We feel that we've created a mechanism—a promise of continued meetings on the subject of Israel—that I believe will eventually result in the Vatican recognizing Israel. We have also established excellent working relations with Cardinal O'Connor, who has been open and supportive of many Jewish causes. The danger from Singer and Bronfman is that their remarks give conser-

vatives in the Vatican the ammunition to argue that the church can't do business with Jews. You have to understand the political reality and the pressures that exist."

The AJC will ask Edgar Bronfman to account for his trips to Moscow on behalf of Soviet Jewry.

Tanenbaum stressed that the AJC would seek a meeting with Bronfman and other Jewish leaders this week in an effort to "clear the factual record" on the "real progress" in Jewish-Catholic relations, as well as to ask Bronfman for "an accounting" of his

activities in Moscow on behalf of Soviet Jewry.

Jewish-Vatican Relations

Against this backdrop of acrimonious words, speaking at a major session of the AJC executive council, Rabbi A. James Rudin, AJC director of inter-religious affairs, stressed the "enormous advances in Catholic-Jewish relations over the past 20 years" and his belief that changes in Catholic attitudes indicate "the best is yet to come."

Sounding a similarly positive note, Father John Pawlikowski, a professor of ethics at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago who has been touring the nation with Rabbi Rudin talking about Catholic-Jewish relations, told the AJC executive council that in his view the Catholic community has "irreversibly changed its theology regarding the continuing role of the Jewish people in the history of salvation; Christians and Jews are now definitely viewed as partners, necessary partners, in the redemption

of humankind."

Both Rabbi Rudin and Father Pawlikowski were later asked why the Vatican has remained reluctant to recognize Israel. Both said they did not want to comment on the dispute with Bronfman and Singer, but both agreed that there exist within the Vatican concerns about "what recognition would mean for Catholics living in Moslem countries." Both also stressed that there are still politically influential Vatican officials who have not yet accepted the "bond between Catholicism and Judaism" described by Father Pawlikowski.

"You cannot look at Catholic-Jewish relations today without seeing those relations in a historical perspective. We have to judge the relationship incrementally, over a long period of time," Rabbi Rudin said. "The change over the past 20 years has been enormous."

Marc Tanenbaum, who also addressed the same executive council session and detailed the results of the Vatican conferences, was more specific about

Continued on Next Page.

the Catholic "concern" over recognizing Israel.

"Of course, there are conservatives in the Vatican who resist any change, especially when it comes to Jews and Israel. But I feel the overriding concern today, based on a number of secret documents that I have seen at the Vatican, is the fear that Christians will be slaughtered in Moslem countries if the Pope establishes ties with Israel... In fact, there are many informal diplomatic links in many areas... But there is a real fear of upgrading these links to a more formal level. The point I want to make is that Jews must be sensitive to those fears and concerns, even if we disagree with them," Tanenbaum explained after his formal remarks.

Referring again to Bronfman and Singer, Tanenbaum stressed, "They simply don't understand the politics and problems the Pope faces. They don't understand the first thing about the relationship we've established. The Jewish delegation that met with the Pope (last October) was clear, firm, scholarly, powerful and critical. But it was also understanding of the partners in the dialogue."

Extremism

Harvey Cox, a Baptist minister and a leading scholar at the Harvard Divinity School who urged the AJC executive council to continue to support religious pluralism, said of the recent Vatican meetings: "I think what the Vatican is saying is that they're willing to deal with hard questions for them and they're willing to do so openly and directly... The worse thing the Jewish community can do now is to

throw up its hands in the air and ignore the problems of this relatively new relationship. What the Jewish community has to understand is that the Catholic Church—in fact any religion—cannot simply change overnight by saying 'We were wrong.' It doesn't work that way. They are going to re-read their own doctrine and throw out the old historical contexts and interpretations... That takes time and negotiations. But, most important from the Jewish community's perspective, is that the church is in fact re-reading its own history on important doctrinal issues."

The Jewish community, Cox warned, needs to be much more concerned today about Christian fundamentalist groups who "are not willing to rethink their doctrines" and "who see the Jewish community as a group playing a role in their scenario for the end of the world and the coming of Jesus. My own perspective is that Jewish conversations with Catholics in America are better than they have ever been, while Jewish conversation with certain fundamentalists just don't exist."

Meanwhile, speaking at the opening session of the executive council meeting, David Gordis, AJC's executive vice president, who would not comment on the dispute with Singer and Bronfman, stressed his general concern over a polarization among Jews.

"I must share with you my growing unease about the climate in which we are operating. We are experiencing the ascendancy of mindlessness and extremism, a hardening of positions, a toughening of attitudes, a driving apart of those who should be partners, both within the Jewish community

and between the Jewish community and groups in the larger society," Gordis said.

After detailing the rise of extremism in the general community—in the farm belt, among certain evangelical Christian groups and among disadvantaged blacks, for example—Gordis warned

Extremism is being reinforced by Israeli policy that favors the Orthodox movement.

that the Jewish community itself is not immune to the phenomenon, pointing out that the Jewish community too often "makes excuses for bigotry, and even for the terrorism of extreme Orthodox fundamentalism."

Continuing, Gordis raised some eyebrows when he said that extremism among Jews is being reinforced by Israeli policy, particularly by the "monopoly of legitimacy granted by... Israel to a single group in Jewish life," clearly referring to the Orthodox in Israel.

"Part of the price Israel pays for the Orthodox monopoly is its inability to nurture a synthesis of Jewish and democratic values in a pluralistic Israeli environment," he added.

Gordis, who served as executive director of the Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel and is a longtime opponent of Orthodox political power, concluded his remarks about Jewish extremism by stating, "It remains the deep hope of many of us who

cherish Israel that the Jewish state will lead the way in this century's great experiment with a Judaism linked to modernity. But so far, the religious Orthodox monopoly has polarized Israeli society, instead of uniting it. It has weakened the voices of moderation, robbed Israel's moderates of their connection with Jewish tradition, and failed to give substance and authority to an authentically Jewish democratic value system."

Turning to the general problem of extremism in America, Gordis told *Jewish World* that the AJC will be adopting several strategies to combat the growth of domestic extremism. Gordis added that the AJC national affairs commission, which will be holding meetings throughout the U.S. to decide on a final strategies, has adopted a number of interim strategies, including:

- Joining the recently organized Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, headed by ex-senator Birch Bayh of Indiana;
- Forming local AJC committees in coalition with ethnic and racial groups to monitor extremist activities;
- Working with media, both electronic and print, to improve programming in local communities and to make media leaders aware of the impact they have on extremist messages;
- Improving fact finding in local communities and disseminating information and reports to local media leaders with respect to extremist activities; and
- Studying the reasons extremists attract certain groups and studying more about those who become followers of extremists.

**JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS:
ACHIEVEMENTS AND UNFINISHED AGENDAS**



Paper presented at Symposium on
"Jews and Christians in a Pluralistic World"
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Jewish-Christian Relations

Achievements and Unfinished Agenda

Marc H. Tanenbaum

During the past 28 years since the adoption of Nostra Aetate <1> by Vatican Council II, the Catholic church and the Jewish people have experienced what has rightly been called "a revolution in mutual esteem."

That transformation of a 1,900 year-old encounter between Christians and Jews which had been characterized mainly by a culture of contempt - (a deicide culture against the Jews) - into a radically new culture of "covenantal partnership" and growing mutual esteem, even of "Love between us," (Pope John Paul II, February 15, 1985) <2> is a momentous achievement in its own terms.

It is an achievement, even in its infancy, that also resonates with moral and spiritual meaning for enabling us to understand and cope constructively with the enormous challenges and threats that are posed by the immense diversity of religions, races, ethnic groups, and political ideologies in the pluralistic world which we inhabit:

Since 1968, I have devoted a large measure of my energies to working with Jewish and Christian groups seeking to bring relief to suffering refugees and starving peoples in Southeast Asia (the Vietnamese boat people, Cambodians, Laotians, ethnic Chinese); in Africa (Ethiopians, South Africans in the black homelands; Nigeria, Uganda, the Sahel, Sudan, Mozambique, etc.); in the Caribbean (Haitians, Cubans); and in South America (Miskito Indians, descamisados in the favelas of Brazil, Venezuela, etc.); in India (Tibetans, Sikhs); Sri Lanka (Tamils, Sinhalese); Soviet Jews and Polish refugees in the United States. <3>

There are today about 12 million refugees scattered throughout the world, some 6 million of them in Africa alone. Through study and personal observation, it is now apparent that many, if not most, of these refugees are victims of profound religious, racial, and tribal conflicts. In a large number of these tragedies, religious fanaticism and absolutistic, messianic nationalism have become the terrible chemistries which resulted in these explosions causing so much human devastation and pain.

The late psychoanalyst, Dr. Eric Fromm, a great humanist, became deeply disturbed by the growing pattern of violence and fanaticism throughout so many parts of the world. At the time of the strife between Hindus and Muslims in India, he carried out a clinical psychoanalytic study of that intergroup violence. In his last monumental publication, "The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness," <4> he presents his findings.

Dr. Fromm concluded that there is "a pathological dynamic" at work in such religious-political conflicts which he termed "Group Narcissism." As is the case with individual narcissism, groups that are narcissistic attribute to themselves all virtue and ultimate value, while denying value to the outside group, "the other". The narcissistic group views itself as "superior" and regards the other as "inferior". This mentality leads to a process of "dehumanization" or "monstorizing" in which the so-called superior group feels justified in emptying the alleged inferior group of all human dignity and value. Such dehumanization becomes the precondition as well as the justification for destroying the other.

There are two vital corollaries to this process which Dr. Fromm characterized as the engine of such vast destructiveness in the World.

First, physical violence against the human person or group is invariably preceded by "verbal violence." White racist segregationists in the American South invariably abused blacks verbally before carrying out their lynchings. <5> The Nazis engaged in systematic verbal violence against the Jews (and also the Polish people, gypsies, among others), reducing them to dehumanized untersmenschen as a cultural precondition for their systematic pogroms. In every instance, it becomes easier to destroy human beings when they are reduced to caricatures filled with contempt and hostility. "Psychic numbing" makes that possible. (Dr. Robert Jay Lifton's concept). <6>

Second, in practically every major religious, racial and tribal conflict that I have studied in recent years, there is non-existent or seriously undeveloped religious ideology or political doctrine of co-existence in a pluralist society. There are simply no religious or ideological resources for living with differences. Difference invariably is experienced as a threat rather than the possibility of becoming a source of enrichment.

What does all that have to do with "Jews and Christians in a Pluralistic World"?

Since the adoption of Nostra Aetate by Vatican Council II, a great reversal of historic proportions has taken place in the Church's relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II expressed that new spirit powerfully during a February 15, 1985, audience with the American Jewish Committee:

"I am convinced and I am happy to state on this occasion, that the relationships between Jews and Christians have radically improved in these years. Where there was ignorance and therefore prejudice and stereotypes, there is now growing mutual knowledge, appreciation and respect. There is, above all, love between us, that kind of love, I mean, which is for both of us a fundamental injunction of our religious traditions and which the New Testament has received from the Old (cf. Mk. 12:38; Lv. 19:18)." And then, as if to suggest his idea of pluralism between

Christians and Jews, he added, "Love involves understanding. It also involves frankness and the freedom to disagree in a brotherly way where there are reasons for it." <7>

I wish to pause here and acknowledge with respect and appreciation the singular contribution that Pope John Paul II, building on the foundations laid by his predecessors, Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, personally has made in redefining and advancing on deep theological, moral and human levels improved understandings between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people. That assertion should not obscure the fact that there are significant differences regarding certain policies and actions - relating mainly to some interpretations of the Nazi holocaust and the State of Israel. But anyone who wishes to speak seriously about the role of the Pope in his inspired commitment to fostering genuine solidarity and mutual respect between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people has a moral duty to study the texts of his numerous addresses and declarations contained in the booklet, On Jews and Judaism, 1979-1986, <8> edited by Dr. Eugene Fisher and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, and the pamphlet, John Paul II - On the Holocaust, <9> also edited by Dr. Fisher.

His Eminence Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, President of the Holy See's Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews and a worthy bearer of the mantle of the late Cardinal Augustin Bea, has recently affirmed that "the Pope was consistent and untiring in his efforts to spread the teachings of Vatican Council on Jews and Judaism elaborated in the foundation documents of Nostra Aetate of 1965, the Vatican Guidelines in Catholic-Jewish Relations of 1974, and, Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church, of 1985. In their essence, these themes embody the central theological and practical achievements in Catholic-Jewish relations since Vatican Council.

I - The Spiritual Bond between the Church and the Jewish People

- ✓ The spiritual bond with Jews is properly understood as "a sacred one; stemming as it does from the mysterious will of God:" (10/28/85). The relationship is not marginal to the Church. It reaches to the very essence of the nature of Christian faith itself; so that to deny it is to deny something essential to the teaching of the Church (cf. Vatican Notes, I,2).

The dialogue between Catholics and Jews is not a dialogue between past (Judaism) and present (Christianity) realities; as if the former had been "superseded" or "displaced" by the latter. "On the contrary," the Pope declared in his moving allocution to the Jewish community of Mainz, "it is a question rather of reciprocal enlightenment and explanation, just as is the relationship between the Scriptures themselves." (cf. Dei Verbum, 11).

Instead of the traditional terms of "Old Testament" and "New Testament" which might be understood to imply that the "old has been abrogated in favor of the "new", the Pope in his recent address to the Jews of Australia (11/26/86), has suggested the use of the terms, "the Hebrew Scriptures" and "the Christian Scriptures" as appropriate alternatives.

In his historic visit to the Great Synagogue of Rome (4/13/86) the first such visit since Apostolic times, the Pope asserted, "The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are dearly beloved brothers and in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers."

II - Judaism - "A Living Heritage"

In his address to the Jewish community of Mainz, the Pope spoke of "the spiritual heritage of Israel for the Church" as "a living heritage, which must be understood and preserved in its depth and richness by us Catholic Christians."

The "common spiritual patrimony" of Jews and Christians is not something of the past but of the present which includes an understanding of post-Biblical Judaism and "the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced still today ..." (3/82)

"Jews and Christians are the trustees and witnesses of an ethic marked by the Ten Commandments in the observance of which man finds his truth and freedom." (Rome Synagogue 4/13/86)

III - The Permanent Validity of the Covenant

The Pope teaches that the Jews remain God's chosen people in the fullest sense ("most dear") and this in no way diminishes the Church's own affirmation of its own standing as "the people of God." In Mainz, the Pope addressed the Jewish community as "the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been revoked by God," referring to Romans 11:29, and emphasized "the permanent value" of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jewish community that witnesses to those Scriptures as sacred texts (11/17/80).

IV - Condemnation of Anti-Semitism, Remembrance of the Shoah

In this his very first audience with Jewish representatives in March 1979, the Pope reaffirmed the Second Vatican Council's repudiation of anti-Semitism, "as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity," and which "in any case the dignity of the human person alone would suffice to condemn". The Pope has repeated this message in country after country throughout the world.

And despite the recent controversies, the record is clear that the Pope, who lived under Nazism in Poland and experienced personally the ancient evil of anti-Semitism, has called on Catholics in country after country to remember "in particular, the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination" (Homily at Auschwitz; 6/7/79).

- In Otranto, he linked for the first time, the Holocaust and the rebirth of a Jewish state in the land of Israel: "The Jewish people, after tragic experiences connected with the extermination of so many sons and daughters, driven by the desire for security, set up the state of Israel" (10/5/80).

On the 20th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the Pope stated that "anti-Semitism, in its ugly and sometimes violent manifestations, should be completely eradicated." He called the attention of the whole Church to the mandate given in the 1985 Vatican Notes to develop Holocaust curricula in Catholic schools and catechetical programs: "For Catholics, as the Notes (no. 25) have asked them to do, to fathom the depths of the extermination of many millions of Jews during World War II and the wounds thereby inflicted on the consciousness of the Jewish people, theological reflection is also needed" (10/28(85).

On August 29, 1981, Pope John Paul II condemned a bomb-throwing attack on a synagogue in Vienna, Austria, as a "bloody and absurd act, which assails the Jewish community in Austria and the entire world," and warned against a "new wave of that same anti-Semitism that has provoked so much mourning through the centuries" (NC News 9/1/81).

V - Land and State of Israel

The complexities of the Middle East situation and the differences between the Holy See and Israel on the issue of establishing full diplomatic relations are well-known.

Suffice it for these purposes in this limited space to cite the Pope's generally positive views on a moral plane toward the State of Israel as disclosed in his Apostolic Letter of April 20, 1984, Redemptionis Anno:

"Jews ardently love her (Jerusalem) and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon who built the Temple there. Therefore, they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as a sign of their nation."

"For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies of their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and the due tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress for every society."

VI - Catechetics and Liturgy

Beyond the rethinking of the traditional understanding of Jews and Judaism, the Pope has called upon Catholics to undertake a major effort: "We should aim in this field, that Catholic teaching at its different levels, in catechesis to children and young people, presents Jews and Judaism, not only in an honest and objective manner, free from prejudices and without any offences, but also with full awareness of the (Jewish) heritage."

He said that it also needs to be made clear to Catholic youth the often tragic history of Christian-Jewish relations over the centuries: "The proper teaching of history is also the concern of yours (ICCJ). Such a concern is very understandable, given the sad and entangled common history of Jews and Christians - a history that is not always taught or transmitted correctly."

During his Rome Synagogue address he urged the implementation of the Vatican Guidelines and Notes: "It is only a question of studying them carefully, of immersing oneself in their teachings, and of putting them into practice."

VII - Joint Witness and Action in History

The Pope repeatedly affirms his vision for Jews and Christians of joint social action and witness to the One God and the reality of the Kingdom of God as the defining point of human history. This way of collaboration "in service to humanity" as a means of preparing for God's Kingdom unites Jews and Christians on a level that, in a sense, can be said to be deeper than the doctrinal distinctions that divide us historically.

The Pope's views have been reinforced by pronouncements issued by National Bishops Conferences in the United States, Austria, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Colombia and Brazil who have promulgated their own statements on Catholic-Jewish Relations, on occasion advancing their teachings beyond those presented in the Vatican documents. Individual Cardinals and Bishops, as well as theologians, have made pronouncements on a variety of religious and moral issues relating to Catholic-Jewish bonds that have enlarged the culture of mutual esteem.

To appreciate the dramatic changes in Catholic teaching about Jews and Judaism inaugurated by Vatican Council II and significantly advanced by the Vatican Guidelines on Catholic-Jewish Relations of 1974, and the Notes on the Correct way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church, issued in June 1985, one needs only to examine the contrasts in educational materials published since the Council with textbooks and teaching manuals in common use into the 1960s. The St. Louis University textbook studies conducted in the United States by three Catholic sisters under the supervision of Jesuit Father Trafford Naher, revealed teachings of hostility and contempt that lent credence to Jewish concerns about Christian polemical traditions as a source of anti-Semitism.

In Europe, the Louvain and Pro Deo University studies which examined Catholic teaching materials in a variety of languages - Italian, French-speaking countries (Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Canada) and Spanish - showed that teachings of contempt were widespread throughout the religious culture. In her study summarizing these findings, Mme. Claire Huchet-Bishop, a Catholic scholar, wrote in her book, How Catholics Look at Jews, that many young Catholics in these countries were still being instructed in the 1960s, twenty years after the Nazi holocaust, the following teachings:

1. The Jews are collectively responsible for the Crucifixion and they are a 'deicide people';
2. The Diaspora is the Jews' punishment for the Crucifixion and for their cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children;"

3. Jesus predicted the punishment of his people: the Jews were and remained cursed by him, and by God; Jerusalem, as a city, is particularly guilty;
4. The Jewish people as a whole rejected Jesus during his lifetime because of their materialism;
5. The Jewish people have put themselves beyond salvation and are consigned to eternal damnation;
6. The Jewish people have been unfaithful to their mission and are guilty of apostasy;
7. Judaism was once a true religion; but then became ossified and ceased to exist with the coming of Jesus;
8. The Jews are no longer the Chosen People, but have been superseded as such by the Christians;

Mme. Bishop noted that charges against the Jewish people were accompanied by a rhetoric of invective, - "verbal violence" - which attributed the most vicious motives to them.

In citing these themes of negative theology toward the Jews, it is not my intention to obsess about the past, nor to seek to evoke guilt. Rather my purpose is to underscore that the radical improvement in Catholic-Jewish relations, theologically and morally significant in itself, may also be a primordial model of how it is possible to transform a culture that once demonized and thereby dehumanized a people into a whole new culture of rehumanization. It also has something to teach us about the importance of overcoming verbal violence and toxic language which destroy human dignity and family solidarity, and replace those invectives with healing language of respect and mutual affirmation. That lesson applies equally to Jews as well as Christians, and, I believe, to all groups who are afflicted by such dehumanizing tendencies.

One of the critical methods for bringing about the dismantling of the old negative culture and constructing a new culture of mutual esteem is to be seen in the dramatic effects in improved and enlightened education. Thus, both the Louvain and Pro Deo studies reported a sharp drop in negative statements in textbooks and other teaching materials issued after Vatican Council II. Mme. Bishop observed; "It seems reasonable to assume that these figures reflect the Church's adoption of a new positive policy toward Jews and Judaism at the Second Vatican Council."

In the United States, Dr. Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, published a study of post-Vatican Council II Catholic textbooks covering sixteen major religion series used in the grade and high school levels. In his book, entitled Faith Without Prejudice, Dr. Fisher found great improvement in the treatment of many of the past troublesome themes. For example, he found clear references to the Jewishness of Jesus, which had been mostly avoided in the past. He found the

notion of Jewish suffering as an expression of Divine retribution completely eliminated from the textbooks. References to the Holocaust were handled with great sensitivity. References to violence against Jews during the Crusades and the Inquisition and references to the modern State of Israel he found to be still "inadequate".

I would like to return to the educational issue under the rubric of "unfinished agenda".

Here it may be appropriate to report that in the growing atmosphere of confidence and trust, the Jewish community has conducted its own self-studies of Jewish textbooks in terms of what Jewish schools teach about Christians and Christianity. As summarized by Ms. Judith Bank, my former assistant at the American Jewish Committee, which sponsored the Dropsie University study and the study of Jewish seminary curricula, we found the following:

While Judaism has been influenced in its development by interaction with Christianity more than is generally acknowledged (Maimonides and St. Thomas Aquinas, etc.), it does not define itself in contrast or comparison with Christianity. The Jewish-Christian encounter as described in Jewish high-school textbooks is social and historical, not doctrinal or theological. On the one hand, this avoids the problem of polemical approaches to Christianity; on the other hand, recounting the episodes of persecution, expulsion and massacres which Jews suffered at the hands of Christians for centuries, and which are among the realities of Jewish history, tends to leave a negative image, not so much of Christian faith, but of the Church as temporal power. In fairness, it must be said that this negative image is somehow offset by attention paid to righteous Christians who shielded and protected Jews across the years, and to the high value assigned in Jewish textbooks to religious and cultural pluralism and human kinship.

Still, many Jews - like many Catholics - are not aware of the momentous changes in Catholic thinking about Jews and Judaism that have issued from the highest levels of the Church since Vatican Council II. As part of the future agenda, Jewish students, as well as others in the general Jewish population, need to be informed of these developments both in formal education and through mass communications.

On the Jewish seminary level, briefly, Christianity and Jewish-Christian relations are taken seriously; and there are a number of courses dealing with the origins of Christianity; the intertestamental period, medieval and contemporary relations. There are also a number of programs that bring Jewish and Christian seminarians together for study and dialogue.

It is important to record that a number of prominent Jewish theologians, scholars and rabbis have been working to conceptualize systematically a Jewish theology or religious understanding of Christianity. As Orthodox Rabbi Yitchak Greenberg formulates the issue; "It is possible for Judaism to have a more affirmative model of Christianity, one that

appreciates Christian spiritual life in all its manifest power ... After the Holocaust, a model of the relation of Judaism and Christianity ideally should enable one to affirm the fullness of the faith claims of the other, not just offer tolerance."

UNFINISHED AGENDA

EDUCATION - While remarkable progress has been made since Vatican Council II, there is still much to be done to change habits of thinking. The self-definition-by-denigration model has not yet been fully replaced on the pedagogical level. Current scholarship which sets the conflict events described in the New Testament - particularly the Passion narratives and the portrayal of the Pharisees - into historical perspective should be reflected in textbooks, teacher's manuals, teacher training, seminary education, and homilists, and clergy to a much greater extent than at present.

Excellent basic reference materials, such as Dr. Eugene Fisher's publication, Seminary Education and Christian-Jewish Relations, provide important perspectives on such areas as sacred Scriptures, liturgy and homiletics, Church history, catechetics, systematic and moral theology, spiritual formation and field education.

In Jewish education, particularly the seminaries, there is need to overcome the little knowledge about Christian beliefs, history of present communities, as well as a longer view of the development of Christian thought and history.

COMMUNICATIONS - There should be a concern that commitment to improved Jewish-Christian relations is progressing primarily among the "ecumenical generals" leaving a substantial gap with the vast number of "infantry troops". A thoughtful, creative and systematic use of modern means of public education through mass communications would help close this gap and give depth to Jewish-Christian solidarity.

JOINT WITNESS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, and HUMAN RIGHTS - The epidemic of dehumanization at loose in large parts of the world is, I believe, one of the most profound challenges facing Christians and Jews. Fanaticisms, resort to verbal and physical violence, torture, terrorism, violations of human rights and freedom of conscience are daily assaults on the dignity of human life created in the Divine image. Close collaboration of Christians and Jews who share a common vision of Biblical humanism could become a critical mass in stemming the forces of dehumanization and in upholding the preciousness of every human life in God's human family. There are models and structures in both the Christian and Jewish communities for advancing this fundamental objective of redemption. It requires moral will, commitment and courageous leadership.

WORLD REFUGEES, WORLD HUNGER - At a time when nations and peoples squander billions on arms races and weapons of death and destruction, it is scandalous that such modest resources are available to help relieve the staggering hunger, starvation,

poverty and disease in so many parts of the developing world. Wherever and whenever Christians and Jews join hands together and mobilize their common will and material resources, they make a crucial difference in relieving vast suffering and in saving human lives. There is no clearer moral and religious duty than Tikkun Olam, the repair and healing of a broken world. The "covenantal partnership" of the Church and the Jewish people is the surest of God's instruments for realizing that work of the Kingdom.

PLURALISM - If after two millenia of estrangement and hostility Christians and Jews can create a genuine culture of mutual esteem and reciprocal caring, the Christian-Jewish dialogue could well become a sign and an inspiration of hope to other religions, races and ethnic groups to turn away from contempt to realizing authentic human fraternity. This pluralistic model of the Jewish-Christian symbiosis may be the most important service that we have to offer to our troubled world.



Ecumenism 1987: Three Views

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7016

Waldheim: the most dangerous curve on ecumenical roller coaster

By Marc H. Tanenbaum
Special to Religious News Service

(Editor's note: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee, was the only rabbi at the Second Vatican Council as guest observer.)

If one were to summarize the state of Jewish-Christian relations during 1987, the most apt metaphor would have to be that of a roller coaster.

There were strong, steady ascents in overcoming theological misunderstandings and in forging new conceptions of mutual appreciation and respect between Christians and Jews. These were best typified by the serious affirmative declarations issued by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ, among others.

But there were also deeply upsetting turns that periodically threatened to send the roller coaster careening off the tracks. The least of these turns, amounting to an annoyance, was the regression of Southern Baptist pastor Bailey Smith to his earlier primitive theological utterances that would doom Jews to eternal perdition unless they became his kind of Christian.

The most serious and potentially damaging threat to the future course of Jewish-Christian relations centered around the incomprehensible audience that Pope John Paul II granted to Kurt Waldheim, the man who lied for 40 years about his Nazi past and still became president of Austria. Many informed Jews finally understood that the pope had to receive Waldheim because Austria is a predominantly Catholic country, and both for internal political and religious reasons the pope had to yield to Waldheim's official request for an audience.

The dangerous silence

But it was, and still is, incomprehensible that the supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church would receive an unrepentant Nazi and not utter a syllable about his morally miserable past. For Jews and many Christians who communicated with us, the danger of that silence was that it was becoming a message to millions of Catholic youths in Germany, Austria, Poland and elsewhere that the Nazi Holocaust has apparently become so irrelevant that it did not even deserve a mention by the pope in the presence of the most highly publicized former Nazi in the world today. No wonder Waldheim beamed to the world's press following the audience, "It far exceeded my highest expectations."

The moral damage that emerged from that encounter, as many Jews (and Christians) saw it, was that the pope, the embodiment of absolute moral standards of good and evil, right and wrong, was contributing to a moral relativism that he so often condemns. If Waldheim receives the same treatment as Ronald Reagan; if President Botha of South Africa, an architect of apartheid and oppressor of blacks, is equal to Margaret Thatcher; if Idi Amin, who massacred an estimated 500,000 black Christians, is received in the Apostolic Palace with full presidential honors, then the ground of moral judgment ultimately collapses.

Clearly that policy, dramatized by the absurdity of the Waldheim visit, needs rethinking by serious people in the Holy See. There must be another method for talking with tyrants, brutal dictators and former unrepentant Nazis without providing them with a papal cover for their anti-human deeds.

Extraordinary support from American bishops

But the good news that emerged during this terribly hot summer of 1987 was the extraordinarily supportive role of the American Catholic hierarchy of the Jewish position. Without the leadership and the regular interventions of Archbishop John May of St. Louis, Cardinal John O'Connor of New York, Bishop William Keeler of Harrisburg, Pa., and others, the papal-Waldheim meeting could well have resulted in a fundamental rupture in Vatican-world Jewry relationships.

Their sensitive and consistently positive support was another testimony to the strength of Catholic-Jewish solidarity and friendship that has been achieved during the past 22 years since the end of Vatican Council II. That augurs well for the future growth of American Catholic-Jewish relations in the years ahead.

This conflict with the Vatican, at the same time, revealed that the Jewish community has a good deal of internal homework to do. The Waldheim-papal episode disclosed that there is a dividing line between those Jews who have been involved in some way in the progress of Catholic-Jewish relations during the past quarter century and those who have had virtually no contact with the fundamental improvement in relations that have taken place on many levels of Catholic-Jewish encounter.

View needs updating

Those who knew little or nothing about the positive ties and the deep changes that have taken place — changes in textbooks, liturgy, teacher training, seminary education and adult dialogues, persist in viewing the Catholic Church through the optic of 1,900 years of pogroms, crusades, inquisitions, teachings of contempt. Hence the rage against two millenia of anti-Semitism.

Those Jews who have experienced the bracing climate of mutual respect and increasing knowledge between Catholics and Jews refused to allow even a Waldheim — more correctly, especially a Waldheim — to jeopardize this extraordinary achievement of 25 years since the adoption of *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican document urging new relations with Judaism and other world religions.

Finally, the issue of Israel and diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Jewish state will undoubtedly undergo a different kind of discussion in the months ahead. It is now clear to many Jews, and growing numbers of Catholics, that if the Vatican intends to be a serious player in the Middle East peace game, the church will require full *de jure* diplomatic relations far more than Israel needs it.

11-27-87

7003

Ordinary progress towards extraordinary expectations

By Arie R. Brouwer
Special to Religious News Service

(Editor's note: The Rev. Arie Brouwer is general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ.)

One way to read our current ecumenical situation is that we are making ordinary progress towards extraordinary expectations. Focusing on the failure of events to match expectations can lead to a loss of hope — especially in the face of the extraordinary needs of

our time. But it is just as valid to focus on the fact that our brief ecumenical history (less than a century) provides the basis for those extraordinary expectations and is thus itself a sign of hope.

Only a few decades ago, people were surprised by ecumenical events that we now take for granted. Today we expect the extraordinary and, when it happens, sometimes take it for granted too!

For example, the success of the "Living Room Dialogues" that brought Roman Catholics and Protestants together throughout the nation was met with surprise in the 1960s. Yet the meeting in Columbia, S.C., last September, of Protestant, Orthodox and evangelical leaders with Pope John Paul II, unthinkable then, was now hardly headline news. Nevertheless, it did represent real progress.

That gathering provided the leaders of the Protestant and Orthodox communions in the National Council of Churches with an opportunity to work side-by-side with conservative evangelicals. Further, it not only furnished an opportunity for frank discussions of the differences that still mar the unity of the Christian church, but also an occasion for common witness by an extraordinarily diverse group.

Two new local initiatives

Two other very significant first-of-their-kind consultations this fall gave Protestant and Orthodox ecumenists opportunities to develop future strategies with their Roman Catholic counterparts. One, held in Indianapolis, dealt with participants of the Roman Catholic Church in local and regional councils of churches. The other, held in Madison, Conn., looked at ways Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholics can and do work together in mission overseas.

Also during 1987, three Lutheran bodies took definitive steps toward the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Not many years ago, that too seemed a far-off dream. On January 1, it will be a reality.

As I write these words, we are planning with Soviet Christians a joint prayer vigil for world peace to be held at the Washington Cathedral during the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. By being together, as we were in Geneva when the leaders of the two nations met there in 1985, we will seek to demonstrate the eager yearning of Christians everywhere for peace and justice. In the 1950s, the presence of Soviet church leaders in the United States caused public disturbances in some places. Today, it too is taken for granted.

Anniversary of Christianity in Russia

Similarly, members of many communions in this country are enthusiastically involved in plans for the celebration in 1988 of the 1000th anniversary of the baptism of Prince Vladimir and the evangelization of Kievan Rus. Several hundred Americans are expected to travel to the Soviet Union under the auspices of the NCC in what will surely be a major opportunity for ecumenical learning.

Within the National Council of Churches we have made steady progress toward becoming the "community of communions" envisioned in 1981. With mutual respect, we have confronted and counseled one another as we have been doing for almost 40 years. We have grown especially in appreciation for our various traditions of worship. We have also ventured to plan toward an unprecedented gathering of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and evangelical Christians in May 1988.

The World Council of Churches document on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" continues to enjoy astonishing popularity among local and regional ecumenical organizations. Through its study, many such organizations have been renewed theologically. At the same time, church-to-church dialogues (what Faith and Order specialists call bilateral conversations) this year have provided several new resources for enriching local relationships. More than a few Episcopal-Roman Catholic "covenanted parishes" have developed from such bilateral studies. And the Consultation on Church Union makes its own steady progress.

Deepening relations with Jews and Muslims

The Orthodox and Protestant communions within the National Council of Churches are also renewing and deepening their relationships with the Jewish community. Recent conversations between the National Council and the Synagogue Council of America strengthened those relationships.

At the same time, relationships with Muslim groups in the United States are also being developed and expanded. This year, several member churches of the Council struggled through to new understanding of, and commitment to, interfaith relationships.

At the same time, through action for the relief of hunger, joint efforts for peace in Central America, a ministry to those who suffer from AIDS, advocacy for freedom in South Africa, and sensitivity to the problems caused by massive U.S. involvement in the Middle East and Asia and throughout the world — and in dozens of other ways — we have been involved in common ministry with other Christians, people of other faiths and the whole human family. None of us involved in those ministries would claim that ordinary progress is enough "for the living of these days," but we are thankful for what we have received, even while we long for more.

11-27-87

7004

Sense of fundamental unity part of Christian experience in America

By John F. Hotchkin
Special to Religious News Service

(Editor's note: Father John Hotchkin is director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

No doubt my most abiding memory of the American ecumenical scene in 1987 will be the meeting of Pope John Paul II and other Christians in Columbia, S.C., on Sept. 11.

My perspective on these events is somewhat different from most people's, since as a staff person I was where staff can usually be spotted, sitting in the back row, looking over the pope's shoulder. So it was not the pope himself who was at the center of field of view, but rather the others who were taking part in these events. What I was seeing was more or less the same as what the pope was seeing.

It was certainly an impressive view. Little wonder as he left Columbia that day, the pope was heard to say, "Only in America!"

Two events were on the pope's schedule in Columbia: a private meeting with 26 representatives of other Christian bodies in the United States and a worship service attended by about 65,000 persons in Williams-Brice stadium.

Unlike anything witnessed before

Both were unique events, unlike anything witnessed before. But not so much because of the pope as because of who else was there. The 26 persons taking part in the private meeting and conversation represented a wider spectrum of Christian leadership than we have ever seen before gathered under religious auspices. They came from the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches, the Episcopal Church, the "mainline" Protestant churches of the 16th century Reformation and the Baptist churches. Included were the prime bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church, as well as leading representatives from the black churches, both Methodist and Baptist.

Under the direction of those present, a common statement was prepared and presented to the pope giving their reflections on the situation of the Christian church as a whole and questions before it. Nothing of this sort had been attempted on such a scale before. The fact that it was done reveals something about American Christianity that is now coming to the surface in more visible ways.

This struck the pope, and he commented on it in his spontaneous remarks during the conversation which followed the presentation of this common statement. He remarked that in his visits to the United States, even before he became pope, he sensed what was so apparent at this meeting. He said that the fundamental unity which links all Christians to one another is experienced in a more tangible way by American Christians than it seems to be elsewhere in the world.

Links with Christians around the world

It struck me that a number of the Christian leaders who spoke at this session stressed the links that American Christians have with Christians in other lands, in the Soviet Union, in Lebanon, in Ethiopia, in Egypt, in South Africa and in Northern Ireland. The American Christians' sense of Christian solidarity is not limited to the boundaries of the United States, and it was notable how quickly those who spoke made that clear.

The stadium service of Christian witness was particularly remarkable. We could estimate from the way the free admission tickets were distributed that 20 percent were channeled through Catholic parishes and the remainder through other churches and to individuals. It had to be remembered that Roman Catholics constitute about 2 percent of the population of South Carolina, so without the help and presence of others, Catholics alone could not have carried off an event on this scale.

I asked the Roman Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, if he could think of another time in history when the bishop of Rome had been invited to preside and to preach at a Christian worship service where far and away the majority of Christians taking part were not themselves Roman Catholics. He thought for a while and said he could not. It had never happened before.

That the pope was so warmly received and attended to in this region where "heartland" American Christianity remains strong, reflects well on the breadth of the Christianity of the people who came, and this should be deeply encouraging to all Roman Catholics in America.

Service fused traditions

The service itself, prepared by a team of worship experts from several traditions, including valuable help from the experienced people of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, was itself a ground-breaker. Bishop David Preus of the American Lutheran Church probably put his finger on what was unique about it. Centered on the cross and the Bible, he said that this service for the first time succeeded in fusing into a unitary whole a strong Protestant spirit of worship and the Catholic liturgical spirit.

One did not feel the service was a mere combination of elements, here a characteristically Protestant element and there a Catholic or Orthodox one. Rather throughout the service one continuously sensed these traditions were brought together to interact and enrich one another at a deeper level and were constantly being expressed in everything that was done. Even the papal sermon had this spirit. As some said, "Today the pope made a good Protestant preacher."

My most abiding single memory of this year will be, I am sure, the people in the stadium stands as night fell. They had been there for hours, and as the service drew gradually to a close, the pope already departed, they seemed to realize their children had not yet had dinner. Gathering into their arms the little ones too tired to walk, they drifted toward the exits

and out into the night toward their homes. It was an entirely natural, beautiful and peaceful moment.

This was not just another papal event, nor even a Roman Catholic day. It was a unique day created by and belonging to all American Christians.

Looking over the papal shoulder, I saw where ecumenism is in the United States. I looked out on the American Christian people and saw what they were capable of doing.



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

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November 23, 1987

Editor
Washington Jewish Week
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To the Editor:

For the record, it needs to be stated that there is a paragraph missing from WJW's otherwise fine article on the postponement of the December IJCIC meeting. The intervening paragraph reported Rabbi Waxman's view that the Pope's reference in Miami to Pius XII did not close the door to an honest exchange on that subject. It was with this that I "concurred," not with Rabbi Joseph Glaser ill-informed opinion that the Jewish leaders were "obsequious" with the Pope in Rome.

As a Catholic participant in that historic encounter, I can attest that, while properly respectful, the Jewish representatives in Rome were anything but "deferential." Rather they were straightforward and very effective expressing the Jewish community's objections to the audience with the President of Austria, its understanding of the significance, of the State of Israel, and its concerns regarding continuing antisemitism within the Catholic community. On all of these matters the exchange was not only frank but also at times, quite painful. Since the meeting was not a debate or a negotiating "interreligious summit" as the secular media erroneously reported the event, but a dialogue touching the most profound levels of our ancient, troubled relationship, there were no "losers." Both sides came away with a much deeper understanding of the other. It was not merely a political but a deeply spiritual encounter with the anguish of centuries of violence culminating in the Shoah.

It has also increased the level of candor in our dialogue not only internationally but nationally and locally as well, as was reflected in the recent National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations in Minneapolis which drew some 1200 people from around the country to one of the most intense experience of dialogue I have ever witnessed on a grand scale. I have noticed that it is

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mostly those in our communities who have never engaged in such a dialogue who criticize those of us who have. I believe history will show that both the Jewish people and the Catholic Church owe a great debt of gratitude to the courageous and skilled Jews who represented the Jewish community so ably and so forcefully in Rome and Miami.

Yours in Shalom,

Eugene J. Fisher
Dr. Eugene J. Fisher

EJF:lm

bcc: Fr. John Sullivan
Archbishop Laghi
Fr. Fumagalli
Bishop Keeler
Archbishop Stafford
Advisory Committee
Jewish Agencies

'Ill-Prepared' Jews Put Off Dialogue With Vatican

BY LARRY COHLER

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

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

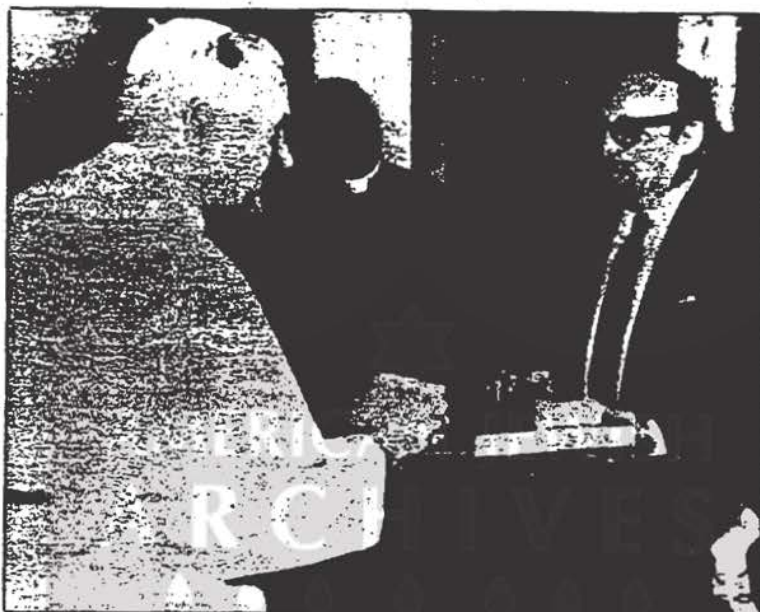
The Vatican, in contrast, has been preparing for the event since the beginning of last summer, according to Dr. Eugene Fisher, director of the Secretariat on Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Catholic Bishops Conference.

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

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

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

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



Pope John Paul II, left, meets with Rabbi Mordecai Waxman last September at Castel Gandolfo, his summer palace outside Rome.

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

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

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

Rabbi Leon Klenicki, who is in close contact with IJCIC as director of interreligious relations for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, concurred that the group

was ill-prepared. "They didn't take seriously enough the importance of this meeting," he said. "This lack of preparation is something unbelievable."

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

Tanenbaum, in an interview last week, blasted the suggestion that the Jewish side was not ready. "I can name a dozen scholars who could walk in and do a fine job with just five minutes' preparation," he

said. "You think these guys need to bone up?" Citing academics such as Raul Hilberg, Saul Friedlander and Emil Fackenheim, Tanenbaum asserted that their long years of research on the Holocaust obviated any need for special preparation.

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

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

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

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

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

But the dramatic events since then have catapulted this dialogue out of the usual low-key academic

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Dialogue

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mode of such get-togethers into a high-profile, high-stakes encounter.

The pope's controversial meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim last June, at which he praised the former UN secretary-general as a "man of peace," outraged many Jews because of revelations about Waldheim's previously unknown Nazi affiliations and links to wartime Nazi atrocities.

American Jewish leaders then threatened to boycott the pope's upcoming tour of the United States unless he met with them in Rome to discuss the matter and other issues troubling them. That meeting, which occurred in early September, was hailed as a success by LJCIC participants despite their failure to obtain an apology on Waldheim or any movement towards Vatican diplomatic relations with Israel.

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

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

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

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

"She devolved her inheritance as a Jewess in order to have a new and different inheritance," said Ratzinger. "But by entering into unity with Christ, she entered into the very heart of Judaism.... The pope has offered [the Jews] respect but also a theological line. This always implies our union with the faith of Abraham but also with the revelation of Jesus Christ in which the faith of Abraham finds its fulfillment."

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

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

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

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

"In contrast, the Catholics are under discipline."

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

Meanwhile, the thrust of recent events have moved some Jewish leaders to sharply question the achievements claimed by those who met with the pope in Rome.

Most recently, Rabbi Joseph Glaser, vice president of the Reform movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis and the group's representative on the SCA, bluntly declared the Rome papal meeting "a failure."

By exonerating Pius XII before his church scholars began their study, the pope had fatally prejudiced the prospects for an objective, open inquiry, Glaser said during a phone interview.

"Forget it," he said of the study.

Referring to the Reform movement's own leader, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, who came back from Rome declaring the papal meeting a success, Glaser said, "I get this feeling from him and others there is this deferential attitude, that they're kind of scared of them [the Catholic leaders]. They tend to be almost obsequious."

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

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

with Rabbi. With more

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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

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

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

He was the only rabbi invited as guest observer at Vatican Council, ^{II} and participated in the first official audience of world Jewish leaders with Pope John Paul II in Vatican City. Rabbi

Tanenbaum, who has been an active member of IJCIC since its founding, played a key role as one of the nine-member delegation of IJCIC leaders who met with Pope John Paul II and Vatican authorities in Vatican City and Castel Gondolfo on Aug. 31-Sept. 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A prize-winning/radio commentator over WINS-Westinghouse, he has served as consultant to the NBC-TV nine-hour special "Holocaust" ~~xx~~ and earlier was consultant to the special "Jesus of Nazareth."

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

NEWS FROM THE Committee



The American Jewish
Committee

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Director of Public Relations

The AJC protects Jewish interests the world over; combats bigotry and promotes human rights for all; defends pluralism, enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people, and contributes to the formulation of American public policy from a combined Jewish and American perspective. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the U.S.

FOR RELEASE AFTER 12 NOON,
Monday, Dec. 7, 1987

Washington, Dec. 7....Dr. Eugene J. Fisher, the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, declared today that "while 1987 was a turbulent year in Catholic-Jewish relations, nevertheless, the delicate fabric of the new relationship that Catholics and Jews have been weaving in patient dialogue for the past twenty years in this country and throughout the world remained intact."

In an address before the American Jewish Committee's Interreligious Affairs Commission, which is meeting here, Dr. Fisher said that "what took place between our two communities, especially after Pope John Paul II's meeting last June with Kurt Waldheim, was something extraordinary. It was tough and challenging on both sides, but Jewish and Catholic leaders were able to cut through the rhetoric of outrage and defensiveness, and for a moment, we touched each other in ways that had not happened before. The recent months of controversy have deepened the entire Catholic-Jewish encounter, and, ironically, have strengthened the entire endeavor."

The Catholic leader added: "Unfortunately there are those within both the Jewish and the Catholic communities, and certainly in the media, who want to write this year's story as one of winners and losers. It is simply not so. And it has been mainly those in our communities who have been least involved in the ongoing dialogue, and who may have a stake in diminishing its significance, who have tried to push this false interpretation of the events."

With regard to the recent controversy concerning the remarks of Cardinal Ratzinger, Dr. Fisher added: "The real story of the events surrounding Cardinal Ratzinger's interview in Il Sabato has yet to come out in the media. That story is, that the system -- if imperfect -- does work. A clarification was needed. A clarification was asked for, and within days, a clarification was given. While much remains to be discussed, there should be no question concerning the irreversibility of the positive stance toward Jews and Judaism officially taken by the Church since the second Vatican Council."

Rabbi A. James Rudin, the AJC's National Interreligious Affairs Director, responded by praising Dr. Fisher for "his outstanding leadership in building positive Catholic-Jewish relations. Personal integrity and wise counsel are Gene Fisher's hallmarks, and they were clearly in evidence during an extremely difficult period in the history of our two communities."

Rabbi Rudin noted that in 1987 alone there had been "Cardinal John O'Connor's trip to Jordan and Israel, the furor surrounding the construction of a convent at the Auschwitz death camp, the beatification of Edith Stein, the

.....more

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CSAE 1707

Papal meeting with Waldheim, the Rome, Castel Gondolfo, and Miami Catholic-Jewish meetings, and most recently Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's disturbing interview in an Italian journal. These shocks, jolts, and surprises have severely tested Catholic-Jewish relations. But I have been enormously heartened by the positive strength of Catholic-Jewish relations in the United States, and I have been gratified by the important leadership role that the American Catholic Bishops have played throughout this year of crisis.

"Future generations will judge us harshly if we now weaken our resolve to continue building positive Catholic-Jewish relations, or, worst of all, if we abandon the task because of the events of 1987."

Jack Lapin of Houston, Texas, who is Chairperson of the AJC's Interreligious Affairs Commission, said, "The American Jewish Committee is intensifying its continuing commitment to interreligious activities. One of these programs is the Holocaust Education program that is being jointly undertaken by the AJC and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This project will make the study of the Shoah a permanent part of Catholic education, something the Pope stressed in his address in Miami last September."

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

EJP, REL



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12/3/87

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date December 22, 1987
to Marc H. Tanenbaum
from Judith H. Banki
subject IJCIC Planning Group for Holocaust Conference

You requested I put together some ideas or guidelines for the benefit of the IJCIC group going to Geneva to plan for the Vatican-Jewish conference on the Holocaust.

Looking over my files, I think the backgrounder including brief guidelines I prepared for the Catholic-Jewish conference in Brazil remains the most suitable item because it was specifically prepared for a Catholic audience largely unaware both of the dimensions of the Holocaust for Jews and of the record of Christian antisemitism. Whether the latter springs from deliberate denial or genuine ignorance is not the question here; the need to address the historical amnesia is paramount.

Some of these quotations cited are not current, but I believe the essence of the approach is still solid and to the point, and I commend it to you and the delegation to Geneva. (I wish I could be among you; yourself excepted, I think I understand the Catholic mentality better than others who may be going)

John Pawlikowski's article from Shoah is also very much to the point and should be read by all involved. Gene Fisher's article will be additionally helpful. Copies are attached.

JHB/ch
attachments

Nov. 1985
Sao Paulo

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Scholars, protests greet Ratzinger in N.Y.

Respect history, he says; respect us, says rabbi

By DICK RYAN

Special to the National Catholic Reporter
New York

CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER, as president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was the focus of curious scholarly attention last week when he delivered a 23-page paper at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York.

Ratzinger's paper, part of the fourth annual Erasmus lecture sponsored by the Rockford Institute's Center on Religion and Society, was titled "Biblical Interpretation in Conflict: the Foundations and Directions of Exegesis Today."

Speaking about the historical-critical approach to the Bible, Ratzinger said, "Certainly texts must first of all be traced back to their historical origins and interpreted in their proper historical context.

"But then," he added, "in a second exegetical operation, one must look at them also in light of the total movement of history and in light of history's central event, Jesus Christ. Only the combination of both these methods will yield understanding of the Bible."

The 61-year-old German cardinal was also, however, the focus of an angry dem-



Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger

onstration by gay rights groups outside the church and later during his talk, as epithets such as "Nazi" and "anti-Christ" were shouted at him before a handful of demonstrators were arrested and removed.

The controversial cardinal was also the target of several angry New York Jewish leaders who refused to attend a meeting with him scheduled by New York Cardinal John O'Connor earlier in the day and at-

tended by Jewish leaders O'Connor invited.

"It's a matter of channels and process," remarked Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Inter-religious Consultations (IJCIC). "Cardinal Ratzinger's recent statement in an Italian newspaper cut to the core of Christian-Jewish relations and made a mockery of everything that has taken place between Christians and Jews over the last 22 years. It's important that any discussion should include responsible Jewish theologians and scholars."

Tanenbaum disclosed that a late February meeting is scheduled in Rome with Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and leading Jewish theologians and scholars.

At a one-hour press conference the next morning, questions were strictly limited to Ratzinger's lecture. Following the conference, however, Ratzinger did respond to a few other questions, noting that he will not comment on the U.S. Catholic Conference statement on AIDS and instructions about condoms until he has the opportunity to speak with several of the bishops.

He also said his congregation has not yet reached a decision on a study currently being conducted on the morality of nonpayment of taxes. After responding to only a few questions, Ratzinger was immediately ushered into another room for a lunch meeting with Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars. ■

Response to Rev. Neuhaus

(V) (H)

It is remarkable that Rev. Richard John Neuhaus has chosen to criticize NCR's Feb. 5 story on Cardinal Ratzinger's visit to New York for "so many errors" and then make so many of his own. For example, his assertion that my "implication that the Cardinal was inaccessible or unresponsive is entirely contrary to fact" is, of course, entirely contrary to fact. Let me count the ways.

It may have been that there were two entirely separate Thursday morning press conferences attended by the Cardinal on January 28th but, during the one I attended, Rev. Neuhaus made it quite clear at the outset of the conference, that questions would be strictly limited to the Cardinal's address, the night before, on Biblical interpretation and then, "if there was time", other questions would be entertained.

Rev. Neuhaus' comment that "I indicated that we hoped the press conference would focus on the subject of the lecture" (and) most questions did that" is farcically understated. There were no ifs, ands, or buts about the iron-clad ground-rule: no non-Bible questions permitted here.

For instance, at one point in the conference, a reporter from Los Angeles asked the Cardinal a specific question which was immediately interrupted by Rev. Neuhaus on the grounds that it was off the subject. The Cardinal "readily responded" over Neuhaus' objection to the question, only because the reporter pressed on and related the question indirectly to the morning's command theme.

(MORE)

After Tracy Early of NC News raised a question about Jewish-Christian interpretation of the Old Testament, the only question that was remotely close to currently controversial issues related to some of the Cardinal's public statements, Rev. Neuhaus announced, after the Cardinal responded, that time had run out and the press conference was over. There was no invitation for further questions and Rev. Neuhaus thanked everyone for coming. If the Cardinal "readily responded to questions asked on other subjects," it was certainly not during the time formally allotted, and definitely not at the conference I attended.

Only very briefly after the conference did a few reporters (myself included) hurriedly ask a few questions of the Cardinal (and duly referred to in my story) before Rev. Neuhaus personally escorted the Cardinal to another room ("ushering" does not fully convey the protectively hovering climate that was present).

As to the Cardinal's responses during that very abbreviated time, the last two paragraphs of the NCR story reported the Cardinal's answers, as they were, and in earlier paragraphs the Cardinal's address from the night before is also quoted. Rev. Neuhaus' comment that I "reported almost nothing of what the Cardinal actually said" is somewhat troubling, if not downright remarkable.

Incidentally, when the Cardinal answered those few brief questions after the formal conference, he did not use the microphone or answer the questions publicly for the benefit of everyone there. He would not, in fact, have answered any if he had not been partially surrounded while a few reporters tried to lean across the table and get his attention.

(MORE)

Rev. Neuhaus stood next to the Cardinal and, after only a few minutes, cut off any further questions after no more than six, at the most, had been asked.

On another point, no one had "greater interest in what the Cardinal had to say in his several days of dialogue with Americans" than I did. However, when I tried to ask the Cardinal additional questions in the separate room where he and Rev. Neuhaus joined a small select group of invited lunch guests after the press conference, I was advised, in no uncertain terms by a Lotus Club employee standing at the door, that the room was off-limits to members of the press. When, a few minutes later, I identified myself as an NCR reporter to Father Michael Swalina, a Vatican aide, and requested the opportunity to interview the Cardinal at any time in the next few days convenient to him, I was informed that it was quite impossible. So much for accessible and responsive.

As for my report that "several angry New York Jewish leaders" refused to attend a meeting with Cardinal O'Connor, that was the distinct impression I received in a personal conversation with Rabbi Tanenbaum. However, instead of mentioning any direct, personal conversation that he may have had (but apparently didn't) with Rabbi Tanenbaum on this matter, Rev. Neuhaus preferred to instead take a third-hand approach by referring to an edition of Catholic New York which, like Rev. Neuhaus, referred to still another, third source, The New York Times, and unfairly criticized the rabbi without giving any indication, anywhere in the story, of having actually talked to Rabbi Tanenbaum!

(MORE)

Also, in his letter to NCR, Rev. Neuhaus slyly, if somewhat mischievously, points out that "Rabbi Tanenbaum, who said he boycotted the meeting, was not invited." According to Rev. Neuhaus favorite newspaper, however, Catholic New York reported, in that same issue, that "in making arrangements the day before the meeting, Brother Martyn said he called Rabbi Tanenbaum's office and was told he was in Austria, so no invitation was offered." If indeed the rabbi "was not invited", it seems obvious that it was only because he was not home.

I hesitate to suggest the good Reverend would be guilty of so clumsy a ploy. However, I find it somewhat disconcerting that he would accuse me of an error while rearranging, to his own advantage, the literal interpretation of a simple declarative sentence about a simple objective fact. Was the revelation of the less than open atmosphere of Cardinal Ratzinger's "dialogue" with the press really that personally upsetting?

Finally, in noting that "Rabbi Tanenbaum said that Rabbi Mordecai Waxman had also boycotted the meeting (but) Rabbi Waxman has publicly denied it", Rev. Neuhaus leaves the distorted impression that we reported inaccurately about Rabbi Waxman's involvement in our story when, in fact, his name and association with the meeting was never even mentioned. Considering the amount of space Rev. Neuhaus gave to his version of Cardinal Ratzinger's eagerness to talk at length about some of his recently controversial statements, one might have expected a greater interest in the kind of simple accuracy and fairness that does not mislead the reader by dropping names, in questionable context, never even referred to in our original story.

(MORE)

To make the point as clear as possible for Rev. Neuhaus, at the particular press conference that I attended, it was obvious from the outset that the session was carefully choreographed and controlled to permit an absolute minimum of "dialogue" about issues which do indeed have great, continuing interest for the public. To be fair, however, I should qualify that somewhat. The Cardinal was quite accessible and responsive to the New York Archdiocesan weekly, Catholic New York, and its editor to whom, for whatever privileged reasons, the Cardinal, and Rev. Neuhaus, granted a private, exclusive interview.

Incidentally, during his brief visit to New York and "his several days of dialogue with Americans", Cardinal Ratzinger also gave a major address on modern Biblical interpretation at a prominent New York church. Before, during, and after that address, no questions or comments by either the press or the public were invited, entertained, or permitted.

To suggest, even facetiously, that Cardinal Ratzinger had "several days of dialogue with Americans" is the most cynically arrogant error of all.

Diels Ryan

Rabbi Marc H. Tenenbaum
The American Jewish Committee
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022-2746
U.S.A.

My dear Rabbi Tenenbaum,

I appreciate very much your profound commitment and your sensitivity regarding the most at the moment difficult problem of the Carmelite convent. Thank you for your so deeply engaged letter of February 7th.

I am fully aware that the statement of Cardinal Macharski, among others because of its laconism, has brought about many quite sharp reactions from the Jewish side. It seems to me that, from the very beginning, the expectations have been much bigger than the real possibilities. That is why I travelled to Paris together with Father Musial in order to explain better the true intentions of Cardinal Macharski's communiqué. A little later, while in Rome, I phoned Dr. Riegner and tried to clarify some necessary points. In the name of Polish Commission for the Dialogue with the Judaisme I have also expressed our view regarding his declaration enclosed in your letter. According to my feeling the real difficulties are due not to the lack of willingness of anyone from Polish side, but in the most part are wholly objective.

Since I have written to you we have in this matter still some more positive developments. On the 27th January and the 9th February the General of the Carmelite Order has written two letters, respectively to Cardinal Albert Decourtray and to Mr Théo Klein. In both he has expressed his full approval for the project of the Auschwitz center of information, education, meeting and prayer, which includes also the presence of the Carmelite Sisters in the new place.

Concerning your Commentary on "Auschwitz to be moved to new center" - for which I am deeply grateful! - I permit myself to add some small remarks: You have written: "Auschwitz was built by the Nazis for the primary purpose of exterminating European Jews". Now, it is obviously true, but not from the very beginning. According to the Encyclopaedia Judaica /vol. 8 p. 871/ mass murder of Jews began in March 1942. And the first transport of Poles arrived to Auschwitz the 14 June 1940. From this time on, during nearly two years, the Auschwitz camp was functioning as an extermination camp primarily for Poles. It is of course quite possible, and even very likely, that there were also some Jews among the prisoners defined as "Poles", but they came to Auschwitz not as Jews, but as Poles.

The first transports of Jews, defined as such, arrived truly in March 1942 and the first Jewish transport sent to Auschwitz by R.S.H.A. /Reichssicherheitshauptamt/ arrived the 12th May 1942. Such was the real beginning of the systematic extermination of Jews decreed at the Wannsee conference, the 20th January 1942.

Many thousands of Polish people were dying in Auschwitz already since the summer 1940, and that is why, among others, as I have many times repeated, Auschwitz has become for all the Poles, still during the war, a holy symbol of martyrdom of the Polish nation. Thus, understanding personally very well the feelings and the sensitivity of the Jews, for whom the same Auschwitz has become the symbol of Shoah, I am not able to see how convince in a plausible way my compatriotes that the Carmelite convent should be moved at once, to a not yet existing "interim center". And to the best of my knowledge Cardinal Macharski has really no possibility to create on the spot such an "interim center".

Truly I see only one issue: to intensify all our efforts to build as quickly as possible the Auschwitz center and in the meantime to learn to suffer each other in charity and to try on both sides to abstain from hostilities in the spirit of our common-rooted faith.

I implore our God that the prayer, even the one of the Carmelite Sisters, may not divide us, but bring us closer together. The idea of the Auschwitz center of information, education, meeting and prayer, which has found the full approval of the Pope, John Paul II, in his address to the Jewish authorities in Vienna, merits without doubt our common efforts in order to propagate it and to explain its true meaning. It seems to me that only our common and genuine commitment, which was at the very heart of Geneva II, can give an authentic answer to the challenge of the present situation.

I pray the Holy One, your good wishes may become reality and remain

respectfully yours



/-/ Henryk Muszyński

Bishop of Włocławek

Enclosure: Déclaration de la Commission de l' Episcopat Polonais pour
le Dialogue avec le Judaïsme

For information: Franciszek Cardinal Macharski



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December 28, 1988

His Excellency
Bishop Henryk Muszynski
Chairman
Polish Episcopate's Commission
for Dialogue with Judaism
87-800 Wloclawek
ul. Gdanska 2/4
Poland

My dear Bishop Muszynski,

It was a genuine privilege to come to know you during the recent congress in Vienna on "Jews and Christians in a Pluralistic World."

I had heard many positive comments about you from colleagues, and our friendly and open meetings more than justified my anticipation. I sincerely hope that we will have opportunities to deepen and enrich that friendship and understanding.

We have many issues to discuss, but I wish to focus at this moment on the question of the Carmelite convent on the grounds of Auschwitz. I genuinely believe in the good will of Cardinal Macharski and yourself in seeking to bring about a constructive resolution of this highly symbolic and emotional issue on both sides.

While I think I understand the resistance that has emerged, I fear that unless there is some genuine movement in the coming weeks to take public steps to create the new center off the grounds of Auschwitz, that this issue will become inflamed and will lead to unfortunate and uncontrollable reactions which could undermine much of the progress we have made in improving Catholic-Jewish understanding.

I have a simple question that might help forestall these negative consequences: Is it not possible for the Cardinal and those associated with him to make a public gesture very soon of placing a spade in the ground of the proposed new center as a sign of commitment and good will? That would become an important gesture that the Geneva agreement is in force. It would then enable Cardinal Macharski and others to continue their conversations with the Carmelite nuns and others, and at the same time signal the world of Jewish survivors that movement is taking place.

His Excellency
Bishop Henryk Muszynski

December 28, 1988
Page Two

We would do everything possible to inform the world Jewish community that there is continued good faith on the part of the Polish Catholic Church and the Polish people, and that nothing should be done to impede the constructive conversations within the Church community.

I fear that if something like that is not done soon, we will lose control of the situation, and irreparable harm would be done to our common cause.

I would be grateful for your confidential response to this idea.

My warmest good wishes for joyous Holy Days to you, your colleagues and your families, and my prayers for God's richest blessings over you.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director
International Relations

MHT:RPR

International Jewish Committee
ON
Interreligious Consultations

December 21, 1987

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P.O.B. 7739
Jerusalem 91.077, Israel

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

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

His Eminence
Cardinal Johannes Willebrands
President
Vatican Secretariat on Religious
Relations with the Jewish People
1 via del Erbe
Vatican City

Dear Cardinal Willebrands,

I have the privilege to inform you that the member bodies of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultation met on December 1st and honored me by their unanimous election as the Chairman of IJCIC.

One of the virtues of this new role is that it will afford me the opportunity of being in more regular communication with you and your colleagues in pursuance of our shared objectives.

We have held our first meeting last week under our new leadership and I am gratified by the growing spirit of harmony and discipline that has begun to emerge.

We recognize that there is need for an early joint liaison meeting in 1988, and we have begun to discuss possible dates and suggested themes for our mutual consideration. We shall meet again shortly after the Holidays, and will advance the process. As soon as we have a clear consensus of our members, I will communicate our thoughts to you and Dr. Gerhard Riegner.

In the meantime, my heartfelt good wishes for continued good health and strength, especially during this Holy Season. May the New Year bring you rich blessings from the Almighty and may peace and mutual respect prevail between all members of the human family.

Respectfully yours,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director
International Relations

MHT:RPR

International Jewish Committee
on
Interreligious Consultations

January 7, 1988

AMERICAN SECRETARIAT:
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327 Lexington Avenue
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Tel.: (022) 34 13 25

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

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

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Association
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Jerusalem 91.077, Israel

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

World Jewish Congress
501 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

His Eminence
Johannes Cardinal Willebrands
President
Vatican Commission on Religious Relations
with the Jews
00120 Vatican City, Italy

Dear Cardinal Willebrands,

A meeting of the official representatives of the member agencies of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) met today, and I have been authorized to communicate the following message to you in their behalf:

There have been persistent reports in recent days that during the planned visit of Pope John Paul II to Austria in June 1988, he may meet again with Kurt Waldheim. There have also been suggestions, not corroborated, that the Pope would be accompanied by Mr. Waldheim on a visit to the site of the notorious Mauthausen concentration camp.

As we know, you well understand, these reports have given rise to widespread and grave concern in many parts of the world Jewish community and, therefore, could have the most serious implications for Vatican-Jewish relations.

We wish to stress that our concern does not relate to the altogether appropriate relationship of the Holy See or the Pope to the Austrian Catholic Church and the Austrian people. We have consistently distinguished between the Austrian nation and people and the role of Kurt Waldheim as an individual with his past as a former officer in the Nazi army.

Your Eminence, you will recall that at the meeting between representatives of IJCIC and the Vatican in Rome during August 31 - September 1, 1987, we arrived at an understanding by which we would seek "to avoid future misunderstandings" through "contacts and collaboration where the need arises, including contact with the Secretary of State," Cardinal Agostino Casaroli.

In our joint statement issued then in Vatican City, the text announced that "the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews heard the dismay and concern over the moral problems raised for the Jewish people" by the Papal audience with Kurt Waldheim. The Commission "acknowledged the seriousness of and the Church's sensitivity to those Jewish concerns."

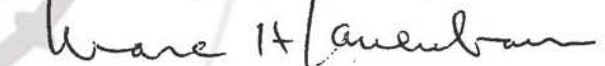
At the Rome meeting, you will also recall, it was agreed with Cardinal Casarolli that "as occasions require, in areas which are of concern to the world Jewish community and where religious and political issues intertwine, future exchanges between IJCIC and the Secretariat of State will be possible from time to time." Accordingly, we would be grateful for your bringing this letter to the attention of Cardinal Casarolli, with a view toward arranging an early meeting with a small group of IJCIC leaders.

We feel the urgent need to discuss with you and Cardinal Casarolli the specific concerns that we believe the world Jewish community has about this possible Papal meeting with Mr. Waldheim, and the details of his Nazi past which we feel strongly must be taken fully into account.

It is our sincere hope that by bringing our views and documentation to the attention of the Holy See in a direct meeting that the constructive purposes of genuine dialogue would be strengthened, and we would together seek to avoid another episode of public controversy which might strain severely our ongoing relationship.

We look forward to your response in this matter and thank you for your kind consideration. In behalf of IJCIC and its member agencies, we extend to you our warm good wishes for health and strength for the New Year.

Respectfully yours,



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Chairman



International Jewish Committee
ON
Interreligious Consultations

PERSONAL

February 2, 1988

AMERICAN SECRETARIAT:
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New York, N.Y. 10016

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

His Eminence
John Cardinal O'Connor
452 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Cardinal O'Connor,

There are several aspects of Ari Goldman's story in the New York Times (January 28, 1988) that require correction and clarification:

He attributes to me an announcement of a "boycott" by several rabbis of the Cardinal Ratzinger meeting in your residence.

First, I never made any such announcement. That was his formulation, not mine.

Second, to my knowledge no one ever used the word "boycott." Neither Mordecai Waxman, Seymour Reich, Wolfe Kelman, Henry Michelman, nor I. Boycott suggests an intentional effort to penalize, or pressure, or embarrass by a specific action of withdrawal or withholding of one's presence. There was no such intention on the part of anyone, as far as I can ascertain.

I was in Vienna, Austria, attending conferences from Sunday through Wednesday last week while your meeting for Cardinal Ratzinger was being organized. On Wednesday morning, as I was leaving for the airport, I received a telephone call from the IJCIC office in New York informing me for the first time about the meeting and who was invited. It was then that I was told that Waxman, Reich, Kelman, and Michelman were invited and declined and for the following reasons:

Last October, when Cardinal Ratzinger's interview was published in Il Sabato, a strong public controversy broke out in the Italian and European press generally. There followed an extensive exchange of telephone calls, letters and telexes between Cardinal Willebrands and his staff, and Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, then chairman of IJCIC, and his staff. After much effort at clar-

Page Two

ification, both privately and publicly, a joint decision was made by Cardinal Willebrands and Rabbi Waxman to place the issue of Cardinal Ratzinger's statements -- and his earlier writings -- on Judaism and the Jews on the agenda of the next liaison meeting of the Vatican Secretariat and IJCIC's member agencies.

Since both parties felt this is a critical core issue in the Catholic-Jewish dialogue, and had appeared to contradict declarations issued by the Vatican Secretariat as well as by Pope John Paul II himself, it was jointly agreed by the Vatican Secretariat and IJCIC that a carefully-prepared discussion was essential in order to avoid further widespread and potentially damaging confusion.

Without discussing it with me as the IJCIC chairman-- since I was overseas -- the four IJCIC members whom you invited, Waxman, Reich, Kelman, and Michelman -- apparently decided on their own that a hastily-called meeting with Cardinal Ratzinger in New York might lead to a public impression that these basic issues were discussed systematically and that the problems were resolved. Such an impression might well have been seen as preempting the planned meeting in Rome, and, quite possibly, reducing the urgency for that discussion with competent Catholic and Jewish scholars.

The independent decisions of the IJCIC members were therefore made, as I understand it, out of their commitment to uphold the joint decision made by Cardinal Willebrands and IJCIC leaders weeks ago, rather than any attempt to embarrass Cardinal Ratzinger or yourself. Regrettably, the press chose to interpret it that way, and none of us have control over that.

Had there been an opportunity to discuss these matters in advance, I believe this unfortunate episode might not have taken place.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman
IJCIC

MHT:RPR

International Jewish Committee
ON
Interreligious Consultations

February 2, 1988

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

Mr. Henry Siegmán
Executive Vice-President
American Jewish Congress
15 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028

Dear Henry,

It was a pleasure having lunch with you recently and I look forward to further opportunities for our talking and sharing together.

As I indicated to you, it was the sense of many at the January 7th meeting of IJCIC that the cause of a unified representation of Jewish interests in relation to the Vatican and World Council of Churches would be greatly strengthened were the American Jewish Congress to rejoin IJCIC as a full participant in decision-making.

As chairman, I have therefore the pleasure of extending to AJ Congress through you this official invitation to return to full membership status.

Our next IJCIC meeting will be held on February 11th, at 10 a.m. If possible, I would welcome a statement of your intention to rejoin. If the time period is too short for making adequate clearance, then perhaps this could be resolved by our March 10th meeting.

In any case, I would like you to know how very much I appreciate your positive spirit, and I look forward to working cooperatively with you and your colleagues.

With warm good wishes, I am,

Cordially, as ever,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman

MHT:RPR

International Jewish Committee
on
Interreligious Consultations

January 21, 1988

AMERICAN SECRETARIAT:
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New York, N.Y. 10016

Mr. Abraham Foxman
National Director
Anti-Defamation League
of B'nai B'rith
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Abe,

It was a pleasure having lunch with you last week and I look forward to further opportunities for our talking and sharing together.

As I indicated to you, it was the sense of the January 7th meeting of IJCIC that the cause of a unified representation of Jewish interests in relation to the Vatican and World Council of Churches would be greatly strengthened were the ADL to rejoin IJCIC as a full participant in decision-making.

As chairman, I have therefore the pleasure of extending to ADL through you this official invitation to return to full membership status.

Our next IJCIC meeting will be held on February 10th (changed from February 11th). If possible, I would welcome a statement of your intention to rejoin. If the time period is too short for making adequate clearance, then perhaps this could be resolved by our March 10th meeting.

In any case, I would like you to know how very much I appreciate your positive spirit, and I look forward to working cooperatively with you and your colleagues.

With warm good wishes, I am,

Cordially, as ever,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman

MHT:RPR

NEWS FROM THE Committee



The American Jewish
Committee

Institute of Human Relations
165 East 66 Street
New York, New York 10022
212 751-4000
Morton Yarmon
Director of Public Relations

The American Jewish Committee protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and anti-Semitism and promotes human rights for all; works for the security of Israel and deepened understanding between Americans and Israelis; defends democratic values and seeks their realization in American public policy; and enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the U.S.

ANNUAL MEETING
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
OCTOBER 27-OCTOBER 30, 1983
THE WESTIN HOTEL
COPLEY PLACE
10 HUNTINGTON AVENUE
BOSTON, MA 02116
(617) 262-9600

PRESS ROOM: DEFENDER ROOM
(Seventh Floor)

CONTACTS:

Press: Joyce Kaplan
Janice Hyman

Broadcasting: Halas Just

FOR RELEASE AFTER 10 A.M.
SUNDAY, OCT. 30, 1983

BOSTON, Oct. 30.—The American Jewish Committee today presented a farewell citation to Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum in honor of his 27 years of "pioneering service" to the Committee and his 35 years of dedicated leadership on behalf of American Jewry.

The citation was presented to Rabbi Tanenbaum by Leo Nevas, chairman of AJC's Board of Governors, at the closing session of AJC's Annual National Executive Council Meeting, which was held Oct. 27-30 at the Westin Copley Place Hotel here.

Rabbi Tanenbaum has been director of AJC's International Relations Department since 1983, and from 1960 to 1983 he was the agency's national director of interreligious affairs.

Since 1987 Rabbi Tanenbaum has also held the chairmanship -- to which he was unanimously elected -- of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), which represents world Jewry in its relations with the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and other international religious bodies.

On January 1, 1989, Rabbi Tanenbaum will become the AJC's international consultant, relinquishing direction of the department he headed from 1983 through 1988. As international consultant he will continue to be involved in several projects he has initiated, such as programs concerned with the Vatican and with Austria, but he plans also to devote a larger measure of his time to writing, lecturing, teaching, and working in the areas of world refugee concerns, hunger, and human rights.

In accepting his citation, Rabbi Tanenbaum said: "As I have thought about my 27 years with the American Jewish Committee, I experience feelings of deepest gratitude to AJC for having made possible opportunities for living a life of high meaning and for making contributions in many areas of importance to the Jewish people and to society at large -- in some cases, contributions that, I trust, have been of lasting and even transforming value."

Among the AJC experiences the rabbi pointed to were his acting as guest observer, as AJC's representative, at Vatican Council II; "lifesaving" work in behalf of refugees in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, and "decades-long struggles against anti-Semitism, racism, and dehumanization."

"I look forward with optimism and enthusiasm to a new career that will enable me to do what I have been diverted from by my activist life," he said, "namely, writing several books which I have had to postpone, extended lecturing, and teaching at a university in the near future."

Rabbi Tanenbaum said he will serve out his term as chairman of IJCIC through December 1988, and will preside as co-chairman, with Cardinal Johannes Willibrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat on Religious Relations with the Jews, at a forthcoming conference on "Anti-Semitism in the Christian West and the Shoah [Holocaust]." The conference is to be held in Zurich February 20-24, 1989.

Mr. Nevas, in awarding Rabbi Tanenbaum the citation, paid tribute to the rabbi for his "historic contributions in building bridges of understanding and respect between all major branches of Christendom and Jewish communities in many parts of the world." Mr. Nevas also expressed appreciation of the rabbi's "pioneering role over the past 25 years in providing singular leadership in world refugee, hunger, and human rights programs." Rabbi Tanenbaum, said Mr. Nevas, has made "permanent contributions to enriching the intellectual and moral leadership of the American Jewish Committee, and all of us remain in his debt for years to come."

The plaque presented to Rabbi Tanenbaum reads: "To Marc Tanenbaum for his exceptional contribution to enhancing understanding of the Jewish people in the interreligious and international communities."

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE
ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman

American Secretariat
Synagogue Council of America
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European Secretariat
World Jewish Congress
1 Rue de Varembe
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New York, NY 10022
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November 16, 1988

Dr. Eugene J. Fisher
Executive Secretary
Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
1312 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Gene,

A copy of your confidential memorandum of October 11, 1988, addressed to a "Jewish Representatives List" has recently been brought to my attention.

I have read your document carefully. In general, I share the concern of your colleagues and yourself and feel personally that a number of your corrections and criticisms are appropriate and justified. I regret that some of these statements were made not only because several were inaccurate, but because they may have left the false impression that these were the views of IJCIC, or its member agencies, or the majority of the American Jewish community.

As I hope you and your colleagues know, none of these declarations cited in your memorandum was issued by any official members of IJCIC nor of IJCIC itself. The ADL is not a member of IJCIC. Its representative on our Sept. 1987 delegation to the Vatican, Rabbi Leon Klenicki, was present by virtue of a special arrangement with B'nai B'rith International. Normal discipline and courtesy should have prompted the sharing of conclusions with IJCIC prior to going public. Regrettably, none of those who spoke or wrote on this subject found it necessary to check their facts or interpretations with any of us from IJCIC who were so deeply involved in the entire process. That is both regrettable and unfortunate.

For the sake of the record, let me say that IJCIC neither sought nor received any so-called "promises" on the several issues alluded to -- the promulgation of a document on anti-Semitism and the Shoah; a "World Jewry Desk" in the Vatican Secretariat of State; and establishment at the present moment of de jure diplomatic relations with Israel.

November 16, 1988

You are fully correct in stating that our joint understanding of exactly what both our delegations discussed and agreed upon was published in the careful and precise communique that we issued in Rome at the close of our meetings. While we felt then, and continue to feel now, that an "official Catholic document on the Shoah, the historical background of anti-Semitism and its contemporary manifestations," would be of major importance, it is true that we also agreed that we will "first engage in a series of consultations on the Shoah" between the Vatican Commission and IJCIC.

As you will recall, there was some hope expressed in the Jewish delegation that that process might culminate in a Papal Encyclical or an Apostolic Letter in order to heighten the potential value of such a document. But no "promises" were asked for nor given. My impression is that we were simply open to that possibility, depending on how our consultations progressed.

I do want to differ with you, Gene, on the issue of the postponement of the Shoah consultation. You are right to assert that "the Jewish side...requested the postponement." But at no time did IJCIC "accuse the Holy See of footdragging." The actualities were that the turbulence over the audience granted by Pope John Paul II to Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in June 1987, the public upheavals during the summer, followed by the IJCIC audience with the Pope on September 1st created such a high state of stress that we thought it the better part of wisdom not to try to meet on such a sensitive and difficult subject as the Nazi Holocaust in the midst of that storm. We also felt that such a meeting in December 1987 held in Washington, DC, with the media of the world broadcasting our every move would be most counterproductive.

My impression is that Cardinal Willebrands, Bishop Keeler, and yourself understood that judgment and agreed that it was the wisest course at that time.

When we thought the atmosphere had eased somewhat after the turn of the New Year, IJCIC began to gear up planning for the Shoah consultation, and dates in the Spring of 1988 were being considered. Then another round of turbulence and stress occurred -- Cardinal Ratzinger's unfortunate press interviews appearing to denigrate Jews and Judaism; the furor over the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz and the resistance to any change; Pope John Paul's visits to Germany and the Edith Stein episode; and then the Pope's second set of meetings with Kurt Waldheim in Austria in June 1988.

Those were hardly actions on the Catholic side that contributed to an atmosphere of trust and sharing, which would have enabled IJCIC to move forward.

As for the other issues you outline in the remainder of your memorandum dealing with Israel, the Pope's visits to Austria, his views on the holocaust, and the Jewish people, I would like to respond to them in some detail in a separate document. Generally, there is much in your clarifications, that I would support, while differing in some perceptions.

Dr. Eugene J. Fisher
Page Three

November 16, 1988

In closing, I do want to make clear my personal view in response to these Jewish spokesmen who appear to be calling on American Jews to collaborate with the American Catholic Church while ignoring or even boycotting the Vatican. I am not sure whether to characterize that attitude as one based on sheer naivete, complete ignorance of the interdependence of Catholic life in relation to the Pope and the Holy See, or just plain chutzpah. I can just imagine some of my Jewish colleagues responding to proposals from Catholic authorities for relating to American Jews but rejecting the place of Israel and Jerusalem in Jewish consciousness.

What much of this means to me is that we have an enormous task in continuing to inform and educate our respective peoples -- obviously intellectuals, leaders, as well as people in the pews -- about basic and essential facts of Catholic-Jewish relations.

We will be in business for a very long time...

Sincerely,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman

MHT:RPR



INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE
ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

*fax was
sent on
12/6 at
4:00*

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Chairman

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To: IJCIC MEMBER AGENCIES

FROM: Marc H. Tanenbaum

DATE: December 6, 1988

RE: Meetings at Vatican

On Tuesday, November 22, a four-member IJCIC delegation met in the Vatican offices of Cardinal Willebrands' secretariat. The IJCIC members were: Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Dr. Gerhardt Riegner, Dr. Leon Feldman, and myself as chairman. Cardinal Willebrands was accompanied by Msgr. duPrey, Msgr. Fumagalli, and Msgr. Salzmann.

In my judgment -- and I think that of the other IJCIC members -- the meeting was conducted in a straightforward, constructive, and friendly spirit.

The first issue we dealt with was that of the removal of the Carmelite convent off the grounds of Auschwitz. Cardinal Willebrands reported that he had written a confidential letter to Cardinal Marcharski in Cracow indicating that the Vatican wanted the "Geneva agreement" implemented. Cardinal Willebrands also told us that the Pope's statement to the Kultusgemeinde in Vienna that "a new center" would be created for study, dialogue and meditation nearby Auschwitz is being taken by the Vatican and now by Cardinal Marcharski as Papal support for the removal of the convent to a new place.

That interpretation was confirmed to me by Bishop Mushinsky, chairman of the Polish Catholic hierarchy's commission on Catholic-Jewish relations, when we met at length during the international congress on "Jews and Christians in a Pluralistic World" in Vienna, Nov. 27-Dec. 1. For whatever it means, Bishop Mushinsky informed me that the convent would be removed before the Feb. 22 anniversary of the Geneva agreement.

There were to be two meetings of several cardinals, including Marcharski, in Milan on Dec. 3, with Cardinal Martini, and on Dec. 20, in Paris, with Willebrands also attending. IJCIC will be informed of the outcome of those meetings as the basis for our future actions.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page Two
December 6, 1988

We then devoted much of the rest of our time to a discussion of the program for the proposed Joint Liaison Committee meeting of IJCIC and the Vatican to be held Feb. 20 - 24 in Zurich. (During our break for luncheon, we were joined by Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff of Italy.)

Enclosed is a copy of the outline that both sides agreed upon. I propose that we meet on Thursday, Dec. 15, 9:30 a.m., at the SCA offices to discuss this program and come to a decision. Please let Dr. Leon Feldman or myself know that you will join us.

Chag Sameach!

MHT:RPR

Attachment



His Eminence
Göthar Cardinal Willebrands
President
~~Secretary~~
Commission for Religious Relations
with the Jews
1 Via del Erbe (?)
Vatican City, Italy

Dear Cardinal Willebrands,

Thank you for your informative letter of December 28th.

I convened a meeting of IJCIC member agencies on Friday morning, January 6th, and placed before our leadership your proposal for postponing the proposed February 20-24th conference until after Passover.

Following extensive discussion, IJCIC representatives agreed to the postponement. Our leadership has asked me to express to you and your colleagues their appreciation for the efforts you have undertaken to try to bring about a constructive resolution of our common problem.

IJCIC members look forward with anticipation to the early implementation of the Geneva agreements which would honor the sacred memory of the Jewish victims of Auschwitz and also preserve the dignity of the Carmelite sisters and the Polish Catholic Church at the agreed upon "new center" off the grounds of Auschwitz.

Our leadership is agreed that the date of our Liaison Committee conference will depend on further developments during the coming weeks.

May I use this occasion to inform you that as of January 6th, I have retired as Chairman of IJCIC. As you will see from the enclosed memorandum, compelling reasons have led to that decision. I have bittersweet feelings about this act, mainly because I have such profound and enduring appreciation of the commitment and leadership you have given so magnificently over so many years to the cause of strengthening Catholic-Jewish understanding and friendship. I will continue to be active in IJCIC affairs as a representative of the American Jewish Committee, and that will afford me the opportunities of continued collaboration and friendship with you and your colleagues.

My successor as Chairman will be Rabbi A. James Rudin, director ~~Wxxxxxxxgxxxxx~~ of AJC's Interreligious Affairs Department.

With every good wish for a healthy, and, above all, a peaceful New Year, I am,

Respectfully yours,

RMHT

29/12/88 14:06

DIRGENTELE VA P01

SECRETARIAT FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY
COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

Vatican City - Tel. 698.4386/698.3071

Prot. N.] 520/324

Vatican City, Dec. 28, 1988

Rabbi TANENBAUM
American Jewish Committee
NEW YORK

(212) 319-0975

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

I was informed last week by Fr. Fumagalli that on Dec. 20 the delegations at the Paris meeting agreed upon a project, first suggested by chief rabbi Sirat, and then discussed by cardinals Danneels, Decourtray, Macharakki and Lustiger, to prepare a pilgrimage to Auschwitz at the same time that we intended to have the XIII IJC meeting in Zürich.

Therefore, I would like consider with you and with the members of the IJCIC the possibility of changing the date of the Zürich meeting. I think that, if all the necessary conditions evolve in the right way, we could envisage a date immediately after Passover (April 27, 1989).

I thank you for any commentary or suggestion you may have on this matter.

With warm wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours

John Paul Willebrands
Cardinal WILLEBRANDS



The American Jewish
Committee

Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
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212 751-4000 / FAX: 212 319-0975

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Robert S. Rifkind
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John Slawson

January 6, 1989

Dear Friend:

As many of you know, on December 31, 1988, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, the American Jewish Committee's International Relations Director, retired from the staff of the AJC. During his nearly three decades of service, Rabbi Tanenbaum has made outstanding contributions to Christian-Jewish understanding and interreligious affairs in both national and international arenas. I know that you join with me in wishing him well in the future.

On behalf of the AJC, he also served during 1988 as the Chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC). Since the Chairmanship is rotated on a two year basis among IJCIC's constituent member agencies, I am pleased to nominate Rabbi A. James Rudin as IJCIC Chairman to serve out the AJC's remaining year.

Rabbi Rudin is the AJC's Interreligious Affairs Director, and I believe that most of you know his work. This change in leadership represents continuity and an ongoing commitment by the American Jewish Committee to the importance of effective interreligious consultation in the international sphere.

Best wishes for a healthy and peaceful New Year.

Sincerely, .

Ira Silverman
Executive Vice President

IS:stg

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE
ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Chairman

American Secretariat
Synagogue Council of America
327 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 686-8670

European Secretariat
World Jewish Congress
1 Rue de Varembe
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
(022) 34-13-25

Constituent Agencies
The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, NY 10022-2745
(212) 751-4000

B'nai B'rith International
1640 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 857-6600

The Israel Interfaith Association
P.O. B. 7739
Jerusalem 91.077, Israel
(02) 63-52-12

Synagogue Council of America
327 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 686-8670

World Jewish Congress
501 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 755-5770

Date: January 5, 1989

To: IJCIC MEMBER AGENCIES

From: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

Re: My Retirement from IJCIC Chairmanship

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I have given much thought to this decision, and I believe the time has come for me to retire from the Chairmanship of IJCIC.

While I believe that we have made some progress in developing better coordination and coherence during the past year, with increasing respect for each other's views, I anticipate the coming year will be a complicated one that will require more intensive commitments of time and attention than I would be able to give to it.

There are two other elements: I had promised the AJC that I would serve one year, and that time is over.

Second, I have signed a two-book contract with a publisher and I simply must give concentrated attention to meeting my writing deadlines.

Despite the usual vexations inherent in all umbrella groups, I have had genuine satisfaction in serving as Chairman. I wish to thank each of you for your comradeship and cooperation, and know that you will lend that same spirit to my successor.

With every good wish for *Hatzlacha*, I am,

Faternally yours,

MHT:RPR

M. Theo Klein, President
CRIF

CONFIDENTIAL

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Paris, France

Dear Theo,

Thank you for your recent telephone call and written notes.

In the interests of getting information to you as quickly as possible, I have sent you by Fax copies of my exchange of correspondence with Cardinal Willebrands, which I hope you have received.

As of now, WJCIC has agreed to postpone the conference on anti-Semitism and the Shoah until after Pesach. The holding of any conference with the Vatican is dependent on the removal of the Carmelite convent from the grounds of Auschwitz.

As you know, I have resigned from the chairmanship of IJCIC as of January 6th, our last meeting. I have done so for several reasons, some of them public, others for obvious reasons less so.

I had agreed to serve for one year and that term expired. IJCIC members had asked me to stay in the chair until after the proposed Zurich conference in February, and I had agreed to do so. When it became clear that the conference would not be held until after Pesach (April), I decided to quit now. Last month I signed a two-book contract with a major publisher and I must produce a manuscript within 15 months, thus my schedule did not allow me to extend my tenure, even though a number of the IJCIC members had asked me to do so.

The final factor in my decision is that it simply became professionally unacceptable to try to preside responsibly over a group, some of whose members think nothing of going to the press regularly and issue contradictory or hostile statements that do not reflect the consensus that we worked so hard to realize. Presiding over anarchy is not one of my specialties, and I have more important things to do with my time.

I am succeeded by Rabbi James Rudin of the AJC. If there is anything that I can do in the future personally to be helpful in the Carmelite issue or other concerns, please feel free to call on me.

With every good wish, I am,
Cordially

CARDINAL'S VIEWS CITED IN BOYCOTT

THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1988

Rabbis Refuse to Meet With Ratzinger Over Reported Remarks on Judaism

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

Several prominent American rabbis refused to attend a meeting yesterday with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the close adviser to Pope John Paul II, because of what one rabbi called "the publicly declared views of Cardinal Ratzinger denying the ongoing validity of Judaism."

The meeting was initiated by John Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, and held at his residence on Madison Avenue. At least five officials of Jewish organizations attended despite the boycott.

The organized decision of the rabbis not to attend was announced by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, chairman of International Jewish Committee on Inter-religious Consultations. The organization has served for 22 years as the leading voice of the Jewish community in discussions with the Vatican.

Remarks Need 'Reflection'

Rabbi Tanenbaum said yesterday that Cardinal Ratzinger's views, as articulated in an Italian weekly last October "calls for the most thorough examination and reflection."

"A social event, while always pleasant in itself, is hardly the setting for such probing reflections," Rabbi Tanenbaum said.

Rabbi Tanenbaum said that Cardinal O'Connor's decision to convene the

A spokesman for Cardinal O'Connor, Joseph Zwilling, said that the meeting was "private and unofficial" and that no public statement would be issued. Cardinal O'Connor attended the meeting, but it was primarily called as a session between Jewish leaders and Cardinal Ratzinger, who as the head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, is the Vatican's chief monitor of theological orthodoxy.

Cardinal Ratzinger, who gave a lecture last night at a Lutheran Church in midtown Manhattan, was also unavailable for comment. He has, however, scheduled a news conference for this morning.

The Cardinal's Interview

In the Oct. 24 issue of the Italian weekly, *Il Sabato*, the Cardinal was quoted as saying that, in dialogue with Jews, Christians should pursue a "theological line" that Judaism finds its fulfillment in Christianity.

At the time, several Jewish scholars said that the comments could be a setback to Jewish-Christian relations since that dialogue had long been based on a respect by both sides for the independent validity of each faith.

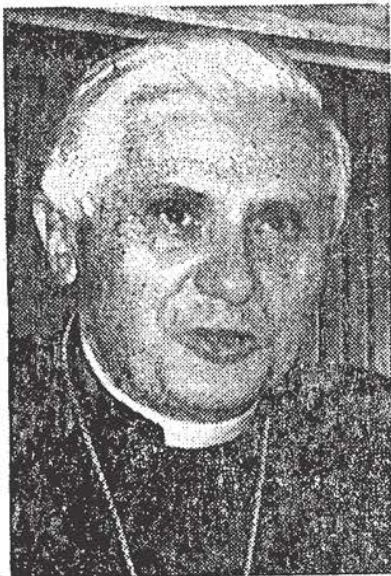
In response to the criticism, Cardinal Ratzinger's office sought to clarify the remarks made in the interview, saying that his remarks had been badly translated from the original German interview. However, Rabbi Tanenbaum and others said that they were not satisfied with the explanation and asked the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations With Judaism to prepare a formal dialogue on the issue.

A Strain With the Vatican

Relations between the Vatican and Jewish leaders have been strained since last June, when the Pope met with Kurt Waldheim, the Austrian President, despite questions raised about Mr. Waldheim's activities as a German officer during World War II.

Among those who boycotted the meeting yesterday were Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, the Long Island rabbi who represented Jews in a public exchange with the John Paul II last September when the Pope visited the United States. Rabbi Henry D. Michelman, executive director of the Synagogue Council of America, which represents Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Congregations, also declined the invitation in protest.

Among those who attended the meeting were representatives of the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and Rabbi Ronald Sobel, the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El. Participants refused to comment about the substance of the meeting. Rabbi Sobel would only describe it as "friendly and useful."



Associated Press

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

meeting at his residence, while well-intentioned, had the practical effect of circumventing the official process of discussion between the Vatican and the Jewish community.