

FROM DISPUTATION TO DIALOGUE:
JEWISH PARTICIPATION IN THE CREATION OF
NOSTRE AETATE

Serena L. Fujita

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Advisors: Rabbi Michael Signer
Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman

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Introduction

Historically the Catholic Church has been seen as the oppressor of the Jewish people. The Church promulgated laws that continued to isolate and denigrate the Jewish populations of Christian lands. Jewish power became increasingly limited and there was no structure to organize rebellion. The only discussion between the two bodies was disputation—there was no apparatus to facilitate dialogue.

The Church continued to reflect the world that surrounded it. When there were tyrannical despots on the thrones of Europe, the Church's leadership in the person of the Pope was also tyrannical. With the Enlightenment came more enlightened popes. The Twentieth Century brought new challenges. Not only were there technological changes, but there was a fine balance between authority and democratization. With the end of World War II the Church realized that it could no longer remain wedded to an old model, that it had to modernize and dramatically change its relationship to the world.

The Second Vatican Council was the major venue in which to accomplish this task. The focus of this thesis is one small section of the documents that were promulgated at the Council, the document known as *Nostre Aetate*, 'In our Time' p 4. It is the document that changed the model of discussion between the Church and the Jewish people from disputation to dialogue.

There was major distrust between the Catholic Church and the diverse Jewish communities based on their history. The first part of this thesis will deal with that relationship and how it was possible to change only under the leadership of a pope who was himself involved with saving the lives of many Jewish people during World War II.

The distrust continues to be evident with the preparation of the Council. Chapter II of this thesis will detail how one organization, the American Jewish Committee came forward to assist the Secretariat for Christian Unity with documentation and legal scholarship. It was in the archives of the American Jewish Committee that much of the information about the dealings of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum and Zachariah Shuster was discovered. My research at the AJC led me to believe that without the unheralded work of the members of the AJC both in America and in Europe, the document known as *Nostre Aetate*, would not have become part of the Council documents. The AJC had a long tradition of working with the Catholic Church and in trying to engage in dialogue on a limited basis. They maintained their advocacy at the beginning of the process when they were hopeful and also when there was little chance of pushing any document through the Secretariat. As is evident in the documentation, they created alliances within the Church hierarchy. They went to important secular institutions and even to the White House. Had they not consistently pushed an agenda for maintaining a statement regarding a new relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, the conservative elements in the Church and the Arab block, might have won out and eliminated any mention of religions outside of Christian religions.

In my research I have found four strands of advocacy, four voices in the Jewish world, that influenced the creation of this Jewish document. It is my intention to deal with each strand and its affect on the Church's ability to create a document regarding the Jewish community. The first, of course, is the American Jewish Committee; the second, the World Jewish Congress; the third, the Anglo-Jewish press; and finally the Israeli press. I will attempt to show how diverse the Jewish community was in its feelings about this document and how this played out in the American press who actually voiced past prejudices and who did not serve the American Jewish community well. I will show how the World Jewish Congress, especially during the Wardi situation, almost destroyed all of the ongoing work of the AJC, and played right into the hands of the conservative elements of the Catholic hierarchy and the Arab nations.

As I read through the years that the Council sessions took place in both the Israeli pro-government newspaper *Davar*, and in the opposition paper *Herut*, the Israeli press had very little to say about the Vatican. I will attempt to show, however, that in their silence they spoke of their real concerns. Israel in fact knew exactly where it stood with the Vatican; they were not a recognized state. Until the Church would change this political reality, Israel could not bother itself with theological documents. As a political entity, Israel could only react to political actions, not statements. That is why they merely reported events and reactions from other world Jewish communities.

It is clear that the Jewish community is not monolithic. In my research, I found elements that were aligned as much with the Catholic Conservatives as others were with the

Progressives. The entire Jewish spectrum whether in advocacy or in silence impacted the process of the creation of this document. However, without the persistent pressure by that segment of the Jewish community that held dialogue important, there would be no 'Jewish Document' in the Vatican Council's Documents. The Church was involved with many issues, and the Church Fathers could have easily been distracted by the will of the minority. The Jewish community kept their focus on the possibility of change between the Church and the Jews. Because of their commitment to change they were able to facilitate a task that many felt was impossible.

I would like to acknowledge a number of people who helped me with my research and kept my focus on what really happened in the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council as well as during the years of the Council. I would like to thank Rabbi James Rudin of the American Jewish Committee, who not only encouraged my work, but also has been a role model and a mentor. To Dr. Eugene Fisher from the National Council of Catholic Bishops who encouraged me to undertake this project. Dr. Fisher introduced me to Msgr. George Higgins, who was in attendance at the Council and who shared stories and insights about the Council and about Pope John XXIII. I would like to thank the archivist, Miriam Tierney, and the librarians at the American Jewish Committee, without whom I could not have found all of the letters and documents that I needed in my work. They were there whenever I needed assistance. I would like to thank Renati Leshem who held my hand through the Hebrew translations and was so very patient with me. And finally I would like to thank my thesis advisor and mentor, Rabbi Michael A. Signer, who has prodded me along and supported my every step.

An Historical Perspective

To the mind of the anti-Semitic bigots,
the idea that the Jews are cursed because their
ancestors crucified the Lord explains a good deal
of history. God would periodically visit the
murders of Christ and incite them to penance
through persecution. All the anti-Semitic excesses
of time past and present can thus be cheaply excused.
They are freely granted the blessing of Providence.
Father George Tavarad¹

A Definition

I believe that to understand the uniqueness of the Second Vatican Council, it must be seen in the context of other ecumenical councils that were convened by the Roman Catholic Church. I further believe that it is important to understand what the Church considers the goal and the authority of an ecumenical council.

An ecumenical council, or general council, is a meeting of the bishops of the whole church. After the split in the Church, a council was not considered ecumenical unless a pope convened it. Its decrees are not binding until they are promulgated by the pope. Decrees issued in this way have the highest authority. The power of an ecumenical council is a power to sanctify. It is the most highly qualified witness of the word of God, it has the power to define what one has to believe and also the power to govern. It is supreme in the Church and is not subject to any other authority, although all other

¹ The Church, the Layman and the Modern World, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1959), 79-80 quote in Arthur Gilbert, The Vatican Council and the Jews, (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1968), 23. George Tavarad is a Catholic theologian.

authorities are subject to it.² The decrees are usually related to issues of doctrine and discipline.

Council History and the Treatment of the Jews

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes only twenty-one ecumenical councils. Many of the earlier councils or synods were not convened by popes but were called by secular rulers, a reflection of where the true power base was in society. Later, during the Middle Ages, with consolidation of power in the Church, the pope began to call councils to deal with both theological and political issues. The Church was moving out from internal concerns to those of the world. From the late Middle Ages to the mid-nineteenth century, the Council held superiority over the pope, but with the onset of the nation-state and strong charismatic leadership, the popes again became the dominant figures. The popes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reflect the strong individual leadership of the heads of the European states. During this period, the church again loses temporal power and tries to maintain itself against nationalist and secular trends. Pope John XXIII breaks the model of the hierarchical papacy as exemplified by Pius XII, and demonstrates another model, that of "pastor of the flock".

Although the issue of the relationship of the Jewish people to Christians was not a primary focus of pre-modern councils, many dealt with issues related to the position of Jew in Christian society. Early councils issued decrees that set the separation of the two peoples into a legal framework. These councils developed their laws out of the teachings of the Church Fathers who denigrated the position of the Jewish People and the validity

² *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967 ed., s.v. "Councils."

of their continuing covenant with God. The teaching of contempt for the Jews that was articulated in the writings of the Church Fathers became law. They taught that it was the Jewish people who killed Christ were being punished for their crime of deicide. This became the rationalization for the election of a new people. In the 3rd century Origen, a noted Christian theologian writes, "We say in confidence that they will never be restored to their former condition, for they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind in conspiring against the Savior of the human race. Hence the city where Jesus suffered was necessarily destroyed. The Jewish nation was driven from its country, and another people called by God for the blessed election."³ St. John of Chrysostom, a 4th century preacher, commented on the act of deicide that, "no expiation is possible, no indulgence, no pardon, but vengeance without end." He said that rejection and dispersion are the work of God because "God hates the Jews and always hated the Jews."⁴ By contrast to these earlier Church leaders, St. Augustine advocated both protection and humiliation of the Jews. He claimed that the existence of the Jewish people remained so that they could be witnesses to their own evil, they would remind Christians forever of the evil they caused.⁵ It is no wonder that the decrees became harsher, and the separation more concrete.

In the late Middle Ages, the popes exercised direct power over the Jews in the Papal States. With the expansion of papal power in the 13th century onward, popes took a more active role in legislating on behalf of the Jews and on restricting Jewish rights. Gregory IX (1227-1241) ordered that all canonical regulations for the life of Jews in Christian

³ Gilbert, 14.

⁴ Ibid.

lands "be held in honor." He wrote the papal constitution on the Jews *sicut Judaeis non*, which prevented atrocities against Jews by claiming that they too are God's creatures and their fathers were friends of God.⁶ Innocent IV (1243-1254) continued the rules about severely maintaining a theological distance from the Jews, but he defended their rights as men who were chosen by God for a unique role in the history of salvation. Jews were protected from the accusation of blood libel, from kidnapping and from bloodshed.⁷

The early councils dealt with theological issues that had the potential for dividing the state. The secular rulers wanted an authoritative ecclesiastical statement that would bring consensus to the people. The Nicene Creed was composed at the very first Council of Nicaea in 325, which defined the nature of the Son and fixed the date for the celebration of Easter, two issues under dispute. A precedent was set at Nicaea to issue decrees separating the Jewish religion and the Jewish people from Christianity and Christians. By setting a date for Easter, the Council in effect separated the Passover festival from the Easter celebration. The council also forbade Jews from converting their slaves and from mixed marriages. At later councils the nature of the Holy Spirit was defined as well as the motherhood of the Virgin Mary. At the third council, the Council of Ephesus in 431 more anti-Jewish decrees were promulgated. This council forbade Jews from building new synagogues; prohibited judgement by Jews in legal cases involving Christians and Jews, and forbade the ownership by Jews of Christian slaves. Twenty years later, in 451, the council at Chalcedon defined the person of Christ as

⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁶ Edward A. Synan, *The Popes and the Jews in the Middle Ages* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), 103.

⁷ Ibid.

having two natures, divine and human. During this period Christian clergy were forbidden to eat at the homes of Jews and Jews were forbidden to appear on the streets during the festival of Easter.

By the Middle Ages the Church became independent from the secular rulers and Popes began to convene councils. After the 11th century, with the formation of the Eastern and Western churches, synods and councils were formally convoked and attended only by the Roman pope. The Church became more political in its own right, and at the Third Lateran Council of 1179, a peace treaty with Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was confirmed. Pope Innocent III, in an attempt at ecumenism, convened the IV Lateran council, in 1215, and invited the eastern bishops to attend. They defined the doctrine of transubstantiation and obliged Catholics to go to confession and take Holy Communion at least once a year. This council was of critical importance since it not only sought to maintain the separation of Jews from Christians it reduced them virtually to the grade of pariahs. This council compelled Jews to give tithes to the Church, wear distinctive clothing and to live in specific Jewish quarters.⁸

With the passage of time the Church had increased influence over secular politics. At the 13th general council at Lyon, in 1245, the conflict between Pope Innocent IV and the Holy Roman Emperor Fredrick II was resolved. The council confirmed the deposition of Fredrick. The 16th ecumenical council in 1414, the Council of Constance, was summoned by the German King Sigismund, who deposed the three reigning popes at the

⁸ Gilbert, 14-18.

time and declared the supremacy of the council over any individual pope. He named Martin V, the pope for the whole church.

Pope Martin further relaxed the previous decrees against the Jews. He stated, "since the Jews are made in the image of God, since a remnant of them shall be saved, since further they solicit our countenance and our compassion... we command that they be not molested in their synagogue, that their laws, rights and customs be not assailed, that they be not baptized by force, made to observe Christian festivals or to wear new badges and that be not hindered in their business relations with Christians."⁹

The 17th council was convened by Pope Eugene IV, with the hope of securing union with the Greeks. Between 1545 and 1563, Pope Pius IV reigned over the Council of Trent. During these meetings there was hope for the reunification of the church, and a rejection of Protestant doctrines. The Council of Trent was one of the great reforming councils, with decisions on such matters as original sin and justification of the seven sacraments and the cult of the saints. No other council was convened for 300 years.

Pope John XXIII (1958-1963)

The transition of the Church from looking inward to looking outward came with a cataclysmic jolt. The end of the World War II and the disclosures that came with it were humbling. Catholics had suffered along with Jews in the death camps. The world had changed so dramatically that there was no going back, no hiding behind the walls of the Vatican. The world had fought globally and now the peace had to be global as well. If

the Church was going to be part of this new worldview, it had to change too. Democracy had won over totalitarianism and the Church was going to need to find a way to again internalize what was occurring on the outside. It needed to openly address its outmoded doctrines and become a defender of those who were in need of healing and who sought equality.

Although Pope Pius XII began this process, he was still too steeped in the old model that had reappeared in the first Vatican Council of 1869 to make major changes. At that council the pope was declared infallible and was raised as the ultimate head of the Church. With his death in 1958, a new model for the papacy and Church in communion could emerge. The newly elected pope, John XXIII had a different vision. His goal was to bring the Church up to date and to foster peace and unity. With these goals, he made more major policy changes about the pastoral shape of the Church in a four-year period than any other pope in history.¹⁰

It is in his personal history and experience that we see what specifically influenced the development of a man who hoped to modernize the Church. John XXIII, born Angelo Roncalli on November 25, 1881, was the third of thirteen children of Giovanni Battista and Marianna Mazzola. His parents, modest Italian peasants worked on an estate until eventually they earned enough money to purchase land. Angelo was the oldest son, and

⁹ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰ E E Y. Hales, *Pope John and His Revolution* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc, 1965), xi-xii.

instead of helping to work the land was sent to study.¹¹ He entered the Bergamo (Italy) seminary at the age of 12, and later transferred to Cerasoli, which is attached to the Roman papal seminary. He was conscripted into the army in 1902, for one year, and when he returned he entered the Apollinaris seminary and was ordained as a priest on August 10, 1904. His service under Monsignor Giacomo Maria Radini Tedeschi, who was considered a progressive Catholic, was instrumental in Angelo's development. It was said he taught Roncalli to combine pastoral skills with the understanding of social problems.¹²

Between the years 1906 and 1910, it is noted at the seminary in Bergamo, that Roncalli was a Professor of Ecclesiastical History, a Professor of Apologetics and a Professor of Dogmatic Theology. In 1919, after serving in the army as a chaplain during World War I, he was made a Spiritual Director at the seminary.¹³ In 1920, he finally left Bergamo, and became the president of the General Council for Italy of the Congregation of Propaganda. In 1925, he became Apostolic Visitor to Bulgaria, and in 1934, the Apostolic Administrator of the Vicariate of Constantinople and Greece, at which time he became familiar with leaders in the Eastern Church. It is now widely known that while serving in this position, Roncalli rescued thousands of Jewish children from the Nazis by creating baptismal certificates.¹⁴ Chief Rabbi Herzog of Israel said of him, "Cardinal Roncalli is a man who really loves the people of the Book and through him thousands of

¹¹ Vittorio Gorresio, *The New Mission of Pope John XXIII*, translated by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Funk and Wagnels, 1970), 59, 66-77.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Hales, 12-13.

Jews were rescued.”¹⁵ Pope Pius XII was made aware of Roncalli through his work in the Balkans and in Greece, and in 1944, selected him as Nuncio of Paris. At the time DeGaulle was forming his government while the Vichy government was being forced out and punished. Rome and the French bishops had supported Petain and the Vichy government and the Pope was afraid that the French bishops would be punished for this. Roncalli managed to work with DeGaulle and encouraged the new French government to look at each case individually, thereby saving many of the Catholic bishops. In 1953, Pius named Roncalli Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice. Angelo Roncalli was elected Pope on October 28, 1958.¹⁶

Shortly after his accession to the Papacy, John XXIII's sensitivity towards the Jewish people was made public. He ordered revisions to the Good Friday Liturgy of phrases that were prejudicial to the Jews, even after the changes made by Pope Pius XII.¹⁷ He had removed the phrases *perfidis Judaei* and *perfidia Judaica* completely, both in the Latin and in the vernacular.¹⁸ Again in 1959, he had specific prejudicial expressions removed from the Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart, recited on the last

¹⁴ “The Ecumenical Council, The Jews, and the American Jewish Committee. A Documented Report,” prepared by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, August 6, 1962, American Jewish Archives, New York.

¹⁵ John Sheerin, *Catholic News*, March 14, 1963, quoted in Gilbert, 41.

¹⁶ Hales, 14.

¹⁷ Gilbert, 30. Pope Pius XII in 1949, had already authorized a change in the translation of the Latin phrase *pro perfidis Judaeis*, to “for the unfaithful/unbelieving Jews.” It had previously been translated “perfidious,” certainly a more derogatory concept.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31. Pope Paul VI revised the entire prayer, removing all offensive phrases, just before Easter, 1965.

Sunday of October, and in 1960, from the Ritual of Baptism of Converts.¹⁹ The portion that was removed from the Consecration of the Sacred Heart read: "Turn Thine eyes of mercy toward the children of that race, once Thy chosen people; of old they called down upon themselves the Blood of the Savior, may it now descend upon them a laver of redemption and of life." In the ritual for Baptism of Converts, part of the liturgy read: "turn away from Jewish perfidy and to reject Hebrew superstition." This portion was removed.²⁰

It was not surprising then, when Pope John XXIII announced the convening of the 22nd Ecumenical Council, later called the Second Vatican Council, on January 25, 1959. The official notice was published in the 'Osservatore Romano,' January 26-27, 1959. It said the Pope intended to take three steps to "meet the errors of the times and its excessive materialism." The first was to hold a Diocesan Synod of clergy in Rome; the second was to summon an Ecumenical Council of the Universal Church and the third was to bring the code of canon law up to date. It stated that this was "not only [for] the spiritual good of the Christian people but equally an invitation to the separated communities to search for that Unity toward which so many souls aspire."²¹

While the pre-sessions and early sessions of the Vatican Council were in progress, John issued several encyclicals that would further define what he was looking for as an ultimate goal for the Council. It was said: "Pope John... in the optimism of his

¹⁹ "The Ecumenical Council, the Jews, and the American Jewish Committee," August 6, 1962. It was later revealed that while serving as Apostolic Delegate to Turkey, Roncalli saved the lives of many Jewish children who would have been killed by the Nazis.

²⁰ Gilbert, 31.

encyclicals, was 'sui generis'. He was not unaware of the evils, or the errors, or the apostasy, or the deadly danger. But he was more impressed by the opportunities, by the improvements, and by the many causes for encouragement, and he preferred to give his attention to these."²² In 'Mater et Magistra,' issued in May, 1961, there was a clear sense that he was embracing a form of socialism which supported individuals, when he addressed the responsibilities of the state toward its citizens. It states: "... a cause of the growing intervention of the State even in matters of such intimate concern to the individual as health and education, the choice of a career, and the care and rehabilitation of the physically or mentally handicapped."²³ His was a program of social and human change, with an emphasis on the wider role played by the state and the enlargement of traditional papal picture of the natural rights of the individual.²⁴ This concern for the individual was later reflected in his desire for the rights of all individuals no matter what their belief system.

This goal was expanded in 'Pacem in Terris,' issued in April 1963, two months before his death. He addresses the encyclical "to all men of good will," an opening statement, certainly not only encompassing Catholics, but the whole world. He writes, "We therefore consider it our duty as Christ's vicar on earth—Christ, the Savior of the world, the Author of peace—and as the interpreter of the most ardent wishes of the whole human family, in the fatherly love We bear all mankind, to beg and beseech men, and particularly statesmen, to be unsparing of their labour and efforts to ensure that human

²¹ *Osservatore Romano*, January 26-27, 1959

²² Hales, 39.

²³ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

affairs follow a rational and dignified course."²⁵ His greatest fear at the time was a nuclear crisis, so that he added, "...unhappily, we often find the law of fear reigning supreme among nations and causing them to spend enormous sum on armaments. Their object is not aggression, so they say—and there is no reason for disbelieving them—but to deter others from aggression." It continues, "...in this age, which boasts of its atomic power, it no longer makes sense (*alienum esta ratione*) to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice."²⁶ Emphasizing rational solutions to worldwide conflicts and universal equality, he adds, "...by meeting and negotiating men may come to discover better the bonds that unite them together, deriving from the human nature of which they have in common."²⁷

John even comments about the changing role of women in 'Pacem in Terris', and expresses an attitude that was in direct contrast to the attitude of his predecessor Pius XII, who felt that women were abandoning the home where they were 'queen.' The document reads that "men and women enjoy equal rights and duties." Specifically in regards to women it says, "...the part that women are now playing in political life is everywhere evident. This is a development that is perhaps of swifter growth among Christian nations... Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role, or allowing themselves to be exploited, they are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons."²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., 61. John consistently voiced the message of dialogue to solve problems.

²⁶ Ibid., 69-71.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 59-60

John had a desire to set the Church on a new path that would acknowledge the rights of individuals, that would seek justice and equality, and would reunite the disparate religious groups that began as one, under the love and protection of the one God. But what about the Jews?

John's experience during World War II, especially his help with rescuing many Jews, led him to reach out particularly to that community. The meeting between Pope John and Jules Isaac in 1960 was critical in the formation of John's understanding of the role of Catholic education and the relationship between Christians and Jews. Isaac, a noted French historian and director of French education, was one of the leading scholars who studied textbooks for the purpose of removing references that might be offensive to human dignity, including anti-Semitic references. He had been the only member of his family that was saved from the fate of most Jews in occupied France. After the war he began to question why it was possible for Christian Europe to tolerate such inhumane treatment of the Jews. He became convinced that "pagan, Nazi anti-Semitism flowered only because it had been engrafted on a stock of contempt for the Jews preserved by centuries of Christian teaching."²⁹ Isaac promoted an organization of Christians and Jews called the International Conference of Christians and Jews.

Jules Isaac was among 65 religious leaders who organized and attended the International Conference of Christians and Jews that met in Seelisberg, Switzerland, in August 1947 to discuss a religious response to anti-Semitism. They, in effect, framed the agenda for a

²⁹ Gilbert, p.27

new era of Christian-Jewish relations. The group agreed to 10 points, "in order to promote fraternal love toward the sorely tired people of the Old Covenant."³⁰

1. To remember that it is the same living God who speaks to all, in the Old Testament as well as in the New.
2. To remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish Virgin of the race of David of the people of Israel and that His eternal love embraces His own people and the entire world.
3. To remember that the first disciples of Jesus, the Apostles, and the first martyrs were Jewish.
4. To remember that the basic precept of Christianity, love of God and neighbor, promulgated in the Old Testament and confirmed afterward by Jesus, obliges Christians as well as Jews in all their human dealings, without exception.
5. To avoid debasing of Biblical and post-Biblical Judaism in order to elevate Christianity.
6. To avoid using the word "Jew" in the exclusive sense of the "enemy of Jesus" to designate the Jewish people.
7. To avoid presenting the Passion in such a way that the odium of the condemnation of Jesus falls only on the Jews. They were not the only ones responsible, since "the Cross which saves all of us proves that the death of Christ was caused by the sins of all mankind," not by those of one part of it.
8. To avoid referring to the maledictions of Scripture and to the shout of the excited crowd, "May His Blood be upon us and upon our children," without recalling that this shout could not prevail against the infinitely more powerful prayer of Jesus, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
9. To withhold credence to the opinion that the Jewish people are reprobate, cursed, and destined to suffer.
10. To avoid speaking of the Jews as if they were not the first faithful of the Church.³¹

Although the work of this group made some impact on individuals, reflected in sermons and pamphlets and at meetings as well in the development of associations for Catholic-Jewish friendship, the message did not have a large enough impact. Only when Isaac's work was made known to both Pope Pius XII in 1949 and later to Pope John XXIII in 1960 during audiences with him, were changes made in Catholic liturgy based on his findings and the points made at Seelisberg.³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 27-28.

³² "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews: A background report," prepared by the American Jewish Committee, December 1964, American Jewish Committee Archives, New York.

Would Pope John's desire to modernize the Church by returning to its roots also lead him to change the way the post Vatican II church related to the Jewish people?

II

Preparation for the Council

Setting the agenda

We will now turn to the preparations for the Council. We will demonstrate how the statement about the Jews was part of the difficult task of setting the agenda for the council and how the leaders of the Secretariat designated to write the statement regarding the Jews reached out to the Jewish community for assistance.

Prior to formally setting the agenda for the Council, Pope John appointed his Secretary of State Dominico Cardinal Tardini, to serve as the head of the Ante-preparatory Commission and Msgr. Pericle Felici, Archbishop of Samosata, as Secretary General for the Council. Felici requested suggestions from all over the world as to what should be on the agenda for this Council. There were over nine thousand pages of suggestions. Among them, from the Americans, were the suggestions of anti-Semitism and the relation of the Church toward the Jews.³³ The Apeldorn group who had met in August, 1960 made a similar suggestion. They were a dialogue group of Christians and Jews who formulated a position paper that was later submitted to the Council authorities insisting that the Jewish issue be addressed at the Council.

The Pope then appointed a series of Preparatory Commissions. These would formulate those principals and proposals to be discussed at a general meeting. In addition to twelve

³³ Gilbert, 44.

Commissions, the Pope appointed three Secretariats. The one that would possibly be looking at the Jewish question was the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, over which Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J. would preside. And it would be this Secretariat which would become the platform from which the Pope could appeal for the reunion of the Christian world.³⁴ To this purpose John said: "God wills that to [the Council's] work on the condition of the Church herself, and her 'aggiornamento,' (modernization program) after twenty centuries of life—which is the principal task—there should be added, as a result of the edification we may give, but especially by the grace of an all-powerful God, some progress towards the drawing together of Our Lord's mystical flock."³⁵

Bea, a Bible scholar in both Old and New Testament as well as an authority on the history of Israel, and the retired rector of the Biblical Institute of Rome could more than any other understand the concerns of the Jews.³⁶ With instructions from the Pope to develop recommendations for the Council that would result in the strengthening of relationships between Catholics and Jews, Bea formed an unofficial group of clergy who would be responsible for this, including 3 staff, 120 Bishops as voting members and 20 consultors.³⁷ Bea's secretary Msgr. Jan G.M. Willebrands, from Holland, had served as European Secretary to a Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Questions for nine years, and all of the other members named to the Secretariat were people who had been

³⁴ Hales, 110.

³⁵ Ibid., 124-125. Statement made by Pope John XXIII on June 28, 1961.

³⁶ Gilbert, 45-46.

³⁷ Thomas Stansky, C.S.P., "Holy Diplomacy: Making the Impossible Possible," in *Unanswered Questions: Theological Views of Jewish-Catholic Relations*, ed. Roger Brooks, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1988), 51.

involved with Jewish-Christian relations. Among them were Father Thomas Stansky, in charge of English language affairs; Father George Tavard, A.A., Father Gustav Weigel, S.J., and Msgr. John Oesterreicher from the U.S., Father Gregory Baum, O.S.A. (from Canada) and Abbot Rudloff, an expert on the Church's relations to the Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land. The English Archbishop of Westminster, England, John Heenan, later said of the members of the Secretariat, "The Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity... had never taken a restrictive view of its terms of reference. Two of its members were Jewish by race, Father Baum and Msgr. Oesterreicher, because they would be able to guide it in its discussions on the larger unity which must include Jews."³⁸

Ecumenism

It is startling to think that a revised view about Judaism would grow out of a consideration of internal Christian needs. So that before discussing the goals of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, it is important to understand what is meant by the term 'ecumenism' in the context of this Council. It was certainly unclear at the beginning of the Council which definition was going to be stressed. One common definition was that of a geographical concept, i.e. the inhabited world, in contrast to someplace local or regional. The Council would therefore represent those Catholics who were in a communion of faith with the Pope. Another definition could include all those who had become Christians through baptism. It is in this sense that Pope John used the word in his address on Pentecost Sunday, 1960. He said of the Secretariat led by Cardinal Bea, that it was created "to enable those who bear the name of Christians but are separated from this Apostolic see... to follow this work of the Council and to find more

³⁸ Gilbert, p.47.

easily the path by which they may arrive at the unity which Christ wants."³⁹ This statement meant that the Catholic Church now recognized that other Christian Churches were participants in Christian communion, a revolutionary idea. Bea further expanded this idea in a draft proposal on June 12, 1962. He said that ecumenism demanded that one have a respect for the dignity of the other and have a willingness to hear what the other has to say, and that even though there is a difference of opinion, the other has also remained faithful to God's truth. In the end it is a belief that God's spirit that would determine how they might achieve God's purpose.⁴⁰

A more inclusive definition of ecumenism could also include a relationship among all those religions that consider themselves in the covenant with the God of Abraham. These would include Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Certainly Jews who call themselves "Israel" and Christians who call themselves "New Israel" have a special relationship. It is for this reason that the question of Jewish-Christian relations was placed under the auspices of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity. And then of course there is the broadest meaning of ecumenism, which could include all humankind, through God's covenant with Adam. This would require the involvement of the Catholic Church in the needs of all peoples.⁴¹

Reaching out to the Jewish community

Cardinal Bea sought ways to involve non-Catholics as observers and guests at the council, in order to get their ideas. It was not totally clear, however, how he would

³⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 49-50.

involve the Jewish community in the work of the Secretariat. Bea, along with members of the Secretariat, met with Jewish leaders both in Rome and abroad, and requested statements and memoranda from Jewish groups and individuals detailing what they would like to see accomplished by this council in relation to the Jewish people.⁴² They specifically asked the World Jewish Congress, the International B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee to prepare documents indicating their concerns. The AJC was invited to participate because of its long standing interest in interfaith work. As early as 1932, the AJC sponsored a long-term program at Drew University involving Catholic, Protestant and Jewish religious educators. The program looked at teaching materials that had the potential for creating prejudice against other groups. The AJC had already been working with Catholic groups during World War II to explore avenues of better understanding between Jews and Catholics. The Committee kept in close contact with Jules Isaac, and had a representative at the Seelisberg Conference. It also collaborated with the International University for Social Studies, "Pro Deo" in Rome, which had direct connections to the Vatican. In 1957 they sent a delegation to Pope Pius XII with concerns about Catholic-Jewish relations and in particular, increasing anti-Semitism in Poland. The AJC was also identified with research in religious education.⁴³

In terms of observers to the Council, the Pope made it clear to Bea that if Jewish observers were to participate at all, they would have to be experts on Jewish law and

⁴¹ Ibid., 50.

⁴² "The Ecumenical Council, The Jews, and the American Jewish Committee," August 6, 1962, 4.

⁴³ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews: A Background Report," a private communication not for publication, prepared by the American Jewish Committee, November 1965, American Jewish Committee Archives, New York, 10-11.

religion. As was stated in the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* on February 24, 1961, "The whole matter was an internal Church matter. Should it be considered necessary to take advice from the Jewish representatives, the Vatican would take it only from experts in Jewish law and religion."⁴⁴

There were many in the Jewish community who did not want to take part in a theological discussion with the Church. They believed that they were not part of the Church's concern. They would only make an exception on discussion of social issues, those being anti-Semitism and problems of social justice. They were hoping for a statement that would look to the past injustices tolerated by the Catholic Church, including the treatment of the Jews, a condemnation of anti-Semitism, and a removal in all writings of the concept of the Jew as a cursed being. The more liberal Jewish community had a broader agenda. They were hoping for an acknowledgement of Judaism as a forerunner of Christianity, of an ongoing relationship with the Jewish people, of an acknowledgement of a shared heritage of monotheism and a view to serve God for the sake of humankind, and finally a hope that there could be open dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people.⁴⁵

The Orthodox Jewish community was disturbed that the Vatican turned to secular Jewish agencies rather than to them for help and information, for they believed that they were the experts in the field of Jewish law. In November 1961 they voted not to participate in any

⁴⁴ *National Jewish Post and Opinion*, Indianapolis, February 24, 1961.

⁴⁵ Gilbert, 51.

way with the Vatican.⁴⁶ Some of the Catholic representatives were displeased as well, since they considered the Orthodox community the only authentic Jewish representatives. This became one of the major reasons the Church decided to limit observers to the Council to the 'separated brethren,' i.e. the Orthodox and Protestant Churches. And although the Vatican eventually invited some Jewish representatives as guests to the sessions, all those who were invited declined.

The decision to decline invitations to be guests at the Council did not mean that the Jewish community became disinterested, for there were constant visits by Jewish leaders to Rome and ongoing consultations between the Jewish leaders and the Bishops and Cardinals who took part in the Council. There were even meetings between some of the Jewish representatives and the Pope. However, these meetings remained unofficial because of possible repercussions in both the Jewish and Catholic communities.⁴⁷

Documents prepared for the Council by the Jewish community

The World Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith responded to the Church's request for a statement by submitting a joint memorandum. Rather than dealing with theological issues, it focused on anti-Semitism. The document was signed only by Jewish laity, "because it was felt that if rabbis had also done so, the document might be interpreted as involving theological problems."⁴⁸ The document reads:

⁴⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 55. Also see section regarding the appointment of Dr. Wardi as observer.

⁴⁸ *Religious News Service*, April 3, 1962.

As Jews we regard the struggle against anti-Semitism as an integral element in humanity's aspirations for a better world. What is for us, as it must be for the Church, a source of deep distress, is that with rare exceptions, anti-Semitic agitation and incidents occur in European settlements in which Christianity is or has been a major formative influence.... We venture to express the conviction that in the contemporary world wherever anti-Semitism is a threat to the Jewish community, it is equally at the same time, a challenge to the Church. If we address ourselves to the Catholic Church on the Jewish question in particular, it is because there are [derogatory] references to the Jews and their place in history, in its liturgical literature, in the catechisms in many of their forms, and in certain commemorative practices as well as in educational devotional manuals in wide use. It is unfortunately not to be denied that the ignorant or malicious may misunderstand or distort and exploit such references to foment hatred of others and to promote causes in patent conflict with the teachings of the Church on the brotherhood of men."⁴⁹

The American Jewish Committee prepared three documents, with the cooperation of both Jewish and Catholic scholars. The three documents that were submitted to the Secretariat for Christian Unity became the foundation for the arguments that led to the final statement by the Council. They provided a link for the Secretariat with an established Jewish American agency that could provide guidance, since the participants who helped write the documents represented some of the most informed Jewish scholarship at the time. Included in the group of scholars was Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. He had been one of Marc Tanenbaum's teachers at the Jewish Theological Seminary and had encouraged Tanenbaum in the field of interfaith relations⁵⁰. Tanenbaum was the Director of the American Jewish Committee's Department on Interreligious Affairs, and was one of the major players in the Jewish community's outreach to the Vatican. The final paper, composed by Rabbi Heschel, initiated a relationship between Heschel and Cardinal Bea that served both communities well.

⁴⁹ Gilbert, p. 57

⁵⁰ Judith Benke, interviewed by Serena Fujita, February 29, 2000. Tanenbaum assisted Heschel in getting his first book published in the United States.

Among the scholars who helped prepare the documents were Jules Isaac, who had earlier consulted with the Pope on the issue of anti-Semitism; Dr. Elio R. Toaff, Chief Rabbi of Rome; Dr. Jacob Kaplan, Chief Rabbi of France; Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University; Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Dr. Salo W. Baron, professor of Jewish History at Columbia University; and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Professor of Jewish Mysticism at JTSA.⁵¹

The Catholic advisors counseled the Jewish scholars to be forthright and explicit about what they would like to see the Council modify. They also urged that the group avoid publicity, since this would make it more difficult for those in the Church to negotiate freely. They were afraid that any premature publicity would invite Arab reaction and anti-Semitic protests. This would also have an effect on the more conservative members of the Council, who were already opposed to major revisions in Church dogma and teaching.⁵²

The documents submitted by the AJC were more specific than the document submitted by the other Jewish agencies, and focused on human and inter-group relations. They deal with issues that effect those who are exposed to them—exposed in the present. They focus on the issue of historical prejudice in the most public arenas, that of pedagogy and in liturgy. The issue of historical prejudice was a very live issue, since the world was still

⁵¹ "AJC White Paper", prepared by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, 1964-65, AJC Archives, New York, 18-19.

⁵² "The Ecumenical Council, The Jews, and the American Jewish Committee," August 6, 1962, 7.

reeling from the effects of the Holocaust and racial prejudice. America was also facing a period where its own racial prejudices were coming under attack and the government was trying to make corrections both in law and in perceptions.

The first of the documents entitled "The Image of the Jews in Catholic Teaching" was completed on June 27, 1961. It dealt with how Jews were presented in textbooks used in Catholic parochial schools in the United States (pedagogy). The second, "Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy," completed on November 17, 1961, spoke to anti-Jewish passages in liturgy and especially in homilies and official commentaries used by priests (liturgy). The third, prepared by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, called "On Improving Catholic-Jewish Relations," was completed in May 1962. This document focused on the need for the Catholic Church to reject the assertion that the Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ and to eliminate abusive and derogatory stereotypes of Jews (historical stereotypes).⁵³

The first Document: Image of the Jews in Catholic Teaching

The first of the documents issued by the American Jewish Committee for the Secretariat for Christian Unity took six months to prepare and drew on the findings of an earlier study conducted at St. Louis University, a Jesuit school, in conjunction with the AJC. It was sent to Rome on July 13, 1961, nine days after a meeting between Ralph Friedman, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the AJC, Zachariah Shuster, the Director of the European office of the AJC, and Cardinal Bea. At the meeting, Bea revealed that the group that was assigned to prepare suggestions for the Council:

regarding Jewish issues was going to convene from August 6 to September 5. He urged the AJC to submit specific concerns as quickly as possible so that he could represent their proposals. In a memorandum following this meeting, Shuster wrote that Bea was committed to the idea of changing the attitude of the Church toward the Jews. He wrote, "Our impression was that Cardinal Bea and the Secretariat are seriously engaged in the preparation of the text of a declaration of the Ecumenical Council stating the position of the Church toward Jews. It is premature to express any views of the nature of this declaration, but from the spirit in which Cardinal Bea spoke it might be warranted to assume that this declaration would be of great significance."⁵⁴

This first memorandum speaks of the destructive power of prejudice. It also expresses the new American value that any prejudice effects the entire society. The document said: "The American Jewish Committee would like to take the opportunity afforded by the calling of this Council to lay before the Head of the Church a matter of deep concern: the question whether Catholic teaching about Jews—particularly in the United States—is fostering prejudice and hostility... Whatever may have been true in past ages, prejudice against any religious group today inevitably weakens the entire fabric of society, degrades both haters and the victims, and saps the spiritual strength of all mankind... In this hour of peril, all those who share the spiritual heritage of the Bible must stand together if humanity is to survive."⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid., 58-59.

⁵⁴ "The Ecumenical Council, The Jews and the American Jewish Committee," 14-15.

The document speaks about the precariousness of the status of the Jew in the Christian world--sometimes being protected and other times being condemned. And it was during a period of condemnation, namely the period of the past war that "hostility, contempt and indifference...made possible the greatest mass murder in history."⁵⁶ The AJC clearly maintained the Shoah as part of its agenda and it called for the Church to take responsibility for some of the evil that occurred by condemning anti-Semitism not only in principle, but also in its teachings. The AJC like other American groups hoped that with the end of this horrific war all prejudices could be eliminated. In order to do this the Church must make an effort to remove "defamatory misstatements and omissions which may encourage hostility and contempt for Jews."⁵⁷ The AJC calls for the revision of teaching materials which "violate the precepts of love and brotherhood."⁵⁸

The theme of historical prejudice, it says, has been taught through a distorted treatment of the Jew as an individual—often positive--and as a group—always negative. As individuals many set forth a positive picture. "A considerable number of Jews have made original contributions to American culture."⁵⁹ The difficulty comes when the Jews as a group are dealt with in scripture and doctrine. The view then becomes negative and distorted. Catholic texts make an accusation, outright or through implication, that the Jews "as a people are exclusively and collectively responsible for the death of the Son of

⁵⁵ "The Image of the Jew in Catholic Teaching, a Memorandum to the Secretariat for Christian Unity," prepared by the American Jewish Committee, July 13, 1961, AJC Archives, New York, 2. All of the following quotes can be found in this document.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

God, and that they are a cursed people, condemned and rejected by God."⁶⁰ Even though Catholic scholars have rejected this notion⁶¹ it still appears in the textbooks. Comments like, "The vast majority of Jewish people...condemn Him to death as a blasphemer, and deliver Him up to the Romans to be crucified," from John Laux, *Church History*, (p. 7) and, "The curse of Christ and the subsequent decay of the tree symbolize the condemnation and the destruction of the Jewish people for their empty lives," from John C. Dougherty, *Outlines of Bible Study*, (p. 101)⁶² The AJC claimed that the concept of the Jewish people deserving suffering and persecution is "extraordinarily invidious, because it cuts off the Jews from the common body of humanity and may make Catholics indifferent to the fate of their fellow human beings."⁶³

The collective noun *Jews* is always used for the enemies of Jesus. When speaking of his supporters, words like men or people are used, as in the example, "It was on the day Christ raised Lazarus from the tomb that the Jews decided to kill him. Nevertheless, they were afraid of the people."⁶⁴ The word *Jews* always carries evil qualities with it, for example, bloodthirsty Jews, envious Jews, blind hatred of the Jews. And since it is a collective noun, it stands for all Jews. When speaking positively of the Jewish people in the Old Testament, the terms Hebrews or Israelites are used. The term *Jew* is used only

⁶⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁶¹ See pp. 9-10 of the Document, the statement by Father Louis Hartman, C. Ss R, General Secretary of the Catholic Bible Association of America

⁶² "The Image of the Jew in Catholic Teaching," 11, and footnotes 5 and 11. See document for other examples.

⁶³ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 14 and footnote 22.

in connection with the New Testament as a negative word. There is no connection made between Hebrew or Israelite and Jew.⁶⁵

The Pharisees are included in the negative context of *Jews*; they are the leaders of this condemned people. In texts like *Living With Christ: Courses I and II* show the Pharisees to be all of one conviction rather than being a diverse group where there had been a group that had supported Jesus and a group that was in opposition. No clear religious motivation is ascribed to those who opposed Jesus, nor is there a sense that what they did was out of a sincere conviction. "The Catholic student thus is given a picture of a group utterly debased, completely hypocritical, with nothing but hatred and willful blindness toward Jesus."⁶⁶ The language that is used for the Pharisees is denigrating, as in the statement: "Back of it all was the envy of the Temple Gang—the better a man Christ was, the greater their hatred of him."⁶⁷ Catholic scholars like Father Paul Demann look differently at the Pharisees, but their statements are not included in the texts.⁶⁸

Comparisons and omissions continue to feed into historical prejudice. Judaism is always described as legalistic with "external observances, devoid of love, mercy and compassion." The students are not told that many of Christ's teachings and those of the Apostles were first taught in the Old Testament.⁶⁹ The Jewish background of Christianity is often ignored. There are few references of Judaism after the birth of Christianity, as if

⁶⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 16-17. See examples of statements in textbooks. The treatment of the Pharisees is based on Matthew 24, where the Jews are labeled hypocrites.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 17 and footnote 33.

⁶⁸ Ibid. and footnote 34.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 18.

Judaism stopped being an authentic religion after the birth of Christ, and is no longer a living faith. Omissions like the fact that many Jews who converted to Christianity during the Middle Ages did not do so on their own free will, but were forced to do so continue to be left out.⁷⁰

In the end, the paper recognizes that these are not the true teaching of the Catholic Church. It also acknowledges that several popes have already made significant changes. The paper ends with this final recommendation:

That His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, cause precise directives to be issued from the Vatican—through proper channels and according to established methods—for improving Catholic teaching about Jews and Judaism, by cleansing all Catholic educational and liturgical publications of inaccurate, distorted, slanderous or prejudiced statements about Jews as a group.⁷¹

Don Carlo Ferrara, Vice-President of Pro Deo University and a close associate of Cardinal Bea's responded with a letter to the AJC dated October 7, 1961. This was several months after the above document was delivered to Bea and after the committee had met. The document had the precise impact it was intended to have because Ferrara wrote:

The memorandum that the AJC has given to Cardinal Bea has promoted the great interest of the Cardinal himself and also of those who belong to the Secretariat for Christian Unity (the organization which studies the Jewish world's problems). Cardinal Bea is studying the wishes of your Organization and is convinced of the opportuneness of improving literal expressions and historical interpretations, in order to reach a more fraternal comprehension between Jews and Catholics. His Eminence has already met, and has consulted with members of the Preparatory Commission of the Sacred Liturgy, some members of the Catechistic Section, belonging to the Sacred Congregation of the Council, and some Professors of the Papal Institute for Oriental Studies.⁷²

The Second Document: Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy

⁷⁰ Ibid., 20-21, for further examples.

⁷¹ Ibid., 28.

⁷² "The Ecumenical Council, The Jews, and the American Jewish Committee,"

The second paper that was submitted to the Secretariat was sent on November 17, 1961, in time for review prior to the second meeting of the Catholic-Jewish sub-commission. While the first paper dealt with teaching, this one dealt with liturgy. As with the first document that deals with textbooks, this one is also concerned with what is said in the public domain. The letter to Cardinal Bea from Louis Caplan, President of the American Jewish Committee, which accompanied the document, restated the goal of the AJC in submitting these papers. It says: "...it is our profound hope that the Ecumenical Council will regard the suggestions contained in these documents as an approach for improving significantly relations between Catholics and Jews in various parts of the world. We believe that a serious and comprehensive re-examination of Catholic teachings about the Jews, and directives that would result in the implementation of the findings of such an examination through the many channels available to the Church, would constitute an historic turning point in the relationships between our two great historic peoples and traditions."⁷³

The paper begins with an acknowledgement of the recent changes in the Church liturgy and then continues to list those areas where there continues to be anti-Jewish passages. These are found in (1) liturgical books; (2) homilies and officially approved commentaries; (3) texts belonging to monastic ritual; and (4) para-liturgical tracts. The paper limits itself to the examination of the first two categories, since they are the ones that are the most public.

August 6, 1962, 13.

⁷³ Letter accompanying "Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy: A Memorandum to The Secretariat for Christian Unity," prepared by the American Jewish Committee, November 17, 1961, AJC Archives, New York.

Anti-Jewish statements are found in New Testament lectionaries, and some of these statements have become part of the mass. For example, *Tradent enim vos in conciliis, et in synagoga suis flagellabunt vos...* They will hand you over in meetings and in their synagogues they will whip you..., is found in the Mass for the commemoration of an Apostle or Evangelist. Medieval hymns are another source of anti-Jewish sentiment, and are still very much used. For example an Easter hymn says: *Credendum est magis solae Mariae veraci/ Quam Judaeorum turbae fallaci*, You should put more trust in Mary, the true one,/Than in the horde of lying Jews.⁷⁴

The greatest source of anti-Jewish sentiment can be found in the liturgy for the period of the *triduum* (Holy Week), the end of the calendar year for Christians, and the liturgical high point. It is noted that many of the anti-Jewish actions took place during this period, like blood libels, pogroms and massacres. These are even noted in Catholic writings. The lectionary readings for this period are from the 4th Gospel, that of John. John "is the gospel most frequently used as the basis for the vilification of the Jews and as justification for anti-Jewish measures."⁷⁵ Among the Patristic literature for the period is St. Augustine's treatise on the Psalms, which reinforces the image of the Jewish people as "base and villainous."⁷⁶ "The Jews, as a people, are depicted as merciless and vindictive. They are held collectively and unilaterally responsible for the Crucifixion, and their stigmatization as a deicide people is clear."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ "Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy," 4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, see pages 8-10, Lectio V and VI.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

The paper emphasizes (like the first paper) that there are statements by the Church fathers that are favorable towards the Jewish people and put them in a positive light. But these were not among the passages that were chosen to be incorporated in the liturgy.

The liturgical poetry for this calendrical period is called the *Improperia*. These verses represent Jesus "indicting his own people in powerful and emotional language." The sentiment appears to be highly anti-Jewish.⁷⁸ The poem seems to be an inversion of a Jewish text, and if this and the words are not enough, the homilies and commentaries have made the meaning clear—that it is the Jews who are the object of this attack.

The authors of the paper reviewed about 50 commentaries of the liturgy of the *triduum*. The ones they quote are standard, and not at all unusual.⁷⁹ They are all statements that clearly blame the Jews for the killing of Jesus and for their actions in trying to destroy the Church—their suffering is payment for their crimes.

The paper concludes with the request that there be a change in the liturgy of the *triduum*, and to remove the charge of deicide that "has been a central factor in the persistent anti-Semitism of Western civilization." It points out that even as recently as 1950 (only 5 years after the end of the Nazi death camps), a commentary was written on the *Improperia* that charges the Jewish people with deicide.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ See Latin and English texts on pp. 11-14 of the document

⁷⁹ See pages 15-17

The Third Document: On Improving Catholic-Jewish Relations

The third and final paper submitted to the Secretariat, is dated May 22, 1962. It was prepared after a meeting attended by Cardinal Bea and a group of prominent Jewish and Catholic scholars and theologians including Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. He was respected by the Christian world as well as by Jews as an outstanding theologian by this time. The discussion focused around the two previous documents and the need for additional investigations into other phases of Jewish-Catholic relations. While the first two studies dealt with negative factors, there was now a need for an extensive document that would set forth positive steps for mutual understanding. That is why the tone is quite different from the first two and why it as a theological document, religiously inspired and written in a prophetic style for which Rabbi Heschel is famous. It needed to satisfy the needs of a diverse Catholic body. The document proposes actions that would result in "mutually fruitful relations."

With humility and in the spirit of commitment to the living message of the prophets of Israel, let us consider the grave problems that confront us all as the children of God.

Both Judaism and Christianity share the prophets' belief that God chooses Agents through whom His will is made known and His work done throughout history. Both Judaism and Christianity live in the certainty that mankind is in need of ultimate redemption, that God is involved in human history, that in relations between man and man God is at stake; that the humiliation of man is a disgrace of God; that the infamy of a wicked act is infinitely greater than we are able to imagine.

He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker,
He who is kind to the needy honors Him.

Proverbs 14:31

The universe is done. The greater masterpiece still undone, still in the process of being created, is history. For accomplishing His grand design, God needs the help of man. Man is and has the instrument of God which he may or may not use in consonance with the grand design. Life is clay, and righteousness the mould in which God want history to be shaped. But human beings, instead of fashioning the clay, deform the shape. God calls for mercy and righteousness; this demand of His cannot be satisfied only in the temples, in space, but in history, in time. It is within the realm of history

⁸⁰ Ibid., 21.

that man has to carry out God's mission.⁸¹

Heschel makes four proposals. The first is that the Council initiate a strong declaration stressing that anti-Semitism is a grave sin and is incompatible with Catholic teaching and morality in general. Second, that the "Ecumenical Council would acknowledge the integrity and permanent preciousness of Jews and Judaism." Third, that knowledge be disseminated and made available to priests and theologians so as to stop suspicion and distortion. In this spirit, to establish research projects and publications that would be worked on jointly by Catholic and Jewish scholars. It also encouraged both groups to cooperate in social efforts, for the benefit of all people. The fourth, to set up a permanent high level commission that would oversee Catholic-Jewish relations, both on the level of the Vatican and at the local level.

Heschel's purpose was to create a structure for the future. He not only wanted to correct past injustices, but he wanted to build a new path to cooperation and dialogue. He hoped that there would not only be educational opportunities to work together, but actual projects that would make the world a better place for everyone, not only Catholic or Jew. This document was written just prior to Rabbi Heschel's work in the American Civil Rights movement, and was part of his vision for a better world.

There was a fourth memorandum that was submitted, based on an AJC sponsored Brazilian study of Catholic catechism, religious textbooks and other educational materials

⁸¹ Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "On Improving Catholic-Jewish Relations: A Memorandum to His Eminence Agostino Cardinal Bea, President, The Secretariat for Christian Unity," May 22, 1962, AJC Archives, New York, Introduction, pp. 1-3.

used in Brazilian Archdioceses. It was called "References to Jews and Judaism in Catholic Catechism, Religious Textbooks and Other Educational Materials Approved By the Brazilian Arch-Diocese. The project was initiated by Father Bertrand De Margerie, S.J., Executive Director of the National Conference of Catholic Priests in Brazil and the personal representative in Brazil of Cardinal Bea. The study that the memorandum was based upon reviewed more than forty textbooks and catechisms approved by the Catholic Teaching Committee of the Archdiocese. The study took five months and was submitted to Cardinal Bea in February 1962.⁸² The goal was for Bea and the Secretariat to see that this was not simply a problem for the American Church, but was an international problem that concerned the hierarchy of other countries as well.

According to some who were close to the proceedings, a text on the relationship to the Jews had been drafted by May of 1962. The statement was entitled *De Judaeis*. It made four main points, namely: (1) the roots of the Church are found in the New Testament; (2) Christ has united both Jew and Gentile; (3) Jews are not *maledict* (accursed), they remain *carrisimi propter patres* (beloved for the sake of their fathers); (4) anti-Semitism is a danger because it attacks Jesus of the House of David.⁸³

The Wardi Affair, June 1962

The issue of Jewish representation at the Council had originally been raised in November 1960. Zachariah Shuster, Director of the European Office of the American Jewish Committee spoke to the leaders of Pro Deo, The International University of Social

⁸² "The Ecumenical Council, the Jews, and the American Jewish Committee," August 6, 1962, 26.

Studies in Rome. He explained that there was no one authoritative group on Jewish affairs. "In order that action be most productive and proceed with the least difficulty and misunderstanding, it was necessary that the Vatican have a clear picture of the reality of Jewish life today; namely, that, no more in this field than in any other was there any single authoritative body which could say that it spoke in the name of all Jews; and it would be a grievous error for the Vatican to 'recognize' any group as such." In the same statement he continued, "In our view the problems to be taken up were strictly religious and moral ones, having nothing to do with politics or any other consideration, and that, therefore, in considering these problems the Vatican should deal with qualified and distinguished Jewish religious leaders only, so that there could be no possible confusion."⁸⁴

On November 18, 1960, the Standing Committee of the Conference of European Rabbis issued a statement saying that they could not see under what circumstances a Jewish representative could be invited to a Ecumenical Council whose purpose it was to consider Christian doctrine.⁸⁵ And on December 8, 1960, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik declared before a meeting of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis, he was unalterably opposed to the presence of Jews as observers or with any formal status at the Ecumenical Council.⁸⁶

⁸³ Ibid., 27-28.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 35.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, President of the World Jewish Congress, met privately with Cardinal Bea in Rome during this same time period. Although their conversations were to remain private, Goldmann leaked a statement saying that the Cardinal indicated the Pope might invite Jewish religious leaders as observers to the Council.⁸⁷ Bea and the Vatican felt that Goldmann abused the confidence of his audience with the Cardinal by making statements without informing the Cardinal in advance. The Vatican then issued the statement saying it would only take advice from Jewish representatives who were experts in Jewish law and religion. In other words, not Goldmann.⁸⁸

At a meeting of the Conference of Jewish Organizations in Geneva in August 1961, Dr. Goldmann declared that there had been some thought about attending the Ecumenical Council. However, following a discussion with Rabbi Soloveitchik, he was convinced the Jewish community should not accept any invitation. It was strange then that on March 1, 1962, Goldmann phoned Soloveitchik asking him whether it would be advisable to request an invitation from Cardinal Bea for representation at the Council. Soloveitchik, in conference with the AJC, stated unequivocally that under no circumstances should Goldmann pursue the question of representation at the Ecumenical Council. Goldmann assured Soloveitchik that he would suspend his efforts with Cardinal Bea.⁸⁹

It was certainly a surprise then that on June 12, 1962, the World Jewish Congress announced the appointment of Dr. Chaim Wardi to serve as the unofficial observer and

⁸⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 37.

representative to the first session of the Vatican Council, set to open that October. Wardi had served as the counselor on Christian affairs for Israel's Ministry of Religion and had previously served as an observer to the 3rd Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi. He had helped draft a statement at that assembly that dealt with anti-Semitism.⁹⁰ Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister and Minister of Religious Affairs endorsed Goldmann's appointment.⁹¹

In an article that appeared in *Herut*, the opposition newspaper in Israel, on June 22, 1962, there was some discussion on the appointment of Wardi and on representation to the Council. It said that something that was so totally inconceivable was now fact—that “Jewish groups might speak out and give their opinion about the question of anti-Semitic statements in Christian Holy Scripture.” The article goes on to speak about the history of Jewish involvement including that of Jules Isaac and the role of the American Jewish Committee.

But the main concern of the article is whether there should be representation at the Council and if so who that should be. The main consensus is that the Christians should resolve their own problems themselves. There should not be a representative and especially not Dr. Wardi, who was an administrator in the Ministry of Religion in Israel. His appointment, *Herut* continued, would “give the impression that a foreign government is interfering in the internal religious affairs of another country.”⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid., 39-40.

⁹⁰ Gilbert, 61.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Who is representing the Jews at the Ecumenical Council?” *Herut*, June 22, 1962.

The American Jewish community protested to the Israeli authorities in the United States that they were outraged by this breach of commitment. The European Conference of Rabbis also protested to Dr. Goldmann regarding the appointment of Dr. Wardi.⁹³ In a memorandum from Zachariah Shuster to Dr. John Slawson dated July 11, 1962, Shuster says that the appointment of Dr. Wardi "has produced a real sense of calamity and shock among the highest Vatican personalities. It has already had serious repercussions on relations between the Vatican and Israel. It has affected the entire Vatican attitude toward the Jews. And it has caused Vatican officialdom to decide to become much more reticent with regard to the subject of Jews and the Ecumenical Council..."⁹⁴

A number of representatives came to Cardinal Cicognani, the Vatican Secretary of State, stating that Wardi's appointment was a 'Zionist conspiracy' to allow Israel's influence into the Council. And the Arab representatives threatened the Foreign Ministry of the Catholic Church.⁹⁵ Cardinal Cicognani and Otaviana, the Chief of the Holy Offices, ordered Cardinal Bea to put an end to all matters that had to do with Jews and Jewish problems. Bea claimed that he was unaware of the plan to appoint a Jewish observer to the Council.⁹⁶

⁹³ Marc H. Tanenbaum, memorandum to John Slawson, June 29, 1962, AJC Archives, New York.

⁹⁴ Zachariah Shuster, memorandum to Dr. John Slawson, "Possibilities of Ecumenical Council Action with regard to Catholic Attitudes towards Jews," July 11, 1962, AJC Archives, New York.

⁹⁵ "The Ecumenical Council and the Role of Jewish Organizations, a Special Memorandum," prepared by Eliezer Greenberg, January 23, 1963, 8.

⁹⁶ Ibid. It is also important to remember that the Vatican at this time did not recognize Israel as a state, which made the choice of Wardi and even greater mistake and a greater irritant to the Arab countries.

The World Jewish Congress finally withdrew the appointment on July 29th, but not without repercussions. The Jewish question was not officially placed on the Agenda for the first session of the Council.⁹⁷

Continued Preparation

Based on meetings with Jewish leaders and the memoranda submitted to him, Cardinal Bea instructed the members of his unofficial group of his Secretariat to construct a statement with regard to the Jews for the Central Preparatory Commission. The Commission was scheduled to meet in June of 1962, for the last time before the formal commencement of the Ecumenical Council. If the statement was approved and adopted by the Commission, it would be officially placed on the agenda of the Council.⁹⁸

The declaration was to be about a page in length and to contain general principles. It was the policy of the Council to adopt a general statement and then leave the implementation to the committees that would be established later by the Council. The major principles articulated in this first document were: (1) the emphasis on the importance of the Old Testament to Christians and the relationship between the Old and New Testaments; (2) an expression of respect toward living Jewish people of today; and (3) a strong condemnation of anti-Semitism and the hostility expressed by Christianity towards Jews in the past and present.⁹⁹ The AJC although pleased with the proposed principles, believed that with the omission of a rejection of the charge that because the Jewish

⁹⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 27-28.

people rejected Christ they were accursed and were condemned to suffer dispersion the proposal was incomplete. This concern was voiced in Rabbi Heschel's memorandum and again by A.M. Sonnabend, the President of the AJC, in a letter to Cardinal Bea, dated May 31, 1962. Sonnabend writes that as the memoranda that the AJC submitted showed, the source of misunderstanding and bias are those teaching that present the Jewish people as guilty of the Crucifixion of Jesus. It is these teachings that have continued to undermine a true relationship between Catholics and Jews. He points out teachings of the Church that have already denounced these ideas, especially during the Council of Trent, which speaks of universal responsibility for the death of Christ. He concluded that only when these discriminatory teachings are replaced with the "noble teachings of charity and brotherhood," would there be a change of attitude and behavior by all Catholics.¹⁰⁰

Zachariah Shuster arranged a meeting with Cardinal Bea on July 11, 1962. The following is his report.

I suggested that in view of the fact that anti-Semitism is a phenomenon of a special nature, unspecific statements about it would probably not have the desirable effect; and that in our view this Ecumenical Council has the opportunity of bringing about genuine historic changes in attitudes by dealing directly and specifically with this problem which, I said, was outlined in the memoranda submitted to him.

Cardinal Bea then said that he personally agrees with this view and that he will try to arrange a special audience with Pope John XXIII during the month of July and present to the Pope the thesis that in view of the sufferings inflicted upon the Jews by the Nazis and the massacre of millions of Jews, it is imperative that the Council make an explicit statement on anti-Semitism. He made this promise with conviction and in a spirit of deep sincerity.

Bea also mentioned during this meeting that he was writing an article, which was later published in the journal Civiltà Cattolica, entitled "The Death of Jesus." The article

⁹⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 29-30.

speaks about how it is wrong to accuse the Jews for the death of Jesus. He felt that this article published at this time would support the claims made by the AJC.¹⁰¹

Also important in the preparation for the Council and the statement of the relationship of the Catholic Church to the Jewish people, were a series of fraternal dinners called 'Agape.' The first took place in Rome in January 1962, and was arranged by the Pro Deo University. It was based on an early Christian institution, but this one included representatives from Protestant, Moslem, Buddhist, and Jewish groups. The purpose was to show solidarity among peoples of all color and religions for "the common objective of combating prejudices and overcoming antagonisms among groups of various origins and beliefs."¹⁰² Cardinal Bea, the main speaker of this first Agape meeting, stated, "There is a basic unity among those who believe that God has created the Universe and that all men have the same value and dignity before God. A great challenge to our generation is the problem of group antagonisms and it is the primordial duty of all groups of mankind to unite for the purpose of overcoming the hatreds of the past."¹⁰³ The AJC was the only Jewish organization from abroad that was invited to address the gathering.

Another Agape gathering was organized by Pro Deo on April 1, 1963, in New York City. Among those attending were United Nations officials, political figures, leaders of world faiths and representatives of the AJC. Again Cardinal Bea addressed the group. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel then responded to Bea with an impassioned response speaking of the need for respect for each human's choice of religious beliefs. He said, "God's

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 30-31.

¹⁰² Ibid.

voice speaks in many languages, communicating itself in a diversity of intuitions." He ended with the words, "A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harms done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair."¹⁰⁴

These gatherings gave Cardinal Bea an opportunity to publicly meet with representatives of many communities, including the Jewish community outside of Rome. Prior to the Agape in New York, Bea met with Marc Tanenbaum and Rabbi Heschel on March 27, 1963, in Boston. He told them that the ongoing meetings with Jewish leaders must remain private, otherwise they would play into the hands of the "bitter enemies of the Jews who are in Rome, in particular Arabs and professional anti-Semites."¹⁰⁵ At the same meeting he assured Tanenbaum and Heschel that he and the Pope were completely in agreement over the inclusion of a Jewish declaration at the Council. Bea said that the Pope wanted to do something to improve Catholic-Jewish relations, and it was Heschel who suggested that the Pope make a statement condemning the charge against Jews of deicide as heresy or as blasphemy. It was at this meeting that Bea indicated that he was interested in creating a permanent sub-committee on Jews after the Ecumenical Council ended, that would deal with scholarly and social issues.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 31-32.

¹⁰⁴ *Response to Cardinal Bea, Pro Deo "Agape" Meeting*, April 1, 1963.

¹⁰⁵ American Jewish Committee Memorandum, April 18, 1963.

There was another private meeting with the AJC on March 31, 1963, where prepared questions were submitted to Cardinal Bea.¹⁰⁶ The first questions had to do with whether a declaration issued at the Council could in fact be made even though it might seem contrary to Christian doctrine and teachings, especially in terms of deicide and maintaining the integrity of the Jewish religion. The second category of questions had to do with ethical questions, especially in judgement of others. And the third was a question of legal change—did the Council have the legal authority to bring about real change?

The first session would not happen for several months, and no one would know what the impact of the all the preparation would have on that session. Would the pessimists be correct and would the conservative elements at the Vatican keep a Jewish document from being presented? Or had the liberal Fathers and the Jewish community done enough work to keep John XXIII's dream alive for a real change in the attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Jews?

¹⁰⁶ "Questions to be submitted to Cardinal Bea, March 31, 1963" and "Conversation of Cardinal Bea and Jewish Scholars and Theologians, 31 March, 1963," AJC Archives, New York.

III

The Sessions of the Vatican Council and

The Evolution of *Nostre Aetate*

Tradition? But do you know what that is?

It is the progress that was made yesterday, and the progress that we ought to make today that will constitute the tradition tomorrow.

John XXIII¹⁰⁷

Session I

The Second Vatican Council opened on October 11, 1962. Pope John XXIII gave the opening address to the approximately 2700 fathers of the Catholic Church who were in attendance. His goal was to have the Council project a pastoral tone as opposed to a doctrinal one and to be a celebration of Christian faith. He spoke about a new understanding of the relation of Church and State, of religious liberty, and of the creative assumption of religion's prophetic role. He spoke about how the Church needs to seek new ways of being the instrument of human reconciliation. John emphasized the need for freedom of expression and for the respect of differences of opinion. He said that the purpose of the Council was not to restate and defend past doctrines but rather "to make a leap forward in doctrinal insight and the education of consciences in ever greater fidelity to authentic teaching. But this authentic doctrine has to be studied in the light of the research methods and literary forms of modern thought. For the substance of the ancient

¹⁰⁷ Pope John Paul XXIII (a mass to celebrate his fourth year as Pope), as cited in Vittorio Gorresio, *The New Mission of Pope John XXIII*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970), 316. He died shortly after.

deposit of faith is one thing, and the way it is presented is another."¹⁰⁸ As Arthur Gilbert says, "The Pope's opening address, ... was a stirring call for church modernization, for Catholic involvement in human need, for the development of structures of mutual cooperation with men of all faiths. It contained a rebuke against those who would stifle freedom within the Church itself; but it also was a testimony to the fact that religious differences between Jew and Christians were still quite pronounced and awkward."¹⁰⁹

During the first session, which lasted until December 7, 1962, the issue of the Jews and particularly the issue of anti-Semitism did not come up. The major move that did occur during this session, was that on October 19th, the Pope elevated the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity to the status equivalent to that of a Consiliar commission. This allowed Cardinal Bea's staff to have authority and to become involved in all ecumenical actions. The more conservative fathers were not pleased with the increase in power given to Bea and his Secretariat, for they felt he could be a danger to the Church, he would compromise the Church by making concessions to non-Catholics.¹¹⁰ A few days before the end of the session, someone distributed a copy of *Il Complotto Contra la Chiesa—The Plot Against the Church*, to all of the Church fathers attending the Council. It was filled with anti-Semitic references, and claimed that the liberals on the Council were in fact the "Jewish fifth column."¹¹¹ Its distribution may have been in reaction to the Pope's appointing a new Central Coordinating Commission composed of many

¹⁰⁸ Peter Hebblethwaite, "John XXIII," in *Modern Catholicism, Vatican II and After*, Adrian Hastings, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Chapter 4, p. 32.

¹⁰⁹ Gilbert, 70.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

liberal fathers. It was to meet between the end of the first session and the beginning of the second (September 1963) to rework the schemata (agenda) of the Council.¹¹²

The Jewish community, although supportive of the goals of the Vatican Council, were disappointed that the issue of Catholic-Jewish relations did not come up. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations stated, "I cannot fail to be somewhat dismayed by reports that the Ecumenical Council does not now seem inclined to continue in those efforts at Catholic-Jewish rapprochement. [It] is more than a little disappointing."¹¹³

Cardinal Bea wanted to make sure that the question of a Jewish declaration would not get sidetracked at the next session of the Council, and one week after the end of the first session, wrote a note to Pope John, asking to keep the Jewish question on the schema. John agreed with Bea.¹¹⁴

In a memorandum by Zachariah Shuster addressed to John Slawson there is an analysis of the first session of the Vatican Council. He says, "The most significant result of the first session of the Council is a recognition by all objective observers that the new spirit that was expected to emerge from within the central sources of the Catholic Church was given full expression during the eight weeks of the Council's sessions." He remarks that very few concrete decisions were made, since most of the discussions were procedural. What

¹¹² Ibid., 76.

¹¹³ Mimeographed release by the UAHC, N. Y. undated, cited in Gilbert, 77.

¹¹⁴ Thomas F. Stransky C.S.P., "Holy Diplomacy: Making the Impossible Possible," in Brooks, 60.

he does say happened was that there was an indication of how the fathers lined up in regards to certain issues. The Bishops of Western Europe, the United States and some African and Asian countries aligned themselves against the central administration of the Church in Rome. In other words there were two major forces; one composed of those who are opposed to any change and insist on maintaining all of the hallowed traditions and the other, those who are ready to adjust tradition to the needs of the times.

Shuster says that the only mention made at the Council regarding the Jews was at one of the last meetings, when there was a call for a reassessment of the Church's attitude towards Jews. Shuster believed that Cardinal Bea and his Secretariat did not want to incite any opposition before they are ready for action. "The opposition envisaged consists primarily of the conservative forces within the Church and the Bishops of Moslem [sic] countries. The latter would oppose any favorable action with regard to Jews not so much on purely religious grounds but under the influence of the political leadership of the Moslem states which feel that any action in favor of Jews would result in creating a more favorable atmosphere for the state of Israel and its political position." He felt that the discussion regarding the Jews would have taken place at the Central Planning Commission in July, had it not been for the Wardi appointment. And his greatest fear at this point in time was that with the incorporating of the original schema from 70 to 20, the declaration on Jews might also be reduced and lose its significance or be divided into several aspects and become part of several schema.¹¹⁵

Shuster ends with what he feels is the task of the AJC.

Our major task, in my opinion, is therefore to continue to develop contact with influential members of the Council and bring to their attention this view and expectation of Jewish public opinion throughout the world that no partial or minor statement about the Jewish issue of the inclusion of the Jewish subject in some general declaration would do justice to the subject; and that the Jewish issue is so unique in its origin and in the disastrous effects it had in past centuries that it must be dealt with in a significant and separate statement. This effort on our part will have to be continued not only in Rome but with Council leaders wherever they are, including the U.S.¹¹⁶

Shuster sees the role of the AJC as a lobby to bring about a strong declaration as well as an agency that could apply pressure through the media. He knew how difficult a task this was but that it would be that much more difficult if Pope John XXIII died before this was passed and a new Pope elected.

Between Sessions 1 and 2

Between the first and second sessions of the Vatican Council, members of the AJC met with Cardinal Bea, as well as with American and foreign Cardinals, Bishops, archbishops, and theologians, trying to win support for a strong declaration. In a memorandum written by A.M. Sonnabend, President of the AJC, he says that there is an expectation that a decree condemning anti-Semitism and repudiating the accusation of deicide would be introduced at the Vatican Council at the second session.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Originally at the first session 70 schema or agenda items were proposed. The Central Planning Committee reduced the number to 20, but incorporating all of the subjects on the agenda into those 20.

¹¹⁶ Zachariah Shuster, memorandum to Dr. John Slawson, "A Review of the First Session of the Ecumenical Council—Prospects on subject concerning Jews," January 18, 1963, AJC Archives, New York.

¹¹⁷ A.M. Sonnabend, President of the AJC, Confidential Memorandum to the Members of Key Leadership Groups, October 17, 1963, AJC Archives, New York.

On June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII did in fact die, and on June 21, 1963, a new pope, Paul VI was elected. And although this was probably the most important event that took place between the first and second session, other events took place that revealed tensions between Jewish groups and conservative Catholics. As Gilbert writes, "The events that occurred between December 8, 1962 when the first session of Vatican Council II ended and September 29, 1963, when the second session commenced, provide a case study of the fragile relations between Jews and Catholics. The election of a new Pope, the emergence of controversy over a stage play [*The Deputy*]¹¹⁸, the revelation of sources of intense opposition to a Jewish statement, innuendoes read into every press release—all of these 'happenings' kept the pot boiling. Jews were sensitive and in constant need of reassurance. Catholics were uncertain and often defensive. Official contacts were minimal, and flagrant rumors circulated."¹¹⁹ A lot of work was needed to get the declaration back onto the agenda.

The play "The Deputy" was an added irritant. In the *Herut*, on October 4, 1963, in an article about the play, the newspaper said that a young German playwright shocked and personally offended the Christian world. In his play "The Deputy," Ralph Hochhuth accuses the head of the Catholic Church, the one who represents Jesus on earth, Pope Pius XII, for not stopping the murder of millions of Jews in Europe. The article continues to expand on the reaction of the play as it opened in various cities in Europe—from stunned indignation to support and emotional acceptance. The play was to open in

¹¹⁸ "The Deputy—Der Stellvertreter", opened in Berlin on February 20, 1963. It was a condemnation of Pope Pius XII for failure to take public action against the murder of the Jews during World War II.

¹¹⁹ Gilbert, 79.

Israel, and the Israeli Foreign Ministry was beginning to get involved in the production. The newspaper reflected surprise, and questions why the play is a problem in Israel. They ask, "How could we be shocked like the Christian world?"¹²⁰

The play caused a shock wave throughout Western Europe and the United States. Any attack on a pope was slanderous, but an attack on a pope that had recently died, one who had tried to repair the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people by making the liturgical vernacular less offensive, was outrageous. Even though the play was written by a German, it brought up emotions that could destroy any further attempts to write a document at the Council regarding the Jews.

Session II

The newly elected Pope, Paul VI, opened the second session of the Vatican Council on September 29, 1963. His message included a commitment to stripping the Church of "what is unworthy and defective." And he declared that the goal of the Church would be "not to conquer, but to serve, not to despise but to appreciate, not to condemn but to comfort and save."¹²¹

He specifically spoke about four goals for the Council. They are: (1) the Church should have a clear sense of its own nature; (2) a need for renewal; (3) Christians of all denominations should be brought together; and (4) the need for dialogue between the

¹²⁰ "The Deputy continues to cause a storm and debate," *Herut*, October 4, 1963.

¹²¹ Pope Paul VI, Opening statement at Vatican II, cited in Gilbert, 88.

Church and the world.¹²² It seemed clear that the new Pope would continue supporting the goals of the Council as were originally set out by his predecessor.

Not quite three weeks into the second session press leaks began to appear. On October 16th, there was a leak to the *New York Times* writer Milton Bracker of the document *De Catholicorum Habitudine ad Christianos ex Maxime ad Judaeos—On the Catholic Attitude Toward Non-Christians and Especially Toward Jews*. On October 17, 1963, there was a front page article that stated that a draft of a schema on ecumenism would acknowledge the Jewish roots of the Church, reject the idea that the Jews were the sole killers of Christ, and would repudiate anti-Semitism.¹²³

The press leaks led to an immediate negative reaction from the conservative members of the Council and from the Arab world. But there was also a show of support not only from the AJC, but from European and South American groups as well. With the controversy still raging, the draft of the document regarding the Church's relationship the Jewish people was distributed to the representatives of the Council on November 8, 1963.¹²⁴ It was part of Chapter IV of a schema on ecumenism.¹²⁵ The official summary made the following points:

- (1) The Church has its roots in the covenant made by God with Abraham and his descendants.
- (2) The responsibility for Jesus' death lies with all mankind. The part played by Jewish leaders in the Crucifixion cannot be charged to the Jewish people as a whole. The Jews are not deicides nor cursed by God.

¹²² *Modern Catholicism*, 40.

¹²³ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews: A Background Report," AJC, November, 1965, 21-22, AJC Archives, New York.

¹²⁴ See appendix for full text.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 22. Chapter V of the schema was a statement on religious freedom.

- (3) The Church is mindful that Jesus, Mary and the Apostles are descended from Abraham's stock.
- (4) The New Testament accounts of the Crucifixion cannot give rise to hatred or persecution of the Jews. Preachers and catechists are admonished never to present a contrary position, and are urged to promote mutual understanding and esteem.¹²⁶

Some in the Jewish community was extremely pleased by the proposed statement. On November 16, at the General Assembly of the UAHC, Maurice Eisendrath challenged the Jewish people with the following statement: "We Jews have long clamored for this indispensable change in official Catholic dissemination of facts and interpretation, but what about our Jewish attitudes toward Christendom, toward Jesus especially? Are we to remain adamant—orthodox—in our refusal to examine our statements, or own facts, our own interpretations on the significance of the life of Jesus, the Jew? Have we examined our own books, official and otherwise, to re-appraise our oft-times jaundiced view of Him in whose name Christianity was established? ... How long shall we continue pompously to aver that the chief contribution of Jesus was simply a rehash of all that had been said before by his Jewish ancestors? How long before we can admit that his influence was a beneficial one—not only to the pagans but to the Jews of His time as well, and that only those who later took His name in vain, profaned His teaching."¹²⁷

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America issued a statement written by Rabbi Norman Lamm in response to the proposed draft. It reflected the earlier statements by that community that the Church had nothing to say about the Jewish people except perhaps to apologize for their actions. He said: "As Jews we object to being absolved of the guilt of killing their God. To be absolved implies that one is guilty but that

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 23

nevertheless he is being forgiven. But we Jews never were guilty and we do not therefore beg forgiveness.... To our mind the question is not who will absolve the Jews. The question is who will absolve the Church for its guilt in inspiring and sponsoring crusades and inquisitions, blood libels and pogroms... The Church has expressed to the Jewish people neither apology nor confession nor regrets."¹²⁸ Statements were made by other authoritative Orthodox rabbis, including Rabbi Manachem M. Schneerson (Lubovicher), and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, regarding the declaration on the Jews. Schneerson felt that the Church was merely proselytizing and Soloveitchik believed there was no value in having theological conversations with the Church, although it was possible to cooperate on social problems. The liberal reaction to these statements came from Marc Tanenbaum of the AJC. He felt that the statements released by the Orthodox movement could be used by the anti-Semitic elements of the Church against the passage of the document the liberals were working so hard to get written and passed.

It is said that when the text of the proposed draft was read aloud, it drew a long round of applause, and that a number of prelates immediately endorsed the text. Bea explained to the body that the document was drafted with the instructions of the late Pope John XXIII. John believed that crimes committed by the Nazis against the Jews, compelled the Church to action.¹²⁹ Bea explained: "...some decades ago anti-Semitism... as it is called, was prevalent in various regions and particularly violent, in criminal form, especially in Germany under the rule of National Socialism which, through hatred for the Jews, committed frightful crimes extirpating several millions of Jewish people—we need not at

¹²⁷ Gilbert, 94.

¹²⁸ Cited in Gilbert, 98.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

this moment seek the exact number. It would have been almost impossible if some of the claims of that propaganda did not have an unfortunate effect even on faithful Catholics, the more since the arguments advanced by that propaganda often enough bore the appearance of truth especially when they were drawn from the New Testament and from the history of the Church." He denied anti-Semitism drew any inspiration from Christian doctrine, but that "It is a question of rooting out from the minds of Catholics any ideas which perhaps remain fixed there through the influence of propaganda." He continued, "We do not mean to state or hint that anti-Semitism usually principally arises from a religious source, namely from what the Gospels recount concerning the Passion and the Death of the Lord. We know very well that anti-Semitism also has causes of a political, national, psychological, social and economic nature." He concluded with a statement on the Crucifixion saying, "the Jews of our times can hardly be accused of the crime committed against Christ, so far removed are they from those deeds. Nor should the majority of the chosen people at that time be accused."¹³⁰ Passage of the schema seemed assured. However the progressives were unable to bring the matter to a vote. The opposition by the Arabs¹³¹ and the conservatives who did not want the statement at all, was augmented by those who felt the statement on the Jews did not belong in the context of Christian ecumenism. The conservatives felt that ecumenism should be defined narrowly, and that the Church was infallible. Any errors were made by people and not by

¹³⁰ Gilbert, 98.

¹³¹ Zachariah Shuster, Memorandum to the New York Office, "Second Session Vatican Council and the Jews," December 9, 1963, AJC Archives, New York. President Nassar of Egypt himself entered into direct communication with the Pope and threatened that a declaration in favor of the Jews would harm the position of the Catholic Church in the Middle East. The representative of the Arab League in Rome also requested the withdrawal of the statement of the Jews and that it not be included in the agenda of the Council. There were also pleas from the Arab representatives at the Council.

the Church. The liberals felt that the shortcomings of the Church needed to be the responsibility of the Church, and therefore corrected.

On November 21, the Pope announced an important change regarding the membership of the commissions. He was increasing the number of members on the Conciliar commissions from 25 to 30, with the hope of appointing more liberals who would pass his agenda.¹³²

On December 3, one day before the close of the Session, another anti-Semitic pamphlet was distributed to all the bishops at the Council. This one was entitled "*Gli Ebrei e il Concilio—Alla Luce della Sacra Scrittura e della Tradizione—The Jews and the Council in the Light of the Holy Scriptures and Tradition*," signed by someone calling himself Bernardus. It consisted of a summary of certain Church teachings and traditions espoused by Church authorities attacking Jews. The pamphlet seemed to have its desired effect.¹³³ The Council recessed on December 4th with a vote on only sections I-III of the draft. Sections IV and V were held back.¹³⁴

¹³² Gilbert, 104. Since the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity had only 18 members, it gained 12 new members. The Church fathers elected 8 and the Pope appointed 4. Two of the new members were Americans, Bishop Charles N. Helmsing of Kansas City—St. Joseph, Missouri and the other Bishop Ernest J. Primeau of Manchester, New Hampshire.

¹³³ "Anti-Semitic Booklet Distributed at Ecumenical Council," Memorandum from the AJC's Paris Office to the Foreign Affairs Department, December 10, 1963, AJC Archives, New York.

¹³⁴ Chapter IV concerned itself with the relationship of the Church with the Jewish people; Chapter V was about religious liberty.

Between Sessions II and III

The conservatives in the Church proposed that the inclusion of a statement on relations with the Jews, rather than being part of the schema of Christian unity should instead be part of a statement on relations with non-Christian religions. During the winter of 1963-64, Cardinal Bea met with his Secretariat and they decided that it would best to take any statement regarding the Jews out of the Schema on Ecumenism and add it to a general statement about other non-Christian religions. However Pope Paul VI created a new special Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians, headed by Paolo Cardinal Marella, which would be in charge of a statement regarding all non-Christian religions. The Pope said that the new Secretariat would have a different role from the Secretariat for the Promotion for Christian Unity, but it would have a similar structure. The Jewish community, although glad to now be outside of the rubric of 'Christian Unity,' feared the leadership of Cardinal Morella, who was known to be a conservative in the Church.¹³⁵

There was much speculation about what would happen to a statement regarding the Church and the Jews in light of the creation of the new Secretariat. Many in the American Catholic leadership, including Msgr. John Oesterreicher who was part of Bea's Secretariat, and Father John Sheerin, who had a widely published column, wanted a strong statement and called for the public to make this known.¹³⁶ The AJC and others continued to speak with important Catholic figures both in Rome and in the United States as well as with American political figures and to keep the subject in the public eye in order to pressure the Vatican to include a strong statement.

¹³⁵ Gilbert, 134.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 136-137.

There was no indication what direction the new Secretariat would take regarding the Jewish statement, and the Vatican was not sharing any information. The Israeli press shared the disappointment.¹³⁷ The focus was now on the trip by Pope Paul to the Holy Land. There was the hope that the visit would clarify some issues for the Pope, although there was also fear by both the Arabs and the Israeli's. This could end in a real political struggle, even though the trip was to be a religious pilgrimage.

Pope Paul VI's Visit to the Holy Land

In his closing speech to the second session of the Council on November 4, 1963, the Pope announced that he was planning a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. No modern pope had visited the Holy Land. One of the major difficulties with this proposed visit was that the Vatican did not recognize the land of Israel as an independent state. The headlines of this proposed event eclipsed any talk about the Council. In fact, many believed that the trip was an extension of the goals of the Council for ecumenical outreach and internal renewal. Internally, there was the possibility for the head of the Roman Church to reach out to the Eastern Church at those holy sites that they both held in common. In terms of the Jewish question, the Vatican had to face the reality that without acknowledging the state of Israel in some way, no fruitful dialogue could begin. But the Vatican could not distance the Arab countries by an outright recognition. The French newspaper *La Monde* said that the visit by the Pope would help to build a bridge between the Church and Israel. The visit means that the Church will *de facto* recognize the State of Israel and later will recognize it *de jure*. Other newspapers in Catholic countries said that they hoped the visit

¹³⁷ "Postponement of the debate about the 'purification' 'teyhayrah' of the Jews," Herut, December 1, 1963.

of the Pope to the Holy Land would foster reconciliation between the Arabs and Jews, between the Church and Israel and between the Christian Churches. In London it was the hope that the Pope would help install peace in the Middle East and that his visit would help him reconsider peace with Israel.¹³⁸ There were high expectations all around for this pilgrimage.

Many in the Jewish community were elated by the news, presuming that the trip meant that the Pope was validating the existence of the Jewish people. Marc Tanenbaum wrote: "The historic pilgrimage of Pope Paul VI to the Land of the Bible, sacred to the monotheistic religions of the world, may well be viewed by generations to come as one of the most dramatic contributions to strengthening the bonds of solidarity and mutual esteem among the millions of peoples of the earth who revere the Divine Covenant.... By returning in the spirit of Biblical tradition as a pilgrim to the sources of Christianity, Pope Paul VI is also returning Christians to an awareness of their sources in Judaism and Jewish traditions and to their living interrelationship with the Jewish people today."¹³⁹

The Arabs, both secular and religious, were concerned about this proposed trip, for it might be seen as a public recognition of the State of Israel and would undermine their claim that theologically the Jews were accursed and were in a state of exile and could not claim the land. The Arabs were not the only ones who were concerned about this visit, so were many of the orthodox rabbis in Israel. Rabbi Rabinovitz wrote an editorial in

¹³⁸ "Responses all over the world after the Pope announced his visit to the Holy Land," *Dvar*, December 6, 1963.

Herut, prior to the Pope's visit warning Israel to be careful about interpreting the visit as something more than it actually is. He says that the Pope is the head of a small but influential state, and that he should not be visiting a state that his state does not recognize as a sovereign nation, "How can he visit a country that does not exist?" He disputes the comment by *La Monde* which claimed that the visit will make recognition *de facto*.

He believes that the Catholic Church is one of the most conservative religious institutions and that change comes rarely and with great difficulty. He says that the Pope comes to Israel after great expectations have been dashed by the fact that there was no vote on the Declaration regarding the Jewish people. It is his belief that there are no 'good' popes or 'bad' popes, but that all popes are representatives of the Catholic Church and their role is to strengthen the Church. The visit to the Holy Land serves this same purpose, and is not taking place for any other reason. The Rabbi ends his editorial with the warning that this visit may do more harm than good—although he says it is his hope that he is wrong in his fears.¹⁴⁰

The Pope arrived in Jordan on January 4, 1964. In his first address he invoked Peter's First Epistle which referenced the Psalms: "He who would love life and see good days, let him turn away from evil and do good. Let him seek after peace and pursue it." The Jordanian radio's response, made only in Arabic and left out from the English broadcast stated: "2000 years ago the Jews crucified Christ and 15 years ago they attacked the

¹³⁹ Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, "Pope Paul VI's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Vatican II and the Jews," (an address by delivered before the AJC's New York chapter), Sunday, January 5, 1964, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁴⁰ "Give the Honor But be Careful," *Herut*, December 20, 1963.

people of Palestine. ... The Jews are the enemies of God and of all religions in the world...[they] should never be forgiven for their crimes....¹⁴¹

The Pope traveled to Megiddo in the Galilee region, and was greeted by Israeli President Shazar. Shazar greeted the Pope in Hebrew, but the Pope chose to respond in French. He did not address Shazar as "Mr. President", but as "Your Excellency," a noticeable difference. The sense was that the Pope was maintaining the difference between the meeting of two heads of state and just an honored citizen. The Pope emphasized the religious nature of his pilgrimage, and concluded his remarks with a hope for peace between men of all nations, repeating the Hebrew words, *Shalom, Shalom*.¹⁴²

Continued Posturing Between Sessions II and III

During the winter and spring of 1964, word about the redrafting of the declaration took a turn for the worse. It was reported by those in Rome who were in contact with the AJC that there were passages implying the expectation that Jews would be converted to Christianity—a development that created consternation in the Jewish community. This situation reemphasized the importance of the active role the Jewish community needed to maintain during this time in reaching out to those liberal Bishops in Rome, in South America, in Europe and especially in the United States who supported a strong statement. There was a personal plea to Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, the dean of American prelates, to make a public statement and a private one to the Pope about his support for a strongly worded decree regarding the relationship between the Church and

¹⁴¹ Gilbert, 11-112.

¹⁴² Ibid., 114.

the Jewish people.¹⁴³ In a speech on April 30th, at the Annual Dinner for the AJC, Spellman spoke out.¹⁴⁴ He made his feelings clear when he said that he was appalled that there were still some Christians who believed that the Jewish people were being punished for their supposed crime of deicide. He said that prejudice and hatred could never be justified by any religion, and that "anti-Semitism can never find a basis in the Catholic religion." He emphasized that all of mankind was implicated in the death of Jesus, and that Jews bore no special responsibility. "Responsibility for the Crucifixion of Jesus as an event of history belongs only to those individuals who were present at the time and who cooperated in His death. It is simply absurd to maintain that there is some kind of continuing guilt which is transferred to any group of people and which rests upon them as a curse for which they must suffer." He further stated that the Church, far from rejecting its Jewish heritage, acknowledged its origins in Judaism.¹⁴⁵

The address was widely covered in the world press, and copies of it were circulated among Catholic educators, social-action agencies and Catholic publications. It was also circulated in Europe through the Pro Deo University and the AJC's Paris office and in South America. The American Bishops were hoping to influence the Council to maintain the idea that the Jews were not responsible for the act of deicide in as strong language as possible.

¹⁴³ John Slawson, a note to Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, February 3, 1964, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁴⁴ The second speaker at the occasion was U. S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

¹⁴⁵ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews," (a private communication), November 1965, 25-26.

While the AJC and others were working to get support from the Catholic hierarchy, the Arabs were also working to block any further action by the Council on the question of the inclusion of a statement regarding the Jews. The thirteen countries that made up the Arab League met and decided that they should all be represented at the Vatican (at this point only 5 were represented). There was some suspicion among American Catholics as to the Arab motives, and in the Catholic magazine *America* there was the comment: "The sudden Arab interest in the Vatican does not proceed from any deeply spiritual motive. The Arabs are seeking closer relations in order to spike what they consider a Zionist movement to enlist Catholic sympathy for Israel."¹⁴⁶

With the pressure from the Arabs and with reports from Rome that there was a continuing effort to weaken the language of the Jewish statement, Zachariah Shuster from the AJC set up a meeting with the Pope. Pope Paul received the delegation headed by Morris B. Abram, the President of the AJC on May 30, 1964. The Pope read a prepared statement that included a commendation to the Committee's determination "to safeguard the religious and cultural freedom of all people." He condemned any curtailment of human rights on racial grounds and acknowledged the links between Christianity and the Judaic tradition. He confirmed that he deplored the sufferings of Jewry in the recent past.¹⁴⁷ He made no mention of the accusation of deicide in his written remarks and was pushed to respond to this issue by Mr. Abram, in light of Cardinal Spellman's remarks. The Pope replied: "I have read Cardinal Spellman's speech, and Cardinal Spellman spoke my sentiments." The Pope also gave his permission for his expressed opinion to be publicly

¹⁴⁶ Gilbert, 133, (May 2, 1964).

¹⁴⁷ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews," November 1965, 26-27.

circulated. The Vatican gave considerable publicity to the audience.¹⁴⁸ The text of the Pontiff's speech was published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican's official organ, and was picked up by many other Catholic and Jewish journals. Although the Pope never mentioned the Declaration, it was clear from his statement that he was looking to end the hostility between the Church and the Jewish people, and that he acknowledged the bond between Christianity and Judaism.

Over the next few weeks after the meeting with the Pope, there appeared to be a crisis developing. There was news from Rome that the deicide issue might be dropped entirely from the Declaration because of the pressure from the Curia. The Curia was using the objections by the Arab states and of Italian political leaders, who were anxious about the weakening of Catholic orthodoxy and of strained economic ties between the Arab states and Italy, to argue for a less emphatic statement. On June 12, 1964, *The New York Times* reported that the latest version of the draft was "drastically watered down". The Vatican did not deny the report.¹⁴⁹ And even worse, there was rumor that the Declaration would not even come up for discussion during the Third Session scheduled for the coming fall.¹⁵⁰

This provoked enormous concern and the AJC reached out to the highest levels of government to help make sure the declaration was at least on the agenda and up for discussion. In a 'strictly confidential' message to John Slawson date July 28, 1964, it was stated that the White House was in contact with DeLequa, the Acting Secretary of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴⁹ "Memorandum on Jewish Catholic Relations in Vatican Council II," undated. Also private communication, November 1965, AJC Archives, New York, 28.

State and Watson (?) in Rome. It continued, "There has been a complete revision of the document since we intervened. The important contact in the White House today on this matter is Dungan. Manion, a personal friend of Dungan's, a former college room-mate, has been contacted by Sidney Rabb, who is a friend of Manion. At this time there is no disposition on the part of the White House to send an envoy, but there is a question whether or not Ambassador Reinhart in Rome might not be asked to deliver a letter from the President to the Pope on September 14 when the Ecumenical convenes."

At the same time, the American Orthodox community was joined by some Conservative and Reform leaders in condemning Jewish contact with the Catholic Church, and issued sharp attacks at the Council. Rabbi Leon Feuer, President of the CCAR, said that Jesus' crucifixion was a Christian problem, not a Jewish one. He stated: "An obsequious appeal for a statement by the Ecumenical Council can only be revolting to the Jewish spirit and an insult to the memory of Jewish martyrdom, such an act of atonement on the part of the Church is long overdue and should need no special pleading on our part."¹⁵¹ The proponents of this view also saw a Council statement as "evangelical propaganda."

These conflicting views within the community made the ongoing pleas to the American Church leaders more difficult. Because of this, an intense effort for consensus was made and by September 14, Jewish religious and communal organizations signed a statement of accord. It expressed a reaffirmation of the Jews' unbreakable commitment to their faith. It said that the Jewish community would not seek to offer suggestions on matters of Catholic doctrine, but it hoped that the Council would help create harmony among the

¹⁵⁰ Morris Abram, a 'strictly confidential message to J.S. [John Slawson] from Sidney Rabb, July 28, 1964, AJC Archives, New York.

world's religions and "contribute to the effective elimination of anti-Semitism and all sources of bigotry and prejudice."¹⁵² The document, entitled "A Statement to the Jewish Community" reads as follows:

Throughout our history we Jews have been the bearers of a distinctive religious commitment. No matter how great the pressures, no sacrifice has been too great for us to maintain our unique religious character. A concern with the common destiny of all men is deeply rooted in our spiritual heritage. We, therefore, note with satisfaction the development of increasingly harmonious relationships among the great faiths that have engendered common positions and actions on vital humanitarian issues. The ever increasing contacts between peoples in the modern world has created new dimensions in human relations which Jews have welcomed and in which they have fully participated. Yet today, no less than in the past, the Jew remains steadfast in his historic commitment, determined to preserve his faith and heritage.

The Ecumenical Council currently meeting in Rome is a convocation of the religious leadership of the Catholic church, concerned with the problem of Christian unity and the definition of Catholic religious doctrine. It would, therefore, be improper for the Jewish community which is not a part of Christianity or its Ecumenical movement to offer suggestions concerning religious doctrine to this Council.

However, it is our hope, that this Council will further harmonious relationships among the religions of the world to seek solutions to the problems of mankind.

All men of good will are encouraged by the concern of this Council with the fact that certain teachings of the church have been used at times as a source of anti-Semitism. It is to be hoped that the final determination of the Council will contribute to the effective elimination of anti-Semitism and all sources of bigotry and prejudice and will lead to better understanding amongst all peoples.

¹⁵¹ 1964 CCAR Yearbook, 14, as cited in Gilbert, 138-139.

¹⁵² Private communication, November 1965, 33. The statement is signed by The American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, Canadian Jewish Congress, Jewish Labor Committee, National Community Relations Advisory Council, Rabbinical Assembly of America, Rabbinical Council of America, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, United Synagogue of America, World Jewish Congress, Central Conference of American Rabbis and Jewish War Veterans of the United States.

The statement, a reaction to the possible weakening of the declaration of the Council, was also an affirmation that the Jewish community was united against any possible proselytizing by the Church. The statement not only unified more of the Jewish community, but also became known to Cardinal Bea, and was warmly received by the Church leadership.

On August 10, 1964, Pope Paul VI issued his first Encyclical called *Ecclesiam Suam—His Church*. This document only added to the fears of the Jewish community, since it was a very conservative document that basically stated that the Roman Catholic Church held the truth and this closed any dialogue with other religious groups. It read in part that only in the Catholic Church had God “revealed the perfect and definitive form [of religion], free from all error in which He wishes to be known, loved and served. Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly our convictions that there is but one true religion, the religion of Christianity.”¹⁵³ Even though Paul’s encyclical spoke about peace and the desire for the Church to participate in solving world disputes and defending the ideals of religion, i.e. liberty, human brotherhood, social welfare and civil order, these ideas were undermined by the declaration that the Church was the keeper of the only true faith.

In late August 1964, two weeks after the release of the encyclical, Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis, indicated that in fact, the Declaration on the Jews was much weakened from the original statement. He hoped that a reinstatement of the original text would occur on the floor of the Council. With this in mind, the Marc Tanenbaum of the AJC drew up *Suggestions for Revision of the Proposed Jewish Decree*. It acknowledged that the

language of the schema introduced in November 1963 was more complete and stronger than the present text. And it urged that Chapter IV of the schema on ecumenism, specifically dealing with the Jewish people be adopted at the third session and not the newer version. If that were not possible, there were suggestions that would be an alternative that was not ideal but acceptable. It asked for the elimination of the phrases "the union of the Jewish people with the Church," and "The Church expects in unshakable faith and with ardent desire the entrance of that people into the fullness of the people of God established by Christ." They believed that the sense of the document stated this way meant that the friendship of the Church with the Jews is contingent upon the dissolution of the Jewish people as a living historic entity and the disappearance of all Jewish institutions. It also stated that the simple one line reference to the Jewish role in the Crucifixion was incomplete and subject to misinterpretation, because it implies that Jews living at the time of Christ were collectively responsible for his death, and would generate hostility towards Jews of the present time. And finally, to reinsert for the last paragraph, which is weak and ineffective the original paragraph that deals with condemnation. The original language of the statement included the words "deplores and condemns" the past treatment of the Jews.¹⁵⁴

On September 3, 1964, the new version of the Statement was published in a report by the *New York Herald Tribune*. The changes in the text were received very positively by the Arab Press, and with profound disappointment by the Jews and others. A statement by

¹⁵³ Gilbert, 139-140.

¹⁵⁴ Written by Marc Tanenbaum, August 28, 1964. The full text of the 1963 version is found in the appendix.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel expresses the sentiments of the Jewish community to the Church Fathers:

Chapter Four of the schema on Ecumenicism printed and distributed in November, 1963, to the Council Fathers, dealing with the "Attitudes of the Catholics...toward the Jews," made special headlines around the world. Except for a few words, troublesome to the Jewish conscience, it represented a momentous declaration and was hailed as an event of historic importance.

Subsequently, this Chapter has been rewritten and the version now distributed to the Council Fathers as publically [sic.] reported is not only ineffective, but also profoundly injurious.

The omissions, attenuations and additions are so serious that, if adopted, the new document will be interpreted as a solemn repudiation of the desire which, to quote a distinguished American Archbishop, intended "to right the wrongs of a thousand years."

The new document proclaims that "the Church expects in unshakable faith and with ardent desire the union of the Jewish people with the Church."

Heschel goes on to attack the sentiment of the text that speaks about Jewish unity with the Catholic Church. He claims that this statement, which envisions the disappearance of the Jewish people, will only push the entire Jewish community away from creating and real relationship with the Church and foster continued distrust. He points out the fact that in the statements about other faith groups, there is no expectation by the Church for their conversion. He says, "Is one to deduce from that that Islam offers a more acceptable way to salvation than Judaism?" He concludes with the following statement:

Our world which is full of cynicism, frustration and despair, received a flash of inspiration in the ecumenical work of Pope John XXIII. For a few years all men of good will marvelled at the spiritual magnificence which he disclosed, and were touched by his reverence for the humanity of man. At a time of decay of conscience, he tried to revive it and to teach how to respect it. Mutual reverence between Christians and Jews began to fill the hearts. We ardently pray that this great blessing may not vanish.

It is our profound hope that during the course of the forthcoming third session of the Vatican Council, the overwhelming majority of the Council Fathers who have courageously expressed their desire to eradicate sources of tension between Catholics and Jews, will have an opportunity to vote on a statement which will express this sacred aspiration.

There was real fear by the American Jewish community that if the document that was written into the schema declared that the Jewish faith was not viable and that only through conversion would Jews find salvation, then all of their work would be in vain. A

statement that anticipated the disappearance of the Jewish people would in fact produce more distrust that had already existed. How could the Church say these things after World War II when the Nazis had stated the same desire—that the Jewish people disappear forever.

Session III

The third session of the Council opened on September 15, 1964. With the hope that the debate on the decree would proceed quickly, the AJC sent letters and memorandum to all 240 American bishops. Meetings were held and letters exchanged with top leaders of the European and South American Church. The Jewish leaders emphasized that the Council of Trent had already stated that the Jews should not be singled out for the guilt of Jesus death, and the Council could do no less.

The liberals Bishops in Rome responded, and on September 12, John Carmel Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster and Primate of Great Britain, denounced the changes that had been made to the draft without the approval of Cardinal Bea's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. On September 17, 170 of the 240 American bishops met and publicly called for a return to the sense of the original chapter. During the following week, many met with the Pope to plead for a return of a stronger statement.¹⁵⁵

The revised draft was introduced to the Council on September 25, and was debated between September 28-29. Cardinal Cushing of Boston opened the discussion with a

¹⁵⁵ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews," November, 1965, 35.

powerful statement. He said, "In this solemn moment we must cry out: There is no Christian rationale ... for any inequity, hatred or persecution of our Jewish brothers."¹⁵⁶ No fewer than 34 Council members from 22 countries spoke, most supporting the original statement, or at least for a stronger statement than was proposed. A member of Cardinal Bea's staff commented that there were Fathers present who wanted an even stronger statement than had been submitted at the second session. With this mandate, the draft was returned to the Secretariat, even before the voting took place. On October 9, the Secretariat was asked to surrender the text to a special mixed commission, consisting of members of Bea's Secretariat, members of the Theological Commission and four newly appointed Council fathers. Although the order allegedly came from the Pope, it most likely came from Cardinal Cicognani, who had continuously been opposed to the statement. It was also rumored that it might be added to the schema of the Theological Commission for incorporation in the document "On the Nature of the Church." Bea was outraged and turned to the Pope for a ruling. The Pope replied that the text was to be viewed by the mixed commission, but they had no power to change the language.¹⁵⁷

On October 13, 1964, Zachariah Shuster wrote a letter to John Slawson, describing the crisis that was occurring in Rome. "The recent crisis began on Wednesday, October 7th, with a meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Ecumenical Council. The atmosphere then in Rome was one of triumph for the progressive forces.... It should be emphasized that the debate on the Jewish subject was so unequivocal that the prevailing opinion was that the declaration will be amended in the light of the discussion and be

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Gilbert, 156.

returned soon for a vote of approval by the Fathers of the Council.... The triumphant march of the progressive forces threw into a panic the conservative elements of the Curia which began to realize the impending defeat of everything they stood for. The details of what transpired at the meeting of the Coordinating Committee are not yet known, but the impression here is that the conservatives advanced the idea of making an end to the Council sessions within the next few days and leave all pending issues unresolved. This would include all crucial issues before the Council.... The Pope's role is not certain. According to some he is supposed to have made some remarks which encouraged the conservatives to interpret them as a basis for immediate and drastic action to curb the Council and its proceedings....

The crisis came to the fore on Friday night, October 9th, when Cardinal Bea read to his Secretariat two letters he received from Monsignor Felici, General Secretary of the Council and one of the conservative pillars of the Curia. One letter concerned the Declaration on Jews and Felici stated that he is writing on behalf of Cardinal Cicognani, Secretary of State and Chairman of the Coordinating Committee. It advised Cardinal Bea that the subject of the Declaration on the Jews is no more to be considered a separate document but is to be integrated into the schema "on the Church" and specifically in Chapter Two of the schema which is entitled "The People of God." ...The other letter concerned the subject of religious liberty and also spoke on behalf of Cicognani. It advised Cardinal Bea that his subject is also to be treated by a new mixed Commission

consisting of member of his Secretariat, members of the Theological Commission and four newly appointed Council fathers."¹⁵⁸

The letter goes on in great detail about the reaction of the progressives and how they pleaded with the Pope through a letter, which began *Cum magnum dolore—with great pain*. They told him that any action taken against the declaration would destroy the prestige and authority of the Council. It also was a flagrant contradiction to the view originally stated on the floor of the Council. The implication was that there was increased pressure from the Arabs that precipitated this crisis. Shuster quotes the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that he says best sums up the situation:

What we have before us is not only a crisis of the Council. There is the danger of a crisis of confidence of the Catholic Church in the world. The question involving the Declaration on Jews reminds one too much of Hochhuth's play: the question is whether considerations of expediency are to take precedence over the precepts of truth, justice and law. One must ask oneself where it will lead if one should yield to Arab pressures. The question is not whether the Declaration on Jews should find its place in the schema on Ecumenism or in the schema on the Church, but whether its content will be watered down. There are many signs that we are confronted with an organized crisis in which money plays a role. Just now there had been published the fourth pamphlet against Cardinal Bea and his collaborators. The Cardinal is being described in this pamphlet as a Jew and a Free-Mason. Dark clouds are now hanging over the Council and not only symbolically.¹⁵⁹

It quickly appeared that this was not what the majority of members had intended for the document and a petition to Pope Paul, signed by 17 prelates, including Cardinals Meyer and Ritter, protested the change of jurisdiction. Cardinals Cushing and Spellman

¹⁵⁸ Zachariah Shuster, a letter to John Slawson, October 13, 1964, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

intervened. Under this pressure the decision was made to keep the text in Cardinal Bea's jurisdiction.¹⁶⁰

On the same day that the decree was brought to the Council, Zachariah Schuster and Marc Tanenbaum sent a memo to Dr. John Slawson summarizing the situation as they saw it. They spoke about the people with whom they were in touch, including Bishops from the United States, Latin America and Europe, and the wording that they found most offensive in the revised document, especially the hope that the Church will see the conversion of the Jewish people. They concluded by saying that while the discussion was taking place and until there was a vote they would not meet publicly with any of the members of the Council, nor would they make any public statements to the press.¹⁶¹

The implication of the new language of the document, the language of conversion, implied that not only would Judaism disappear but with that, the entire Jewish people. The State of Israel, still unrecognized by the Vatican, even after the Pope's visit, would not exist if the Vatican got its wishes. Therefore when the language of the revised document was made public, the Israeli community was outraged. The press was highly critical as seen in the statement by the Orthodox' party's publication *Hamodia*.

"...[F]rom a lofty platform as though the Jewish people sat before them accused at the bench, begging for a favorable opinion. There is no greater insult to the Jewish people... They stand as beggars before the gates of Rome pleading for a crust of bread at

¹⁶⁰ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Jews," 36.

¹⁶¹ Zachariah Shuster and Marc Tanenbaum, memorandum, "Summary of Present Situation re Jewish Decree," September 25, 1964, AJC Archives, New York.

the hands of persecutors...this groveling blemishes the whole of the Jewish nation."¹⁶²

They were embarrassed that the Jewish people needed validation for their existence from the Church. A proud people who had a profound history and a lasting religion should not have to ask permission from others to exist. And in *Lamerhav*, the Socialist Party's official paper, "No ecumenical spirit has created this new version. Odors of the Middle Ages rise from it. Jewish leaders...must divorce themselves from all dealings and all activities related to the Jewish document."¹⁶³ They were speaking to past councils that promulgated laws against the Jews in order to isolate them and make them appear less than Christians. Only the non-aligned, independent paper *Haboker* suggested that the leaders continue their activities and hoped that the original statement be adopted.¹⁶⁴ They appeared to be the only group that aligned themselves with the American Jewish community who hoped that a compromise could be made. Perhaps they believed that this could be a beginning towards peace in the Middle East.

Discussions on the schemata on the Church in the modern world and on missionary activity took up a great part of the Council sessions while the amendment to the Schema on the Church and on Ecumenism and the revised Declaration on the Jews continued to be pushed back. The discussion on the Church in the modern world, however, was an important prelude to the discussions on the statement regarding the Jews. On November 17, 1964, Tuesday of the last week of the session, the revised text of the declaration on religious liberty was brought up for discussion and on Wednesday, November 18 the declaration on the Jews and non-Christians was distributed with a voting deadline for that

¹⁶² *Hamodia*, September 30, 1964, as cited in Gilbert, p. 142.

¹⁶³ *Lamerhav*, September 13, 1964, as cited in Gilbert, p. 142.

Friday. The newly revised document was entitled Declaration on The Relationship of The Church to Non-Christian Religions. It was no longer attached as an appendix to the Schema on Ecumenism, but was an independent document.

Another crisis erupted when, on Wednesday, there was a move to postpone the vote on the statement on Religious Liberty until the next session.¹⁶⁵ On Thursday, the announcement that there would be no vote led to the creation of a petition signed by more than a thousand bishops pleading to the Pope to permit a vote. He would only promise that the issue would be considered first at the next session of the Council. The outrage continued when the liberals discovered that the Pope had made a great number of changes to the document on Ecumenism, and there would be no time for a serious discussion on this item either. They would either have to vote on the document the way it was now presented or wait until the next session for this as well.

On Friday, November 20, the last day of the third session, the Fathers voted on the Schema on Ecumenism, including the declaration on the Jews. By an overwhelming majority, 1,651 yes, 242 yes with reservation, and 99 no, the draft of the document was accepted. The document would need another vote at the final session of the Council, but this vote guaranteed passage. The version that was passed excluded the reference to conversion; it deplored and condemned anti-Semitism; and it warned against considering Jews past or present guilty of deicide. What it included was an affirmation of the Jewish

¹⁶⁴ Gilbert, 142.

¹⁶⁵ Procedurally when a document was substantially revised after its first presentation, it was considered a "new document" and needed new discussion. The Fathers who wanted to postpone the vote used this as the basis for their argument.

origins of Jesus, Mary and the Disciples, and recognized Jews as an enduring historic community. It recommends continued dialogue, and in terms of teaching says, "May all see to it that in the catechetical work or in their preaching... they do not teach anything that would give rise to hatred and contempt of Jews in the hearts of Christians."

The Jewish world was more than pleased with the changes in the document and hopeful about a new relationship with the Catholic Church. The fact that anti-Semitism was condemned and Judaism was specifically held to be a separate faith community reflected the goals of those acting in behalf of the Jewish community. A news release by the AJC for 'world consumption' stated: "Jews throughout the world note with satisfaction the action of the Ecumenical Council in approving so overwhelmingly the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to the Non-Christian Religions. We realize that the vote of the Council is an initial approval and that final promulgation must await the fourth session of the Council. When the Council Fathers will have voted finally on this Declaration, and upon its promulgation, the Catholic Church will have made an historic contribution to the advancement of harmonious relations among the great faiths. We are encouraged to hope that formal promulgation of the Declaration will mark the continuation of a process that will contribute to the effective elimination of anti-Semitism and will lead to better understanding among all peoples. We reiterate our belief in the distinctive role of Judaism as a separate faith community in making its contribution to the achievement of the common goals of humanity."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ AJC new release for 'world consumption,' November 20, 1964, AJC Archives, New York.

While the reaction of the Jewish world was favorable, clearly the conservatives and the Arab world were feeling defeated. Several Jordanian Christian members of Parliament denounced the statement, and said it was "tantamount to a stab in the heart of Christianity." The Pope agreed to meet with representatives of the Christian Arab community. The fear that all that was won could be lost prevailed among the liberals.¹⁶⁷ There was work to be done between the end of this session and the beginning of the fourth, scheduled for the following fall.

Between Sessions III and IV

In a joint memorandum by John Slawson and Marc Tanenbaum dated February 3, 1965, the opposition to the Declaration is laid out: the Arab campaign; Christian non-Catholic religions; Curia Conservatives and anti-Semitic groups. Regarding the Arab campaign, they describe the diplomatic efforts by the embassies in Paris, Bonn, Rome and Washington. The Arabs, they say, are claiming that Jewish organizations have "manipulated" the Vatican, and that the result is a political document, not a religious one. However all of the activity by the Arab diplomats have been of a secretive nature, so that it is impossible to confront directly. They claim that M. Helou, President of Lebanon and President Nassar of Egypt were each scheduled to meet with the Pope. They comment that "[t]his means that the Arabs will be using their heaviest guns to try to wreck the decree before the Summer...."

In terms of Christian non-Catholic activities, the Arabs were speaking to people like Makarios of Cyprus, the Archbishop of Canterbury in Great Britain, Athenagoras of

¹⁶⁷ Gilbert, 158-164.

Constantinople, Chrisostomos of Greece and Metropolitan Alexis of Moscow. The Arabs had been encouraging these church leaders to speak to the Vatican and warn that if the Jewish decree passes it will effect ecumenism among the Christian Churches.

The Curia Conservatives, they say, had an ongoing campaign organizing delegates in the United States, Western Europe and Latin America to influence the government officials in their respective countries. Their political argument is that the passage of the decree will effect the preservation of peace in the Middle East. The Conservatives were suggesting that the document be divided and incorporated into other schema of the Council.

And finally Tanenbaum and Slawson say that the rightist movements in Europe have been pressuring to weaken the support of the Jewish decree. They warn that there will be an increase of books, articles and public meetings specifically against the document.

Tanenbaum and Slawson fear that because the Declaration received an overwhelming vote at the end of the third session the Jewish people might take a less aggressive stand. Their goal is to keep the issue alive in light of this strong opposition¹⁶⁸. They realized that if the Jewish community did not persist in their pressure to keep the document in its present form, the pressure from those who opposed would be strong enough to influence the Council Fathers to vote for a change. That change would reflect a less positive attitude towards the Jews.

¹⁶⁸ John Slawson and Marc Tanenbaum, memorandum, "Review of the Present Situation in Rome Re Jewish Declaration," February 3, 1965, AJC Archives, New York.

In another document to John Slawson from Marc Tanenbaum, dated March 16, 1965, Tanenbaum summarizes a conversation with Zachariah Shuster who was in Paris. Shuster reported to him that the Pope appointed a commission to review the text of the Jewish Declaration. The four members of this commission were not members of Bea's Secretariat. Three of the four, he believed, wanted to keep the text as voted, while one wanted to use the more watered-down version of the Central Coordinating Committee. He said there were rumors that the Pope wanted to make serious changes in the text of the document and possibly delete the deicide reference. Shuster believed that the Pope wanted to substitute the more evangelical language of his encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*. He continues that Bea is strongly opposed to these moves and also wanted to lift the blanket of silence that was spread over the Council activities.¹⁶⁹

The world Jewish community was startled when the Pope gave his annual Lenten homily on April 4, 1965. "The Hebrew People," he said, "fought Him [Jesus], slandered Him and in the end killed Him." It appeared they were back where they started, it appeared that he was saying the Jews were to blame for the death of Jesus. An Anglo-Jewish newspaper led with the headline, "The Pope's Revival of the Deicide Charge Shows the Need for the Council Schema." Balfour Brickner, Director of Interfaith Activities for the Reform Movement in America said, "It is difficult to believe," and called on the Pope to explain his words. The Vatican tried to clear things up in light of this criticism. They tried to explain that the Pope did not mean to accuse the Jewish people of the death of

¹⁶⁹ Document dated March 16, 1965 written by Dr. John Slawson and Marc Tanenbaum. An article in the *New York Times*, on April 25 confirmed what Shuster had reported.

Jesus, but that they did repudiate him. They said that the Pope was using the reference as a metaphor for humankind in general, Christians and non-Christians, who continue to reject Christ.

In a statement released by the London Jewish Chronicle, Rabbi Heschel remarked, "The deicide charge is the most dreadful calumny ever uttered. It resulted in rivers of blood and mountains of human ashes. It is absurd, monstrous, and unhistorical, and the supreme repudiation of the Gospel of love."¹⁷⁰ Heschel, referring to the Holocaust and the other Christian violence against Jews, believed that this was not what Christian teaching really meant, but that acts of love and kindness were more a reflection of the Gospels. Continuing to speak of deicide would only lead to continued acts of violence.

Over the spring, it appeared that the Document was in more trouble. On June 20, the London *Observer*, claimed that the Coordinating Commission of the Council was being instructed to take the Jewish issue off the agenda for the fourth session. The Council's Secretary General immediately denied that it would be removed. Questions continued over the summer about whether the whole Jewish issue or just that of deicide would be stricken from the Council. In a memorandum from Marc Tanenbaum to Zachariah Shuster, dated August 31, 1965, Tanenbaum refers to a meeting he had just had with Bishop Luigi Liggutti who had his offices in Vatican City and was in charge of a number of Vatican programs dealing with economic and social problems. He was a longtime friend of the Pope, with whom he spent many years in Milan. Liggutti reported that he had recently spoken to the Pope about the declarations on religious liberty and on the

Jews. He said that the Pope clearly stated that the Declaration on the Jews could not be passed in its present form because of repercussions it would have on diplomatic relations in the Middle East. The Bishop said that the Pope was extremely "diplomacy-minded" and "that the tremendous economic pressures that were brought to bear on him in the past couple of months had had their effect." The Arabs had threatened economic repercussions on Italy if the Vatican did not change the language of the Document. At this time Italy was facing an economic depression and the threat could pose more economic hardships on the Italian government. They also threatened Catholic institutions in Arab countries.

Bishop Liguori raised the point that if there was not any counter pressure from the hierarchy of the Church in America, Europe, Latin America, Spain and even from Africa, the Pope will submit to the conservative and Arab pressures. He said that the "failure of both of these declarations would be a major disaster for the Church, and that the moral credentials of the Pope as an arbiter of peace among nations would be seriously compromised." The final issue that was raised at this meeting was that on many issues in the past the Arab League backed away when strength was shown against them. There was a suggestion that there be a documented report of this "Arab smoke without fire."¹⁷¹

Because of the political nature of the threat by the Arabs and the possible economic repercussions, this same information was relayed to Lee White at the White House, with

¹⁷⁰ Gilbert, 174.

¹⁷¹ Marc Tanenbaum, memorandum to Zachariah Shuster, August 31, 1965. The information was reiterated in a 'strictly confidential' letter from Marc Tanenbaum to

the added note that there be "strong but discreet intervention from Western governments" along with pressure from the Catholic hierarchy.¹⁷²

By September 8, 1965, a twenty-two page confidential memorandum was completed by the AJC called "Arab Threats and Pressures" (Summary). The memorandum was written to show how the Arabs in the past had in fact backed off when there had been resistance to their threats which had been raised at the meeting with Bishop Liggutti. It begins "The current Arab campaign against the 'Jewish declaration' of the Ecumenical Council has included threats of retaliatory action against Christians and Church institutions in the Arab world. The attached memorandum points out that this is only the most recent instance of the Arab use of the tactics of threat and intimidation." It then lists 5 recent instances where these threats turned into "empty bluffs" when met with firm resistance. These were: (1) West German establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel; (2) the 1952 German Reparations Agreement with Israel; (3) Controversy over the Jordan Waters; (4) Nasser's insulting declaration with regard to the U.S. and his subsequent apologies; and (5) examples of successful resistance to the Arab economic boycott. In each case the Arab threat is explained, then the response and finally the Arab retreat. The report concludes with the understanding that when the Arabs have threatened in the past, a firm stand against them usually results in them retreating and when given into, it has led to more demands and additional pressure.¹⁷³

Sidney Rabb of Boston, "Problems effecting the passage of the Jewish Declaration," September 2, 1965, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁷² Morris B Abram, letter to Mr. Lee White, September 2, 1965, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁷³ AJC Memorandum, "Arab Threats and Pressures," (Summary), labeled Personal and Confidential, September 8, 1965 (no indication of who compiled the information). John

The fourth session of the Council was set to open on September 14, 1965. There was enormous apprehension not only by the Jewish community, but by those liberals in the Church community who supported the Document as well. The Pope's most recent address had been filled with statements on the need for adhering to dogma and tradition, and a warning against a too rapid pace on the road to change and renewal.¹⁷⁴ He had also refused to take a stand on the issues that would be confronting the final session of the Council, and there was fear that the conservative forces in Rome had gained control once again. On September 10, the Italian press agency *Ansa* reported that the term 'deicide' had been deleted from the draft, in order to do away with "confusions and misunderstandings" that had grown up because of "counter-opposed interpretations" given to the texts by Arabs and Israelis. The actual text that was being proposed was not available to the public, but there was hope that it would remain pretty much intact in principle and in language. Whatever changes were made would be presented and voted upon during this final session.¹⁷⁵ There were no more rumors that it would be taken off the table.

Slawson in a Memorandum dated September 18, 1965 comments on this report. He says that although the report was well done, he does not feel that the situations described are analogous to the present one. The ones cited were examples of Arab attacks against outside powers and interests, while this one concerns institutions and groups within Arab countries.

¹⁷⁴ "The Second Vatican Council's Declaration of the Jews," November 1965, AJC Archives, New York, 43.

Session IV

All pessimism was dispelled when the Declaration on Religious Liberty was brought to the floor during the first week of the session. Also in the first week, the General Secretary, Msgr. Felici announced at a general meeting of the Council that the Declaration with regard to the Jewish people would be brought to a final vote.¹⁷⁶

The Declaration on Religious Liberty was the key to the vote on the declaration regarding the Jewish people. Without a statement on the right to freely choose one's religion, there was no reason for the Church to validate non-Christian religions, including Judaism. It also validated the legal rights of the Church as well as other religious institutions to exist within every state. The new wording on religious liberty was strong and direct. It declared that, "man must be free from coercion, either by individuals or by social groups or by any human power, in suchwise that in religious matters no one should be forced to act, or prevented from acting, according to his conscience in private or in public...."

Further, "it is the desire of this Vatican Council that the right of the human person to religious liberty be universally recognized by all states, and be surrounded with effective safeguards, so that all citizens may be enabled to exercise the rights and discharge the duties implied by religion." The document claims that every religious group should have the same rights and that "the chief duty of all public authority is to protect and to promote man's inviolable rights. Hence, civil authority must, through appropriate just laws, effectively undertake to protect and guard the religious liberty of all its citizens and to

¹⁷⁵ As per procedure, only the amendments needed to be voted on, and there would be no debate on the subject.

¹⁷⁶ The Pope was scheduled to make a trip to the United Nations on October 4. There was hope that all of the major issues would be resolved by the time he left.

insure that equal rights for all citizens are never violated for religious consideration."¹⁷⁷

There was little doubt that with the majority vote in favor of this document,¹⁷⁸ there would be no difficulty with the passage of the declaration on the Jewish people.

However this was only true if in fact it was the same or very similar to the text that was passed in the third session of the Council (there were even rumors that the text has been improved and tightened).

There was pretty much a consensus among the Catholics and the Jews that the word 'deicide' was going to be omitted from the final text of the Document. The rumored reasons were (1) that it is an absurdity for "you cannot kill God;" (2) the term points to a denial of the Scripture and of Tradition; (3) the Arab opposition was focusing on this particular term. There were private assurances by those Church Fathers who were in touch with the AJC that even without using this term, the substance of the statement on this issue would remain intact.¹⁷⁹ In the Documents for the Council, a footnote to the phrase that appears in the final document "...Jews should not be persecuted or repudiated or cursed by God..." speaks to the issue of the word 'deicide. It says, "The phrase 'or guilty of deicide (deicidii rea) was dropped from this sentence before the present version [final version, voted on at the end of the fourth session] of the Declaration came up for

¹⁷⁷ Zachariah Shuster, memorandum to Dr. John Slawson, "Ecumenical Council," September 18, 1965, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁷⁸ During the debate, Cardinal Ritter addressed the issue, stating, "justice demands that through this Declaration we make amends for the ill-deeds perpetrated in the past, almost officially, in certain Catholic Orders against those who are not of our faith." The vote for the Declaration on Religious Liberty was voted on September 21, 1965. It was approved 1,997 to 224.

¹⁷⁹ Zachariah Shuster, memorandum, September 18, 1965. Also Walter M. Abbott, ST., general editor, *The Documents of Vatican II*, A Herder & Herder Book, Crossroads, N.Y., 1989, foot note 23.

discussion and voting in the final session of the Council. Many newspaper accounts attributed the deletion to pressure from Arab governments, etc., but the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity's chief architect of the document, explained that many Council Fathers asked for the deletion because the phrase was ambiguous and might even suggest to some people that the Church no longer regarded Jesus as God. The Secretariat agreed to drop the phrase since the idea is already found in the preceding sentence: 'What happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews.' The Secretariat recommended that the word 'deicide' be eliminated from the Christian vocabulary; it has given rise to false theological interpretations that occasion difficulties in pastoral work and in ecumenical dialogue."

On September 30, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity distributed copies of the new statement on the Jews to the bishops and to the press.¹⁸⁰ The text stated that the Church acknowledged that the "beginnings of her faith are already found among the Patriarchs, Moses and the Prophets" and that "Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, as well as most of the early Disciples sprang from the Jewish people." It recommended theological studies and fraternal dialogues to foster mutual knowledge and respect. And it directly mentioned the word 'anti-Semitism.' "The Church... moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, deplores hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism directed against Jews at any time or by anyone." By acknowledging that the early ancestors of the Church were Jewish people created a direct relationship between

¹⁸⁰ The work was divided into 5 chapters: (1) introduction on the objective unity of the human family and for the quest for "answers to the profound riddles of the human condition; (2) various religions: primitive, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.; (3) Islamic

the two religions and a foundation for dialogue. The condemnation of all forms of anti-Semitism responded to the accusations that the Church did not in fact condemn persecution of Jews not only in the distant past, but also during the Holocaust.

The negative elements however were glaring and disturbing. The word 'deicide' had been removed, as had been anticipated. But there was more. The charge of collective guilt in the Crucifixion was now prefaced with the qualification that "the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ." And the phrase "Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation" was added. There was the implication that the status of the Jews as the "Church of God" was lost because of their failure to accept Jesus as the Christ. In other words, not recognizing Christ as the Messiah forfeited the Jews place as the people chosen by God. In the earlier version the text stated that the Church "deplores, indeed condemns" hatred of the Jews, the new text only used the term 'deplores'. Again, in the earlier text, people were forbidden any teaching "that could give rise to hatred or contempt for Jews in the hearts of Christians," was changed to "the Jews should not be presented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this follows from Holy Scriptures." The general statement on non-Christian religions contains the statement "the Church must ever proclaim Christ the way, the truth, and the light in whom men find the fullness of religious life." In other words, even with the acceptance of and recognition of all religions that recognize a Supreme Being, Christianity is in fact the only true religion. So even though the Church acknowledges

religion; (4) Jewish religion; (5) the condemnation of every kind of discrimination or harassment because of race, color, condition of life or religion.

that other religions should have the right to exist, only Christianity is the true path to salvation.

The following are the two texts side by side:

Approved Text

November 20, 1964
(3rd version)

4. (*The Jews*) As this Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

In truth, *with a grateful heart*, the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are already found among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes That all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith (cf. Gal. 3:7)—are included in the same Patriarch's call, likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament from the people with whom God in His ineffable mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she feeds upon the root of that cultivated olive tree into which the wild shoots of the Gentiles have been grafted (cf. Rom. 11:17-24). Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one (cf. Eph. 2:14-16).

Emended Text

October, 1965
(4th and final version)

4. (*The Jewish Religion*) As this Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that *spiritually* ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

In truth, the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her elections are already found among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons (cf. Gal. 3:7)—are included in the same Patriarch's call, likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament *through* the people with whom God in His ineffable mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she feeds upon the root of that cultivated olive tree into which the wild shoots of the Gentiles have been grafted (cf. Rom. 11:17-24). Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one *in Himself* (cf. Eph. 2:14-16).

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the legislation and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

Even though a large part of the Jews did not accept the Gospel, nevertheless, as the Apostle testifies, God holds them most dear for the sake of the Fathers; His gift and call are irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11:28-29). In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus of such magnitude, this Sacred Synod wants to foster and recommend a mutual knowledge and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

Moreover, this Synod, in her rejection of injustice of whatever kind and wherever

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and covenants and the legislation and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation (cf. Lk. 19:44), nor did the Jews, for the most part, accept the Gospel, indeed many opposed its spreading (cf. Rom. 11:28). Nevertheless, according to the Apostle, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of the Fathers; His gift and call are irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11:28-29; cf. Constitution on the Church, n. 16). In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus of such magnitude, this Sacred Synod wants to foster and recommend a mutual knowledge and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

inflicted upon men, remains mindful of that common patrimony and so deploras, *indeed condemns*, hatred and persecution of Jews, whether they arose in former or in our own days.

May all, then, see to it that in catechetical work or in preaching they do not teach anything that could give rise to hatred or contempt of the Jews in the hearts of Christians. May they never present the Jewish People as one rejected, cursed, or *guilty of deicide*. All that happened to Christ in His passion can in no way be attributed to the whole people then alive, much less to the people of today.

Although the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. Jn. 19:16), nevertheless what happened to Christ in His passion cannot be attributed to all Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor to the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this follows from the Holy Scriptures. May all see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in preaching the word of God they do not teach anything that is inconsistent with the truth of the Gospel and with the spirit of Christ.

Moreover, the Church, which rejects every persecution against any man, mindful of the common patrimony with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, deploras hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, the Church has always held, and holds now, that Christ underwent His passion and death freely—out of Infinite love—because of the sins of men. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

Besides, *as* the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, *in order that all may reach salvation*. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

Of course reactions by the Jewish community were mixed—it was a stronger statement because it actually used the word ‘anti-Semitism,’ yet it was an emasculated version of the one that was voted upon previously. In this fourth version, anti-Semitism was not condemned as it had been in the earlier third version, but only deplored. There were a number of bishops who tried to get the Council to reinstate the older language, but they had little success.

Although the Israeli press had not had a lot to say during the Council meetings, when this version of the statement was released they were not at all pleased. Three of the major newspapers, two representing political parties and a third a religious party each were disappointed but for different reasons. *Davar*, the publication of the majority party Mapai felt that the Church had lost its moral authority by not condemning anti-Semitism. It said, “The new text of the ‘Jewish Schema’ is a clear regression in content and significance.... Even if we disregard the theological aspects of the declaration and attribute their dilution to difficulties in departing from a deeply rooted tradition—this explanation cannot apply to the fact that the Church again is not prepared to stigmatize anti-Semitism, but only to regret it... this is the moral power of the strongest religious body in the Western world, and this is its testimony.” *Haboker*, the organ of the Liberal Party blamed the Arab pressure and the fears of the Church. It said that the Council “capitulated not only to its internal prejudices, but to the political pressures of the enemies of Israel.” It continued, “In lieu of a total exoneration of the Jewish people from the charge of ‘deicide,’ those Jews who asked for Jesus’ death are to be considered guilty. This amendment affects the very heart of the entire document. It therefore requires

counter-action on the part of the Jewish people." And *Hatzofe*, the daily publication of the National religious party believed that the way the statement was written gave permission to those who wanted to continue to persecute the Jews. It wrote, "In laying the deicide charge at the door of 'the Jewish authorities and their followers' there may be a hint to the Arabs that (the Vatican) puts no obstacle in the way of their attacks on the present Jewish regime of Israel... It is very much to be doubted if the Jewish Document, in its present formulation, will serve its purpose of restraining anti-Semitism, since it actually repeats the historic charges of Christians against the Jews."¹⁸¹

In the United States, the American Jewish Committee hailed the document as a step forward in Jewish-Christian relations. Rabbi Heschel, reflected the majority opinion of American Jews when he said, "not to condemn the demonic canard of deicide... is a defiance of the God of Abraham and an act of paying homage to Satan."¹⁸²

On October 14, the Council brought the revisions on the text up for a vote.

1. On the changes to the introduction, the vote was Yes 2,071, No 110, Null 4.
2. On non-Christians in general and specifically Hindu and Buddhism, Yes 1953, No 184, Null 6
3. On Islamic religion, Yes 1900, No 189, Null 6
4. 1st section dealing with Jews—spiritual relations between people of Old Testament and New Testament, Yes 1937, No 153, Null 9
5. Rejecting collective guilt of Jewish people for death of Christ, Yes 1875, No 188, Null 9
6. Declaring Jews must not be represented as 'accursed' or 'rejected by God,' Yes 1821, No 245, Null 14
7. Rejecting anti-Semitism, persecutions against Jewish people, spreading of anti-Jewish sentiments through preaching or teaching, Yes 1905, No 199, Null 14
8. Summary on universal brotherhood excluding all discrimination, Yes 2064, No 58, Null 6

¹⁸¹ "Israeli Press Not Happy with Statement on Jews," *Jewish Post and Opinion*, December 1965.

¹⁸² *New York Herald Tribune*, October 1, 1965, as cited in Gilbert, 182-183. For a more complete discussion on the reaction to the Déclaration, see final chapter.

The entire schema on non-Christian religions was approved 1763 to 250. The very final vote on the Declaration on non-Christian religions came on October 28, a date chosen by the Pope because it was the anniversary of the day John XXIII was elected to the Papacy. The vote was Yes 2221, No 88, Reservations 2, Null 1.¹⁸³ Immediately afterwards, Pope Paul promulgated the declaration.

¹⁸³ Gilbert, 193.

IV

Reaction to the Final Document

Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

The American Reaction

The American Jewish community had been kept informed of the proceedings at the Vatican by both the Jewish press and the secular press. The American Jewish press did not present their readers an unbiased report of the process or of the final document. Past prejudices and mistrust biased their opinions, which they then transmitted. Many saw the final document as weak and blamed the Church for emasculating the language. Others felt that with the removal of the deicide charge, there was no real clarification of intention and that this would only sustain anti-Semitism. The Orthodox Jewish community had all along not agreed to become involved with internal Church matters, and the opinions of their rabbis reflected this attitude, although some went to greater extremes than others. Only the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish organizations that were committed to interfaith dialogue that had worked continuously through years of expectation and disappointment and compromise, maintained that the document was a great breakthrough in Jewish-Catholic relations.

Humor and sarcasm has been one way of responding to serious issues. In an article from the Carolina Israelite, the humorist Harry Golden reflected the view of many American Jews.

I have a suggestion to offer the Jewish leaders of the world. It is in the form of an invitation addressed to the Chief Rabbis of Israel, United Kingdom, France, Denmark,

Argentina, as well as to the Rabbinical Councils of America, the B'nai B'rith, American Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress:

My plan is to call a Jewish Ecumenical Council in Jerusalem sometime in 1966, for the purpose of issuing a Jewish Schema on the Christians.

The Catholics and many of the Protestant brotherhoods have recently issued the Christian Schema on the Jews. We have been absolved from personal responsibility in the crucifixion of Jesus. Now is it our turn. I propose that we forgive the Christians for the Inquisition, the Crusades, the ghettos, and the expulsions. I think we can also include forgiveness for the usurpation of property which continued unabated for sixteen hundred years, the rape of Jewish girls, the world-wide discrimination, and we may also waive our annoyances at the barriers that guard country, city and fraternal clubs.

This line of thought goes on until the final paragraph, which reads:

For all this terrifying history, let us clear those Christians living today. The Jewish Schema on the Christians would not only express appreciation for the recent events at the Catholic Ecumenical Council, but would clear the air for Brotherhood and remove our own memories of bitterness. I strongly urge the Jewish leaders to call this conference. It is the time for—love.¹⁸⁴

Golden was using this irony as a teaching tool as well as expressing his own disappointment. What Mr. Golden was expressing was the feeling that was common among many Jews, that whatever the Council did could not make up for all of the terrible and terrifying actions sanctioned by the Catholic Church. But the feeling that perhaps we could now move forward together in a hopeful way clearly was present as well.

Using a more serious tone, Milton K. Susman in his column in the *Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh* entitled "As I See It," claims that "every self-respecting Jew" should feel let down and rejected. He claims that the final document is "emasculated and stripped of its original intent," and continues, "It is sheer flummery and sweet sentiment which lacks the sting of forthrightness and the assurance of good faith." He ends with this sad picture: "I feel like the passenger left at the terminal after the crowded bus has pulled away. Kind of

¹⁸⁴ Harry Golden, "The Jewish Schema On The Christians," *The Carolina Israelite*, September-October, 1965.

passed by and alone. So will a lot of other Jews."¹⁸⁵ He believed that the Church did not actually change its attitude toward Jews, but made superficial statements because the present situation, i.e. post Holocaust, demanded that they do so. Jews are still on their own in a world that does not stop for them to climb aboard.

The attitude that Mr. Susman represented was one that had been so hopeful at the beginning of the process and was so let down in the end. His was the opinion that said so much was possible, was so close to being, until the fears of the minority overcame the hopes of the majority. In the end, it was a compromise that had little wind and no punch.

In an overview from the *National Jewish Post and Opinion*, from November 5, 1965, the reactions from several cities were examined. It quoted the *American Brooklyn Examiner*, which expressed disappointment. It said that the removal of the word 'deicide' did not add any dignity or moral stature to the action. "But even more regrettable was the decision to use the word, 'deplore' instead of 'condemn' with reference to anti-Semitism."

The *Cleveland Jewish News* echoed the same sentiments. It said, "Far from sounding the death-knell of anti-Semitism, the declaration and the discussion preceding it have in some ways given a kind of rationale for Jew-hatred." It went on to suggest that the motives of the Council were positive and were based on tolerance and liberalism, but the end result was the declaration continues to imply that the Jews were involved in the act of 'deicide.'

¹⁸⁵ Milton K. Susman, "As I See It," *Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh*, Friday, October 22, 1965.

There were a few newspapers that voiced a different point of view, among them was the *Jewish News of Newark*. Although it did not differ in describing the document as inadequate, it did say that it was a "tremendous forward step by the Catholic Church.... Its principal significance... is found in its repudiation of doctrinal descriptions of the Jews as one who for all eternity must bear the responsibility for the death of Christ."¹⁸⁶ The fact that the Church took the risk of saying that some of its doctrine needed reinterpretation was a major breakthrough, and praising this effort was important. The Jewish American public needed to understand that although the document did not express all of their hopes, it did break with a tradition. This change could be the basis of further theological change and for dialogue.

It is clear that expectations were high, but that the end result was disappointing, and that the Jewish communities were unsure whether to react thankfully to the fact that at least there was due consideration of the issue or to be angry that it was still not resolved. In an article by Nathan Ziprin in the *American Examiner*, he deals with both possible reactions. He starts out by saying that the document that was passed had much left to be desired. But on the other hand it is a beginning. It is a map that the Catholic Church can use to guide further discussion and teachings—it "could trigger a new era in interreligious relations."¹⁸⁷ And in another editorial on the same page of the *American Examiner*, entitled "The Vatican Declaration on Jews—Agony and Hope," Julio Dressner, the correspondent in Rome, spells out the reasons for the emasculation of the decree. He

¹⁸⁶ *National Jewish Post and Opinion*, November 5, 1965.

explains that the final version was an appeasement to those who would vote against the document not the Arabs, but those ultra-Conservatives who would continued to vote against the Pope's wishes. He believed that there was a serious threat to the passage of any decree, and at least this one was on the record. He saw the letters and statements that followed the close of the sessions hopeful, and that "what had happened around the declaration may have the beneficent consequences of mobilizing quickly and decidedly Catholic progressive forces in the fight against anti-Semitism."¹⁸⁸

Even Marc Tanenbaum who had been quoted in the *New York Herald Tribune* said that few Jews were pleased with the final document, but continued that the American Catholic hierarchy has shown "its genuine friendship for the Jewish people," and that may be more important than the document itself. He explained the reason that the document was such a disappointment is that it does not finally resolve the issues. "It leaves open the possibility that bigots and anti-Semites will be able to exploit negative teachings about Jews, saying that these are 'not consistent with the truths of the Gospel.'" On the other hand he says he welcomes the document "because for the first time in the history of 21 ecumenical councils the Catholic Church has committed herself to rejecting the invidious tradition of attributing corporate guilt to the Jewish people for the Crucifixion and to repudiating anti-Semitism." He, like many others who continued to be hopeful, looked to the creation of the special commission on Catholic-Jewish relations by the Catholic

¹⁸⁷ Nathan Ziprin, "The Vatican and The Jews," *American Examiner*, Thursday, November 4, 1965, 13.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Julio Dressner, "The Vatican Declaration on Jews—Agony and Hope."

hierarchy to continue the conversation about Catholic-Jewish relations.¹⁸⁹ For Tanenbaum and others, the document was not an end, but only the beginning. In the words of Rabbi Heschel, "The spirit of the Council is greater than the Council."

In an AJC document called "Reactions to the Passage of the Ecumenical Council Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non Christian Religions," there is an attempt to reflect on the different voices from the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities. The AJC's disappointment at the weakened language and the inability of the Church to take a firm stand against both deicide and anti-Semitism was tempered with the knowledge that any document that radically changed the theology of the Church was a major win. In the Jewish community, the AJC reflects, the reaction ranged from "qualified approval to bitter denunciation (sic), but the general response struck a middle note...." Morris Abram, President of the AJC, called the document an "act of justice long overdue," although he did regret the fact that the declaration was not as clear as it could have been and could lead to misunderstandings. And Zachariah Shuster, the European Director of the AJC, similarly shared Mr. Abram's disappointment over the weakness of the document, but was equally hopeful in the fact that it would "go far to eradicate prejudices." The document was the culmination of many years of consulting and lobbying. Initial hopes had been high, but the group was realistic, and knew that it had been a struggle to even maintain the momentum to keep the document on the table. They were relieved that this document had passed, and that in itself was a victory.

¹⁸⁹ "Rabbi Weighs Opinions on Jewish Declaration," *Boston Pilot*, Saturday, October 30, 1965. The declaration recommended that a process be instituted that could foster "mutual

Leaders of Jewish organizations like Dr. Joachim Prinz, a congregational rabbi and a member of the American Jewish Congress, and Dr. William Wexler, the President of the National B'nai B'rith, concluded that the declaration was an action of "goodwill." They believed that the future would be the true test, in how it would be carried out in Catholic parishes. Dr. Joseph Lichten of the anti-Defamation League, who had spent time in Rome during this process, hoped that the document would "eliminate prejudice and discrimination from all our lives." And the World Conference of Jewish Organizations echoed the sentiments of the American Jewish organizations. It was their belief that once the conservative Catholic Church, could make changes in its attitude towards Jews and other non-Catholic religions, then other Churches would follow their lead. And once religious organizations could begin this process, they could influence political machinery to institute laws that would reflect this belief—that prejudice and discrimination are contemptible and that each person's beliefs must be respected.

Even scholars like Professor Jacob Neusner of Dartmouth, writing in the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*, called the statement "significant and meaningful." He added that "any statement which will add to a social reconciliation and to harmony among differing groups is to be welcomed, and so is this."

Although all parties were aware of the weaknesses of the document, some were more critical than others. Of those who had a more negative response to the doctrine, their arguments centered around three themes: (1) the substitution of 'deplore' for 'condemn,' (2) the removal of the term 'deicide,' and (3) the absence from the Vatican document of knowledge and respect."

any sense of contrition for the Church's contribution to anti-Semitism of the past. It was this last point that led to the most visceral reactions.¹⁹⁰ The Holocaust was still a wound that was barely scabbed, and many in the Jewish community wanted someone to take responsibility for the loss of lives of their "family." The Church was the natural institution to accept responsibility, since it was viewed that they had, over the length of their history, made life unbearable for Jewish communities. It was hoped that at this point in time the Church should confess to its crimes, take responsibility and make amends. Because it did not, people felt that there was still no vindication for the loss of Jewish lives over the centuries.

The Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America under the leadership of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, issued a policy statement regarding Jewish-Christian dialogue at its convention in 1964, in response to what was happening in the Vatican. They were not reacting to any specific portion of the Council's deliberations but to what the Council meant in general. The statement by the RCA reflected the sense of Rabbi Soloveitchik's sentiments early on in the process regarding the Jewish community's participation in the Vatican Council. Specifically, it was to remain outside of any theological discussion since each faith community is unique, but to dialogue on those issues that concerned religious communities in terms of social and political problems.¹⁹¹ He said, "We

¹⁹⁰ AJC, "Reactions to the Passage of the Ecumenical Council Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non Christian Religions," December 1, 1965, AJC Archives, New York.

¹⁹¹ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Confrontation," *Tradition* 6, (1964) 27-28. The statement reads: We are pleased to note that in recent years there has evolved in our country as well as throughout the world a desire to seek better understanding and a mutual respect among the world's major faiths. The current threat of secularism and materialism and the modern atheistic negation of religion and religious values makes even more imperative a

cooperate with the members of other faith communities in all fields of constructive human endeavor, but simultaneously with our integration into the general social framework, we engage in a movement of recoil and retrace our steps."¹⁹² He did support the fact that there was a move towards respect for all religious communities and for a return toward religious values, and he saw the declarations issued by the Vatican Council another move in this direction. He certainly wished that all faith communities could show respect for each other while maintaining their own integrity.

But he was not the only voice in the diverse Orthodox community. Several years later, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, head of the Metivta Tiferet Jerusalem in New York published two responsa, regarding his view of interfaith dialogue. Feinstein was among the most respected and authoritative *ravs* in the Orthodox community. His view was different from Soloveitchick's, although he had hoped that Rabbi Soloveitchick would in fact support him (there is no evidence that Soloveitchick ever did on this issue). Feinstein believed that any dialogue between Jews and Christians was a plot by the Christians to convince

harmonious relationship among the faiths. This relationship, however, can only be of value if it will not be in conflict with the uniqueness of each religious community, since each religious community is an individual entity which cannot be merged or equated with a community which is committed to a different faith. Each religious community is endowed with intrinsic dignity and metaphysical worth. Its historical experience, its present dynamics, its hopes and aspirations for the future can only be interpreted in terms of full spiritual independence of freedom from any relatedness to another faith community. Any suggestion that the historical and meta-historical worth of a faith community be viewed against the backdrop of another faith, and the mere hint that a revision of fundamentals of basic historic attitudes is anticipated, are incongruous with the fundamentals of religious liberty and freedom of conscience and can only breed discord and suspicion. Such an approach is unacceptable to any self-respecting faith community that is proud of its past, vibrant and active in the present and determined to live on in the future and serve God in its own individual way. Only full appreciation on the part of all of the singular role, inherent worth, and basic prerogatives of each community will help promote the spirit of cooperation among the faiths.

Jews to abandon their faith and convert to Christianity. But he also based his opinions on legal grounds. He maintained the classical Jewish view that Christianity was a form of idolatry, that they were *ovdei avodah zarah*—idol worshipers¹⁹³ and that Jews needed to avoid contact with them.

He framed the first responsa in the form of a letter written to a young rabbi who had committed himself to attending an interfaith dialogue. The rabbi wanted Rabbi Feinstein's opinion on whether it was acceptable to attend. Feinstein replied that even though the discussion was to be non-theological in nature "it is clear and simple that such participation constitutes a grave violation of the prohibition against abetting idolatry. For a plague has now broken out in many locales on account of the initiative of the new Pope, whose only intent is to cause all the Jews to abandon their pure and holy faith so that they will accept Christianity... Consequently, all contact and negotiation with them, even on worldly matters, is forbidden, for the act of 'drawing near' is in and of itself forbidden as it falls under the category of the grave prohibition against 'rapprochement with idolatry—*hitkarvut im avodah zarah*':"¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Ibid., 26.

¹⁹³ Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times*, (New York: Schocken, 1969). Some Talmudic sages felt that Christianity was not even a monotheistic religion because of the doctrine of the Trinity. Others like Rabbi Isaac, a medieval authority, stated in Sanhedrin 63b, that even though it seemed to Jews that Christianity appeared to have more than one God and was idolatry for Jews, it was not that way for Christians. This opinion was also held by the 14th century rabbi Menachem Ha-Me'iri of Provence, who agreed that Christians believe in a single Godhead, and excluded Christians from the category of idolators.

¹⁹⁴ Moshe Feinstein, *Iggerot Moshe, Yoreh Deah* 3, Number 43.

The second is a letter to Rabbi Soloveitchik where he expresses his "concern over those young rabbis who are trapped in the snare laid by the Head of the Priests in the Vatican in the name of the Ecumenical Council. . . " He claims that the calling of interfaith committees and conventions is a "deed of Satan" and requests Soloveitchik to help him "overturn the conspiracy of the evil ones and the success of the deeds of Satan, as well as to rescue the Jewish people from apostasy (sh'mad) . . ."¹⁹⁵

Feinstein's opinions were an extreme example of the attitude of the Orthodox community's feelings about the Catholic Church. They reflected the same feelings that those orthodox in the Catholic Church felt about the Jews. There was a fundamentalist feeling that because certain attitudes have remained the same for centuries, there is no means of changing them. They have become fixed and to change would admit that there was something wrong. Some Jews believed that Christians were idol worshippers; some Christians believed Jews were Christ killers. There can never be conversation between these groups, since there is no room to dialogue.

It appears that the Orthodox community, although declaring consensus on the fact that theological issues were off limits in an interfaith dialogue, were in disagreement as to whether any interactions should take place at all. Each side had many followers, and therefore left the community split as to further actions and reactions.¹⁹⁶ Soloveitchik stood on the more liberal side and Feinstein on the more orthodox.

¹⁹⁵ Soloveitchik remained committed to working with other communities on social issues.

¹⁹⁶ Some members of the Orthodox community of New York became part of an interfaith dialogue with the Liberal members of the Jewish community and the National Council of Catholic Bishops. This effort only recently dissolved.

therefore left the community split as to further actions and reactions.¹⁹⁶ Soloveitchik stood on the more liberal side and Feinstein on the more orthodox.

The Israeli Reaction

In Israel there was not a great deal of talk about the Council, but the almost silent response spoke loudly. Why did Israel need to respond to this Council? The Vatican did not even recognize Israel as a state. Should Israel recognize what the Vatican says about the Jewish people? And anyway there were more pressing issues for this struggling country that were more real and had to be dealt with more concretely. The major issue at the time was getting the Jews out of Russia. This was also an election year, with the elections coming around the same time as the vote on the Declaration. The economy was struggling and the Arabs were making a lot of noise with threats.

The newspaper reports about the Council vote tended to be factual and opinions from other Jewish communities outside of the land were printed. It seemed Israel did not need to deal with something so obvious and straight forward—they did not need to get involved in issues that the Catholic Church felt they needed to deal with. When they did speak of the Council, much of the discussion was cynical and brought up the more recent past like the Holocaust and the priests in Germany who led the Germans to the Jews. Their questions were more about actions—How does this declaration change the relationship between Jews and Catholics?

¹⁹⁶ Some members of the Orthodox community of New York became part of an interfaith dialogue with the Liberal members of the Jewish community and the National Council of

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress issued a statement from Tel Aviv. He said that the issuing of the document is an important event, but that the document as a whole was more than "inadequate." "To 'deplore' anti-Semitism after the Nazi period is certainly more than inadequate." But he did say that Israel would have to wait to judge the significance of the document "by the seriousness with which it will be implemented and how its effects will be felt in the day-to-day attitude of the Church."¹⁹⁷

In *HaDavar*, the government newspaper, the articles speak facts. In a short article found on September 29, 1965, just a week after the 4th session began, the fact that the Declaration, *hamismak hayehudi*, would be brought up for a vote probably in October is mentioned. There is a simple statement at the end of the article that there had been some change in the language from the third session with the removal of the term *deicide*, but there is no opinion expressed. Again on October 15th, there is an article stating that the voting began on the document concerned with non-Christian religions and that the expectation is that it will win with a more than 2/3's majority, which was what was necessary for passage. The article then goes on to report what Cardinal Bea said about the changes in the document, and that he spoke in favor of these changes. Bea, they report said the changes made the document no longer offensive to the Arabs or to Christian doctrine, and that the document accomplished what it had to. There were two reasons for the removal of the term *deicide*, *retsakh el*. One was pastoral and the other doctrinal. Bea also explained that the word condemned, in Hebrew *deflorat*, was removed because that word was strictly used for heretics. (They did comment that the Hebrew press

Catholic Bishops. This effort only recently dissolved.

¹⁹⁷ New York Herald Tribune, October 18, 1965

[*Herut*—the opposition newspaper, on October 5, 1965] misinterpreted the word *deflorat* to mean *lehetstaer*, to be sorry, but really it meant something stronger, *leganot*, to denounce, to be against.) But again there was no commentary about the changes. It is interesting that what they focused in Bea's explanation was the fact that the document was no longer offensive to the Arabs—a population that was obviously important not to offend.

On October 17th, a week after the vote, *HaDavar* speaks about the historical significance of the document. They said that what the document did was to remove the guilt of the killing of Jesus from all Jews, and placed it only on those who lived at that time and in that place. They wrote that the document declared that God did not reject the Jews. The paper did point out that in the older version of the document it was stated that Jews should not be accused of deicide, but that the document that was passed stated that the Church deplored any form of anti-Semitism (not stated in the earlier version). This article stressed the fact that had one-third of the Fathers not voted for the new version, they would have reverted back to the other version, the one that the Jewish groups and some of the Cardinals preferred. Their implication was that even those Fathers who supported the stronger version allowed the weaker one to pass.

It is in this article that the opinions of Jewish leaders around the world are stated, as well as the opinions of the Arab leaders, but not the opinion of anyone from Israel. The Jewish leadership that they chose to include basically agreed that the document was of major historical significance, but lacked the impact of the older version. As for the Arab

leaders, most felt that they had achieved their goal, but that the document would unfortunately be a first step in the Vatican's recognition of Israel as a state.

From Israel's perspective, this was a political document. This sentiment was reflected in the choice of representatives who were sent to attend the closing ceremony of the Council (*Herut*, December 3, 1965). Only political figures were sent to Rome, including a member of the Foreign Ministry, a member of the Israeli Embassy in Rome, and the head of the Department of Christian Religions of the Ministry of Religions. No religious leaders were invited to represent Israel.

Overall, it seems Israel understood that this document would be helpful to them as a political document rather than a religious one. It meant that there could be a new era of relationship with the Catholic Church and the Vatican. This would be useful in terms of negotiating with the Arab world. But the document itself was just another document. The Church's actions in the end would demonstrate how sincere the Church really was in proving real change.

Conclusion

The Second Vatican Council provided a significant opportunity for the Jewish community to help reshape the course of Jewish-Christian relations. Previously the Church had propagated laws that effected Jews, and the Jewish community had no recourse but to endure the laws.¹⁹⁸ This was the first time that the Church, under the leadership of a pastorally-oriented pope, asked how they could make the relationship between Jews and Christians different. Pope John XXIII presented a model of change from that of disputation to one of dialogue.

On the basis of what is said in this thesis, there were four main Jewish voices that impacted on the creation of a Jewish document at the Council: the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, the Anglo-Jewish press; and to a lesser extent the Israeli press.

The American Jewish Committee was the sustaining voice in process. Their role as an advocate for a diverse Jewish people was very delicate. Not only were they trying to influence the Vatican, they were also trying to maintain a somewhat fragile coalition among the American religious Jewish communities. Their ongoing work prior to the Council in the area of Jewish-Catholic education, their contribution at Pro Deo University in Rome and their presence at the Seelisberg Conference, among other things, made them a well-known entity to the Vatican.¹⁹⁹ Their ability to gather together American Jewish

¹⁹⁸ See Chapter I, "An Historical Perspective"

¹⁹⁹ See Chapter II, "Preparation for the Council"

scholars and authorities in the liberal movements, including Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who then produced important documentation for the Vatican²⁰⁰ gave them a voice of authority. They were able to create relationships with the American Catholic community as well as with liberal members of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, especially between Rabbi Heschel and Augustin Cardinal Bea, the head of the Secretariat, who kept them informed of the debate during the sessions of the Council. The continuous flow of information enabled the members of the AJC to reach out to the American Jewish community, the Catholic hierarchy as well as to the representatives of the American government and secular world organizations,²⁰¹ in order to keep the issue of a Jewish document on the table.

The memorandum and the letters that are housed in the archives of the AJC give a picture of an organization that was proactive in assisting the Vatican Council produce a document to promote dialogue between two religious entities. Their backroom negotiations when leaked to the conservative elements at the Vatican often resulted in back-peddling and apologies. But their efforts resulted in the passage of a document, however imperfect it may be.

The Anglo-Jewish press on the other hand, was reactive throughout the years of the Council and did not serve the Jewish community well. Following the passage of the document in 1965, the American press reflected prejudices that were dominant among

²⁰⁰ See Chapter II, "Preparation for the Council" regarding the three documents prepared for the Vatican by the AJC.

²⁰¹ See information about Agape meetings, and footnote 168 regarding a letter to Mr. Lee White at the White House.

those Americans who could not see beyond the past injustices of the Church and the Holocaust. Their focus on disappointment rather than on accomplishment raises the issue of how the press continued to move the American Jewish community away from serious consideration of the document and toward condemnation of the work of the Council. It is true that the document did not do all that the Jewish people hoped it would do, but the fact of the matter is that it was a Church document. The American journalists did not seem to want to make this clear in their presentations to the public. They continued to react as if the document was written primarily for the Jewish community rather than the Catholic faithful. The press can not only influence opinion, but can be used as a tool for information and education. The American journalists for the most part neglected this particular role in order to criticize the work of the Catholic Church.

The World Jewish Congress under the leadership of Nahum Goldmann did a great deal of damage to the process. The appointment of Dr. Wardi as an observer to the Council was completely inappropriate, as Wardi had been a member of a ministry of the Israeli government. Goldmann had been told and had agreed that no Jewish community would send an observer to the Council. He then went against all recommendations and appointed Wardi. He not only received condemnation from the American Jewish community, but from the Church fathers. He especially embarrassed Cardinal Bea. His actions created a backlash from the conservative Church Fathers and the Arabs that threatened any passage of a document.²⁰²

²⁰² See Chapter II, "Preparation for the Council," "The Wardi Affair."

The final voice in my thesis is the Israeli press. In many ways they tried to remain neutral about the process, the visit of Pope Paul VI and the final document. They tended to report what other Jewish communities were saying and feeling, but with few exceptions they did not report internal reaction. This was a time when Israel was still struggling. Their economy was weak, they were constantly fighting their Arab neighbors (one must remember that this is before the '67 War. There was little outside support for Israel, financially and emotionally), and there was great concern for the Russian-Jewish population—how to get them out and what to do with them once they arrived in Israel. The Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church was of only vague interest to Israel. They could not exert energy in a business that did not ultimately concern them, even though there was the promise of a document that would change the nature of the relationship between all of the Jewish people and the Church. Israel could not get excited over a theological argument when it was having difficulty surviving.

The Israeli journalists expressed some emotion when it came to Pope Paul's visit, since this directly affected the possibility of becoming a recognized state. The event became a focal point because the Church in many ways offended the State of Israel and her public representatives by not acknowledging either the state or its officials as it would during any other state visit.²⁰³

When all was said and done, the Israeli press expressed disappointment, as did the American Jewish communities. They focused on the language of the document, especially the removal of the word 'decide.' They did not give the Catholic Church

credit for its attempt at renewal, but remained skeptical about any change in behavior towards the Israel. Only a few journalists expressed the hope that the actions of the Vatican would outweigh the meekness of the final document.

The Catholic Church and the Jewish community have created new networks in order to maintain the dialogue that was the goal of the document created at the Second Vatican Council. Further papers have been issued by the Church, including *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing Nostre Aetate* (=4), issued in 1974, and *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic World*, published in 1985. The most recently published document released by the Church's Commission for Religious Relations is *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, issued in 1998. Each document has been criticized for its weakness, especially the one concerning the Shoah, which enraged a large segment of the Jewish community. The Church was charged with not taking responsibility for not helping more Jews escape the Nazis, and for holding Pope Pius XII as a revered figure, and not as a collaborator with the German machine. The anger over the beatification of Pius XII has only continued to fuel this debate.

Even with these ideological struggles the work continues between the two communities. It no longer is carried on only by the American Jewish Committee, but directly with the representatives of the Jewish American religious communities, including until recently, the Orthodox community. The Conservative and Reform communities continue to have on-going dialogues and consultations with the National Council of Catholic Bishops of

²⁰³ Chapter III, 'Pope Paul's Visit to the Holy Land.

America. It is our responsibility to acknowledge the mistakes that have been made in the past but to continue the work that was begun over forty years ago between these two religious groups. In the words of Pope John XXIII (*Pacem In Terris*) "by meeting and negotiating men may come to discover the bonds that unite them together, deriving from the human nature which they have in common."

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Appendix I

ON THE ATTITUDE OF CATHOLICS TOWARD
NON-CHRISTIANS AND ESPECIALLY TOWARD JEWS*

*Latin text distributed to Council Fathers
at Second Session, November 8, 1963.*

Now that we have dealt with the principles of Catholic ecumenicism, we do not wish to pass over in silence the fact that the same principles should be applied, taking differences in condition duly into account, in the matter of speaking and cooperation with people who are not Christians, but who worship God, or at least in a spirit of good will conscientiously endeavor to observe the moral law innate in the nature of man.

This applies especially in the case of the Jews, as people who are connected with the Church of Christ in a special relationship.

The Church of Christ acknowledges with a grateful heart that the beginnings of the faith and of its election, along with the salutary mystery of God, can already be found among the Patriarchs and Prophets. For it is manifested that all the believers in Christ, the sons of Abraham according to the faith (cf. Gal. 3:7), come under the vocation of that Patriarch and that the salvation of the Church is mystically prefigured in the exodus of the chosen people from the land of bondage. The Church, a new creature in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:15), cannot forget that it is a continuation of that people with whom of old God, out of his ineffable mercy, was pleased to make his Old Covenant.

In addition the Church believes that Christ, our Peace, embraced both Jews and Gentiles in a single love and made them one (cf. Eph. 2:14) and by the union of both is one body (cf. Eph. 2:17) announced the reconciliation of all the world in Christ. Although a

*Translation made in Rome privately and mailed to author by Council observer October 15, 1963. This version never came to vote. large part of the chosen people are still far from Christ, yet it is wrong to call them an accursed people, since it remains very dear to God because of the Fathers and the gifts given them (cf. Rom. 11:28), or a people that killed God, since the Lord, by his passion and death, washes away the sins of all men, which were the cause of the passion and death of Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; 1 Cor. 2:8). Yet the death of Christ was not brought about by the entire people then alive, and far less by the people of today. Therefore, let priests be careful not to say anything, in the instruction of the catechism or in preaching, that might give rise to hatred or contempt of the Jews in the hearts of their hearers. Nor does the Church forget that Christ Jesus was born of that people according to the flesh, that the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ, was thus born, that thus were born the Apostles, the foundation and pillars of the Church.

Wherefore, since the Church has so much of a common patrimony with the synagogue, this Holy Synod intends in every way to promote and further mutual knowledge and esteem obtained by theological studies and fraternal discussions; and, moreover, as it severely reproves injuries to men anywhere, even more so does it, with maternal heart, deplore and condemn hatred and persecution of Jews, whether committed of old or in our times.

ON THE JEWS AND NON-CHRISTIANS*

*Latin text debated by Council Fathers
early in Third Session, September 28-30, 1964.*

(On the inheritance common to Christians and Jews.) The Church of Christ gladly acknowledges that the beginnings of its faith and election, in accordance with God's mystery of salvation, are to be found already among the Patriarchs and Prophets. Indeed, all Christians believe that, as sons of Abraham by faith (cf. Gal. 3, 7), they are included in this Patriarch's vocation and that the salvation of the Church is mystically prefigured in the exodus of the chosen people from the land of bondage. Nor can the Church as a new creation in Christ (cf. Eph. 2, 15) and as the people of the New Covenant ever forget that it is a continuation of that people with whom God in his ineffable mercy once designed to enter into the Old Covenant and to whom he chose to entrust the revelation contained in the Books of the Old Testament.

Moreover, the Church does not forget that from this Jewish people were born Christ, the Virgin Mary, as well as the Apostles, the foundation and the pillars of the Church.

Further, the Church was always mindful and will never overlook Apostle Paul's words relating to the Jews, "whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises" (Rom. 9, 4).

Since such is the inheritance accepted by Christians from the Jews, this Holy Council is resolved expressly to further and to recommend reciprocal understanding and appreciation, to be obtained by theological study and fraternal discussion and, beyond that, in as

*Translation appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune*, September 30, 1964. This version was presented as an appendix to the Schema on Ecumenism. Cardinal Bea urged that it be strengthened.

much as it severely disapproves of any wrong inflicted upon men wheresoever, it equally deplors and condemns hatred and maltreatment of Jews.

It is also worth remembering that the union of the Jewish people with the Church is a part of the Christian hope. Accordingly, and following the teaching of Apostle Paul (cf. Rom. 11, 25), the Church expects in unshakable faith and with ardent desire the entrance of that people into the fullness of the people of God established by Christ.

Everyone should be careful, therefore, not to expose the Jewish people as a rejected nation, be it in Catechetical tuition, in preaching of God's Word or in worldly conversation, nor should anything else be said or done which may alienate the minds of men from the Jews. Equally, all should be on their guard not to impute to the Jews of our time that which was perpetrated in the Passion of Christ.

(All men have God as Father.) The Lord Jesus has clearly confirmed that God is the Father of all men, as this was already stated in the Writings of the Old Testament and is suggested by reason itself. But we surely cannot appeal or pray to God as the Father of all, if we deny brotherly behavior to some men who are all created in the image of God. The attitude of man toward God as Father and the attitude of man toward man as brother are so closely connected that any negation of human brotherhood carries with it or leads to the negation of God himself with whom there is no respect of persons (cf. 2 Par. 18, 7; Rom. 2, 11; Eph. 6, 9; Col. 3, 25; 1 Pet. 1, 17). The First Commandment is in fact so interwoven with the second that we cannot be acquitted from our debts unless we ourselves wholeheartedly acquit our debtors. Indeed, it was said already in the Old Law: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" (Mal. 2, 10); the same is even more clearly reaffirmed in the New Law: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him that he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 Jn. 4, 20-21.)

Impelled by such love for our brethren, let us consider with great diligence views and doctrines which, though in many points different from ours, in so many others, however, carry the ray of that truth which gives light to every man born into this world. Thus we embrace also, and first of all, the Moslems who worship one personal and recompensing God and who in religious feeling as well as through many channels of human culture came closer to us.

(Any kind of discrimination is to be condemned.) In consequence, any theory or practice which leads to discrimination between man and man or between nation and nation, insofar as human dignity and the rights flowing therefrom are concerned, is devoid of foundation.

It is imperative, therefore, that all men of good will and Christians in particular abstain from any discrimination or vexation of human beings on grounds of their race, color, social status or religion. As to the Christians, the Holy Council solemnly entreats them "to behave seemly among gentiles" (1 Pet. 2, 12) and if possible and insofar as it depends on them, to maintain peace with all men (cf. Rom. 12, 18); it enjoins them, moreover, to love not only the neighbor, but even the enemies, should they think to have them, that they should be in truth the sons of the Father who is in heaven and who makes his sun rise over all (cf. Mt. 5, 44-45).

[REVISED] DECLARATION ON THE CHURCH'S
RELATIONSHIP TOWARD NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS*

*Latin text distributed to Council Fathers
near end of Third Session, November 18, 1964.
Approved by Council in preliminary vote, November 20, 1964.
1,651, yes; 242, yes with reservation; 99, no.*

In this age of ours when mankind is being drawn closer together, day by day, and the ties between peoples here and there are made stronger, the Church weighs earnestly her relationship toward non-Christian religions.

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the entire human race live on all the face of the earth (cf. Acts 17, 26). One, too, is their ultimate end God: His providence, His goodness—of which creation is the witness—His saving design extend toward all men (cf. Wisd. 8, Acts 14, 17; Rom. 2, 6-7, 1 Tim. 2, 4). And in the end all the elect will be united in that Holy City whose light is the glory of God, that City where the nations will walk in His radiance (cf. Apoc. 21, 24f).

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, riddles that move the hearts of men today as they did in olden times: What is man? What is the meaning, what is the purpose of our lives? What is the moral good, what sin? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment, and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate, inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence, which is the fountain as well as the destiny of our beings?

Ever since primordial days, numerous peoples have had a certain perception of that hidden Power which hovers over the course of

*Translation appeared in *The Catholic Herald* (London), December 4, 1964.

things and over the events that make up the lives of men: some have even come to know of a Supreme Being and Father.

Religions, however, that are entwined with an advanced culture have been able to use, in their struggle for an answer to man's great questions, more refined concepts and a more developed language.

In Hinduism, for instance, men try to fathom the divine mystery, expressing it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through keen efforts of a philosophical kind; they seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition through ascetical methods, profound meditation, and a flight to God, full of love and trust.

Again, Buddhism realizes the radical inadequacy of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, with minds devout and confident, seek to liberate themselves, through a self-denial and inner cleansing, from the fleetingness of things, and to attain a state of lasting quiet. Other religions, everywhere on earth, counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing ways, that is to say, doctrines, rules of life, and sacred rites.

The Catholic Church scorns nothing in these religions that is true and holy. For ceaselessly she proclaims Christ, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn. 14, 6), in whom God reconciled all things to Himself (cf. 2 Cor. 15, 19). Having learned of various dispositions toward salvation (cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 28, 2; PG 7, 1062), she regards with sincere reverence those ways of action and of life, those precepts and teachings which, differ though they do from the ones she sets forth, reflect nonetheless a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men!

The Church, therefore, admonishes her sons that they converse and collaborate with the followers of other religions in order to preserve, indeed, advance those spiritual and moral goods as well as those socio-cultural values that have a home among men of other religious traditions.

The Church is filled with esteem for Moslems: they adore the one God who lives, exists in Himself, and wields all power; they adore the Creator of heaven and earth who has spoken to men; they strive to obey wholeheartedly even His incomprehensible decrees, just as Abraham did, to whose faith they like to link their own.

Though Moslems do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a Prophet. They also honor Mary, His Virgin-Mother; at times, they even call on her with devotion. Again, they await the day of judgment when God will reward all those who have risen.

Furthermore, as they worship God through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, so they seek to make the moral life—be it that of the individual or that of the family and society—conform to His Will.

In the course of centuries, however, not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems. Hence this Sacred Synod urges all not only to forget the past but also to work honestly for mutual understanding and to further as well as guard together social justice, all moral goods, especially peace and freedom so that the whole of mankind may benefit from their endeavor.

As this Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

With a grateful heart, the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election were already among the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith—were included in the same patriarch's call, likewise that her salvation is typically foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage.

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament from the people with whom God in His ineffable mercy concluded the former Covenant. Nor can she forget that she feeds upon the root of that cultivated olive tree into which the wild shoots of the Gentiles have been grafted (cf. Rom. 11, 17-24). Indeed, the Church believes that by His Cross Christ our Peace reconciled the Jews and Gentiles, making both one (cf. Eph. 2, 14, 16).

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "Theirs is the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and of them is the Christ according to the flesh," the Son of Mary the Virgin (Rom. 9, 4-5).

No less does she recall that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

Even though a large part of the Jews did not accept the Gospel, they remain most dear to God for the sake of the patriarchs. This is the witness of the Apostle as is the utterance that God's gifts and call are irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11, 28 f.). In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve Him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3, 9; cf. Is. 66, 23; Ps. 65, 4; Rom. 11, 11-32).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is of such magnitude, this Sacred Synod wants to support and recommend their mutual knowledge and respect, a knowledge and respect that

are the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

Moreover, this Synod, in her rejection of injustices of whatever kind and wherever inflicted upon men, remains mindful of that common patrimony and so deplures, indeed, condemns hatred and persecutions of Jews, whether they arose in former or in our own days.

May all, then, see to it that in their catechetical work or in their preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that could give rise to hatred or contempt of Jews in the hearts of Christians.

May they never present the Jewish people as one rejected, cursed, or guilty of deicide. All that happened to Christ in His passion cannot be attributed to the whole people then alive, much less to that of today.

Besides, the Church has always held and holds now that Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of all men and out of infinite love. It is, therefore, the burden of Christians preaching to proclaim the Cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

We cannot truly address God the Father of all, if we refuse to treat some men or other in a brotherly way, even though they are created in His image. Man's attitude toward God the Father and his attitude toward his human brethren are so intimately linked, one to the other, that Scripture is able to say: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 Jn. 4, 8; cf. 1 Jn. 2, 9-11; Lk. 10, 25-37).

Thus any theory or practice that, so far as their human dignity is concerned, discriminates between man and man or people and people, creating a different set of rights for each of them—any such theory or practice is shown to be without foundation.

All men, therefore, but especially Christians must refrain from discrimination against, or harassment of, others because of their race, color, creed or walk of life. But this is not enough. Treading the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this Sacred Synod ardently implores the faithful that they rather "maintain good conduct among the Gentiles" (1 Pet. 2, 12) and live, if possible, that is, so far as it depends on them, in peace with all men (cf. Rom. 12, 18), so that they may really be sons of the Father who is in heaven (cf. Mt. 5, 44).

5/27/61

THE IMAGE OF THE JEWS IN CATHOLIC TEACHING

A Memorandum to
THE SECRETARIAT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Submitted by
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
New York

I. CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Spiritual Man at the Crossroads

The middle years of the twentieth century have ushered in a period of profound change, unparalleled in the history of mankind.

Titanic forces--technical, intellectual and spiritual--are at work. Atomic energy, new methods of communication and travel, the population explosion and the dawn of space exploration, are remaking our society. Political and economic upheaval is the order of the day, as rich nations, blind and complacent, are faced with the awakening of the world's underprivileged masses. Established religions everywhere are confronted by the legions of those who either deny spiritual values, or else wear a false religious badge while seeking only success, material comfort or power.

Under the impact of these forces, a totally new age has come into being in less than 25 years. Two overwhelming factors dominate this age. First: there are no islands any more; what happens anywhere on earth happens next door to us. Second: man is now able to destroy himself in a matter of minutes.

For these reasons, man's actions today have far wider repercussions than formerly-- for better or for worse. The mighty forces at large in today's world can spell spiritual division and physical annihilation; or they can speed man on his search for unity and spiritual fulfillment.

Catholic-Jewish Tension

The state of the world thus calls for a re-appraisal of values among all those concerned with the spiritual destiny of man. In this grave hour, His Holiness Pope John XXIII has called an Ecumenical Council, the first in nearly a century.

The American Jewish Committee would like to take the opportunity afforded by the calling of this Council to lay before the Head of the Church a matter of deep concern: the question whether Catholic teaching about Jews--particularly in the United States--is fostering prejudice and hostility.

Tensions between Jews and Catholics are centuries old, but the dangers of the present day make the issue more urgent than ever before. Whatever may have been true in past ages, prejudice against any religious group today inevitably weakens the entire fabric of society, degrades both the haters and the victims, and saps the spiritual strength of all mankind. Hostility among believers of different creeds serves only to advance the cause of anti-religious forces. In this hour of peril, all those who share the spiritual heritage of the Bible must stand together if humanity is to survive.

The Christian Conscience and the Jews

Jews have lived in the Christian world since its beginning, yet their status among the Christian majority has almost always been precarious. On one hand, the Church has protected them; Popes and Church Councils, in medieval and modern times, have condemned anti-Jewish propaganda, violence and persecution, and

for five hundred years (from the 11th until the 16th century) Jews enjoyed safety in the Papal states. But, on the other hand, Jews in nearly every century have undergone untold suffering and degradation at the hands of supposed Christians, sometimes with the acquiescence of ecclesiastical authority.

This ambiguous attitude of the Christian world toward the Jews has persisted into our own time. When Hitlerism -- an essentially pagan movement generated chiefly by social and economic forces unrelated to religion -- unleashed the most terrible of all persecutions, some devout and valiant Christians courageously saved Jewish lives; but the majority of Christendom stood indifferently by. The Jews will not forget their rescuers, but neither can they forget the six million whom no one rescued.

How could this diabolical crime have come to pass, in a country of ancient Christian traditions, unless the Christian conscience had been numbed -- unless a strong undercurrent of anti-Jewish feeling ran through the Christian culture? In the days of the death camps as in those of the Black Death, many nominal Christians must have felt that the Jews were outside the human community, that they somehow deserved their fate, and that the rest of mankind was not responsible for them. It was this hostility, contempt and indifference which made possible the greatest mass murder in history.

Teachings About the Jews

It is appalling, therefore, to find that fifteen years after the catastrophe our culture still is permeated by

**Missing
Page 4**

re-examination and revision of Catholic teaching materials concerning Jews, insofar as they violate the precepts of love and brotherhood.

We do so without accusation and without rancor, moved solely by the belief that eradicating religious antagonism will greatly benefit both Christians and Jews, and will strengthen the spiritual forces in the world.

II. AMERICAN ASPECTS

Prejudice a Danger to America

Because of certain historical and ethnic factors in American society, the problem of Catholic attitudes toward Jews in the United States has important civic and social implications in addition to its spiritual ones.

The immense variety of religious faiths and national backgrounds among the American people makes it necessary to work steadily and rapidly toward the elimination of intergroup tensions -- not by persuading anyone to abandon his religion for that of the majority, nor by preaching syncretism in any form, but by creating a climate free from prejudice.

To accomplish this end, Americans of all faiths in recent years have made special efforts to do away with all religious sanctions of bigotry. The election of a Catholic to the Presidency of the United States is in part the result of these efforts.

Anti-Semitism in America

Jews have always lived peacefully in America, even though they have been, and to some extent still are, subjected to certain unofficial forms of discrimination, such as quota restrictions in college admission, and ineligibility to some clubs and residential areas. Occasional expressions of flagrant anti-Semitic prejudice -- an epithet hurled at a Jewish child on the street, an anti-Jewish slur in conversation among Gentiles -- are usually dismissed as trivial.

Yet, even in America's open, pluralistic society there runs an undercurrent of anti-Semitism. In times of political, economic and social stress, this current sometimes comes to the surface in irrational outbreaks that are far from trivial. Thus, in 1957-58, anti-Semitic violence accompanied mob resistance against the Negroes' demands for equality. Another series of outbreaks occurred in 1959-60, with some 800 acts of Nazi-style vandalism against synagogues, homes and other property.

Possible Sources of Bigotry

We believe the persistence of anti-Semitism thus evidenced cannot be explained solely in social and economic terms. Such explanations cannot by themselves account for the fact that the Jewish minority has been singled out as a target of prejudice in the most varied circumstances: when they were many and when they were few; when they lived apart and when they were assimilated; when they were capitalists and when they sided with the working classes. There is at least a strong

possibility that anti-Semitic attitudes are strengthened by misguided religious notions.

We note, for example, that racist agitators in America often pose as Christians and base their anti-Jewish appeals on such themes as God's alleged rejection of the Jews and the myth of the "cursed people." These and other defamatory notions are still widely current in religious publications. By propagating them, churches give unintentional sanction to false prophets.

Traditional notions of a kind likely to breed distrust and dislike of Jews may be repeated by writers of religious publications and passed by the Censor without awareness of their possible psychological effect. But the damage they can do to America's spiritual strength is no less for being unintentional. Of all the forces that might seriously impair America, none is more destructive than the prejudices that set citizens against one another.

More Than a National Problem

Because America's inner strength is of critical importance to the destiny of mankind, religious prejudice in the United States is not merely a national problem, but a danger to the world.

If the American nation is to remain united by bonds stronger than materialism, religious groups must not be content merely to condemn violent bigotry. They must recognize and correct erroneous teachings that keep bigotry alive, and thus strip prejudiced beliefs of any semblance of religious

sanction. We think many Catholics in America, as elsewhere, would be eager to assist in this task if they were assured of the Vatican's support and encouragement.

III. WHAT CATHOLICS LEARN ABOUT JEWS

Sources of Material Cited

What are the false charges against the Jews which still distort Catholic teaching, spreading old hatreds among a new generation of Americans? We find that such charges are similar to those identified by investigators in other countries. They are documented below, in extracts from current Catholic teaching materials.

The extracts quoted are not an exhaustive collection. They are merely examples encountered by the American Jewish Committee's Institute of Human Relations in surveying a random selection of approved parochial-school textbooks, plus a few other publications. However, the large number of objectionable passages found in these few, presumably typical, texts would seem to indicate that the problem is widespread.

A comprehensive study of the ways in which Catholic teaching materials portray other religious, racial and ethnic groups is now in process at St. Louis University under the supervision of Father Trafford P. Maher, S.J. Self-studies of Protestant and Jewish teaching materials have also been undertaken, the former at Yale University, the latter at Dropsie College.

Portrayal of the Jews

Many of the Catholic textbooks we have examined take an exemplary attitude toward other groups in lessons on the social or civic responsibilities of Catholics. In this context, the tone is friendly and positive; human brotherhood and the contributions made by persons of different cultural and religious backgrounds are stressed. For example:

"A considerable number of Jews have made original contributions to American culture. Through newspaper and book publishing, the theater, motion picture production, and radio, others have assisted in the popular dissemination of information and culture. There is hardly a national group or a voice in the world that has not in some way left its mark upon our arts or daily living."²

The difficulties arise in passages that interpret Scripture or doctrine. When the discussion turns to such topics as the birth of Christianity, the conflict between the early Church and the synagogue, or the relationship between Jesus and his contemporaries, teaching about Jews often becomes uncharitable and distorted. The portrait painted often is so negative as to cancel out well-intentioned statements in other lessons. Jewish contributions to culture will hardly impress a student who is also taught, directly or indirectly, that the Jews are cursed by God as the murderers of Jesus.

Father Louis Hartman, C. Ss. R., General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, has stated:

"The New Testament quite clearly lays the chief responsibility for the death of Christ on a small but powerful group of men who could not claim to act as the rightly constituted head of the Jewish people. The rabble which they were able to rouse up to clamor for the death of Christ before Pilate's tribunal could not speak in the name of the whole Jewish people of that time and certainly not in the name of all later Jewish generations. The Gospels show that the vast majority of the Palestinian Jews with whom our Lord came in contact were very favorably inclined towards Him. Moreover, the bulk of the Jews at that time probably lived outside of Palestine, and apparently very few of these had even heard of Jesus of Nazareth until some decades later when the Apostles first preached to them.

"Historically speaking, therefore, there is no basis for the claim that the Jews of that time as a people were guilty of the death of Christ, and obviously there is not the slightest reason for bringing this accusation against their descendants of two thousand years later."³

Yet many of the texts examined by us make precisely that accusation, stating or implying that the Jews as a people are exclusively and collectively responsible for the death of the Son of God, and that they are a cursed people, condemned and rejected by God. A few examples follow:

"The Jews wanted to disgrace Christ by having him die on the cross."⁴

"The vast majority of Jewish people...condemn Him to death as a blasphemer, and deliver Him up to the Romans to be crucified."⁵

"The chief priests took up a cry that put a curse on themselves and on Jews for all time: 'His blood be on us and on our children!'"⁶

"Show that the Jews did not want Pilate to try Christ but to give permission for his death."⁷

"Again the Jews were changing the charge, as they had done in the religious trial. If one accusation didn't work, they would try another."⁸

"When did the Jews decide to kill Christ?"⁹

"He declared the divinity of Christ whom the Jews had crucified."¹⁰

"The curse of Christ and the subsequent decay of the [fig] tree symbolized the condemnation and the destruction of the Jewish people for their empty lives."¹¹

"The Jews as a nation refused to accept Christ, and since his time they have been wandering on the earth without a temple or a sacrifice and without the Messias."¹²

"The Gentiles came to take the place of the Jews in Christ's Kingdom."¹³

"God separated Israel from the rest of the world

and gave it ample protection. He left it in the keeping of the leaders of the people, and from time to time, through His prophets, asked for results. The harsh treatment given these spokesmen of God reached a climax in the willful murder of Christ. As a consequence, these false leaders and their followers were rejected as the foundation of the Kingdom in favor of the Gentiles."¹⁴

"When they (the Jews) would not heed the Prophets, He sent His only-begotten Son to call them to repentance. Him also they put to death. Because of this fact, they were finally rejected by God and their rights to His Kingdom were given to others."¹⁵

Similarly, in the footnotes of an edition of the New Testament we find:

(Commenting on St. Luke 23:31, "If it goes so hard with the tree that is still green, what will become of the tree that is already dried up?":)

"This verse is generally understood to mean, 'If crucifixion is the lot of The Innocent, what is to be expected by the guilty (that is, the Jews)?'"¹⁶

(Commenting on St. Matthew 23:29-32, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees ... it is for you to complete your father's reckoning":) "To complete your father's reckoning? By killing the Son of God as their fathers had killed his prophets."¹⁷

And in a Lenten Missal we read:

"His Jewish nation was suffering an exile of seventy years. In captivity they were atoning for the worship of false gods. In these modern days, the Jews are still dispersed in every nation, in a condition worse than exile. They have been atoning these 1900 years for the greatest of all crimes, committed when an entire nation rejected, crucified, and shed the Blood of the Son of God. Amongst us Christians they are witnesses of a lost vocation, without 'prince, or prophet, or sacrifice,' or a temple in Jerusalem; divine punishment hangs over them until the end of time, when God, because of His promises to the Prophets, will, in some extraordinary way, bring them to believe and live in Jesus Christ."¹⁸

Teachings like these are likely to instill the conviction that the Jews bear a collective guilt and somehow deserve the sufferings and persecutions that have marked their long history. This concept is extraordinarily invidious, because it cuts off the Jews from the common body of humanity and may make Catholics indifferent to the fate of their fellow human beings. If a child is taught that God has cursed and rejected the Jews, who will blame him for doing likewise?

Partiality in the Use of the Term "The Jews"

The suggestion that the Jewish people are guilty in a collective sense is frequently reinforced by partiality in the use of the word "Jews."

Thus, in some books, the enemies of Jesus are identified as Jews, while his firends and followers are not. For example, there is no mention of Jews in these passages:

"Christ chose the twelve men who were to be the foundation of His Kingdom."¹⁹

"All together, numbering well over five thousand, they listened to the Master all day, forgetting even to eat."²⁰

"In the beginning of His public life, Jesus was held in great admiration by the people."²¹

Contrast these passages with the following -- particularly the first, in which history and logic are blatantly twisted:

"It was on the day Christ raised Lazarus from the tomb that the Jews decided to kill him. Nevertheless, they were afraid of the people."²² (Were not "the people" also Jews?)

"Scripture tells us that Judas was watching for a chance to turn his Master over to the Jews."²³

"They were afraid to be seen by the Jews, for fear they might be put to death as their master was."²⁴

"The Jews stirred up the rabble against him ..."²⁵

"For what words of His did the Jews attempt for the second time to stone Him?"²⁶

In the examples just given, and in those that follow, the generic term "the Jews" is freely used in contexts in which actually only some Jews were involved. Merely by correcting these omissions and false emphases, much could be done to

change the erroneous impression that the Jews as a people hated Jesus and conspired toward his death.

The name "Jews," thus generically used, is frequently coupled with alleged evil qualities:

"Since Pilate could not find anything wrong with Christ, he decided to disfigure His pure and beautiful body so that even the bloodthirsty Jews would back down...."²⁷

"Jesus ... was rejected by the leaders of the Jewish people ... because of their material and carnal minds ..."²⁸

Time and again we find references to "the envious Jews," "the blind hatred of the Jews," and so forth. The repeated use of such phrases makes it possible for students to associate evil characteristics with all Jews, and to think of Jews as a hate-ridden, cruel and materialistic people.

Many textbooks also show partiality in calling Jews by different names in Old and New Testament contexts. In lessons about the Old Testament, where the Jews are presented in friendly, positive fashion, they usually are named "Hebrews" or "Israelites." In New Testament lessons, where the prevailing attitude is negative and unfriendly, "Jews" is the commonly used term. Since that is the name in use today, the Catholic student is likely to associate Jews with the conflict described in the New Testament, but not with the living people to whom God revealed Himself, who upheld even through martyrdom the faith in the one and living God which made Christianity possible.

The student is not made sufficiently aware that the "Hebrews" and "Israelites," who are praised for their loyalty and devotion to God, are the same people as the Jews.

Sweeping generalization, oversimplification and partiality in the use of names have long been recognized by scholars as stimulants for anti-Semitic attitudes. Thus Father Trafford P. Maher, already mentioned as one of the American Catholics concerned with the impact of such material on the minds of students, quotes an objectionable passage from a Catholic textbook:

"The Jews, on the contrary, by the bad influence of their pride and hypocrisy, hindered the spread of the knowledge of God among other nations."²⁹

Comments Father Maher:

"Patently, the problem here is the broad sweep in the author's statement, his lack of care in the statement of the facts, and his apparent unawareness of what such a statement might do in the formation of the young reader's attitudes toward people in his own world."³⁰

The Pharisees

The treatment of the Pharisees in Catholic textbooks may be questioned on several grounds. No distinction is made among Pharisees, although the New Testament itself distinguishes between those who opposed and those who supported and befriended Jesus. No true religious motivation is ever ascribed to the Pharisees; nowhere is it suggested that Pharisees who opposed

Jesus might have done so out of sincere conviction. It is said, for example, that the Pharisees pretended to be shocked by Jesus' claims; the possibility that they might really have been shocked is never raised.

The Catholic student thus is given a picture of a group utterly debased, completely hypocritical, with nothing but hatred and willful blindness toward Jesus:

"No one has any sympathy for the Pharisees because they deliberately made themselves blind to the inspiring miracles and teaching of Christ."³¹

"The high priest and the rest of the Temple Gang [described as Pharisees and scribes] played the part of hypocrite and looked horrified at what Christ said."³²

"Back of it all was the envy of the Temple Gang -- the better a man Christ was, the greater their hatred of him."³³

In his book on Christian catechetics and the Jews, Father Paul Démann writes:

"The manner in which we approach and judge the Pharisees would seem to constitute a true test of the spirit of our teaching. Too often, instead of seeing in them, and in the reproaches that Jesus directed to them, the mirror of our own hypocrisies, our own narrowness, our own formalism, we are tempted to take exactly the same attitude toward them which

they were tempted to take toward the sinners and publicans. To present the Pharisees in a historically and theologically accurate way means to show that their temptations, their sins, the reproaches addressed to them, are to be taken, not in a collective sense but rather in a permanent and universal sense; it means to understand and to make it understood that the question is not 'they (as against us),' but 'we beside them.'"³⁴

Nowhere in the materials examined by us are the Pharisees dealt with in the manner called for by Father Démann.

Unjust or Inaccurate Comparisons

In expounding Christianity, unjust and inaccurate comparisons with the Jewish faith are often made. Judaism is depicted as a legalistic religion, concerned only with external observances, devoid of love, mercy and compassion. Catholic students are not told that love of God and neighbor was first mentioned in the Old Testament and is just as obligatory there as in the New. Gratuitous slurs on Judaism are introduced to heighten the contrast with Christianity.

"The Jews believed that one should hate an enemy; - but Christ taught the opposite."³⁵ (Actually, St. Paul's injunction, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him," Romans 12:20, is a direct quote from Proverbs 25:21.)

"No Jewish rabbi reads the Old Testament scriptures as faithfully as does the priest."³⁶

"The first martyr was St. Stephen ... who was stoned to death for defending the new Faith and the right of Gentiles (Non-Jews) to salvation."³⁷ (The implication is that St. Stephen was killed for preaching salvation outside the Jewish faith. Actually, Jews did not then and do not now deny that faiths other than their own may lead to salvation. The rabbinic dictum, "All the righteous of the earth have a share in the world to come," was expressed almost a century before Jesus.)

"But little progress has been made in the conversion to any form of Christianity of groups who regard their race or religion as the antithesis of Christianity, such as the Jews and Mohammedans. Both of these large bodies are more anti-Christian than they are pro-something."³⁸ (Jews are not a race; they practice their religion for its own values, not in opposition to another faith; and they do not consider Judaism "the antithesis of Christianity.")

In addition, Catholic history textbooks unwarrantedly accuse Jews of many evil deeds:

"In order to divert the masses from what they believed the true origin of the fire, Nero, perhaps at the suggestion of the Jews*, charged it to the Christians."³⁹

* Underscore is ours.

"The Jews no doubt* had insisted on wreaking vengeance on someone, after St. Paul had escaped their fury by his appeal to Caesar."⁴⁰

"In 726 Leo the Issaurian (717-741), urged perhaps by Mohammedans and Jews* ordered the destruction of all images in the churches."⁴¹

Omissions

What is left out of a lesson may be as important in forming of attitudes and values as what is put in. By ignoring certain facts -- either intentionally or under the influence of unconscious prejudice -- authors of educational literature may stimulate or abet bigotry.

For example, it would be untrue to state that in the Middle Ages many Jews were moneylenders. But the statement would be misleading unless it were explained that Jews had few other ways of supporting themselves, being barred from guilds and forbidden to own land.

Some omissions likely to foster prejudice are illustrated here:

1. The Jewish background of Christianity is often ignored. Many Catholics are largely unaware of Christianity's Jewish roots. Some passages give the impression that the Bible did not exist previous to the Catholic Church.

"[God] inspired men whom He chose to write the different smaller books which comprise it [the Bible]. There can be no doubt that the world must thank the Catholic Church for the Bible."⁴²

* Underscores are ours.

2. There are no references to Judaism as a religion after the birth of Christianity. Jewish religious practices, holy days, etc., are described only in the context of the ancient past. The Catholic student is given the impression that Judaism as a faith ceased to exist with the founding of Christianity, or with the destruction of the Temple. The Jews of later ages thus are made to appear, by implication, as an irreligious people. Even though Catholics believe Christianity to be the fulfillment of Judaism, is there not a responsibility to mention that Judaism continues as a living faith?
3. Through omission of facts, later phases of Jewish history are presented in a false light. For example:

"The Jews, as religionists, were not subject to the Spanish Inquisition, but only as baptized Christians, known as Marranos. Jews who practiced their own religion were not molested. Jewish scholars admit that many Jews, of their own free will, embraced the Catholic Church, were baptized, followed Catholic practices, yet were insincere."⁴³

(It is not mentioned that Jews who practiced their own religion were severely molested by the civil authorities if not by the Church. Most Marranos converted, not of their own free will, but under pressure and the threat of expulsion.)

Summary

Prejudiced teachings about Jews in the materials examined by us fall into certain categories:

1. Slanderous interpretations (e.g., sole and collective responsibility of the Jews for the Crucifixion; deicide; "cursed people"; Jews rejected by God).
2. Oversimplifications and sweeping statements (e.g., description of the Pharisees; partiality in the use of the term "Jews").
3. Unjust or inaccurate comparisons (e.g., the religion of law vs. the religion of love).
4. Invidious use of language (e.g., "carnal Jews," "bloodthirsty Jews").
5. Omissions (e.g., Jewish roots of Christianity; continuity between Old and New Testaments).

IV. DESTROYING THE ROOTS OF PREJUDICE

The Church's True Position

In the preceding pages we have cited many negative and hostile references to Jews and Judaism, which seem to contradict the Church's precepts of love and charity.

We recognize, however, that these references -- especially those bearing on the central issue of the Passion -- do not reflect the true doctrine of the Church. That doctrine, formulated four centuries ago by the Council of Trent, rejects the view that the Crucifixion was a crime committed by the Jewish people, and places the responsibility on all mankind:

"It was the peculiar privilege of Christ the Lord to have died when He Himself decreed to die, and to have died not so much by external violence as

by internal assent.... Should anyone inquire why the Son of God underwent His most bitter Passion, he will find that besides the guilt inherited from our first parents the principal causes were the vices and crimes which have been perpetrated from the beginning of the world to the present day and those which will be committed to the end of time....

"In this guilt are involved all those who fall frequently into sin; for as our sins consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the cross, most certainly those who wallow in sin and iniquity "crucify to themselves again the Son of God, as far as in them lies, and make a mockery of Him" (Hebrews 6:6). This guilt seems more enormous in us than in the Jews, since according to the testimony of the same Apostle: 'If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory' (I Corinthians 2:8); while we, on the contrary, professing to know Him, yet denying Him by our actions, seem in some sort to lay violent hands on Him.

"...Men of all ranks and conditions were 'gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ' (Psalms 2:2). Gentiles and Jews were the advisers, the authors, the ministers of His Passion; Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and the rest deserted Him...."⁴⁴

Nor are we unmindful of the Catholic forces that are striving today for greater harmony between Christians and Jews. In the following pages, some of these forces and their accomplishments are identified.

Liturgical Changes

That the Church is concerned about her influence on attitudes toward non-Catholics is indicated by certain changes in the liturgy made during the last six years. Thus, in 1955, the Sacred Congregation of Rites reintroduced the Flectamus genua for the Jews during the Good Friday service; and in 1958, after the accession of Pope John XXIII, reference to "perfidia Judaei" and "perfidia Judaica" were removed from the Good Friday prayer. In 1959, the following sentence was dropped from the Act of Consecration of the Human Race (celebrated as part of the Mass of the Sacred Heart, the Blessing of the Holy Sacrament, the Feast of Christ the King, and on the first Friday of each month):

"Look, finally, with eyes of pity upon the children of that race which was for so long a time thy chosen people; and let thy Blood, which was once invoked upon them in vengeance, now descend upon them also in a cleansing flood of redemption and eternal life."

Finally, in 1960, this sentence was dropped from the Baptism of Converts:

"Horresce Judaicam perfidiam, respue Hebraicam superstitionem."

Contributions by Scholars

The Holy See's concern with religious influences on attitudes toward Jews is echoed by the work of Catholic thinkers, both in Europe and the United States.

In articles, documents, lectures and books, scholars and theologians have called for changes in Catholic teaching where it touches upon Jews: for greater emphasis on the close bonds between Judaism and Christianity; for an affirmation of the Jewish roots of Christianity and the Jewishness of Jesus; for a truer interpretation of the Passion, which will place the responsibility in the conscience of mankind, instead of laying it on the Jewish people.

A comprehensive survey of Catholic teachings about Jews, by Father Paul Démann, N.D.S. (La Catéchèse chrétienne et le peuple de la Bible, Paris 1952), has already been mentioned.

Jewish scholars, too, have helped to shed new light on interreligious problems -- most notably the distinguished historian Jules Isaac in France. In the United States, Hyman E. Goldin, Morris Goldstein, Joseph Klausner, Samuel Sandmel and Solomon Zeitlin have published studies of Jesus from the Jewish viewpoint during recent years.

Spokesmen and Organizations

Specific issues bearing on Catholic-Jewish relations have been the subjects of statements by Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston; Achille Cardinal Liénart, Bishop of Lille; Msgr. Charles de Provençères, Bishop of Aix; Father John A. O'Brien of Notre Dame University (U.S.A.); Father John LaFarge, S.J., and others.

Organizations in several countries are working for improved relations between Catholics and Jews -- for example, the Confraternidad Judeo-Cristiana in Argentina, Amitié Judeo-Chrétienne in France, and the Catholic Commission for Israel in the Netherlands.

Publications

Teaching about Jews has been discussed in the United States in at least three Catholic magazines -- America, Jubilee and Social Order -- and in the Annual Report of the Catholic Library Association.

A periodical on Catholic-Jewish relations, Rundbrief zur Förderung der Freundschaft zwischen dem alten und dem neuen Gottesvolk im Geiste der beiden Testamente (Freiburg) is published in Germany.

In Catholic diocesan newspapers the new, positive approach is reflected from time to time. One such publication for example related the Christian Easter to the Jewish Passover, and continues:

"To say -- without reservation -- that the Jews rejected our Lord is to forget the record. The nucleus of every early Christian congregation was Jewish. The bishops of today are the successors of 12 Jews (or 14, counting Paul and Barnabas).... The Popes of the Middle Ages condemned persecutions of Jews -- including persecutions by slander. But enough Catholics, individual clergy included, participated in persecution -- even of the physical

kind -- as to leave a lasting mistrust in the minds of Jews.... To avoid even the appearance of slander, Pope John XXIII dropped the term 'perfidis Judaeis' from the liturgy of Good Friday.... Can the rest of us do less, this Easter time, than try to eliminate slander from our words and ideas about Jews?"⁴⁵

It would not be truthful to suggest, however, that this positive attitude has been adopted by the Catholic press as a whole.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

= Catholic attitudes toward Jews and Judaism today range all the way from foresight and understanding, as expressed in the efforts of Pope John XXIII and certain Catholic leaders, to age-old hostility, wittingly or unwittingly kept alive in many parts of the Church community.

The moral obligation of religion to inspire love and respect for all the children of God, as well as the need for unity in a world threatened by materialism and totalitarian oppression, demand an end to religious prejudices that have scarred the relationship between Catholics and Jews for many generations.

To ensure that a spirit of good will toward people of other faiths may animate the entire Church community, we respectfully request, in private and without publicity:

That His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, cause precise directives to be issued from the Vatican--through proper channels and according to established methods--for improving Catholic teaching about Jews and Judaism, by cleansing all Catholic educational and liturgical publications of inaccurate, distorted, slanderous or prejudiced statements about Jews as a group.

Such a revision would bring books and teaching materials into line with the precedent already set by recent changes in the liturgy of the Church, made by the present Pope and his predecessors.

We, members of the American Jewish Committee -- an organization devoted to fostering cooperation and understanding among religious and racial groups in the United States -- believe that the improvement of Catholic teachings about the Jews is an urgent task, of equal importance to the spiritual health of America and that of the whole world.

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AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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

November 17, 1961

His Eminence Agostino Cardinal Bea, President
Secretariat for Christian Unity
Collegio Bie Brasiliana
Via Aurelia 527
Rome, Italy

Your Eminence:

In accordance with the conversation between yourself and the representatives of the American Jewish Committee, Messrs. Ralph Friedman and Zachariah Shuster, that took place in your study on July 13th, we send you the enclosed memorandum entitled, "Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy".

This document will supplement the material contained in our memorandum on "The Image of the Jews in Catholic Teaching" sent to you on July 13th.

We are most grateful that you have agreed to receive on November 26th the eminent Jewish theologian, Professor Abraham J. Heschel of New York City; Dr. Max Horkheimer, Professor of Philosophy and Sociology at Frankfurt University in Germany; Zachariah Shuster of Paris, Director of the European Office of the American Jewish Committee, for a discussion of these documents. We are confident that your discussions will contribute markedly to the realization of our shared objective of improving mutual relations.

As we have indicated in our July 13th letter, we are prepared to make available our resources of additional scholarship, research, and other services that you may regard as helpful both prior to and subsequent to the convening of the Ecumenical Council.

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As we sought to indicate in our letter of December 15, 1960, to His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, it is our profound hope that the Ecumenical Council will regard the suggestions contained in these documents as an approach for improving significantly relations between Catholics and Jews in various parts of the world. We believe that a serious and comprehensive re-examination of Catholic teachings about the Jews, and directives that would result in the implementation of the findings of such an examination through the many channels available to the Church, would constitute an historic turning point in the relationships between our two great historic peoples and traditions.

In behalf of the American Jewish Committee, I express our warm appreciation for your gracious interest and fraternal cooperation demonstrated in our relationship in recent months. It is our hope the coming months and years will bring us into even closer and mutually helpful association.

Respectfully yours,

(signed)

Louis Caplan
President

LC:fb
Encl.

ANTI-JEWISH ELEMENTS IN CATHOLIC LITURGY

A Memorandum to

THE SECRETARIAT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Submitted by

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

New York

November 17, 1961

I THE JEWS IN CATHOLIC LITURGY

In submitting this memorandum to the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, we are motivated by the same desire that prompted our earlier* memorandum on "The Image of the Jews in Catholic Teaching" - the desire to improve relations between Catholics and Jews. It is our hope that the present document, which focuses upon certain passages in Catholic liturgy which we consider prejudicial to Jews, will be accepted by the Secretariat as a constructive attempt to confront sources of misunderstanding and hostility between Catholics and Jews.

Attitudes communicated to Catholics in the public worship of the Church are deeply implanted and are supported by the authority of the Church and the solemn majesty of the service. Thus, when we call attention in this memorandum to passages in Roman Catholic liturgy which are hostile to Jews, we do so on the assumption that these passages, and the commentaries they have traditionally elicited, contribute to anti-Jewish attitudes and behavior -- an assumption unfortunately justified by Jewish historic experience.

* Submitted to His Eminence Augustin Cardinal Bea, July 13, 1961.

Recent Changes in the Liturgy

We acknowledge with appreciation that recent changes have been made in the liturgy of the Church with a view toward effecting more positive understanding of the Jewish people and Judaism on the part of Catholics; i.e., the removal in 1955 of the special rubric which made the Jews the only exception to the rule of flectamus genua -- a rubric that was greatly offensive to Jews who were aware of it and knew its intention was to humiliate them; the specification by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in 1948, that the expressions perfidis Judaeis and Judaica perfidia may be translated as signifying simply a lack of faith in the Christian revelation; and finally, the elimination of the words perfidia and perfidis by Pope John in 1959, and the subsequent authorization of this change by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

Nevertheless, anti-Jewish passages remain within Catholic liturgy. These are found in:

- 1) liturgical books of the Church, such as Missale, Graduale, Vesperale, Antiphonale, etc. which serve the public worship in parish churches and cathedrals;
- 2) homilies and officially approved commentaries upon the public liturgy, which guide and inform the priest in the preparation of his sermon;
- 3) texts belonging to the monastic ritual, or to the Breviary or to obsolete ordines or sacramentaries;
- 4) so-called para-liturgical tracts.

In this memorandum we have limited our consideration to the first two categories, which are directly related to the public worship of the Church, although numerous anti-Jewish passages and interpretive remarks may be found in the third category¹ and in para-liturgical tracts, particularly in devotional materials prepared locally by sodalities, fraternities, etc.

1. E.g. "Dicant nunc Judaei, quomodo milites custodientes sepulcrum perdiderunt Regem ad lapidis positionem. Quare non servabant Petram justitiae? Aut sepultum reddant, aut resurgentem adorent, nobiscum dicentes: 'Quod enim, vivit, vivit Deo, Alleluia'." (Hymn "Christus resurgens", Vesperale juxta ritum S. Ordinis Praedicatorum, Romae 1900, ed. Fruehwirth, p. 190/1)

"Let the Jews say, how the soldiers, who guarded the sepulchre, gave away the body of the King, according to the (changed) position of the tomb-stone. Why did they not serve the rock of justice? They should have either put back the stone, or adored the resurgent (Christ), saying with us: 'For he is alive, alive with God, Alleluia'".

"Erubescat Judaeus infelix qui dicit Christum ex Joseph semine esse natum." (Ibid., p. 433)

"May the wretched Jew blush for saying that Christ was born out of the seed of Joseph".

"Sit etiam signorum sonitus, Domine, Judeis et perfidis terrificatio valida resipiscenda a malitia..." (Liber ordinum, ed. Férotin, Paris, 1904) This is, according to Férotin, the oldest formula for the blessing of bells.

"Let also their clamorous sounding, (of the bells) be a strong deterrent to Jews and traitors, lest they take courage for new wickedness..."

"Lugeat carnalis Judaeus, sed spiritalis gaudeat Christianus..." (Ibid., p. 423)

"Let the carnal Jew mourn, but the spiritual Christian may rejoice..."

Footnotes continued from Page 3.

"Saeienti diabolo per ministeria Judaeorum formam
servi nihil peccati habentis objecit..." (From the
Breviarium juxta ritum S. Ordinis Praedicatorum
Dominican Order / Tournay 1894, vol. I Good Friday;
from the Sermones of Pope Leo I, p. 407)

"With the help of the Jews the sinless servant
of God was thrown to the raving Devil..."

(Contra Judaeos) "O natio nefandi generis / cur gratiae
donis abuteris?" (From Dom Ulysses Chevalier,
Repertorium hymnologicum, vol. II, p. 213, No. 13302,
Louvain, 1897.)

"O nation of infamous character, why do you abuse
the gifts of God's grace?"

Within the public worship of the Church, there are a number of passages and statements expressing hostility to the Jewish people. For the most part, these are found in the New Testament lectionaries. Occasionally, a hostile comment drawn from the New Testament actually becomes a part of the Mass. For example. "Tradent enim vos in conciliis, et in synagoga suis flagellabunt vos..." (Commune Apostolorum et Evangelistarum, Vesperale Rom.) "They will hand you over in meetings and in their synagogues they will whip you..." This phrase is repeated during the Mass on the occasion of every memorial day of an Apostle or Evangelist.

In addition, some medieval hymns, several of which are still in liturgical use, are particularly prejudicial to Jews. We quote only a few instances:

Wipo's sequence for Easter (Victimae paschali laudes):
Credendum est magis solae Mariae veraci
Quam Judaeorum turbae fallaci

You should put more trust in Mary, the true one,
Than in the horde of lying Jews.

Guillelmus Secundus: (Meditationes circa mysteria
passionis Domini):
Judaei Jesum Reum Mortis Conclamant.

Bos herum noscit rationis expers
Sedulo impensas redimens labore;
Te suum quaerit scelerata proles
Perdere Patrem.

The Jews demand that Jesus be condemned to death.

Even a slave, stupid as an ox, recognizes his
master and repays his expense with useful work;
But this heinous brood would fain
Ruin Thee, their Father!

While the texts and chants cited above give offense to Jews, we have, in this memorandum, centered our attention on that area of Catholic public worship which is considered most critical in the formulation of attitudes toward Jews and Judaism: the liturgy of the triduum, and the homilies based upon them. The triduum is the peak and climax of the Christian year. It stands out from all other holy days. It is the nucleus of the most ancient Christian worship. A great and extensive homiletic literature has evolved dealing with the triduum, and it is here that anti-Jewish sentiments and interpretations accumulate in their most concentrated form.

Moreover, history records that this period of the Christian calendar was often attended by the most harsh and vicious manifestations of anti-Semitism, by the notorious ritual blood libels, and by pogroms and massacres of the Jews. The medieval Hebrew chronicles attest to the widespread suffering that Jews endured at the hands of the populace during Holy Week.¹ Similar evidence is contained in the chronicles of the Christian historians of that period.² A contemporary acknowledgment of the relationship between the liturgy of the Holy Week and the mistreatment of Jews is found in the writing of Gregory Baum, O.S.A.:

...the days of Holy Week were the most dangerous ones of the year for medieval Jewry. The people, excited by the liturgy depicting the crime of "the Jews" would, on leaving the Church, molest and maltreat the Jewish population. In some areas the humiliation of the Jews took place even in Church as part of the ceremony.³

1. Emek habakha, ed. M. Wiener, Leipzig, 1858, pp.30,36,51, 56, 59, 63, et passim.

Liturgy in the Vernacular

All passages which are susceptible to anti-Jewish interpretation and which have been used to justify harsh anti-Jewish messages in past centuries and anti-Jewish sentiments in both past and present, are all the more dangerous when they are (1) said in the vernacular, (2) elaborated upon in subsequent homily.

Footnotes cont'd from p.5

2. "Apud Mogontiam Judei numero virorum ac mulierum mille et 14 interfecti sunt et maxima pars civitatis exusta est..."
(Pertz, Mon. Wirzburgenses ad ann. 1096, II, 246)

"Near Mayence, a thousand and fourteen Jews, men and women, were killed and a large part of the city burned."

"Hoc anno (1420) Dominus Albertus Quintus dux Austriae captis omnibus Judaeis in tota Austria, in Octava Ascensionis Domini sub ortum solis et plurimis conversis ad fidem, tandem in feria quarta ante diem Pascae sequentis anni videlicet 21 omnes nondum converti volentes utriusque sexus fecit comburi sub una eademque hora; cremati sunt in Vienna 110 solidi utriusque sexus." (Oefelius, Rerum Boicarum scriptores, Chronicon Joannis Staindelii, in Mon. Germaniae, [ed. Pertz], I and II.)

"In this year (1420) the duke of Austria, the Lord Albert V, took all Jews of Austria prisoner; then, in the week after Ascension Day, right after dawn, many converted to the faith; but on Wednesday of Holy Week of the following year, he had the twenty-one who were still not willing to convert, of both sexes, burnt at the stake at one and the same hour; in Vienna 110 were burned of both sexes."

Footnotes cont'd. from p. 6

"Item in die Coenae in civitate Tridentina Judaei
martyrisaverunt puerum quendam Christianum nomine
Simonem, crudelissime....Et ob hoc Judaei in eadem
civitate crudeliter per ignem, rotas et alia poenarum
genera sunt puniti et interfecti. (1475)"
(Chronicon Salisburgense, ed. Pez, II, p. 437)

"Likewise, on Maundy Thursday, in the city of Trent
the Jews martyred a Christian boy by name of Simon
in the most cruel way...On Account of this all the
Jews of this city were cruelly killed by fire,
the wheel, and other devices of torture. (1475)
(This was the notorious case of Simon of Trent.)

3. Gregory Baum, O.S.A., The Jews and the Gospel: A Reexamination
of the New Testament, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1961, p.10.

II THE TRIDUUM

Within the liturgy of the triduum there are three categories of passages to be considered. These are:

- A. Readings from the New Testament lectionary
- B. Passages from patristic literature
- C. Liturgical poetry

Let us consider these three categories separately.

A. New Testament Lectionary

The main lessons of Holy Week are taken from the Fourth Gospel¹, which, as is commonly recognized, is the gospel most frequently used as the basis for the vilification of the Jews and as justification for anti-Jewish measures.

"There can be no doubt that John's gospel has often served as a justification for the contempt in which the Jewish people were held and even for the injustices and violence with which they were treated. The hostile passages which we find in the Church fathers likening synagogues to temples of the devil and making each individual Jew a co-operator with evil spirits in the fight against Christ's kingdom, have their literary origin in the Gospel of John... When the whole history of Christian hatred of the Jews is told and the account given of the pretended motives for it drawn from the New Testament, an impressive case could be made for the author of the Fourth Gospel being the father of Christian anti-Semitism."²

1. Cf. H. Schmidt, S.J., Introductio in Liturgiam Occidentalem, Rome, 1960, p. 516 ff.

"Sine ullo dubio, Evangelium S. Joannis in Quadragesima (immo in toto tempore paschali) gaudet praedilectione speciali, praesertim autem tribus ultimis hebdomadis ante Dominicam Resurrectionis...nam in istis Evangeliiis S. Joannis lateret antiquissimum systema lectionis continuae de S. Scriptura .."

Undoubtedly, the Gospel of St. John enjoys a special predilection during Quadragesima (indeed in the whole Easter Season), but particularly during the last three weeks before Resurrection Sunday...for in these lessons of St. John rest the oldest system of continuous reading from Holy Scripture...

2. Baum, op.cit., pp.98-99 (Father Baum maintains that the gospels are not anti-Jewish in themselves, but have been erroneously used to support or justify anti-Semitism.)

B. Patristic Literature - St. Augustine's Lessons

If the gospel lessons of the triduum depict the Jews as a base and villainous people, motivated only by hatred and vengeance, the patristic literature -- which is the only homiletic literature elevated into the integral service of the triduum -- unfortunately serves to reinforce this defamatory stereotype.

Lectio V

Nostis quid conventus erat malignantium Judaeorum, et quae multitudo erat operantium iniquitatem. Quam iniquitatem? Quia voluerunt occidere Dominum Jesum Christum. Tanta opera bona, inquit, ostendi vobis: propter quod horum me vultis occidere? Pertulit omnes infirmos eorum, curavit omnes languidos eorum, praedicavit regnum caelorum, non tacuit vitia eorum, ut ipsa potius eis displicerent, non medicus, a quo sanabantur. His omnibus curationibus ejus ingrati, tamquam multa febre phrenetici, insanientes in medicum qui venerat curare eos, excogitaverunt consilium perdendi eum: tamquam ibi volentes probare, utrum vere homo sit, qui mori possit, an aliquid super homines sit, et mori se non permittat. Verbum ipsorum agnoscimus in Sapientia Salomonis: Morte turpissima, inquit, condemnemus eum. Interrogemus eum: erit enim respectus in sermonibus illius. Si enim vere Filius Dei est, liberet eum.

Translation

You know about the council of maligning Jews and whose was the conspiracy of wrong-doers. What wrong? For they intended to kill the Lord Jesus Christ. So many deeds of mercy have I shown you, says he; for which of those do you want to kill me? He supported their weak ones; cured all of their sick, preached the Kingdom of Heaven, did not gloss over their vices silently, so that they would lose pleasure in their sins, not in the physician, by whom they might be healed! Yet for all his loving endeavors they thanked him not; like frenzied by a delirious fever, whose fury went against the physician who came to heal them, they hit upon the plan to do away with him. Thus they meant to probe, whether he was a man, who could be put to death, or something superhuman, who would not permit himself to die. Their words we recognize in the Wisdom of Solomon:

"Let him be sentenced to an ignominious death, and thus we shall put him to the test; then in his own way he shall find deliverance. If he is God's Son indeed, God will deliver His Son."

Lectio VI

Exacuerunt tamquam gladium linguas suas. Non dicant Judaei : Non occidimus Christum. Etenim propterea eum dederunt judici Pilato, ut quasi ipsi a morte ejus viderentur immunes. Nam cum dixisset eis Pilatus : Vos eum occidite; responderunt: Nobis non licet occidere quemquam. Iniquitatem facinoris sui in judicem hominem refundere volebant : sed numquid Deum judicem fallebant? Quod fecit Pilatus, in eo ipso quod fecit, aliquantum particeps fuit : sed in comparatione illorum, multo ipse innocentior. Institit enim quantum potuit, ut illum ex eorum manibus liberaret : nam propterea flagellatum produxit ad eos. Non persequendo Dominum flagellavit, sed eorum furori satisfacere volens: ut vel sic jam mitescerent, et desinerent velle occidere, cum flagellatum viderent. Fecit et hoc. At ubi perseveraverunt, nostis illum lavisse manus, et dixisse, quod ipse non fecisset, mundum se esse a morte illius. Fecit tamen. Sed si reus, quia fecit vel invitus : illi innocentes, qui coegerunt ut faceret? Nullo modo. Sed ille dixit in eum sententiam, et jussit eum crucifigi, et quasi ipse occidit : et vos, o Judaei, occidistis. Unde occidistis? Gladio linguae : aculistis enim linguas vestras. Et quando percussistis, nisi quando clamastis : Crucifige, crucifige?

Translation

They sharpened their tongues like a sword. Let not the Jews say: we did not kill Jesus Christ. For exactly this was in their minds, when they handed Him over to Pilate, so that they themselves might appear innocent of His death...For, when Pilate said to them: you kill Him, they replied: we are not permitted to kill anyone. They wanted to shift the iniquity of their crime to a human judge: but, did they deceive the Divine judge? Whatever Pilate did, he was, to a certain extent, an accessory: but in comparison with them [the Jews] he was much more innocent. He endeavored, to the best of his ability, to deliver Him from their hands: thus he displayed Him to them scourged. He did not scourge the Lord in order to persecute Him, but because he wanted to satisfy their fury: so that they might relent and desist from wishing to kill Him when they had seen Him scourged. This, too, he did. But when they

persevered, you know that he washed his hands and said that, as it was not his doing, he was innocent of His death. This, too, he did. But if Pilate is guilty, because he did what he was bade by them, are they innocent who forced Pilate to act? In no way. Yet he pronounced the verdict and commanded Him to be crucified, and thus killed Him, as it were. But you, O Jews, have killed Him. In which way have you killed Him? With the sword of the tongue; for you sharpened your tongues. And when did you slay Him, but when you cried out: crucify, crucify?

These excerpts incorporate accusations against the Jewish people that have become the refrain of anti-Semites throughout the ages. The Jews, as a people, are depicted as merciless and vindictive. They are held collectively and unilaterally responsible for the Crucifixion, and their stigmatization as a deicide people is clear.

While the inclusion of these excerpts in the liturgy is a venerable tradition,¹ there exist many more lenient and favorable comments by St. Augustine himself (Sermo ad Iudaeos) and by other fathers of the Church. It is regrettable that these passages -- which strengthen rather than balance the negative impact of the gospel lessons -- were selected.

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1. The custom of inserting patristic commentaries of the Psalter in the nocturns antedates Gregory the Great, as he advised his bishops: (Epist. XII; 24) "Dic (Mariano episcopo) ut commenta psalmodum legi ad vigiliis faciat." (Cf. C.Callewaert, J.D.C., De Brevarii Romani Liturgia; II., Eruges, 1939, p. 124) The definite reference to St. Augustine's commentaries in the nocturn of Good Friday seems to appear for the first time in the Ordo Rom. 28 (ca. 800), contemporary in the Cod. Parisinus 974, where Duchesne located the primary sources more than sixty years ago. (Cf. Mgr. L. Duchesne, Christian Worship, 3rd ed., London 1903, p. 455; also H. Schmidt, S. J., Hebdomada Sancta II., Rome, 1957) Callewaert believes that the regular patristic lesson in the second nocturn was a consequence of St. Benedict's rule, whereas Mgr. Battifol takes it a "purely Roman creation". (Cf. Mgr. P. Battifol, History of the Breviary p. 526 Rome, 3rd ed. N. Y. 1912, p. 92)

C. Liturgical Poetry -- The Improperia

In the triduum, the most dramatic of all litanies are the Improperia. These verses, which represent the crucified Jesus indicting his own people in powerful and emotional language, have a strong potential anti-Jewish impact; unfortunately, the commentaries and homilies on this litany almost invariably interpret the indictment as directed solely against the Jewish people. (From the viewpoint of the Jewish scholar, the Improperia are particularly offensive because they are a deliberate inversion of a Jewish prayer of thanksgiving to God.*) In America, the significance of this litany is magnified by its recitation in English by the entire congregation.

Latin Text

- R Popule meus, quid feci tibi? aut in quo contristavi te?
responde mihi.
- (1) Quia eduxi te de terra Aegypti: parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.
R. (Trisagion)
- (2) Quia eduxi te per desertum quadraginta annis, et manna cibavi te, et introduxi in terram satis optimam; parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.
R. (Trisagion)
- (3) Quid ultra debui facere tibi, et non feci? Ego quidem plantavi te vineam meam speciosissimam: et tu facta es mihi nimis amara:
- (3a) aceto namque sitim meam potasti: et lancea perforasti latus Salvatori tuo.
R. (Trisagion)
- (4) Ego propter te flagellavi Aegyptum cum primogenitis suis: et tu me flagellatum tradidisti.

*See Appendix A for remarks on the origin of the Improperia.

R. Popule meus...

- (5) Ego te eduxi de Aegypto, demerso Pharaone in mare Rubrum;et tu me tradidisti principibus sacerdotum.

R. Popule meus...

- (6) Ego ante te aperui mare:et aperuisti lancea latus meum.

R. Popule meus...

- (7) Ego ante te praeivi columna nubis;et tu me duxisti ad praetorium Pilati.

R. Popule meus...

- (8) Ego te pavi manna per desertum;et tu me cecidisti alapis et flagellis.

R. Popule meus...

- (9) Ego te potavi aqua salutis de petra:et tu me potasti felle et aceto.

R. Popule meus...

- (10) Ego propter te Chananaeorum reges percussi:et tu percussisti arundine caput meum.

R. Popule meus...

- (11) Ego dedi tibi sceptrum regale; et tu dedisti capiti meo spineam coronam.

R. Popule meus...

- (12) Ego te exaltavi magna virtute;et tu me suspendisti in patibulo crucis.

R. Popule meus...

English Translation¹

O My People, what have I done unto thee? Or in what have I offended thee? Answer Me. Because I led thee out of the land of Egypt, thou hast prepared a Cross for thy Savior. R. (Trisagion)

V Because I led thee out through the desert in forty years, and fed thee with manna, and brought thee into a very good land, thou hast prepared a Cross for thy Savior... R. (Trisagion)

V What more should I have done, and did it not? Behold I

¹My Lenten Missal, explained by Rev. Joseph F. Stedman, Confraternity of the Precious Blood; New York, 1941. ("Three Hours Agony" Service) pp. 380 ff 381,382.

have planted thee as My fairest vine, and thou hast become very bitter unto Me, for thou hast quenched My thirst with vinegar, and with a lance hast thou pierced thy Savior's Side...

R. (Trisagion)

V For thee did I scourge Egypt and its firstborn, and thou hast given Me over to be scourged...

R. O My People...

V I led thee out of Egypt, overwhelming Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and thou hast delivered Me to the chief priests...

R. O My People...

V I opened the sea before thee, and thou hast opened My Side with a lance...

R. O My People...

V I went before thee in a pillar of cloud, and thou hast led me before the seat of Pilate...

R. O My People...

V I have fed thee with manna through the desert, and thou hast beaten me with blows and lashes...

R. O My People...

V I gave thee the water of salvation to drink from the rock, and thou hast given Me gall and vinegar to drink...

R. O My People...

V For thee I struck the kings of the Chanaanites, and thou hast struck My Head with a reed...

R. O My People...

V I gave thee a royal sceptre, and thou hast given My Head a crown of thorns...

R. O My People...

V With great power I lifted thee up, and thou hast hung me upon the gibbet of the Cross...

R. O My People...

The "people" who are accused of such great treachery and faithlessness are the Jews, since it was the Jewish people for whom God performed the acts specified in the poem. And, lest there should remain any doubt that the Jews are the object of this attack, the commentaries and homilies based on the Impropria

(indeed, on the entire triduum) make this abundantly clear. In fact, what a great opportunity has been lost here! Authoritative commentary could do much to mitigate the unfortunate effects of the Improperia, the patristic literature and the lectionary. It could provide the necessary background; explain, for example, that in the Gospel of John the term "the Jews" is unfortunately used to describe only the enemies of Jesus; it could caution the faithful against misinterpretation, universalize and internalize the Church's understanding of sin and redemption. For the most part, however, the commentaries do exactly the opposite; they point out and specify the guilt of the Jews and absolve the Romans of historical responsibility, and mankind of theological responsibility. They are often more vindictive and hostile toward the Jews than the liturgical passages upon which they, often falsely, elaborate.

III COMMENTARIES

We are aware that commentaries are not directly inspired by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Nevertheless, they could not exist without the liturgy on which they are based, and they cannot be separated from the liturgy with regard to their impact upon the feelings and attitudes of Catholics toward Jews. Negative commentaries about Jews may be stimulated by other, isolated passages in the gospels and the liturgy, but in the triduum, the most negative and hostile gospel passages, patristic literature and the Improperia all converge together at the most solemn and important of the Christian holy days, and it is here that the commentaries reinforce the most accusatory and vindictive aspects of the liturgy.

The following illustrations are excerpted from contemporary commentaries on the liturgy of the triduum, all written by priests or members of orders. Here, again, the Breviary and its commentaries have not been considered. These examples are all drawn from homilies on public worship, and they are typical, not exceptional, excerpts from approximately 50 commentaries scrutinized:

1. J.F. Stedman, ed., My Lenten Missal, New York, 1956

p. 269 (Thursday of Passion Week)

In the EPISTLE she the Church asks us to study the prayer of Azarias. His Jewish nation was suffering an exile of seventy years. In captivity they were atoning for the worship of false gods. In these modern days, the Jews are still dispersed in every nation, in a condition worse than exile. They have been atoning these 1900 years for the greatest of all crimes, committed when an entire nation rejected, crucified, and shed the Blood

of the Son of God. Amongst us Christians they are witnesses of a lost vocation, without 'prince, or prophet, or sacrifice,' or a temple in Jerusalem; divine punishment hangs over them until the end of time, when God, because of His promises to the Prophets, will, in some extraordinary way, bring them to believe and live in Jesus Christ.

p. 284 (Saturday of Passion Week)

...their [the Jews'] hatred of Him grew in proportion as He revealed His love for them the more and more. He permitted the destruction of their homeland as a correction. Worldly happiness caused them to neglect God and soul. Worldly suffering brought them to their knees...

2. Louis Bouyer, O. P., Le Mystère Pascal. Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1950.

p. 339

...quand bien même ceux que en sont l'objet ne lui répondent que par des rebuffades, et finalement par le deicide. Mais, quel sera leur sort, si cette extrémité n'a pu les émouvoir? Si cet amour les condamne, pouvons-nous dire, retournant le mot de saint Paul: qui les délivrera?

However, the very people who were the object [of His love] answered Him with rebuffs, and finally by deicide. But what will be their lot, if this supreme sacrifice could not move them? If that love condemns them, can we say anything except, in the words of St. Paul: Who will save them?

3. Prosper Gueranger, O.S.B., The Liturgical Year, Vol. 6, Passiontide and Holy Week, translated by Laurence Shepherd. Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1947.

p. 312

Jerusalem is doomed to be a slave, and a slave to infidels, to all but the very end of time. She drew this frightful curse upon herself by the crimes she committed against the Son of God...

p. 321

The Synagogue, having crucified the Son of God, did its utmost to destroy the Church, by putting many of her children to death.

p. 328

The seventh psalm declares the vengeance of God on those who excite His anger. It shows us what will happen to the Synagogue...it shall drink the cup of God's wrath, even to 'The very dregs thereof'.

p. 458

Like the tiger that grows fiercer as he sees blood, so is Israel at the sight of Jesus after His scourging.

p. 460

The mark of parricide and deicide here fastens on this ungrateful and sacrilegious people; Cain-like, they shall wander fugitives on the earth. 1800 years and more have passed since then; slavery, misery, and contempt have been their portion; but the mark is still upon them...

4. John Rickaby, S.J., The Ecclesiastical Year. New York, Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1927.

p. 127

Jerusalem is the type of retribution falling heavily at last, after long delay and after several punishments grave but not finally catastrophic... On the other side stands the retribution for such iniquity, when its short triumph has passed. Not only Judas but the people at large had been treated as companions or equals by Christ...; and now the punishment for grossest infidelities to the trust reposed in them is that death shall seize upon them, and they shall go down quickly into Sheol, the dwelling of wickedness, 'the pit of destruction'...

p. 129

Men like these [Jews] loved a curse and it has fallen upon them; they disdained a blessing and it has been removed far from them. A curse clings to them as a garment or Nessus-shirt, and penetrates to their very bones...

5. Aemiliana Löhr, Nun of Herstelle, The Great Week: An Explanation of the Liturgy of Holy Week, translated by D.T. Bridgehouse. London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1958.

p. 99

Our generation and our time have no difficulty in understanding the ancient songs of Zion. We have seen the late progeny of these sufferers, the Jews of our day, disappear in a cloud of destruction which choked down complaint. The world looked on with horror as the deluded wielders of power over great areas wickedly set themselves under vengeance for a guilt which, godless as they were, they could not understand... Jerusalem still mourns, Israel still mourns; but all peoples and all times mourn..."¹

What are the common elements of prejudiced thinking and anti-Jewish interpretation that are found in the homiletic literature of Holy Week? We isolate a few of the most common stereotypes:

-
1. This was the only sympathetic commentary encountered.

1. If the Jews prosper in a country during a certain time, this is interpreted as indication that they are unscrupulous materialists and worshippers of the Golden Calf.
2. If the Jews are oppressed or their lives are made miserable by temporal power, this is interpreted as proof that they are a despised people, fugitives and wanderers till the end of time. The suffering of the Jewish people is seen, not as an indication of man's brutality and inhumanity to his fellow man, but as proof that the Jews are a cursed people: "...it is from the lowly condition, inflicted upon the Jews by Christians, that the same Christians then pretend to prove the victory of the Church over the Synagogue and the superiority of the Christian faith."¹
3. The language of the Old Testament and its sense of justice is in general criticized as wrathful and short of pity, stern and merciless. However, when this language turns against the Jews, as in the Prophetic literature, then the Christian theologians consider it eminently suitable and adequate. Instead of adopting the self-critical and self-corrective perspective embodied in the Prophetic writings, and applying the same standards to the Christian community, the vast majority of commentators use these passages as a polemic against the Jews.

1. Baum, op. cit., p. 7

4. Nearly all homilies stress the fact that the Jews are dispersed as a people and that they do not possess Jerusalem, the Holy City. Such comments are not only anachronistic in the light of recent world developments, but they give the unfortunate impression that the commentators are making a political judgment about current events. (In fact, the mentality formed by these traditional interpretations may predispose a writer to view current history with prejudiced eyes.)¹

1. Cf., e.g., Civiltà Cattolica, April 1938: "Concerning the Question of Zionism", we read: "Judaism is a deeply corrupted Religion, it is nationalistic inasmuch as it is the religion of corrupt messianism."

IV CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sacra enim Liturgia ut humanis, ita divinis constat elementis; haec autem, ut patet, cum a Divino Redemptore constituta fuerint, nullo modo ab hominibus mutari possunt; illa vero, prout temporum, rerum animorumque necessitates postulant, varias commutationes habere possunt, quas Ecclesiastica Hierarchia, S. Spiritus auxilio innixa, comprobaverit... inde progrediens incrementum proficiscitur, quo peculiares excolendae religionis consuetudines ac peculiaris pietatis opera pedetemptim evolvuntur, et quorum tenuis dumtaxat iudicium superioribus aetatibus habebatur....

....Ita pari modo, cum de sacra Liturgia agitur, qui ad antiquos redire ritus consuetudinesque velit, novas repudiando normas, quae ex providentis Dei consilio ob mutatas rerum condiciones fuere inductae, non is procul dubio, ut facile cernere est, sapienti rectoque movetur studio.

Pius XII, Encycl. "Mediator Dei", pars IV.

We follow here the officially endorsed paraphrase given by C.R.A. Cunliffe of these celebrated passages from the Papal encyclical:

In 'Mediator Dei' the Pope distinguishes between the divine elements in the liturgy, which can never be changed, and the human elements of the liturgy, which were devised by the Church and are subject to change by her authority. The purpose of the latter is to engender in those who are to receive grace through the divine elements of the liturgy the optimum dispositions which will enable them to profit to the full.¹

Of the passages which we have considered in this memorandum regarding the liturgy of the triduum, the Improperia and the lessons from St. Augustine's treatise on the Psalms are of human origin and character. Equally of human origin are the commentaries and homilies on the liturgy, whether written for educational or devotional purposes.

1. C.R.A. Cunliffe, English in the Liturgy, London, 1956, pg.50

In the interest of better relations between the adherents of the historical monotheistic religions, we request the Church to seek ways of mitigating the impact of the liturgy of the triduum. Were the Church to select passages which would accurately convey its true attitude toward the Jewish people, or to produce or stimulate authoritative interpretation or commentary which would, for once and for all, lift the charge or implication of deicide from the Jewish people, it would make a great contribution to increased understanding between Catholics and Jews.

Most Jews are profoundly convinced that the charge of deicide, uttered throughout the centuries has been a central factor in the persistent anti-Semitism of Western civilization.

Serious and thoughtful Catholic scholars have agreed that misinterpretations of Catholic scripture and teachings -- misinterpretations sometimes spread among the populace by ecclesiastics and church documents -- contributed to anti-Jewish prejudice up to, and including, the present. Yet, in a commentary on the Improperia written in 1950, only five years after the greatest planned slaughter in human history, we encounter the term "deicide," quite clearly intended to apply to the Jews, written by a responsible and learned Catholic author.¹

1. Cf. comment by Louis Bouyer: "...quand bien même ceux qui en sort l'objet ne lui répondent que par des rebuffades, et finalement par le deicide..." (supra p.15)

That such a provocative charge may be found in Catholic homily five years after the horrors of the Nazi death camps is a source of deep disturbance. Not only does commentary of this sort misrepresent the intentions of the Church, it must, of necessity, create anxiety and suspicion among Jews.

In the light of the Church's authoritative and self-critical teaching, is it not time to put an end to the un-Christian use of the Jews as a scapegoat people?

We respectfully request that the Church, rectify, according to its own precedents and through its own methods, the passages in liturgy and teaching which, in themselves, or by way of homily, stimulate and reinforce the slanderous concept of the Jews as a cursed, despised, deicide people.

At this critical time in human history, the adherents of the great monotheistic, revealed religions must bend their efforts to do away with the barriers of suspicion and prejudice which have created bitterness and bloodshed in the past. We are faced, on the one hand, with the possibility of a man-made Armageddon and, on the other, with the threat of totalitarian anti-religious oppression. If we are to confront these great challenges, no fellow man who lives by God's commandments should be defamed or humiliated.

While the social and political realities of our time warrant such a response, our appeal is based primarily on moral grounds -- the principles of charity and the demands of justice.

Quod si delibatio sancta est,
et massa, et si radix sancta,
et rami. (Rom. XI: 16)

Secundum evangelium quidem
inimici propter vos; secundum
electionem, charissimi propter
patres. (Rom. XII: 28)

Pax omni operanti bonum Judaeo
primum, et graeco; non enim est
acceptio personarum apud Deum
(Rom. II:10, 11)

For if the firstfruit be holy,
so is the lump also: and if the
root be holy, so are the branches.
(Rom. XI: 16)

As concerning the gospel, indeed,
they are enemies for your sake:
but are touching the election,
they are most dear for the sake
of the fathers.
(Rom. XI: 28)

But glory and honour and peace
to every one that worketh good:
to the Jew first, and also to the
Greek.
For there is no respect of persons
with God.
(Rom. II: 10,11)

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA
NORTHEAST CORNER, BROADWAY AND 122ND STREET
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

Den 22ten Mai, 1962

Seine Eminenz
Augustinus Cardinal Bea
R o m a, Italy
Via Aurelia 527

Ihre Eminenz,

Ich stehe noch immer unter dem Eindruck unserer Aussprache im November. Seit jener Stunde lebe ich im Gefuehl der ueberwaeltigender Wichtigkeit des Themas, das wir beruehrt haben und des heiligen Ernsts unseres Unternehmens. Tief ist meine Dankbarkeit dafuer, dass die Vorsehung es mir gestattet hat, im Dienste dieser hohen Aufgabe zu stehen, und inbruenstig flehe ich Gott an, dass Er in Seiner Gnade es Ihnen moeglich machen moege, diese maechtige Aufgabe, die Hoffnung vieler Jahrhunderte, im Sinne der prophetischen Voraussage zu erfuellen.

Im Geiste unserer Aussprache und mit Ihrer Erlaubnis, habe ich die Ehre, Ihnen das beiliegende Memorandum zu uebersenden.

Die Idee, dieses Memorandum abzufassen, verdanke ich der Inspiration, die Ihre guetigen und verstaendnisreichen Worte und die tiefe Froemmgkeit und Weisheit Ihrer Persoenlichkeit mir zuteil werden liessen.

Das Memorandum ist von der Leitung des American Jewish Committee studiert worden, die direkt an Sie schreiben wird, um ihre Identifikation mit dem Memorandum zu bestaetigen.

Die bruederlichen Erklaerungen ueber die Wichtigkeit der Verbesserung der Beziehungen zwischen Katholiken und Juden, die Papst Johannes XXIII und Ihre Eminenz abgegeben haben, haben das juedische Volk auf der ganzen Welt mit Hoffnung und Erwartung auf grosszuegige Taten seitens des bevorstehenden Vatican Council erfuehlt.

Darf ich dieses Schreiben mit tiefempfundenen guten Wuenschen fuer Ihr persoenliches Wohlergehen schliessen.

Et sit splendor Domini Dei nostri super nos,
et opera manuum nostrarum dirige super nos:
et opus manuum nostrarum dirige.

Mit vorzueglicher Hochachtung,

Ihr sehr ergebener
Abraham Joshua Heschel
Abraham Joshua Heschel

ON IMPROVING CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS

A Memorandum to
His Eminence Agostino Cardinal Bea
President
THE SECRETARIAT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Submitted by
Abraham Joshua Heschel
New York

May 22, 1962

INTRODUCTION

With humility and in the spirit of commitment to the living message of the prophets of Israel, let us consider the grave problems that confront us all as the children of God.

Both Judaism and Christianity share the prophets' belief that God chooses agents through whom His will is made known and His work done throughout history. Both Judaism and Christianity live in the certainty that mankind is in need of ultimate redemption, that God is involved in human history, that in relations between man and man God is at stake; that the humiliation of man is a disgrace of God; that the infamy of a wicked act is infinitely greater than we are able to imagine.

He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker,
He who is kind to the needy honors Him.

Proverbs 14:31; see 17:5

The universe is done. The greater masterpiece still undone, still in the process of being created, is history. For accomplishing His grand design, God needs the help of man. Man is and has the instrument of God which he may or may not use in consonance with the grand design. Life is clay, and righteousness the mould in which God wants history to be shaped. But human beings, instead of fashioning the clay, deform the shape.

God calls for mercy and righteousness; this demand of His cannot be satisfied only in the temples, in space, but in history, in time. It is within the realm of history that man has to carry out God's mission.

We and the prophets employ different standards. To us the moral state of society for all its stains and spots, seems fair and trim, while to the prophets it is dreadful. So many deeds of charity are done, so much decency emanates day and night; to the prophet satiety of the conscience is callousness and flight from responsibility. Our standards are modest, our sense of injustice tolerable, timid, our moral indignation impermanent, yet human violence is interminable, unbearable, permanent. To us life is often serene, in the prophet's eye the world reels in confusion. The prophet makes no concession to man's frailty. Exhibiting little understanding for human weakness, he seems unable to extenuate the culpability of man. We and the prophets do not have the same quality of sensibility in common.

Who could bear living in a state of disgust day and night? The conscience builds its confines, it is also subject to fatigue, longing for some comfort. Yet those who are hurt, and He Who inhabits eternity, neither slumber nor sleep.

The prophet is sleepless and grave. The frankincense of some deeds of charity fails to fumigate the cruelties. Perhaps the prophet knew more about the secret obscenity of sheer unfairness, about the unnoticed malignancy of established patterns of indifference, than most of us care to know, a knowledge which he does not ascribe to his own intelligence or power of observation.

The prophet's ear is directed to God, his soul is overwhelmed by His word. Yet the prophet's eye is directed to the human scene; society and its conduct are the main theme of his speeches. He is "an assayer and tester" of the people's ways (Jeremiah 6:27). This is the outstanding characteristic of the prophets: openness to the historic situation, to the divine call and its demands. In their eyes the human situation may be a divine emergency.

THE SINFULNESS OF HATRED

It is such a situation that we face today when the survival of mankind, including its sacred legacy, is in balance. One wave of hatred, prejudice or contempt may begin in its wake the destruction of all mankind. It is therefore of extreme importance that the sinfulness of thoughts of suspicion and hatred and particularly the sinfulness of any contemptuous utterance, however flippantly it is meant, be made clear to all mankind. This applies in particular to such thoughts and utterances about individuals or groups of other religions, races and nations. Speech has power and few men realize that words do not fade. What starts out as a sound ends in a deed.

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS

The following proposals are offered in the sincere hope of improving mutually fruitful relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish community. They are also motivated by the

equally sincere conviction that the Church's vigorous repudiation of anti-Semitism - forthrightly expressed in various Papal statements and other Catholic writings - must be accompanied by an authoritative clarification of religious teachings which lend themselves to anti-Jewish interpretations and which have been frequently abused to support anti-Semitic ideology and activity.

Anti-Semitism is an ancient and complex evil, which cannot be ascribed to a single cause. Nor can responsibility for its perpetuation be invested in one particular institution. Yet, in response to the prophetic call for justice, and out of respect for the six million innocent martyred, we must ask that all institutions - political, civic, and religious - examine, and uproot possible sources of anti-Semitism in themselves; and we must confront each of the sources, including invidious religious teachings. Foremost among these is the slanderous claim that "the Jews" are collectively responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus, that because of this the Jews are accursed and condemned to suffer dispersion and deprivation throughout the ages. This charge has been used by anti-Semites for centuries, to justify the most cruel and inhuman treatment of Jews; it has even been advanced to justify the fate of six million Jews during the Nazi holocaust.

Because we recognize that the Roman Catholic Church represents a rock of solidarity, belief, and morality in the world where so many values in the moral, ethical, and religious spheres

have foundered, we ask the Church's assistance in putting an end to such slanderous religious teachings, and in thus assuring that anti-Semites can claim no sanction in Catholic religious teachings.

We are conscious that the formularies used in the subsequent proposals may need further amplification and development as regards the detailed execution of whatever is decided upon, and we will be happy to continue our discussion for the purpose of greater clarification.

FIRST PROPOSAL

There has never been an age which has witnessed so much guilt and distress, agony and terror. At no time has the earth been so soaked with blood; at no time has man been less sensitive to God.

An age of supreme anguish and extreme horror calls for words of supreme spiritual grandeur, for actions the moral force of which will purify the lives of many generations to come.

The forthcoming Ecumenical Council, which has already evoked the sympathetic interest of the entire world community, provides an exceptional opportunity for the Church to exert its moral influence by reaffirming its opposition to persecution and bigotry, and its condemnation of the sin of anti-Semitism. We would hope that the Ecumenical Council will issue a strong declaration stressing the grave nature of the sin of anti-Semitism as incompatible with Catholicism and, in general, with all morality.

We recognize, however, that a condemnation of violent bigotry will not deal with one of the most profound and pervasive roots of the problem, that the urgent duty of fighting against the hatred that has brought upon the Jewish people unparalleled horror throughout the ages requires a rejection of false religious teachings:*

Therefore, we consider it a matter of supreme urgency for the Ecumenical Council to reject and to condemn those who assert that the Jews as a people are responsible for the Crucifixion of Christ, that because of this, the Jews are accursed and condemned to suffer dispersion and deprivation throughout the ages; and to declare that calling a Jew Christ-killer is a grave sin.

This condemnation should be disseminated widely under the highest authority of the Roman Catholic Church to all who are charged with the preaching and teaching mission of the Church and to all who are responsible for the spiritual guidance of the faithful.

Such a request seems to us consonant with Catholic doctrine as we understand it. It is our understanding that the Church holds the sins of all mankind responsible for the death of Jesus; and teaches that he foreordained his own death in keeping with the Church's doctrine of God's redemptive plan.

*With gracious encouragement of Vatican authorities, the American Jewish Committee submitted two memoranda, "The Image of the Jew in Catholic Teaching" (June 22, 1961), and "Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy" (November 17, 1961). In these documents, attention was drawn to sources of misunderstanding and hostility in Catholic textbooks and liturgy and it was requested that the Church seek appropriate measures to eliminate these possible bases of religious prejudice.

SECOND PROPOSAL

As St. Thomas said over 600 years ago, no man or group of men can be hindered in worshipping God in the way in which they consciously, freely, and in virtue of the light of their conscience choose to worship Him, provided that it is obvious this method of worshipping God is not anti-human or anti-social.

While we would not impinge upon the rights of any religious group to seek adherents through persuasion, we cannot but feel distressed that in the eyes of the Church the holiness of the existence of the Jews as Jews, in their loyalty to the Torah, is not acknowledged. Throughout the centuries our people have paid such a high price in suffering and martyrdom for preserving the Covenant and the legacy of holiness in faith and devotion. To this day our people labor devotedly and with commitment to educate their children in the ways of the Torah. Genuine love implies that Jews be accepted as Jews.

Thus, it is our sincere hope that the Ecumenical Council would acknowledge the integrity and permanent preciousness of Jews and Judaism.

THIRD PROPOSAL

The Biblical imperative includes more than the exercise of justice. More than doing, it asks for love; deeper than justice, it refers to good and evil. "Seek good and not evil... Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the gate" (Amos 5:14a, 15a).

"It has been told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness (hesed), and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8) - doing justice as well as loving kindness. The prophets tried to excite fervor, to make hesed an object of love.

What the Lord requires of man is more than doing one's task, fulfilling one's duty. To love implies an insatiable thirst, a passionate craving. To love means to transfer the center of one's inner life from the ego to the object of one's love.

However, we do not love him who is unknown. Knowledge and charity are interrelated.

Ignorance breeds suspicion, just as false knowledge generates distortion. In our age, few Catholic priests and laymen possess adequate information about Jewish life and the spiritual and moral dimension of Jewish existence in the last two thousand years. It would be important to assert in a conciliar statement the need on the part of Catholics to seek mutual understanding of Jews and their tradition. This would imply a program that would seek to eliminate abusive and derogatory stereotypes about

Jews and Judaism, e.g. the supposed contrast in the field of law between the harsh Jewish enforcement of the lex talionis and the God of Wrath of the Hebrew Bible and God of Love of the Gospels. It would help to counteract the misconception of the period between the return from the Babylonian exile and the beginnings of Christianity as one of continuous decline; to call attention to the great spiritual, moral, and intellectual vitality of the Jewish people during the last 2500 years, the teaching, worship and observance; to disseminate positive information about Jews and Judaism; to promote mutual understanding and a greater mutual comprehension of the issues between us and also of the richness of each other's heritage.

From the other side, there is substantial ignorance among Jews as to the true relationship between Jewish communities and the Church throughout history. Some Jews see the Church's record regarding the Jewish people as one of unrelieved antagonism and hostility; they know about the yellow star and the ghetto, but not about the many Papal declarations condemning anti-Jewish violence and the efforts of Church authorities to protect Jews. Thus, more knowledge and exchange of information is needed on two levels; knowledge and understanding about Judaism as a vital religion; and honest, unapologetic viewing of Catholic-Jewish relations in past and present. For these purposes, it could become a source of great blessing if:

1. A "Forum" be established with the support and approval of the Church in which knowledge about Judaism would be made available to Catholic priests and theologians. Through

such a forum problems of great importance could be discussed, views exchanged and issues deliberated by Jewish and Christian scholars.

2. Research projects and publications arranged jointly by Catholic and Jewish scholars.

3. A declaration should be issued reaffirming earlier Papal and Vatican pronouncements encouraging cooperation among religious groups in civic affairs to promote the common good (i.e., neighborhood improvement, works of charity, combatting juvenile delinquency, group antagonisms, etc.) Fortunately, such cooperation already goes on in many parts of the world. In some places however, it is difficult to engage Catholics in even the most worthy civic cooperation projects, because of the resistance of local ecclesiastical authority. We believe that working together at an objective work for love of fellow man would in itself add considerably and decisively to the purification of the souls and the creation of a climate of mutual respect.

FOURTH PROPOSAL

The prophets' preoccupation with justice and righteousness has its roots in a powerful awareness of injustice, a sense for the monstrosity of injustice. Moralists of all ages have been eloquent in singing the praises of virtue. The distinction of the prophets was in their remorseless unveiling of injustice and oppression, in their comprehension of social, political and religious evils.

Justice is precious, injustice exceedingly common. One of the troubles seems to be that we have delegated the concern for justice to the judges, as if justice were a matter for a few specialists. The prophets insist that justice must be the supreme and active concern of every man. It was not to the judges but to every member of the people that the words of the Lord are directed: "Seek justice, correct oppression, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow."

There is an evil which most of us condone and are even guilty of: indifference to evil. We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the wrongs done unto other people. Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself; it is more universal, more contagious, more dangerous. A silent justification, it makes possible an evil erupting as an exception becoming the rule and being in turn accepted.

The knowledge of evil is something which the first man acquired; it was not something that the prophets had to discover.

The great contribution to humanity was their discovery of the evil of indifference. One may be decent and sinister, pious and sinful. I am my brother's keeper. The prophet is a person who suffers the harms done unto others. Wherever a crime is committed, it is as if the prophet were the victim and the prey.

Above all the prophet's word is a call to repentance. "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean" (Isaiah 1:17). Such cleansing must be an ongoing process. As long as there is hatred in one heart, or prejudice disseminated in one public utterance, textbook, or journal, there is an overriding urgency to cry out against it.

Jews have recognized and recognize willingly and gratefully the sacrificial work done in the past by members of the Catholic community, both clergy and lay, in behalf of persecuted Jews. We can only thank the Almighty for this. Yet we must also recognize that for every Catholic who came to the aid and assistance of Jews, there were hundreds of others - also loyal Church members - who were at best indifferent to the fate of the Jewish community, and who failed to resist or condemn anti-Jewish utterances and atrocities, particularly during the time of the Nazi era. Many Jews are convinced that the failure of the great majority of European Catholic Church leaders to speak out frankly and publicly against anti-Semitism entailed suffering for Jews on many occasions and in many places. Therefore, in order for the Church to more fully and effectively disseminate to its

faithful throughout the world its abhorrence of anti-Semitism,
we respectfully propose the following:

1. We request that a permanent high level commission be established at the Vatican for the purpose of eliminating prejudice and of watching over Christian-Jewish relations everywhere.
2. We further request that at every diocese a similar commission be established to further the demands of justice and love.

May we say in conclusion that we are certain that positive action about these points in an Ecumenical Declaration would mark a revolutionary step of the highest significance. We are of course, respectfully aware of the far-reaching implications and the complexity of the issues involved in the proposals advanced in this memorandum. It is our faith in the magnificent blessings which the spirit of God bestows upon those who are dedicated to Him, that gives us the courage to pray; that in this grave hour of history His children may be granted the wisdom and the power by which obstacles can be overcome.