

# **JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN GERMANY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST**

**The case of the German Coordinating Council of  
Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation  
1960-1969**

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For my parents,  
Dr. Jacobus and Ellen Schoneveld

In memory of Jochanan, 1961-1969

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## PREFACE

Jewish-Christian relations in West Germany have a special complexity to them because of the legacy of the Holocaust. Although this cataclysmic event has had a profound effect on Jewish-Christian dialogue worldwide, the actual dealing with war criminals and the repercussions of a totalitarian regime in Germany have added other factors to it. In Germany, one cannot discuss Jewish-Christian relations without going into German-Israeli relations as well. The two are intimately interrelated.

Attempts at understanding between Jews and Christians commenced very soon after the end of the Second World War, aided from the outside, and through German initiative. One of those attempts led to the establishment of the German Coordinating Council of Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (DKR). Little has been written, however, about the history of the DKR. At the moment, a history of the early years is being composed in Germany, and an exhibition is in process about that time period. There has been little treatment of the history of Jewish-Christian relations in Germany, although works on theological changes within the countries are more numerous. There has been no systematic treatment of the specific topic of this thesis at all. I have had to piece it together from a number of sources and



archives.

This thesis attempts to trace the history of the DKR from 1960 to 1969, in a time of great transformation in Jewish-Christian dialogue, Western values and the Middle East. It will try to assess the issues with which the Council had to deal during this period. The year 1960 represents a convenient point to start because a major incident took place in West Germany relevant to our discussion: the antisemitic incidents of Christmas/New Year 1959/1960. I chose the year 1969 as the end of my study because it was just prior to a marked change in the foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, known as the Ostpolitik. It was to have very important repercussions for the whole world. The New Left was gaining momentum, and a new attitude was forming towards Israel and the Middle East. This time period was also very eventful for Jewish-Christian relations.

The first chapter, which serves as an introduction, will provide the background to the period under discussion, both from the point of view of German-Israeli and Jewish-Christian relations. It will look at the context in which the DKR operated, from 1945 to 1960. I will consider the restitution agreement between Germany and Israel and the response, or lack thereof, of the German Churches to the Holocaust. Further, I will discuss the origins of the DKR, from its inception in 1948 through actions taken by US military authorities.

In chapter two I will take a look at the structure and

institutions of the Council, and issues facing it from 1960 to 1965. These include the antisemitic incidents around the turn of the year 1959/60, the Eichmann Trial, problems of communication between the head office and the local branches, and attempts to remedy them. One of the focuses of the chapter is the calls for diplomatic relations with Israel, and the actions undertaken to further this aim. In addition, I will deal with the discussions surrounding the statute of limitations on manslaughter in the case of Nazi crimes. Another focus will be the Nazi crimes themselves and the response of the DKR.

Chapter three will focus on Jewish-Christian relations, specifically the controversies surrounding the promulgation of a document defining the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Jews. I will trace the course of the deliberations on the document through its four versions, and the reaction of the DKR.

Finally, chapter four will look at the DKR from 1965 to 1969, beginning with the change of its leadership, through its activities with the outbreak of the Six-Day-War. I will then look at the rise of the New Left by 1969, and the response from the DKR.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Background and Context

Context is everything. Taking things out of context is one of the main reasons for the inability to understand a certain situation, and will necessarily lead to false conclusions. In order to understand the sphere of action of the Deutscher Koordinierungsrat der Gesellschaften für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit<sup>1</sup> it is necessary to take a look at Germany, especially the Federal Republic, from its beginnings until 1960. For obvious reasons this cannot be more than a historical survey in the most cryptic form, but emphasis will be placed on those events which, to my mind, are important for understanding the DKR during the sixties.

In May, 1945, Germany capitulated unconditionally to the victorious allies (United States, Soviet Union, France and Great Britain) after the latter had invaded and occupied the country. This brought a war to an end which inflicted immeasurable suffering on millions of people all over the world. In addition to casualties of war, there were those who were murdered only because they happened to have a Jewish grandparent, or belonged to a people the Nazis classified as inferior. Six million Jews

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<sup>1</sup> the German Coordinating Council of Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, henceforth "DKR".

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were killed in a monstrosly planned and executed operation which was designed to eradicate more than 11 million. It was important enough to the Nazis to justify even measures that contributed to their losing the war. When the tide did turn in the German attack on the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1943, the holocaust was intensified even though the resources were sorely needed at the enormous front. The concentration and extermination camps functioned in full swing even when the allies were advancing. The death marches of 1945 show that Jews were forced to walk to other camps while the camp of origin was militarily untenable. That many would die on the way was taken for granted. At the same time a war was raging inside the boundaries of Germany, with widespread bombings of German cities and advancing armies of the Americans, Soviets and allies.

By this time it was already apparent that as soon as fighting stopped, the allied coalition would break apart. Despite the conferences of Teheran and Yalta, there was no uniform concept on how to deal with Germany. With the capitulation, authority went over to the supreme commanders of the various occupation forces, with the four-power declaration. An Allied Control Council was set up to coordinate the zones of occupation. In the meantime the Potsdam conference took place with Stalin, Truman and Churchill (later Attlee)<sup>2</sup> attending. The Potsdam

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<sup>2</sup> An election was held in Britain while Churchill was at the conference, and the opposition Labour party was elected to office. Churchill had to vacate his seat for his successor, Clement Attlee.

agreement of August, 1945 encompassed four main points: 1) removal of nationalism and militarism; 2) division of Germany into four zones of occupation with the remainder to be under Polish hegemony. Berlin was to have special status. Germans from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were to be resettled. 3) The German bureaucracy was to be maintained under supervision of the control council. 4) Finally, control of industry was exercised in such a way as to guarantee economic unity.

Millions of people had become refugees, and were trying to get home as fast as possible to build up what could still be rescued. There was perpetual motion across borders, back to Eastern European states in the immediate aftermath of the war. But one group was, in the main, not part of this: the Jews who came out of the concentration camps. Calling themselves "She'erit Hapleta", the rescued remnant, they wanted to move on to other countries, preferably Israel or the United States and start over there. The occupation forces were of course keen on bringing some order into the chaos and decided to establish camps for displaced persons. All refugees were interned in these camps, victims together with perpetrators. They were guarded by US or British troops. Abraham Peck gives us a particularly shocking example of the attitude of the occupiers.<sup>3</sup> General George S. Patton, commander of the 3rd Army in south Germany, insisted that each

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<sup>3</sup> Abraham J. Peck, "Befreit und erneut in Lagern: Jüdische DPs; statt eines Epilogs" in Walter H. Pehle (Hrsg.), Der Judenpogrom 1938: Von der "Reichskristallnacht" zum Völkermord, (Frankfurt, 1988), 206-207.



camp be surrounded with barbed wire and guarded by US soldiers as if its inhabitants were enemies. After pressure from several sources, an investigation was held to look into the charges. The US government was shocked at the results, and even speculated that should the German population get word about the situation, it would interpret this as a retroactive okay to the actions of the Nazis.

At least sixty such DP-camps had been established by 1947, usually in the vicinity of former concentration camps. There was nowhere to go because the British were refusing to allow Jews to enter Palestine for fear of a reaction by the Arabs. The United States was not much easier to immigrate to due to entry quotas. When pogroms broke out in Poland and Rumania, thousands of Jews fled to the American sector, and were put into these camps too. That it was an organized operation, bringing Polish Jews to the zones of occupation, can already be seen by the destination of these DPs. Out of 108,000 Jews, 106,000 went to the American sector, the rest being divided between the other two. A Jewish DP problem was being created by American Jewish organizations which would force the United States to act. Since the vast majority wanted to emigrate to Palestine, the Americans could be induced to apply pressure on the British to liberalize entry regulations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, "Die Lager der jüdischen Displaced Persons in den deutschen Westzonen 1946/47 als Ort jüdischer Selbstvergewisserung" in Micha Brumlik, Doron Kiesel et al. (Hrsg.), Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland seit 1945, (Frankfurt, 1986), 37.

The interned Jews were not going to lament over antisemitism and persecution, but instead tried to establish a cultural life inside the camps. Schools were founded, based on the Polish model before the war. Cultural events took place in theaters and clubs, and dozens of newspapers were published. The positive view of life had its impact on the birth rate in the camps, which was higher than that of any other Jewish community in the world. The Zionist movement had a strong impact on She'erit Hapleta, producing a strong urge to move to Palestine/Israel. By 1950, a sense of disappointment grew. It became more and more apparent that there was a conspiracy of silence both on the part of the victims and the perpetrators. Coming to terms with the past was not on the agenda at all.

The occupation powers did want to do just this. Higher Nazi officials were detained and charged. "Denazification", a policy, ostensibly to rid Germany of its Nazis, was initiated. Since the implementation of this policy was handled differently in each zone, and due to the vast number of people implicated, it soon deteriorated. At first, it was handed over to German authorities, and later became a meaningless exercise. Without German personnel it was impossible to work through all of the questionnaires filled out by 13 million people. Neither was it possible to make all ex-Nazis accountable for their crimes because this would mean that most institutions would cease to function. The Americans prohibited those who had been found guilty from working. From around the country, complaints came in that a large part of the



teacher force had to be fired. Many of these claimed that they were waiting for the war to end, only to be rewarded with such a prohibition, according to one person.<sup>5</sup> A classification of Nazis into five categories was instituted to deal with this problem.<sup>6</sup> In many Länder most of the people were classified as hangers-on or as bystanders (Mitläufer). Only one percent was identified as Hauptschuldige. It was, in effect, a white-washing of the Germans. Twenty-four key Nazi figures were taken to court by the Allies. Some, like Marshal Göring, took poison and "cheated the executioner", while others were condemned to death or long prison terms. Had the prosecutors had access to the documents which came to light later on, more of the accused would possibly have been condemned to death. Trials against other figures, such as SS doctors, diplomats, generals, industrialists and jurists followed. Lichtenstein maintains that some of these trials could not use all the documents at their disposal because of pressure from business interests in the United States.<sup>7</sup> There were some highly publicized trials which followed in the various zones of occupation. These were usually trials connected with the concentration camps. In the American zone, guard troops of

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<sup>5</sup> See: Jörg Friedrich, Die kalte Amnestie: NS-Täter in der Bundesrepublik, (Frankfurt, 1984), 133. Although this book is more of a popular historical work, it has great merits in describing the situation.

<sup>6</sup> Hauptschuldiger, Belasteter, Minderbelasteter, Mitläufer, Entlasteter.

<sup>7</sup> Heiner Lichtenstein, "NS-Prozesse - Ein Kapitel deutscher Vergangenheit und Gegenwart" in Micha Brumlik et al. eds., Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland, 72.

Dachau, Buchenwald and Mauthausen were tried, while in the British those of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and Natzweiler had to appear in court. In comparison, the GDR dealt with its Nazi criminals in the early 50s. Its judicial authorities took the principles of the Nürnberg trials and sentenced according to those. It was not necessary for the prosecution to identify a certain murder on a certain date in order to be convicted. Belonging to the guard troops was already enough evidence for a guilty sentence.<sup>8</sup> In 1947, it was apparent that the amount of work was too great, and it was decided that the insignificant cases should be dropped. A general amnesty was therefore proclaimed to coincide with Christmas of that year.

At the same time life had to go on in the various sectors, and this was done by creating political parties, such as the Communists, the Social Democrats, the Free Democrats and the Christian Democrats. New Länder were created in all of the zones. But to ensure that Germany would not become too strong so soon after the war, the industrial plan of the Control Council was enacted. It limited the industrial output to fifty percent of the level before the war. In the Soviet sector, 25% went over directly into Soviet possession. Here, again, there was no coordination between the zones due to a French veto. It demanded direct control over the Ruhr area. In 1947, Bizone was created, joining the American and British zones, under protest of the French and Soviet delegates. The Soviets insisted upon political

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<sup>8</sup> Lichtenstein, "NS-Prozesse," 72.

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before economic union. After a while, the French zone was also incorporated into Bizone as a result of East-West tensions, resulting from the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. It was now obvious that consensus could no longer be reached. A conference was therefore organized in London which recommended that West Germany be integrated economically into the West. The Control Council was dissolved soon after; the Soviets no longer attended its meetings. In June, 1948, a currency reform was put into effect in West Germany. The reaction was not long in coming. A change of currency was undertaken in the Soviet zone, based on the same exchange rate (1 DM = 10 RM). In addition, all land access to Berlin was cut off. The West was in no mood to give up the city, and immediately started to airlift all supplies, with up to 927 flights a day. Everything had to be flown in, from food to coal to all basic necessities. The Soviets could not afford to shoot down any of the aircraft for fear of unleashing a war.

Meanwhile, in West Germany, the occupation forces called together an assembly to work out a constitution. This was followed by the creation of a parliamentary council in Bonn, at whose head was Adenauer of the Christian Democrats. In April, 1949, the Washington Agreement exchanged the military governments for High Commissioners, and in May the "Basic Law" of the Federal Republic of Germany is passed. At the same time, in the Soviet occupation zone, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) was reorganized with all other organizations subordinate to it. Unity candidates were the only ones allowed to run in the elections of May, 1949,

and the draft of the new constitution was accepted. In August, 1949, the first elections to the West German Bundestag were held, and a coalition of CDU, FDP and Deutsche Partei was formed under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, former mayor of Cologne. West Germany was increasingly tied into western Europe. This led to fears on the part of the opposition Social Democrats that this would retard reunification. The Allied powers rescinded the occupation statute, and with it, the abolition of the state of war was proclaimed. All restrictions on industrial output no longer had effect.

The trials of commanders of the Einsatzgruppen before American tribunals were going on. A number of them were ultimately condemned to death. The German Bundestag passed a unanimous petition asking that the death sentences be commuted into life-long prison terms. A delegation of members of the Bundestag of both the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats approached the American High Commissioner, John McCloy, on the subject. Lichtenstein quotes Robert M.W. Kempner, the chief prosecutor at Nürnberg, about this petition. At first the members demanded that all death sentences not yet executed be commuted to life-long terms because the Basic Law rejects capital punishment. McCloy had been much more receptive to the petition than other, stricter people would have been. Lichtenstein adds that this was not the complete picture. The West Germans were threatening not to accept rearmament as long as German soldiers were being condemned to death. The United States succumbed to

this blackmail, and by 1956, no murderer was left in prison.<sup>9</sup> This sent a signal to the general public that it was not all that bad after all. This was exacerbated by the fact that in 1951, an amendment to the Basic Law was passed which allowed ex-Nazis to come back into the civil service. Many Nazi lawyers took advantage of this law. It goes without saying that they had no interest in prosecuting Nazi criminals.

In Europe, the Cold War was raging. The Soviets had lifted the blockade of Berlin (May 1949) when it became apparent that it was not effective. All this time thousands of refugees from East Germany were crossing into West Germany, escaping from the Communist regime. Dissatisfaction reached such proportions that in June 1953, a revolt broke out in East Berlin against the government, but it was put down brutally.

Germany had an interest and moral obligation, as heirs to the Third Reich to award some kind of reparations to the Jewish people. The one man who was instrumental in this issue was Konrad Adenauer, according to Hans Keilson.<sup>10</sup> Chaim Weizmann, then head of the Jewish Agency, had approached the victorious Allies in 1945 with the demand that reparations be paid to Jewish victims and property be returned. But this was not heeded by the allies at the time.

Kurt Schumacher, the head of the SPD, called for German

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<sup>9</sup> Lichtenstein, "NS-Prozesse," 74-76.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Keilson, "Die Reparationsverträge und die Folgen der 'Wiedergutmachung'" in Micha Brumlik et al., Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland, 121.



reparations in an address to his party on 29 June, 1947.<sup>11</sup> He was also the one who brought up the subject with Adenauer on September 21, 1949 in a Bundestag debate. Adenauer was focussing on new outcroppings of antisemitism and said:<sup>12</sup>

Wir halten es für unwürdig und für an sich unglaublich, dass nach all dem, was sich in nationalsozialistischer Zeit begeben hat, in Deutschland noch Leute sein sollen, die Juden deswegen verfolgen oder verachten, weil sie Juden sind.

Schumacher countered that just feeling sorry for the Jews was by no means enough. The German people should help to make some kind of restitution. It will have to bear the consequences of the extermination of six million Jews for a very long time. Schumacher's speech did, however, not receive much response, but had some impact. Later on, Adenauer granted Karl Marx, the editor of the Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland, an interview in which he said that the Germans would be prepared to provide some kind of "Wiedergutmachung".<sup>13</sup> Adenauer was willing to extend a sum of DM ten million (!), but this was rejected by Israel immediately as an impossible basis for negotiations.

With the establishment of the State of Israel, another

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<sup>11</sup> See Annemarie Renger, "Juden und Israel im Deutschen Bundestag", in Rainer Barzel (Hrsg.), Sternstunden des Parlaments (Heidelberg, 1989), 140-161.

<sup>12</sup> Renger, "Juden und Israel...", 143.

<sup>13</sup> Renger, "Juden und Israel", 144: "... Das Deutsche Volk ist gewillt, des Unrecht, das in seinem Namen durch ein verbrecherisches Regime an den Juden verübt wurde, insoweit wiedergutzumachen, wie dies nur möglich ist, nachdem Millionen Menschen unwiederbringlich vernichtet sind. Diese Wiedergutmachung betrachten wir als unsere Pflicht."

request was passed to the four occupation powers, and in 1951, a claim was submitted for reparations of 1.5 billion dollars. This is not such a large sum considering that 450,000 Jews had legitimate claims. The four powers answered that they were not in a position to impose their will on the Federal Republic. There were many reasons for this refusal. Acceding to the request would mean that the whole reparations issue would unravel, imposing too great a burden on the new Federal Republic. Other countries would also come with their own demands. In the framework of the political constellations of the time it seemed inopportune to open up discussions over reparations in general because there would be no end to it.

The situation was not much easier for Israel. On the one hand, German aid was desperately needed to keep the economy alive in a situation where it was near bankruptcy. On the other hand there was fundamental opposition to accepting money from Germany, and ambivalence about negotiating with Germans directly.<sup>14</sup>

Hans Keilson paints a much too optimistic picture of the situation in his article. He neglects the role of the German finance ministry in the whole affair.<sup>15</sup> Finance minister Schäffer was the main person who engaged in tactics intended to slow down negotiations. When the German delegation came to the Wassenaar meeting it soon became clear that it had not received any

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<sup>14</sup> Hans Keilson, "Die Reparationsverträge", 123.

<sup>15</sup> See Christian Pross, Wiedergutmachung: Der Kleinkrieg gegen die Opfer, (Frankfurt, 1988), 56-86.

concrete guidelines. The finance ministry had tried to placate the Israeli delegation with some small amounts of money and be done with it. Adenauer wasn't the great protagonist he is made out to be either. He was also part of the stalling measures. Only when an embarrassing situation came up, he was forced to act. When both German negotiators, Dr. Otto Küster and Prof. Franz Böhm, resigned because they refused to play along in the game, Adenauer found himself in an awkward situation, and had to agree to Böhm's demands, despite Schäffer's opposition. The latter resorted to antisemitic comments in the affair. His plan was to draw up an equation with, on one side, the claims of the Jews for restitution, and on the other, alleged illegal transactions of Jews in the DP camps in Germany. Calculating that the illegal activities amounted to DM 10 billion, Schäffer maintained that there would be no need to pay any restitution to the Jews because "they" had earned much more than they were to receive.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time negotiations were going on in London, too, concerning reparations. The head of this delegation maintained that West Germany would be unable to honor all the reparation demands due to the tight financial situation. This would have an effect on the Jewish-German negotiations. Adenauer, however, stepped in, and accepted Böhm's argumentation. The latter had said that while it was true that the amount of money to be spent on reparations was high, it should not be the main consideration. The main task was to step out of the shadow that the crimes

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<sup>16</sup> Pross, Wiedergutmachung, 85.



during the Holocaust had cast over Germany. Making a clear decision would not only send a signal to Israel and to world Jewry, but would also have a great effect in Germany itself. It could form the basis for a moral and educational coming to terms with the Holocaust.<sup>17</sup>

Such a clearcut decision was made, and it formed the basis of the agreement signed in Luxemburg on 10 September, 1952. For the next fourteen years, the Federal Republic paid a total of three and a half billion Marks to Israel in loans and goods. The demands of the "Conference on Jewish Claims against Germany" were also included in this sum. It took an additional six months before this agreement was ratified by the Bundestag. The main opposition was centered on the fear that economic relations with Arab countries could be jeopardized.<sup>18</sup> The Arab League had imposed an embargo on all products from the Federal Republic. Pross maintains that several Nazis who had escaped to Egypt had masterminded the embargo. There were also influential people, however, who called for the ratification of the agreement, among them Gertrud Luckner of the Freiburger Rundbrief, Helmut Gollwitzer, head of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland and Eugen Kogon. Finally the agreement was presented to the Bundestag, and was passed with parts of the opposition voting in favor, and quite a number of Christian Democrats either opposed, or abstaining. Pross says that Adenauer managed to neutralize the

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<sup>17</sup> Keilson, "Die Reparationsverträge," 124-125.

<sup>18</sup> Pross, Wiedergutmachung, 68-69.

opposition to the agreement, but still could pursue his opening to the West. He did this, according to Pross, by letting Schäffer do his antisemitic rabble rousing, thereby deflecting popular sentiments. He could then continue with his rapprochement without crossfire from his own party.

Keilson rightly says that nothing is as difficult to understand as a symbol. Adenauer talked about the payment of reparations to the Jews as a symbol. Keilson provides a definition of a symbol as an act which is performed with the intention of giving it a representative character, as opposed to a pragmatic-instrumental one. This act is intended to be an exemplary image of what a real act may be. In the case of the Wiedergutmachung one has to be clear on the definition. Is it a representative or a pragmatic-instrumental act? This has led to a lot of misunderstandings and arguments. Like others before and after him, Keilson thinks that the term Wiedergutmachung is catastrophic. His reasoning is not, however, very clear. He says that the "giver" sees him/herself in the position of assuming the responsibility for wrong acts committed by predecessors. The recipient is constantly reminded of the "wrong" committed by the perpetrator, and identifies the "giver" with the "perpetrator".<sup>10</sup> In my opinion, there is another, more weighty consideration. How can one make such heinous crimes "good" again? Paying sums of

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<sup>10</sup> Keilson, "Die Reparationsverträge," 127. The rest of the article deals with a case study which shows that the traumatic effects of the Holocaust (in this case being given to foster parents during the war while the parents perish) can take years to be articulated.

money will not make things undone. Does the "giver" cease to have a moral obligation once the payment has taken place? Can the "giver" simply return to the day-to-day agenda?

Keilson also gives a much too optimistic picture of the whole process of restitution. Pross gives us many examples of the "Kleinkrieg gegen die Opfer".<sup>20</sup> For example the affair Auerbach, in which Philipp Auerbach, the head regional office for restitutions, was the target. He was a survivor of Auschwitz, and was responsible for paying out claims to the victims. The Bavarian police came into his offices with a search warrant. He was accused of paying out restitution to non-existent victims. It later turned out that all charges were completely unfounded, but the damage had been done. It even went so far that the Bavarian minister of Justice, Joseph Müller, had to resign for his role in the affair. Charges were pressed against Auerbach, but even though they proved unfounded, he was sentenced to two years in prison. Feeling that the situation was hopeless, he committed suicide in jail. Most of the people in the prosecution were, it turned out, ex-Nazis and cronies of Müller.<sup>21</sup>

Pross concludes that the Wiedergutmachung had deteriorated into a pedantic juggling with laws and ordinances. The authorities responsible for processing the claims put all kinds of stumbling blocks in the victims' way, and asked for the most

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<sup>20</sup> War of attrition against the victims, the subtitle of this well-documented work.

<sup>21</sup> Pross, Wiedergutmachung, 73-77.

outrageous documentation. A girl - who was seven years old at her release - was asked to bring two witnesses that she was in Auschwitz even though she could show the tattooed number on her arm. Another person, who lost his 900-book library, was asked to provide all the titles of all the books plus receipts of purchase.<sup>22</sup> These are only a few examples of the practice of these authorities. Complaints were even heard from numerous members of the Bundestag, who called for a more generous policy.

In 1955, the Federal Republic and the three western powers signed the "Ueberleitungsvertrag" which bridged the post-war period and the start of sovereignty of the Republic. Ten years had passed since the end of the war, and all war crimes had been subject to a statute of limitations. This treaty specified that no Nazi criminals who had been in court under the Allies would be charged again.<sup>23</sup> It was feared that West Germany might engage in an amnesty wave. The treaty, however, also protected those who had been sentenced in absentia. Under German law, such a sentence is no more than the beginning of a judicial inquiry. The treaty was to have a tremendous psychological effect on future trials. Even if new material came to light, those who had been tried-

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<sup>22</sup> Pross, Wiedergutmachung, 92-98.

<sup>23</sup> All crimes may be judged by German authorities "in Strafverfahren gegen natürliche Personen, es sei denn, dass die Untersuchung wegen der angeblichen Straftaten von den Strafverfolgungsbehörden der betreffenden Macht oder Mächte endgültig abgeschlossen war oder diese Straftat in Erfüllung von Pflichten oder Leistungen von Diensten für die Besatzungsbehörden begangen wurde". Quoted in Adalbert Rückerl, NS-Verbrechen vor Gericht: Versuch einer Vergangenheitsbewältigung, (Heidelberg, 1984) 2nd ed., 138-139.

and later pardoned - would not be taken to court again.

More important things had to be dealt with, it was felt, for example the communist scare, the Cold and Korean wars. Adenauer had gone to Moscow in September, 1955 to negotiate the release of the German prisoners of war. He came back with 15,000 prisoners, among whom were also those who were wanted in connection with crimes committed in the concentration camps. One of these was the head of the Einsatzkommando in Lithuania. He had returned to Germany, and, under a false identity, was heading a large refugee camp in Ulm. He was fired for using an assumed name, and went to court to try to have himself reinstituted. When the press reported on this trial, a witness came forward and said that this man was seen in Lithuania at the time of the murders. One thing led to another, and he was charged in what was known as the Ulm Einsatzgruppen trial. The public found out what had been going on behind the front. The federal ministry of justice, together with the regional counterparts, finally decided that something had to be done. A central office should be created to deal with Nazi crimes.<sup>24</sup> Its seat was to be in Ludwigsburg, and its task would be to collect material for the prosecution of these suspects. The aim was to have the office investigate crimes committed in concentration camps, ghettos and forced labor camps. It was specifically stated that the office did not have the right to prosecute real war crimes, because these were the domain of the

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<sup>24</sup>" Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung von nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen", in short Zentrale Stelle.



individual courts of the area where the offender was living.<sup>25</sup> The task was to collect all pertinent material for setting up the prosecution of cases, together with finding out where the suspects were living. The Zentrale Stelle did not, itself, have the right to prosecute since it was not an office of district attorney. It would pass on its cases to the relevant offices for further legal action on it.

The year 1955 also saw the proclamation of the so-called Hallstein Doctrine. Named after Walter Hallstein, a high official in the West German ministry of foreign affairs, it specified that any state establishing diplomatic relations with East Germany would jeopardize its relations with West Germany. This doctrine had to be proclaimed in view of the fact that Adenauer had been able to secure the release of German prisoners of war. The price was that a diplomatic mission had to be opened in the Soviet Union for this purpose. Now, the FRG had relations with a state which also recognized the GDR. In order to make sure that no other country would follow this lead, the Hallstein Doctrine was proclaimed. The Federal Republic saw itself as the only legitimate representative of the German people, and has never recognized the (now nonexistent) German Democratic Republic as a sovereign state. This was to have importance later on in the consideration of diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Arab states, under the leadership of Egypt, saw their

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<sup>25</sup> Rückerl, NS-Verbrechen vor Gericht, 139-144; Lichtenstein, "NS-Prozesse", 77-78.

opportunity to apply pressure on the Federal Republic to desist from ratifying the Wiedergutmachung agreement with Israel. They maintained that they were also eligible for reparations. Their reasoning went as follows: since Germany has seen as its moral responsibility to recompense Jews, and is guilty of allowing them to move to Israel, it has tacitly agreed to the displacement of Arab refugees. It should therefore also pay reparations to these displaced people.<sup>26</sup> When it became apparent that the Federal Republic was going to stand by the agreement, the German question card was played. Egypt threatened to recognize the GDR, as did other Arab states, but the threat was never carried out. The Federal Republic was developing into a serious economic power, and soon it became an important trading partner for these states.

The episode of maneuvers of both West Germany and Israel towards attempting to establish diplomatic relations have been very succinctly characterized by Deutschkron as a game of hide-and-seek.<sup>27</sup> Both West Germany and Israel were, at different times, willing to establish these relations. West Germany was the first to propose relations but met the refusal of the Israelis. The reparations agreement had just been signed, and Israel was in no mood to expand these relations. This view is of course very understandable. Later on, when the Federal Republic started to make its presence felt as a result of the economic miracle, a

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<sup>26</sup> Inge Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen: Zwischen Ressentiment und Ratio (Köln, 1970), 84.

<sup>27</sup> See Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 102-124. This is the title of one of the chapters in her book.

change also started to take place in Jerusalem. West Germany could no longer be ignored. Now, Israeli politicians, with Ben Gurion and Sharett at their head, started to propose relations in various interviews.

By this time, however, the Federal Republic saw that it had some vital interests in the Arab world and was cultivating those relations. The Hallstein Doctrine was soon proclaimed, and it actually provided the Arab states with ammunition, threatening to establish relations with the GDR if the FRG opened a diplomatic mission in Israel. Foreign minister von Brentano was only willing to consider just opening an economic mission. This was seen in Jerusalem as a slap in the face. The real reason for even offering to establish a trade mission in Israel will probably never be known, according to Deutschkron.<sup>20</sup> Such a mission was already in existence for some time in Cologne, and in view of the cool relations between the two countries this offer did not seem to fit in. West Germany was now no longer willing to broach the subject. It did not want to create the impression that it was making any overtures towards the Jewish state. That Israel was not being totally ignored was very keenly perceived when the Suez crisis of November, 1956 came around. The United States tried to pressure West Germany to stop all payment of reparations in order to induce Israel to vacate the Sinai peninsula. The FRG refused to do this, saying it had a moral obligation to continue. It also said that it would ignore all United Nations calls for sanctions

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<sup>20</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 102.



since it was not a member, and wouldn't feel bound by its resolutions. It goes without saying that this registered very positively in Israel. It was also instrumental in bringing about a change in Israeli attitude to the Germans.

From an economic perspective, German-Israeli relations went on without great disturbances. German ships regularly docked at Israeli ports, with few expressing especially strong feelings about it. From 1956 onwards, a secret trade of weapons was flourishing. Israel was supplying the Federal Republic with "Uzi" submachine guns and other light weapons. When this became known, however, a crisis developed in the Israeli government. Ben Gurion maintained that West Germany was the only country from which Israel could buy weapons, now that the United States had taken a hostile position in the aftermath of the Suez crisis of 1956. For Achdut HaAvoda, one of the partners in the coalition, it was even more despicable to sell weapons to Germany than to receive them from it. Out of partisan considerations, these deliberations were made public, inviting harsh criticism from the opposition Herut. The Achdut HaAvoda ministers in the cabinet were asked to resign. Upon their refusal, Ben Gurion resigned on 30 December, 1957. A few days later, he was commissioned by president Ben-Zvi to put together another coalition government, which had the exact same composition as the last. This time, all the ministers had to commit themselves to secrecy.

Michael Wolffsohn brought up a point which has characterized relations between Israel and West Germany throughout the whole

period. He calls this "Ungleichzeitigkeiten",<sup>29</sup> meaning that both sides were approaching the subject of relations from different angles.

Dieser Begriff bedeutet zweierlei: Erstens haben sich beide Seiten zu unterschiedlichen Zeitpunkten umeinander bemüht. Zweitens hat sich das Denken und Handeln der Politiker, ja, auch der Bevölkerung beider Staaten, auf unterschiedlichen historisch-politischen Zeitebenen vollzogen. In Israel sah man Gegenwart und Zukunft stets und vor allem durch die Brille der Vergangenheit; in Deutschland betrachtete man die Vergangenheit eher und lieber mit der von Gegenwart und Zukunft.

This attitude was apparent in the different times when both sides were interested in establishing diplomatic relations. Later on, in the 1970s and 1980s it became even more apparent that West Germany was trying to stop contemplating the past, and look towards the future.

What was the state of Jewish-Christian relations during the first fifteen years after the Holocaust? What were the main issues which preoccupied people interested in this complex?

One of the prerequisites for understanding what went on after the Holocaust is to know what the traditional Christian attitude was towards the Jews. For most of them, the year 70 CE was the pivotal point. From the time of Abraham until the appearance of Jesus, the Jews were living, in a sense, in history. When this was fulfilled, with the death of Jesus, Christian scholars perceived a decline in Jewish history. This

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Wolffsohn, "Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen" in Brumlik *et al.*, eds., Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland, 96.

phase of "Spätjudentum" saw, according to them, the demise of the Jewish people from history, and the beginning of their eternal wandering. The destruction of the Temple was seen as divine retribution for the Jewish rejection of Jesus, and not a result of inner-Jewish strife. No attempt was made to understand Jewish history in its own context.

In the context of the Second World War and the Holocaust, there were individual Christians who spoke up in defense of the Jews, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Although basing himself on a relatively traditional Christology, he did speak up in 1933 against the boycott of 1 April, and the law passed on the 7th to "restore the professional civil service," effectively barring all Jews from belonging to it. This put him on the black list of the Nazis, and ultimately he had to pay for his uprightness. He was jailed in a Gestapo prison, and was executed towards the end of the war. Such responses, were, however, few and far between in the Church.

After the war, the Protestant Church came together to discuss what had happened. This was put to paper in the form of the "Stuttgarter Schuldbekenntnis".<sup>30</sup> The assembled Church leaders confessed that the Church had not protested loudly enough, and said that the Church also bears partial guilt for the crimes committed under the National Socialist regime. No mention is made of the Jewish people or any other group subjected to Nazi

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<sup>30</sup> Rolf Rendtorff, Hans Hermann Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945-1985, (Paderborn, München, 1988), 528.

terror. Stöhr remarks that this declaration, and others after the war reflect the state of mind of the Protestant bishops in the 1920s. They were still talking about the issues of secularization, the role of the Church in society and so forth. The Church had not realized yet how lifeless and meaningless it had become.<sup>31</sup>

Martin Niemöller, himself a personal prisoner of Hitler for seven years, tried to concretize the Stuttgart statement, and demanded that Christians also accept political responsibility for the failures of the Third Reich, not only remaining spectators of the course of history. Niemöller's approach did not pass because the Church wanted to continue where it had left off in 1933, effectively ignoring the Nazi period. It resorted, according to Stöhr, to a policy of equating victims and numbers of dead. No attention was paid to the fact that there was a qualitative difference in the persecution of the Jews, as compared to that of the Church. Even in the Darmstadt Declaration of a year later, the Jewish component was still not mentioned, although innovative paths were taken to deal with Christian guilt.<sup>32</sup> The inability to deal with this topic was to be a sign of what was coming. The so-called "Jewish problem" was actually much more a Christian problem!

Other declarations followed from various sources in German

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<sup>31</sup> Martin Stöhr, "Gespräche nach Abels Ermordung: Die Anfänge des jüdisch-christlichen Dialogs", in Brumlik et al. (eds.), Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland, 206.

<sup>32</sup> See Stöhr, "Gespräche nach Abels Ermordung", 209-210.

churches. The "Kirchlich-Theologische Sozietät in Württemberg" published a statement on April 8, 1946 which did deal with the persecution of the Jews, especially those who had converted to Christianity.<sup>33</sup>

Wir sind mutlos und tatenlos zurückgewichen, als die Glieder des Volkes Israel unter uns entehrt, beraubt, gepeinigt und getötet worden sind. Wir liessen den Ausschluss der Mitchristen, die nach dem Fleische aus Israel stammen, von den Ämtern der Kirche, ja sogar die kirchliche Verweigerung der Taufe von Juden geschehen.

There was even a declaration of a German missionary society which advised its members not to engage in missionary activity immediately in view of the Holocaust. Instead, more information about Jews and Judaism should be collected. Such a moratorium was only to have a provisional character.

Stöhr presents a five-point explanation for the Church's inability or unwillingness to deal with the question of guilt or responsibility.<sup>34</sup> For our purposes, the fifth explanation is of interest. He calls it "Sprachlosigkeit". Why has there been such silence about the past? Why is it that a dialogue between Jews and Christians took such a long time to materialize (if we temporarily ignore attempts at the periphery)? One authority speculated that the magnitude of what happened shows that there weren't any categories through which the events could be ethically processed. Stöhr rightly says that the core of the

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<sup>33</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 530-535.

<sup>34</sup> Stöhr, "Gespräche nach Abels Ermordung", 211-214.



problem is changing one's own theological points of view. Since Israel occupies a central, albeit negative, position in Christian thinking, making the connection between the Israel of Christian thought and the Jews who have been killed under Nazi hegemony is not always that easy.<sup>35</sup>

On the periphery something did happen. A number of individuals in the United States and in the zones of occupation started to contemplate what had happened under the Nazis, in particular the persecution and extermination of European Jews. These people felt that an organization for Jewish-Christian understanding was necessary to combat such outcrops. They looked towards the United States as an example. In that country, a number of regional bureaus of the National Conference of Christians and Jews were in existence. They were of course operating in a completely different environment. In each city, a sizeable Jewish community made this dialogue possible. The organizations in the US did not have to deal with the immediate consequences of such a calamitous event as the Holocaust, although it did not leave them untouched. Jews and Christians together fulfill a critical role in American society, exemplified in the civil rights struggle and the peace movement. In Germany, on the other hand, few Jews were still there. The vast majority wanted to immigrate to other countries, and build up a new existence. Those who stayed behind ultimately were not interested in contacts with non-Jews for their own self-preservation. Only a

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<sup>35</sup> Stöhr, "Gespräche nach Abels Ermordung", 214.

few Christians in Germany had the insight to try to build up some new kind of relationship with Jews. Due to the vast disproportion of Christians to Jews, a role as in the United States could not be fulfilled. This does not mean that no activity took place. The first Associations for Christian-Jewish cooperation were formed in 1948, with key help from the NCCJ.

In September of that year, the 72nd German Catholic lay meeting met in Mainz. One of the resolutions passed dealt with the "Jewish question". In the framework of dealing with the challenges faced by the Catholic Church at the time, there was also a segment on the Jews. This document called for "Wiedergutmachung" and return of illegally purchased property. All Christians were urged to combat the resurgent antisemitism, and also called a periodical into existence which would teach Christians about Judaism and Christian-Jewish relations: the Freiburger Rundbrief.<sup>36</sup>

In 1950, the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland passed a declaration in Berlin on the Jews to make up for the failure at Stuttgart in 1945. It went further in that it confessed to being guilty of remaining silent when Germans were annihilating Jews. The novelty is that for the first time we see the beginnings of a

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<sup>36</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 239-240. The periodical was called, at first, "Rundbrief zur Förderung der Freundschaft zwischen dem Alten und dem Neuen Gottesvolk in Geiste beider Testamente". Later, it received two other name changes, subheadings to Freiburger Rundbrief. This title still revealed some of the Christological tendencies present, namely supercessionism. This was changed later on, after the Second Vatican Council.

new theology.<sup>37</sup>

Wir glauben, dass Gottes Verheissung über dem von ihm erwählten Volk Israel auch nach der Kreuzigung Jesu Christi in Kraft geblieben ist.

In addition, there was a call to all Christians to desist from antisemitism. This document should, however, not be over-interpreted because we also find the old Christology maintaining that Jesus will accept the saved remnant of the Jews at the end of days.

### The Origins of the DKR

The creation of the DKR can be seen as an integral element of the United States occupation forces' attempt to effect a policy of denazification. The National Conference of Christians and Jews, and its president, Rev. Everett Ross Clinchy, had a major role in it. Upon the invitation of General Lucius D. Clay, the NCCJ was commissioned to establish an organization similar to the American one in Germany. The NCCJ was founded in 1927 under the leadership of Rev. Clinchy, and was having success in interfaith relations in the United States. Within the framework set by the US occupation forces, the NCCJ set about looking at possibilities of establishing German councils for Christian-Jewish cooperation.

In the company of several NCCJ officials, Clinchy embarked,

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<sup>37</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 548-549.



in October, 1947, on a fact-finding mission to Germany to sound out the possibilities of such a venture. He kept a journal of his meetings in Germany with various groups throughout the country. There were several initial obstacles which had to be overcome, the first of which was language. Few Germans spoke English, so an interpreter was needed. Clinchy records that a future liaison person would have to be able to speak German and be aware of the intricate theological patterns which are of such importance.<sup>38</sup> The US authorities gave all support necessary to work on setting up an organization. General Clay set up interviews with German personalities in Berlin and the American Zone. Clinchy says in his report of January 1948 that "we were able to say that OMGUS Headquarters (Office Military Government United States) in Berlin authorized this work, but were not superimposing it".<sup>39</sup> He writes on October 22, 1947:<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to know that General Clay considers this exploratory trip of such importance that our party has had Dr. [Sterling W.] Brown assigned to us, and we will receive the courtesy of Government transportation, which is extended only to the technical classification VIP (very important persons). This is a tribute to the work, not to any individuals.

Our objective is exploratory. We are scheduled to meet with German mayors of cities, German adult, Youth, Church, University, School and Civic

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<sup>38</sup> Social Welfare History Archives [Hereafter SWHA], NCCJ files, Box 8, Everett Ross Clinchy, writings 1947: Journal, "Berlin October 18, 1947".

<sup>39</sup> SWHA, NCCJ, 8, "Clinchy Writings 1947" "A report of a European Mission", p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> SWHA, NCCJ, 8, Clinchy Writings 1947, Journal, October 22, 1947.

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leaders. We will confer with all of the civilian  
OMGUS section leaders and some military.

Any changes we can effect will require much  
time and persistence. Old German traditions are  
very much alive, traditions much older than Hitler.  
Some of these traditions will be helpful and others  
obstructive. I believe that we will succeed in  
forming a German Council of Christians and Jews, by  
the Germans and for the Germans, and that it will  
take shape within the coming year.

The journal records meetings with people who were to have  
considerable influence later on, such as Probst Grüber, who,  
during the holocaust, led the office which allowed "non-Aryan"  
Christians to emigrate. That office was also instrumental in  
preparing the way for many Jews to escape. Grüber thought that  
the reorientation of Germany was a spiritual problem. There was a  
danger that, despite the military victory, the Allies might lose  
the objectives of the war. "For this reason, this plan of local  
councils must maintain its distinctive and essential religious  
core".<sup>41</sup> Clinchy reports that everywhere he went he encountered  
positive responses. Some individuals, such as Bishop Stohr of  
Mainz, cautioned that there could be hesitation to engage in  
Christian-Jewish relations because the Cross is an obstacle.  
Contacts between Catholics and Protestants would be easier. The  
team went around from city to city to talk to high officials.  
Clinchy wanted to have the names of people from all walks of life  
who would be interested in a German council. In order to attract  
attention, he suggested that a trio team of minister, priest and  
rabbi should speak at public meetings. They would be Americans at

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<sup>41</sup> ibid.

first, but would be replaced by Germans later on. Other leading discussion partners had different concerns. The mayor of Munich, Karl Scharnagl, maintained that contacts between Christians were much easier than between Christians and Jews. A large influx of Jews from the east and from Rumania had increased hatred among the German population. In addition, complaints about Jews' activities in the black market were common. Scharnagl felt that the Germans must be told that Christians, and even American soldiers, are involved in this market. Dr. Anton Fingerle, an educator also present at the meeting, was enthusiastic about the concept of a trio team.<sup>42</sup>

On October 30, Clinchy and his delegation were taken on a tour of Dachau, which he describes as a ghastly place. That afternoon, the delegation met with Jewish officials responsible for the DP camps, at whose head was Dr. Phillipp Auerbach. Some of the participants were apprehensive whether Jews should be participating at all in this venture. Christians should take the initiative and show that they mean it. Clinchy then provides seven points circumscribing the attitude of the Jews at present.<sup>43</sup>

1. The Jewish group is deeply hurt, suspicious, dubious and torn by the conflict between the pressure to get Europe's Jews into Palestine and those who wish to stay in Germany.
2. The Jews feel that OMGUS has failed in many

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<sup>42</sup> SWHA, NCCJ, 8, Clinchy Writings 1947, Journal, "Wednesday October 29, 1947 Munich".

<sup>43</sup> SWHA, NCCJ, 8, Clinchy writings 1947, Journal, Thursday, October 30, 1947.

respects to de-Nazify.

3. The Jews do not believe the Christian Churches really want to uproot anti-semitism.

4. Some Jews admit that they have problem Jews and evil Jews (as all groups have evil people) and that these provoke anti-Jewish feelings.

5. Those Jewish leaders assure us of cooperation with ICCJ.

6. They approved the tour of a visiting American trio next Spring.

7. They averred that Christians must become convinced that they have a stake in making brotherhood actual, both as Christians and as Germans.

Back in Berlin, there was a discussion whether a chapter of the ICCJ should be set up. By a show of hands a majority was reached. The journal does not specify, however, whether it was acted upon. This last meeting was the last of the series of encounters with people involved before Clinchy set off to other European countries, notably to Geneva to the World Council of Churches, and to Rome for an audience with the Pope.

Clinchy's report of January, 1948 reflects the success of the exploratory mission. The opinions expressed by some of the German partners show this. Mayor Scharnagl wanted action within three weeks, and Mayor Riedlhammer of Wiesbaden felt that the Council would provide an effective countermeasure to "the poison contaminating the former Nazis in the age range between 20 and 32 years". This would give Germany prestige and respect in the world. General Clay was also more than pleased with the results of the mission, and gave the NCCJ the go-ahead to proceed with organization and program on the civilian level.

Clinchy did not wait long to act upon his trip. In January, he called Rev Carl F. Zietlow, director of the North Central

Region of the NCCJ, located at Minneapolis. After briefing him on the visit, he said that an officer should be chosen to go to Germany and assist German leaders in setting up councils in major German cities. Clinchy asked Zietlow to take a leave of absence from his work and set up an educational program.

Zietlow felt that the approach of the NCCJ would not work in Germany. Stressing national unity could overcome intergroup hostility in the United States, but it had a completely different effect on Germany where it inspired hatred and destroyed a nation.<sup>44</sup> Neither could one appeal to the democratic tradition. He decided therefore to base his program on universal elements found in western civilization.

Zietlow arrived in Germany in March, 1948. His aim was to enlist influential people to serve on organizing committees.<sup>45</sup> He traveled around Germany, especially the American Zone, in order to drum up support for the venture. The reception in Munich was particularly enthusiastic. After some discussions, it was decided to establish a council in Munich on the American model. The name chosen was the "Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit". Clinchy spoke to the Munich council on July 15, 1948, on the occasion of its establishment. A permanent secretary

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<sup>44</sup> Carl F. Zietlow, "Human Relations in Germany", Common Ground, vol. 4, no. 3, 19.

<sup>45</sup> See Zietlow's account, SWHA, NCCJ, Box 7, File International Council of Christians and Jews, "The story of a year; In the beginning: A report of the first year of work organizing German councils of Christians and Jews, by Carl F. Zietlow, Liaison Representative International Council of Christians and Jews, March 31, 1949", 7 pp.



was hired in September. Zietlow remained in contact with persons in other German cities and facilitated sending a number of German delegates to the International Conference on Human Relations in Fribourg, Switzerland in July, 1948. This was the first time Germans had participated in an international interreligious colloquium after the war, and it signalled their readiness to make a fresh start. Zietlow had to move from Berlin to Nürnberg because of the Berlin blockade. Working out of this city, he traveled around the American Zone, supervising the establishment of councils in Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt and Augsburg. The experience in Wiesbaden was typical of other councils too. The organizing session turned out to be a spiritually uplifting affair, according to Zietlow. The directors of the councils were sent off to the United States to learn from the experiences of the NCCJ. The military took care of the expenses of these people, because it was considered to be in the framework of reorientation. After a while, a necessity arose to coordinate the activities of the various councils, such as translating and supplying printed materials. For this reason, the "Deutscher Koordinierungsrat der Christen und Juden" was set up, with six members. It modified its name later on.

Zietlow sums up his experiences in the year since his arrival as follows:<sup>46</sup>

A year ago, I came with a belief in an ideal and that I would find people in Germany willing to accept responsibility for developing wholesale

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<sup>46</sup> SWHA, NCCJ, 7, ICCJ, "The story of a year", 6.



human relations as a part of an international movement to make this world a place where all people, regardless of religion, nationality, race, or cultural background could live together in peace and freedom. I had the assurance of Dr. Clinchy that his survey revealed that such an interest was present, but unorganized. Today, I am convinced there is a real interest and that it can be organized.

Zietlow's projection of the tasks ahead reveals a very intense schedule. It included developing six new councils, holding one-day conferences, holding two-week workshops on human relations, sending out 14 trio teams on a speaking tour around the American sector, developing a traveling library, and also giving assistance to leaders in the French and British zone when called upon to do so. The NCCJ had not received permission in the middle of 1949 to set up a similar network in the other western zones.

The composition of the councils was varied, with people from all walks of life sitting on the board. In each instance there were to be three co-chairpersons, a Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew. Each Council was to have a series of committees. Each one was to approach a different segment of society. There was a committee for educational institutions, a religious organizations committee, one for community organizations, another one for press, film and radio, and a final one for finances.

Zietlow did see the limitations from the outset. First of all, a lot of time was spent with orientation. Then there was the problem of the availability of sources in German. He felt that this was, however, outweighed by the enthusiasm of those involved.

In 1947, the Ten Points of Seelisberg were proclaimed. It gave "directions" for Christian preaching about Jews and Judaism. One of the people who had most influence on the proclamation was Prof. Jules Isaac. He was to be instrumental later on in getting a process started which led to Vatican II. It became clear that Seelisberg was far ahead of its time, with Churches proclaiming the same principles in the 1960s and 70s.

In Germany the Seelisberg declaration was taken as a basis for a revised version, discussed by Catholic and Protestant theologians. The conference, held in Bad Schwalbach, was organized by the DKR in 1950. The target audience was Catholic and Protestant clergy and educators.<sup>47</sup> Point 2 is of special interest:

... Durch ihn [Jesus]... haben wir Erbanteil an der Erlösung, welche für Israel mit dem Kommen des Messias verbunden und auch allen andern Völkern schon durch den Abraham-Segen mitverheissen ist. So gewiss für unsern Glauben dieser erlösende Erfüller aller Verheissung in der Person jenes Jesus von Nazareth gekommen ist, so gewiss wird auch von uns Christen der Tag noch als künftiger erwartet, wo wir die offenbar werdende Vollendung schauen werden.

Sometimes, however, the document goes into great lengths explaining issues away. A good example is point 8,<sup>48</sup> dealing with the writer of the Gospel of John saying that "the" Jews are the enemies of Jesus.

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<sup>47</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 647-650.

<sup>48</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 649.

The last sentence of the document<sup>49</sup> does, however, specify that the final aim of the Church is to bring the Jewish people to Jesus. Here we still see the traditional theology of the ultimate return of the Jews to Jesus. It was to be a long time before Christians were able to discard it.

Starting out with these "Schwalbacher Thesen", teachers of religious education could highlight certain aspects in their schools. The DKR, founded in 1950, and its member organizations in the various cities, held consultations for teachers, like one organized by the Düsseldorf Association for Christian-Jewish Cooperation.<sup>50</sup> The DKR had made educational issues one of its most important points. Eckert says that the decision was made that schools should make up the main emphasis because the churches will only be able to reach a small portion of the population. Ninety-six percent of all children go to mandatory religious education, so they are the ideal group to be taught values of tolerance.<sup>51</sup>

Since 1952, there has been a "Brotherhood Week", again on the American model, in which personalities from public life gave keynote addresses on a certain theme.

A major problem for the DKR and its Associations has been

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<sup>49</sup> which has nine, not ten points.

<sup>50</sup> Henceforth, individual organizations will be titled associations, i.e. the Düsseldorf association, in this case.

<sup>51</sup> Willehad Eckert, "Christlich-jüdische Begegnung in Deutschland seit 1945" in Freiburger Rundbrief, XII. Folge 1959/60, Nr. 49, 26 September, 1960, 6.

the small number of Jewish partners in dialogue. Most Jews are wary of this new phenomenon, fearing that its root is a false philosemitism, which could be used whenever it is opportune. In this connection, Eckert asks what the relationship of Christians and Jews should be. He clearly says that missionary activity will only widen the gulf between both sides. Both sides come to dialogue for different reasons: Christians ask how both can come together, while Jews ask how they can live together.<sup>52</sup>

The Churches did not hand down any further declarations until a decision was made in 1957 by one of the regional Protestant Church synods regarding missionary activity.<sup>53</sup> It stated that missionizing among the Jews was just as important as among the "heathens". This, more than any other decision, shows that there was a small minority interested in a sincere dialogue without hidden agendas, while the majority apparently did not draw any lessons from the Holocaust. They were obviously unaware of the role the Church has had throughout the ages in forming and perpetuating antisemitic stereotypes.

A much more sincere project was born in 1958 by a decision of the Protestant Church in Berlin-Brandenburg. "Aktion Versöhnungszeichen" (later called Aktion Sühnezeichen) was called into existence. At the beginning, volunteers were to work in Poland, the Soviet Union and Israel on building up hospitals

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<sup>52</sup> Eckert, "Christlich-jüdische Begegnung", 7.

<sup>53</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix, (Hrsg.) Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 549-550.

villages, settlements, churches and so forth. These acts should not be misinterpreted as merely Wiedergutmachung, but in addition to that, as asking for forgiveness. It was to take a few more years until the project got off the ground. Today it encompasses volunteer service in Israel, a number of East and West European states, as well as work at several concentration camps.

The vocation of the DKR became apparent in an article in the Allgemeine Jüdische Illustrierte on the occasion of the first Woche der Brüderlichkeit:<sup>54</sup>

Die deutschen Gesellschaften [für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit] sind eine Organisation, deren Anliegen natürlicherweise vor allem das blutdurchtränkte Problem des Antisemitismus ist. Der Antisemitismus wird dabei als lediglich eine Form des Vorurteils aufgefasst. Der eigentliche Feind, gegen den es den Kampf zu führen gilt, ist das Vorurteil an sich, diese krankhafte Veranlagung der Seele und des Geistes, aus der so viel Unheil, giftiger Hass und martervoller Verfolgung gekommen ist.

The campaign against antisemitism was to become one of the major focuses of the DKR during the 1950s, together with the educational challenge.

The Woche der Brüderlichkeit is also a concept taken over from the NCCJ. In 1950, an organization was set up with Clinchy at its head, calling itself World Brotherhood. It aimed at protecting all persecuted minorities throughout the world. All forms of discrimination were to be banned from school, church and

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<sup>54</sup> "Die praktische Überwindung der Vorurteile" in Allgemeine Jüdische Illustrierte, Jhrg. 2, Nr. 6/7, März, 1952, p. 3. Sonderausgabe zur "Woche der Brüderlichkeit" vom 9. bis 16. März 1952.

communal work. Chapters were set up all over the world, even as far away as Asia. For a time the ICCJ and World Brotherhood were the same organization. After a few years, they separated, for reasons not relevant to our account.

The stage was now set for the DKR to set out on its course. The first post-war years of Christian-Jewish cooperation can be characterized as Jews and Christians dealing with social issues, rather than religious ones. It is, in this respect, no different from other attempts at interfaith relations. Looking at the Freiburger Rundbrief of the early 1950s, for example, reveals that little attention was paid to grappling with religious issues between Jews and Christians. Far more attention is paid to political issues. The time was simply not right for an exploration of one's own heritage, something which can be a very frightening experience. The Schwalbacher Thesen also fit into this framework. They take the progressive Ten Points of Seelisberg, and supplement them with Christian sources and outlooks. While the Seelisberg points are sufficiently vague to allow for various interpretations, the Schwalbacher Thesen reveal the stage of liberal Christian thought at the beginning of the 1950s. Christian-Jewish dialogue had a long way to go still, but these points developed by the DKR are a pioneering step towards a religious rapprochement.

The main thrust of the DKR at this stage was not so much on the abstract theological level, but rather to effect a change in which Jews and Judaism were taught in Christian religious



education at school. A second point of emphasis was fostering tolerance and better understanding between various segments of society, not only between Jews and Christians.

## CHAPTER 2

### The DKR and Political Involvement

#### What is the DKR?

The DKR is an umbrella organization of Associations for Christian-Jewish understanding. By the early 1960s there were already twenty-nine such associations throughout the Federal Republic and West Berlin. Each of these organizations is autonomous, with three chairpersons, a Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew. The DKR, and its member organizations, found its genesis, as discussed in the previous chapter, with the activities of Everett Clinchy and the National Conference of Christians and Jews, just after the end of the Second World War. The way, the individual Associations were started was to call upon various local personalities to set them up. There was no grass roots movement. This is understandable at the beginning, but it was to influence the organization in the years to come.

Erich Lüth gives us an insight into the beginning of the DKR. After going into the connection with the NCCJ, he talks about prejudice against whole groups of people. He felt that manifestations of arrogance actually covered up an inferiority

complex. The case of the German is especially poignant. A super human is constructed. In reality, it is nothing more than the "Kraftmeierei ethisch und geistig Unterentwickelter. Sie war eine Prunkfassade, hinter der das dumpfe Nichts gähnte".<sup>1</sup> When, in 1945, the Americans came with an academically perfected concept, they maintained that it was not enough to fight antisemitism. They probably were right, Lüth said, but it did not work. That model was suited for the United States. Without a willingness among Germans for self-examination, no struggle against prejudice would be successful.<sup>2</sup>

Ohne den Willen der Deutschen zur Selbsterkenntnis wäre das akademische Konzept der Bekämpfung von Gruppenvorurteilen undurchführbar geworden. Umerziehung durch andere ist mieslich. Selbsterziehung, die aus den Quellen eigener Erfahrung und Einsicht schöpft, ist ungleich wirksamer und erfolgversprechender.

Saying something about the fate of European Jewry was the baptism by fire for this concept of self-education, Lüth said.

The example of an association created from above is the Munich Association, which is the oldest.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Clinchy approached the mayor of Munich, Dr. Karl Scharnagl, with the request to set up an organization similar to the NCCJ. Scharnagl called the "Komitee zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus" into existence. Soon

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<sup>1</sup> Erich Lüth, "Unsere Brüder haben viele Farben", Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XVII, no. 50, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Herbert Liebmann, "20 Jahre Münchener Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XXIII, no. 17, 28 July, 1968, 11.

this committee came to the conclusion that more should be done than merely fighting antisemitism. The committee should fight "for" something, and not only "against". The outcome was that an association for Jewish-Christian cooperation was formed, with, at its core, the relations between the two religions. This would be done, however, in the context of an exploration of stereotypes of all kinds within German society. Dr. Josef Brandlmeier, the executive secretary (in 1968), provided numbers as to the growth of the Association. At its inception, on July 9, 1948, it had 25 members. Seven years later, there were 155 members. There had been a steady increase from the very beginning. In 1968, Brandlmeier said, there were 945 members. He broke that down according to religion. Forty percent were Catholic, 29 percent were Protestant, and 15% Jews. Brandlmeier complained that the Association had trouble attracting the youth to its events. When approached, the typical answer was that what transpired during the Third Reich does not affect them. They had other, more important, things to worry about.

The Berlin Association, established in May, 1949, had similar goals. In the introduction to a booklet to mark the 30th anniversary of the Association Ella Barowsky says the following about the aims:<sup>4</sup>

Der Schwerpunkt ihrer Arbeit, der schon in ihren  
Namen zum Ausdruck kommt, sah und sieht die  
Gesellschaft in ihren Beitrag zu einem

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<sup>4</sup> Ella Barowsky, "Rückblick auf 30 Jahre", in Toleranz und Brüderlichkeit: 30 Jahre Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit in Berlin, (Berlin, 1979), 8.

verständnisvollen, fruchtbaren, nachbarlich-mitmenschlichen Zusammenleben und -wirken von Juden und Nichtjuden in Deutschland....

Die Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit sieht das den Juden und Christen gemeinsame religiöse Fundament als gute Voraussetzung für das Kennen- und Verstehenlernen von Juden und Christen zur geistigen Überwindung des Antisemitismus an....

Die Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus und anderer Vorurteile ist eine immerwährende pädagogische Aufgabe, die alle Altersstufen und alle Lebensbereiche angeht. Die Gesellschaft legt deshalb auf die Mitarbeit der Schulen grössten Wert; sie hat selbst mehrmals in jedem Jahr Jugendseminare über verschiedene aktuelle Themen veranstaltet, deren Inhalt sich für die Behandlung der mitmenschlichen Beziehungen und des Toleranz-Gebots eignete.

We see the struggle against antisemitism appearing over and over again in other Associations as well. That there was a lot to be done could be seen by the events around the turn of the year 1959/60, and later on with the Nazi trials, and the debate surrounding a statute of limitations on Nazi murder crimes. These topics will be dealt with in due course.

Following the example of the United States, the DKR held, as of 1952, a yearly Woche der Brüderlichkeit. It was modelled on the NCCJ Brotherhood week, with a main event, followed by smaller events at the individual Associations. In a special issue of the Allgemeine Jüdische Illustrierte, there is a diagram of the activities each association should be engaged in. These include providing lecturers, discussion groups, statements to the press, literature on various topics, and the use of radio and film (this was before the time of television in Germany). The recipients

would be all sectors of society.<sup>5</sup> The Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung carried greetings from high government officials each year, along with statements from the leadership of the DKR in a special issue. Appended to it, was a list of all the activities which were to take place during the week throughout the Federal Republic. Just by looking at the volume of addresses printed in this newspaper, one can trace the course of Jewish-Christian relations over the decade of the 1960s. At the beginning, we find profuse apologies for the antisemitic incidents in Germany in 1959/60, together with strong statements of resolve to root out these phenomena. The addresses reach a crescendo with the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican Council declaration concerning Catholic relations with the Jews. Another high is reached after the outbreak of the Six-Day-War. Afterwards, it tapers off into a few statements. This is due to the strained relations between Jews and Christians following the disappointing response of the Churches to the threat to Israel's survival in 1967.

Just as the Woche der Brüderlichkeit was held each year, there was the perennial criticism that the week had no significance. Leopold Goldschmidt, the general secretary of the DKR, addressed this issue. Critics would say that it was a commendable private function, implying that it had no business being made a public event, with radio and television around.

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<sup>5</sup> "Die praktische Überwindung der Vorurteile", in Allgemeine Jüdische Illustrierte, vol. 2, no. 6/7, March, 1952, 3.



Goldschmidt retorted by saying:<sup>6</sup>

Demnach wäre also all dies Privatangelegenheit: die 29 Gesellschaften in der Bundesrepublik; der Deutsche Koordinierungsrat; unsere ständige in Tiefe und Breite wachsende Tätigkeit; die Tatsache, dass zahllose namhafte Persönlichkeiten in dieser "Woche" sich brüderlich an das Volk wenden; dass der Herr Bundespräsident... am 5. März dieses Jahres in der Paulskirche zu Frankfurt den Auftakt geben wird; der Versuch einer Proklamierung der Gedanken der Brüderlichkeit, Toleranz, Verständigung, Versöhnung einmal im Jahre -- dass wäre eine Privatangelegenheit unserer Gesellschaften -- und also nicht unserer Gesellschaft!...

Man sollte jede Stunde brüderlich, tolerant, voll Verständnis für den Mitmenschen sein; aber gerade weil man es so oft nicht ist, bedarf man der besonderen Anlässe und Anstösse, um sich dieser Pflichten besser bewusst zu werden, öffentlich und privat.

Among those who support the concept of the Woche der Brüderlichkeit, there are also critics of the way it is being run. Heinz Galinski felt that the large number of activities to mark the week were not the optimal means to reach those portions of society who remain on the sidelines.<sup>7</sup> He referred to problems specific to the Berlin Association. That these are justified, is evidenced by the fact that the DKR was displeased with Berlin's attitude. Galinski said that there were those who question the validity of the Woche as a whole. This would especially be the case in view of a lack of response by that Association to such

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<sup>6</sup> Leopold Goldschmidt, "Nichts verloren auf Terminkalendern?", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XV no. 49, March 3, 1961, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Heinz Galinski, "Gedanken zur Woche der Brüderlichkeit", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XIX, no. 49, 5 March, 1965, 11. This article appears in the section "Hier hat Berlin das Wort".

political issues as relations with the State of Israel and the statute of limitations on Nazi crimes. The Association would lose its raison d'être otherwise, he continued. Galinski felt that the year 1965 was the crucial one. Especially with the deliberations going on in Rome concerning Vatican II, a strong statement would be necessary. That Galinski's criticism was not pulled out of thin air is underscored by comments made by Goldschmidt himself. In a report on the annual general meeting of 1963, Goldschmidt complained that, as soon as the word "politics" came up, the consensus fell apart.<sup>8</sup>

We will see that the DKR did do something which invigorated it. A new leadership took over. The style of leadership also changed. Leopold Goldschmidt had much greater latitude to lay down policy under the old guard. The new chairmen became executive chairmen, with the general secretary implementing those decisions. All three, Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson, Father Willehad Paul Eckert and Reverend Martin Stöhr, became much more high profile leaders than their predecessors.

Eckert provides us with the changed goals of the DKR after the new leadership took over. He reviewed what had happened up to that moment (1968) on the international scene of Jewish-Christian relations. At a time of greatest peril, Israel received little support from the Churches in the United States and elsewhere, precipitating a crisis in these relations. The way out of it is,

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<sup>8</sup> Willy Sage, "Neue Aufgaben warten; Mitgliederversammlung des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XVIII, no. 18, 2 August, 1963, 15.

according to Eckert, to realize what the concept of peoplehood means to Jews.

Diese aus der Krise gewonnenen Einsichten in die Bedingungen eines jüdisch-christlichen Dialogs gelten nicht nur für Amerika. Auch wir in Deutschland müssen uns dieser Thematik stellen. "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit", Ueberwindung antisemitischer Vorurteile waren wichtige Aufgaben, denen sich die Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit gewidmet haben und auch in Zukunft noch widmen müssen, denn die Geister der Vergangenheit sind nur ungenügend gebannt. Aber eine neue Aufgabe hat sich gestellt, Vertiefung in das, was jüdische Existenz ausmacht, die Entdeckung des Judentums für die christliche Theologie, das Erfassen dessen, was das Land Israel bedeutet.

#### The setting

The 1960s were a time of turbulence in West Germany. Many changes were taking place, and a new generation was growing up. The Second World War was starting to fade into the distance, and, because of the economic miracle, there was a sense of optimism. The state of relations between the two German states was characterized by high tension. The first Berlin crisis in ten years had taken place in 1958, and would escalate in 1961. West Germany had become a respected member of the international community, and an economic power to be reckoned with. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was careful to maintain a pro-Western policy, especially now that the Federal Republic was a member of NATO. The FRG still held on to the doctrine of being the sole representative of all the Germans in east and west, laid down in the Hallstein Doctrine. This doctrine, as stated before,

specified that any country maintaining diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic, and establishing relations with the Democratic Republic would automatically jeopardize its ties. For fear that Third World countries might establish relations with the GDR, the FRG was willing to make concessions. This doctrine turned out to be the weak point of West German foreign policy, and was extensively used by several countries, especially Arab ones. The Federal Republic saw itself unable to progress on the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel.

Both sides had, at different times, expressed an interest in normalization, with the Germans pressing for it just after the Wiedergutmachung treaty had been signed. The Israelis were, of course, not ready for it. Later on, the Israelis tried to normalize relations, but were met with West German silence, now that the Hallstein Doctrine had been passed. In the mid-1950s, the Federal Republic started to pursue its own foreign policy. In the Middle East, one can discern three main goals.<sup>9</sup> First was to avoid recognition of the GDR by other states in the region. The second goal was to prevent the Soviet Union from getting a foothold in the region. President Nasser of Egypt knew how to use the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union to his own advantage. The United States had refused to help Egypt build the Aswan dam, giving it a pretext to turn to the Soviet Union. The Federal Republic had a long-standing interest in

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<sup>9</sup> Deligdisch, Jekutiel - Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zum Staate Israel: Eine Zusammenfassung der Entwicklung seit 1949 (Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1974), 60-62.

relations with Egypt. It was not burdened by a colonial past, as France and Britain were in the area. The main reason for cooperation was political: stopping the Soviet Union. Economic interests also played a part. The third main goal was a security one. It had to do with the balance of power between the two super powers. Israel was a stable factor on the Western side, and had proved itself militarily. Having military agreements with Israel contributed, in the eyes of the Germans to a stabilization in the whole area. Secret arms deals had been signed by Franz Josef Strauss, defense minister, and Shimon Peres, for the sale of the "Uzi" submachine gun.

Relations with Israel were characterized by another event, which had a positive reaction in Jerusalem. In the aftermath of the 1956 Sinai war, the United Nations had imposed sanctions on Israel. West Germany, not being a member of the UN, ignored its statements, and those of the United States, and staunchly kept to the reparations agreement of 1952. Ben Gurion decided that previous reservations should be discarded, and approached the Germans on the issue of diplomatic relations. The Federal Republic was not prepared to engage in it at that point. Deligdisch concludes that, over all, relations deteriorated between the two states, as compared to the period when the Wiedergutmachung was signed.

For the DKR, the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel was of great concern. The individual associations for Christian-Jewish cooperation had emphasized the existence of Israel during



the last few years, along with the struggle against antisemitism. This was carried over from the 1950s when the DKR saw education for tolerance as its main objective. Willehad Eckert refers to this in an article.<sup>10</sup> He turns specifically towards religious education as an arena for fighting prejudice. A reevaluation of Christian teachings concerning the Jews must be initiated. One of the commissions of the DKR responsible for the dissemination of such educational materials was the educators' commission. This commission had organized conferences about the nature of antisemitism. One of the members, in the annual general meeting in 1960, analyzed the phenomenon. He fits it into the framework of hatred of otherness. He warns that antisemitism shouldn't be turned into a taboo about which one will not talk. It could be a symptom of something far less easy to detect.<sup>11</sup> The activities of the educators' commission were aimed at two goals: to get rid of antisemitism and to get rid of intolerance and prejudice. The main targets of such educational programs are the schools where they can be implemented with greatest effect. The knowledge of a complex reality will prevent hatred from cropping up, it was felt. The conditions seemed to be right for this program because Germans were starting to confront the past. The commission did concede that a public interest in the past does not automatically

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<sup>10</sup> Eckert, "Christlich-jüdische Begegnung in Deutschland nach 1945", 6-7.

<sup>11</sup> Bundesarchiv Koblenz (Henceforth "BA"), collection B259, File 630, "Mitgliederversammlung 1960", "Niederschrift Mitgliederversammlung, 12 Juni, 1960, Düsseldorf".



translate into a greater grappling with the issue in the schools. Since the regional ministries of education are autonomous in their choice of texts for class, the process is slow. It seemed more opportune to have the educators' commission present its case at the various ministries, and make sure that pertinent textbooks were revised.

### The antisemitic incidents of 1959/60

A wave of antisemitic incidents rolled over West Germany which started at the end of 1959, around Christmas. This wave provoked a bitter reaction abroad. The Federal Government was keen on finding an explanation, and published a White Book about the whole affair.<sup>12</sup> The document is interesting in that it goes into great detail to identify the individual acts, and try to find a culprit responsible for the whole series. In addition, a study is made about the state of knowledge about the Holocaust in Germany.

Gerhard Schröder, the federal interior minister, and author of this book sees several reasons for the lack of knowledge in schools. Teachers have not received clear-cut directives concerning the material which has to be taught. There is a genuine sense of perplexity as to how to deal with the issue

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<sup>12</sup> Die antisemitischen und nazistischen Vorfälle: Weissbuch und Erklärung der Bundesregierung (Bonn, 1960).

without alienating students and parents. There is also pressure from parents who don't want their children to know what went on in the Third Reich.<sup>13</sup> He says, however, that in other countries, knowledge of the past is also not much better. As to the incidents themselves, Schröder makes veiled references to a communist plot which is exploiting this wave of incidents. The report sees, however, no overarching political motivation. Only eight percent of those arrested identify themselves as extremists of the right or the left. Another 24 percent cite unresolved antisemitic, anti-democratic or Nazi ideas. The vast majority can be traced to rowdies.<sup>14</sup> It is clear that the report was written after foreign responses were very negative. West Germany was trying to bolster its image in the West, and portray itself as a loyal member of the Western alliance. The last thing it needed was being accused of not having come to terms with the past. It was easy to blame communist plots orchestrated by the arch-rival, East Germany.<sup>15</sup>

Seit Jahren betreiben die Kommunisten eine Propagandakampagne, die darauf gerichtet ist, die Bundesrepublik als faschistisch, militaristisch und Revanchistisch vor der Weltöffentlichkeit zu diffamieren. Das Ziel dieser Kampagne ist, die Bundesrepublik bei ihren westlichen Partnern und den östlichen Nachbarn als Friedenstörer hinzustellen... und damit den Weg freizumachen für die Anerkennung der Sowjetzone.

<sup>13</sup> Die antisemitischen und nazistischen Vorfälle, 15-17.

<sup>14</sup> See chart, Die antisemitischen und nazistischen Vorfälle, 50.

<sup>15</sup> Die antisemitischen und nazistischen Vorfälle, 60-61.

It is doubtful whether anyone in Bonn believed the communist conspiracy theory, but it afforded a convenient scapegoat in that time of high tension between East and West.

The DKR had already recognized that one of the key elements to combat reactionary sentiments was to educate the youth.<sup>16</sup> The general secretary, Leopold Goldschmidt, maintained that the knowledge of recent history was very lacking in schools. He could not point to a specific reason why this was the case. Are the teachers, the school system or the parents responsible? He disagrees with people who interpret the past incidents as the last remnants of National Socialism, which will soon vanish. He has a much more pessimistic attitude. Citing several newspaper articles, he concludes that such excesses could recur at any time because the ground is fertile.<sup>17</sup> Many of the old Nazis were still in positions of influence. Even granting that the majority might have changed their outlook after the war, there was still a small remnant. These few people could still fuel these feelings merely by their presence in high positions, becoming role models of sorts. To counteract this phenomenon, the DKR came out with a statement calling for the removal of all people from public

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<sup>16</sup> See "'Gegen die Unwissenheit ankämpfen': Die Aufgabe der Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit" in Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland (henceforth Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung), vol. XIV, no. 12, 19 June 1959, 1.

<sup>17</sup> BA B259, File 630, "Mitgliederversammlung 1960", "Niederschrift über die Mitgliederversammlung, 12 Juni, 1960, Düsseldorf".

### Eichmann

In April, 1960, the world found out that Adolf Eichmann, one of the most sought after criminals responsible for the Holocaust had been captured in Argentina and had been brought to Israel to stand trial. He was the head of the "Judenreferat" of the Gestapo. The tipoff as to the whereabouts of Eichmann was given by the public prosecutor of Frankfurt, Dr. Fritz Bauer. He had found out that Eichmann was living in a South American country. At some point, a rumor was spread that he was hiding in a Middle Eastern country. It was intended as a false lead in order not to arouse his suspicion. After his capture, the main question which was raised in Germany was not so much the revelations of the crimes he had committed, but more the manner in which he had been captured. Deutschkron gives us some statistics.<sup>20</sup> Fifty-four percent of all men and 42 percent of all women felt that Eichmann's kidnapping was not legal. She qualifies this number by saying that some were opposed because they did not want to create an impression that kidnapping as such was a legal act. At the time, it was common for people to be forcibly dragged away in the context of the East-West conflict. A large percentage did not have an opinion on whether it was right to kidnap him and have him stand trial. It was conspicuous that the German government did not express an opinion on the case, although privately, some did say that they could not endorse kidnapping, but they were not

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<sup>20</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 145.

displeased that Eichmann finally had to show up in court.

The concern of the West German government was not so much whether there would be a fair trial, but rather, what influence it would have on world public opinion concerning Germany. The authorities were concerned that revelations of atrocities would soil the German reputation. In a press conference just before the trial was to get under way, Adenauer expressed it in the following way.<sup>21</sup>

Der Eichmann-Prozess macht mir natürlich Sorgen, nicht nur der Prozess als solcher. Eichmann wird das zuteil werden, was er verdient. Ich habe zu der Rechtspflege in Israel volles Vertrauen. Aber ich habe gewisse Sorgen wegen der Rückwirkungen, was da erörtert werden wird, auf das Urteil über uns Deutsche überhaupt.

In German public opinion, there was a relatively small number who had no problem with a trial being held in Israel. Deutschkron remarks that the percentage (16%) was roughly equivalent to the usual pro-Israeli sentiments among Germans. Thirty percent thought that an international tribunal might be better suited to deal with the trial, since there would be less of a chance of a prejudiced court. Another 28% thought that the trial should take place in Germany- itself. Only two percent maintained that Eichmann should not be prosecuted at all.

On the eve of the trial, Adenauer held a press conference in which he maintained the following:<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Deligdisch, Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik, 66. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Deligdisch, Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik, 66.

Man solle nicht vergessen, dass hier in Deutschland selbst nationalsozialistische Deutsche an Deutschen genau dieselben Verbrechen begangen haben, wie Eichmann sie an den Juden vollbracht hat... und dass die... allermeisten Menschen, wenn sie irgend-einen jüdischen Mitbürger helfen konnten, das mit Freude getan haben und dass es ein Unrecht wäre, wenn man den Stab über alle Deutsche brechen würde.

Whether Adenauer actually believed what he was saying can be debated. Most of the people who had done something for German Jews were communists or social democrats, who were also subjected to persecution. He interpreted his friendship with Ben Gurion, which had developed since their meeting in New York in 1960, as a proof of Ben Gurion's opinion of the whole of the German people, not just a personal friendship. Ben Gurion had said some time earlier that the younger generation was not to be held responsible for the deeds of their parents. It is understandable that this was not well received in Israel at the time.

The German government decided not to demand the extradition of Eichmann from Israel to Germany for a number of reasons. First of all, it did not want to enter a tug of war with Israel over legal principles. It would have sent the wrong signal to the world, namely that it did not have confidence in their ability to let justice be done to Eichmann. A further reason was that there was a difference in Israeli and German law. In contrast to the former, Germany did not have capital punishment. Eichmann would not be able to get what he deserved, according to Eugen Gerstenmeier, speaker of the Bundestag.

The trial was incomprehensible, as Deutschkron put it. She did not mean that it was a mistrial, but that it surpassed human



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capability to comprehend it. The world was faced with a man of medium intelligence, who could have easily been an average small-town official. He was a person who "simply followed orders", who was not a highly visible Nazi official. It was simply unfathomable that such a meek-looking man could be responsible for the smooth running of a massive murder operation. He would straighten out obstacles preventing the trains from arriving on time at the death camps. The daily reports on the trial forced the Germans to confront the Holocaust, and try to come to terms with it. Most of the major German newspapers sent correspondents to cover the trial, and they found themselves in a position where they were unofficial representatives of the German people. An article written by Albert Wucher, correspondent of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of Munich, is very interesting.<sup>23</sup> He is caught off guard when his expectations of the Israeli reactions to a German reporter are shattered. He had expected a cold attitude, but found a friendly one, sometimes assertively so. On the other side, the Israeli stereotypes are also shattered. In the words of one young telephone operator:<sup>24</sup>

Sie wissen nicht was für uns - wir sind alle Studenten... - was für uns dieser Prozess bedeutet. Ich schlafe nicht mehr, ich bin völlig fertig. Für mich sind die Deutschen ein Volk von Mördern, sie haben die "Endlösung" auf dem Gewissen; ich habe

<sup>23</sup> Albert Wucher, "So viele Fragen an das deutsche Volk: Begegnungen und Gesprächen in Jerusalem" in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (München), 25.5.1961, reprinted in Hans Lamm (Hrsg.), *Der Eichmann-Prozess in der deutschen öffentlichen Meinung* (Frankfurt, 1961), 25-31.

<sup>24</sup> Wucher, "So viele Fragen an das deutsche Volk", 26-27.

nie etwas anderes gehört, ich kenne nur Menschen, die in Deutschland gelitten haben, denen die Deutschen die Eltern, die Geschwistern, die Verwandten ermordet haben... Und nun kommen Sie nach Israel. Wir vermitteln Ihnen die Telefonverbindungen, Sie bringen uns ihre Fernschreiben. Wir sprechen miteinander, und gelegentlich gibt es sogar etwas zu lachen. Die deutschen Reporter sind nicht anders als die übrigen Ausländer, vielleicht ein wenig steifer, formeller, leiser. Wir finden sie sympatisch. Und das sollen dieselben Deutschen sein...?... Das Volk der "Endlösung" - und die ersten Deutschen, die ich treffe, finde ich sympatisch!

The example of Probst Heinrich Grüber was a case in point. The Israelis were suddenly confronted with a person who did not fit the stereotype. He had tried to help Jews escape Nazi Germany and ended up in Dachau himself. He testified in the trial that his pleas to Eichmann were totally ineffective. Israelis kept asking how it was possible that a people which brought forth such great musicians and philosophers could do such a thing. How could such a people even let something like that happen? Wucher was asked constantly whether those Germans, who seem so friendly, could, under certain circumstances, also commit such horrendous atrocities.<sup>25</sup>

Oft und oft bekam ich zu hören: Wir sagen nicht, Eichmann ist Deutschland, und auch nicht, alle Deutsche sind Eichmänner. Aber wir fragen Sie, war nicht in Eichmann typisch Deutsches, haben nicht alle Deutschen etwas von Eichmann in sich? Und heute nicht mehr? Oder schlummert es nur, weil es ihnen gut geht?

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<sup>25</sup> Wucher, "So viele Fragen an das deutsche Volk", 27.

The editorial in Die Zeit,<sup>26</sup> published just before the concluding remarks of the prosecution and defense says that, in a certain sense, the trial was a failure. The prosecution wanted to charge a man with perpetrating these atrocities, with a small circle of cronies. Instead, it showed the world that many people could be turned into "bloodthirsty beasts", with the aid of propaganda, commands, alcohol. The people who held their fingers to the trigger were normal before and afterwards. The trial turned out to be an indictment of an era, not only of one person. Eichmann was prepared to commit these crimes because he had sworn loyalty. Pendorf concludes:<sup>27</sup>

Das ist es, was viel fürchterlicher ist als hier ein Sadist und dort ein brutaler Schlächter: die unheimliche Fähigkeit von Menschen, sich selbst zu Robotern auch des schrecklichsten zu degradieren, sich dessen zu entkleiden, was den Menschen zum Menschen macht, nämlich der Verantwortung für das eigene Tun. Dieses aber kann uns und anderen und überall alle Tage wieder passieren. Das ist das bittere Fazit dieses Prozesses.

Deutschkron gives us some interesting statistics about the number of people who were following the trial in the media. According to a survey, 26 percent of the people read the reports of the trial regularly, 48 percent read them periodically, while 22 percent admitted that they did not read any of them. This has to be clarified. One has to take into account that there were 114

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<sup>26</sup> Robert Pendorf, "'Weil ich Treue geschworen hatte...': Das Fazit des Eichmann-Prozesses vor den Schlussplädoyers", in Die Zeit, 21 July, 1961, reprinted in Lamm, Der Eichmann-Prozess, 44-46.

<sup>27</sup> Pendorf, "Weil ich Treue geschworen hatte...", 45-46.

sessions of the court, and probably just as many reports. Furthermore, television gave nightly coverage of the proceedings, just after the eight o'clock news. Here, an average of 50 to 60 percent of TV viewers followed the summaries. The main interest in the trial was exhibited by people 15 to 34 years of age, and those 45 to 64 years old. Those over the age of 65 had the least interest, probably because they were in their best years during the war.<sup>28</sup>

Church circles also dealt with the Eichmann trial. The German Catholic bishops published a declaration on 31 May, 1961, dealing with the trial.<sup>29</sup> They expressed concern about the it, and the facts which came to light. It was imperative, they said, that such crimes do not recur. The utmost must be done to retribute the injustice done to the Jews, not only of a material kind. Some kind of atonement has to be done for the injustice. They also recall those Christians who helped Jews find a place to hide, sometimes paying for it with their lives. On the Protestant side, mention of the Eichmann trial was made in the context of the 1961 Berlin Kirchentag, on July 22, 1961. In the working group concerning relations between Jews and Christians, the authors say:<sup>30</sup>

Der gegenwärtig in Jerusalem stattfindende Prozess

<sup>28</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 157-158.

<sup>29</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 241.

<sup>30</sup> Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 553.

geht uns alle an. Wir evangelischen Christen in Deutschland erkennen, dass wir darin schuldhaft verwickelt sind. Im Zeichen des Umdenkens und der Umkehr bitten wir die deutsche Öffentlichkeit, für folgendes einzutreten:

1. Eltern und Erzieher sollten gegenüber der jungen Generation das Schweigen brechen, eigenes Versagen eingestehen und die Ursprünge der Verbrechen ans Licht bringen, damit wir gemeinsam lernen, unsere Gegenwart zu bestehen...

2. Die Unmenschlichkeit zwangsläufiger Befehlssysteme und die Berufung auf den sog. Befehlsnotstand müssen uns vor den unmenschlichen Möglichkeiten moderner Gesellschafts- und Staatsorganisationen warnen. Wir müssen bereit sein eigene politische Verantwortung auch unter Risiko wahrzunehmen.

The DKR itself did not come out with a statement on the trial, but in the annual general meeting of 1960, Leopold Goldschmidt talked about possible repercussions.<sup>31</sup> He asked rhetorically whether any ex-Nazis or neo-Nazis would turn around and reexamine their attitudes as a result of the trial. His negative assumption was borne out by the percentage of people who did not want anything to do with the trial. There would always be a remnant of people who are the "ewig gestrigen", but they should not be allowed to be the barometer of popular sentiment. When the trial did get under way, there was universal agreement within the DKR that it was being handled in exemplary openness.

The verdict was spoken in December, 1961. It was surprising that there was much less interest in it. There seemed to be a tiredness with the trial, already while witnesses were still being called to testify. When asked why this was the case, an

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<sup>31</sup> BA B259, File 630, Mitgliederversammlung 1960, "Niederschrift über die Mitgliederversammlung 12 Juni, 1960, Düsseldorf".



Israeli journalist said:<sup>32</sup>

Der Prozess gegen Eichmann war das wichtigste! Er hat uns gepackt und aufgewühlt. Ich weiss nicht, wie alle andern darüber denken, aber für mich ist das, was mit Eichmann geschieht, zweitrangig. Das Mass des Verbrechens und des Grauens, das von Eichmann und seinesgleichen ausging, ist so gewaltig, dass unsere menschliche Reaktion auch anders ist, als man es eigentlich vorstellen müsste... Es gibt keine absolut gerechte Strafe oder Sühne für einen kalten, systematisch geplanten und verübten sechsmillionenfachen Mord an unschuldigen Menschen.

We find a similar sentiment in Germany too. Here, the Eichmann trial showed the scope of the Holocaust. It was then only a minor point what sentence he would get. The issues it had raised were not going to be settled by the verdict, and would have a much more lasting effect. Any other verdict except the death penalty would have retroactively vindicated those who had been sentenced in the Nürnberg trials.

Until the very end, Eichmann maintained that he was a victim too. He had no choice but to obey orders to kill. The judges refused to accept this version. He had never thought of giving up his position when faced with carrying out the "Final Solution". He had been the perfect example of an opportunist who decided to go beyond "the call of duty". He could therefore not hide behind the excuse of "Befehlsnotstand".

A sigh of relief was almost audible in Germany when the trial was over, and Eichmann had been condemned to death. The image of the Federal Republic had not been severely tarnished,

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in G. Jasper, "Eichmann", in Judaica, vol. 18, No. 2, June, 1962, 81.



due to the efforts of the judges who made sure that the trial not turn into an indictment of Germany. Everyone was agreed that it was very fair.

After the start of the trial, Israel suddenly became very popular for Germans. In the 1950s there were very few Germans who made a trip to Israel, often going under an assumed name and nationality. Israeli authorities were afraid of assaults on them.<sup>33</sup> Towards the end of the decade, it mellowed, but still there was little travel. With the Eichmann trial, Germans got a better picture of the country through the reports of the German journalists who covered it. It was not possible simply to go to Israel as any normal tourist, first of all due to visa regulations intended to filter out those who had a Nazi past. German tourists had to be prepared to face criticism and uneasy questions.

During this time, the DKR remained conspicuously silent about the trial. The annual general meetings and the material sent out do not reveal otherwise. The reason was that the DKR was not yet clear on whether to become politically involved. Some member associations had doubts as to it, headed by the Berlin Association. One of its chairpersons, Dr. Heinrich Vockel, was the representative of the Federal Republic for Berlin. He had no

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<sup>33</sup> Erich Lüth, a person who had started a campaign entitled "Wir bitten Israel um Frieden" in the early 1950s in Germany, was invited to come to Israel as an official guest. He flew there with the identity of a Belgian Jew. He had to postpone his trip because of violence in connection with the signing of the Wiedergutmachung accord.

interest in contradicting the official policy of the government. His opposition to political involvement centered around the fear that a deterioration of relations with Arab states might be the result of greater pressure. The Aktionsausschuss of the DKR had asked Goldschmidt to write a letter to Adenauer about just this topic in 1960, but no answer had been received. During the Eichmann trial the moment was inopportune. The Federal Republic was trying to maintain a low profile, and efforts in the direction of relations with Israel would be counterproductive. The differences between the DKR and Dr. Heinrich Vockel were unreconcilable, and he resigned his position. The Berlin Association did not, however, leave the DKR. In a sense, the DKR voted with its feet in conveying its attitude towards Israel. In 1960, a first trip to Israel was being organized. Most of the participants were to be educators. There were, however, difficulties to be overcome with visas and the like. After these were overcome and the participants came back, they showed a tremendous sense of enthusiasm for a country which had been able to effect changes without vast amounts of resources.

There was little political involvement as a whole on the part of the DKR. The leadership was trying to change this, urging greater activity. Leopold Goldschmidt felt that it should have the character of political discussion with relevance to Jews and Christians. An example would, of course, be pressing for diplomatic relations with Israel. A decision was taken to have

the individual associations come up with proposals for action.<sup>34</sup> The difficult position emerging from the awkward Hallstein Doctrine could be appreciated, and had a sobering effect. The beginning of the 1960s, with the tensions surrounding Berlin, and finally the erection of the Berlin wall, occupied the attention of most of the members. The leadership of the DKR was afraid that the increase in tensions would lead to nationalist feelings coming up, and consequently to more antisemitism.

#### A problem of communication

A basic problem plagued the DKR during these years. At the annual general meetings resolutions were being passed out by several of the more active member associations, but the feedback was definitely lacking. Goldschmidt complained ceaselessly that he had little more to go on than lists of lectures the Associations were supplying. He was unable to extract any ideas on how to proceed.<sup>35</sup>

Die Berichte enthielten jedoch kaum einen Anhaltspunkt, wie die Gesellschaften über Erziehung, Publizistik, Antisemitismus und alle diese Dinge dächten.

The situation did not become much better later on. Goldschmidt

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<sup>34</sup> BA B259, File 630, "Mitgliederversammlung 1960", Friede mit Israel - Mitteilungsblatt der Gesellschaft für Christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit Hamburg, Nr. 42, August, 1960.

<sup>35</sup> BA B259, File 632, "Geschäftsführerkonferenz, Protokoll, Wiesbaden, 5 Juni, 1961".

suggested that, in addition to mere lists, opinions should be expressed in the activity reports which came out annually. Only this way could the DKR get more clout, and emerge from under the label of a "Verein".<sup>36</sup> The possibility came in connection with the Eichmann trial. He was confident that this increased interest would make the work of the DKR more known.<sup>37</sup> It was, however, short-lived. During the annual general meeting of the next year, there were complaints that there was a small crowd at all the events planned by the individual Associations, and those attending tended to be the same people over and over again. The example of Cologne is cited. M. Sommer, of that Association, gave a lecture entitled "Sind neue Wege für unsere Arbeit notwendig und möglich?"<sup>38</sup> He dealt with the reason why there was such a lack of response to activities. Although the events are public, and that Association has 650 members, only 80 to 100 people show up for lectures. A questionnaire sent around to members received a response of only 14.8 percent.

Sommer saw a complacency in the German people as a whole. In a country where there was a "geistige Disintegration", the

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<sup>36</sup> A Verein is a closed club in which the members have similar interests. In Germany, there are many such Vereine, for example stamp collectors, sports groups. They do not aspire to having a large-scale public audience to whom to address their message to. Since there are many such small Vereine, this is also not necessary. Remaining such a Verein would spell its end.

<sup>37</sup> BA B259, File 632, Mitgliederversammlung 1961, "Protokoll, Mitgliederversammlung, Wiesbaden, 4 Juni, 1961".

<sup>38</sup> BA B259, File 634, Mitgliederversammlung 1962, "Protokoll über die Geschäftsführerkonferenz, Wiesbaden 4 Juni, 1962".

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Holocaust could happen. Less than twenty years later, the Germans were acting as if nothing extraordinary had happened. The question of whether new ways were necessary seemed rhetorical, according to Sommer. He felt that the DKR was too exclusive for the general public. In order to get better feedback, those people who were idols of the time should speak up, in addition to academics. How this was to be achieved, and who those people should be, Sommer left unanswered. He did say that there should be great efforts to reach the youth, with the main emphasis on university students. The DKR should also, in his opinion, cooperate with other groups, such as the adult education schools, religious organizations, and Aktion Sühnezeichen.

It is interesting to note that not much had been achieved during the year since the last annual general meeting in terms of getting ex-Nazis to resign their posts in the government. In 1961, we see the same resolution passed as the previous year, calling for action on this front.<sup>30</sup> It demands the removal of ex-Nazis, including providing authorities with the names of those who had committed crimes during the Holocaust, greater cooperation with other organizations also engaged in intensifying political education (politische Bildungsarbeit), and combatting national socialist periodicals and newspapers with greater

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<sup>30</sup> BA B259, File 632, "Protokoll über die Mitgliederversammlung, Wiesbaden, 4 Juni, 1961".



vigor.<sup>40</sup> In explaining it, Dr. Krause (of the sponsoring Hamburg council) said that the intent was not to embark on a new Inquisition, but to inform political parties of people on the local and regional level with such a past. The educational offensive should be aimed primarily at the "Volkshochschule", the Federal institution for adult education. Tackling the neo-Nazi periodicals will involve localizing the problem and working against it rigorously. A commission should be established to write to various publishing houses and make them sensitive to the problem. After discussion of the proposal, a revised, watered down version was put forward. Now there was no reference to supplying names to authorities, only calling for the removal of such persons. The second point was reformulated more significantly. Next to more determined action against neo-Nazi and antisemitic publications, derogatory references to Judaism and to the preservation of human dignity should be eliminated from textbooks in German, history and religion. Here again, Dr. Vockel has reservations about publishing this statement. He would prefer to see it circulated as an internal memorandum. He was outvoted, and handed over chairmanship of the meeting to another person. The discussion of this resolution offers a unique insight into the actual proceedings of the annual general meeting. In the

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<sup>40</sup> The reference here is to the Deutsche Nationalzeitung und Soldatenzeitung, a weekly newspaper which went to great lengths to insult leading personalities of all major political parties, as well as openly professing antisemitism.



lengthy verbatim record,<sup>41</sup> we see that there were several instances of commotion where the stenographer could no longer copy down the proceedings. There were vast differences of opinion, usually along association lines. A compromise was finally reached when it was decided, after several failed attempts, to make the resolution available to the various associations, and leave it up to their discretion to do as they pleased with it. It satisfied the misgivings of Vockel, as well as the wishes of the more dynamic Associations.

On the international scene, the task of the DKR was to show that there is another image of Germany. Sommer, in his lecture, called to mind a meeting between Germans and Dutch in Holland. It opened the eyes of the Germans to the effects of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, and to the intense hatred of the Dutch for the Germans. International tent camps, like those organized by the Berlin Association, were very good to foster such contacts. The contact with various other countries surrounding the Federal Republic should be intensified, according to Sommer.

In the discussion which followed, some of the members complained that it was very hard to get the youth to participate. The best way to reach them was to start with a small circle and

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<sup>41</sup> In the early 1960s the sessions of the general meeting were written down verbatim. This led to sometimes 180-page transcripts, which are much more enlightening than even the best record of minutes. Later on, after the retirement of Leopold Goldschmidt as general secretary, we witness a shift to short minutes.

work outward from there. Other speakers held that the name of the DKR, referring to Christians and Jews, made certain segments of society unreceptive to its activities. A remedy would be to act in unison with other similar organizations.

The situation of feedback from the individual Associations improved so much apparently that the DKR was able even to publish a summary of their activities in the Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung. We see here a whole spectrum of issues the DKR dealt with.<sup>42</sup> By this time there were 37 Associations. A large emphasis was placed on youth work, with a good deal of response. Mrs. Elisabeth Cremers, executive secretary of the Düsseldorf Association, wrote following about the organization's success in showing the youth the horrors of the Holocaust. There had been a series of conferences on such subjects as Jewish history, history of antisemitism, the State of Israel and the like. Mostly, the students are allowed to miss school in order to attend these conferences.<sup>43</sup>

Welche Erfahrungen werden uns zuteil im Gespräch mit den Jugendlichen? 1. dass sie dankbar sind für sachliche Informationen und froh darüber, sich dadurch ein Urteil bilden zu können; 2. dass wir, die sie zu diesen Gesprächen einladen, bereit sein müssen, ehrlich und mit ganzer Aufrichtigkeit auch über die von ihnen gestellten Fragen zu sprechen.

One of the concerns voiced by these youths is that after the

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<sup>42</sup> "Die Arbeit trägt Früchte; aus den Tätigkeitsberichte der Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XVII, no. 51, 15 March, 1963, 4.

<sup>43</sup> ibid.

excesses of the Nazis, people could be overshooting the mark in the other direction. Praising everything Jewish and not finding any faults at all can lead to resentment too. It is best, according to them, to treat Jews as human beings with their idiosyncracies and misgivings. Other Associations have tried to intensify their cooperation with educational authorities. The case of the Wuppertal Association is instructive. The aim is to have a panel of experts.<sup>44</sup>

Die Aufgabe eines solchen Arbeitskreises sollte eine doppelte sein: Einmal gilt es, den Pädagogen selbst Rüstzeug zu einem offenen und ehrlichen Betrachten der jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit - auch der eigenen Vergangenheit - an die Hand zu geben. Mit der Fülle offizieller Verlautbarungen und Ministerialerlasse zum Thema "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit" ist es nicht getan. Ja, es besteht ernsthaft die Gefahr der Überfütterung und des "zuviel" an Staatsbürgerkunde, politischem Unterricht und wie die Bezeichnungen lauten mögen. Daneben ist in weiten Kreisen der Bevölkerung - auch unter den Pädagogen - eine versteckte Form des öffentlich verfehten Antisemitismus zu bemerken... Diese "stumme Sympathie für nichtöffentliche Meinung" wird durch Grossveranstaltungen repräsentativen Charakters schwerlich überwunden. Hier kann nur in sorgfältige Kleinarbeit Abhilfe geschaffen werden.

Another major focus of the DKR was a study of school books. In textbooks for religious education, there are references to the sole guilt of the Jews for the death of Jesus and God's rejection of the Jews. In history classes, it would be of greater worth to deal with the problem of hatred of foreigners than only with antisemitism. The latter should be seen in the context of the former, in order not to have a fruitless discussion, which can

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

have the opposite effect than affording a more understanding point of view.

The Tätigkeitsberichte also reveal that a number of conferences were organized by various Associations, dealing with topics of Jewish history and theology. This was interpreted as very encouraging, but care should be taken to avoid the pitfalls, according to the DKR.<sup>45</sup>

Gerade bei der positiven Einstellung aller offiziellen Stellen zur christlich-jüdischen Zusammenarbeit, bei der Fülle von Tagungen, Sonderheften, Funk- und Fernsehveranstaltungen zum Thema, von der Flut einschlägiger Literatur auf dem Büchermarkt ganz zu schweigen, gerade bei dieser konjunkturell anmutenden Woge allgemeinen Wohlwollens besteht die Gefahr, die zur Zeit verdunkelten Abgründe gefährlicher, keineswegs überwundener Stimmungen und schlummernder Vorurteile zu übersehen. Sie werden weder durch Verharmlosung noch durch Dramatisierung, sondern nur durch ernste und unermüdliche Kleinarbeit überwunden und ausgeräumt. Die Umkehrung hat mit dem Verschwinden des NS-Staates nicht aufgehört.

#### Statute of Limitations on Manslaughter

The early 1960s witnessed a vast increase in Nazi trials, after a spurt in the mid 1950s. That there was a connection between these efforts and the Eichmann trial cannot be disputed. The Federal Republic was trying to do everything to enhance its image in the world, including initiating a crackdown on fugitive Nazis. At the same time, the first cases of a statute of limitations on crimes came about. It was now fifteen years after

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<sup>45</sup> ibid.

the end of the Second World War. Crimes of manslaughter (Totschlag) which lay back more than fifteen years could no longer be prosecuted. Normally, the calculation of 15 years starts with the time of the crime. The case of the Third Reich was different, because it was at times hard to determine when the crime occurred. Since there was state-sanctioned crime during the twelve years of the regime, trying to determine when exactly a certain crime took place would complicate matters, bogging down the investigations. West German authorities decided to start counting fifteen years from the end of the Third Reich, that is May 8, 1945. Just before the fifteen years were up, the Polish government supplied the Zentralstelle with information concerning ex-Nazis. This necessitated a change in the final date. The Social Democrats pushed for an extension of the period when the crimes could be prosecuted. They claimed that German authorities did not have the unrestricted ability to prosecute cases before 1949 because they did not have absolute sovereignty over the judicial process. There were therefore only eleven years in which evidence could be collected against the accused. The Christian Democrats, and their coalition partner, the Free Democrats, voted this proposal down. Fritz Schäffer, the federal minister of justice, claimed that manslaughter was the least of the offenses during the Third Reich. Most of the cases dealt with murder, subject to a twenty-year deadline. The government did not feel that it had to deal with the matter beyond the immediate concern. That the problem would recur in five years is apparent.



It is telling that no action was taken on the relatively minor cases of manslaughter. Popular sentiment in the 1950s held that the authorities should stop prosecuting crimes which took place such a long time ago. A poll taken in 1958 reveals this: fifty-four percent felt that a long enough time had passed and that no further trials should take place. Only 34 percent supported the statement that those who had murdered should not be allowed to get away unscathed. In concordance with this view, several courts dealt with such cases. The accused were given extremely light sentences.<sup>46</sup>

There have been scholars, Hannah Arendt<sup>47</sup> among them, who claimed that the arrest of Eichmann had led to an intensification of measures to prosecute ex-Nazis. Rückerl says that this is not true.<sup>48</sup>

Die Intensivierung begann bereits eineinhalb Jahre vor der Festnahme Eichmanns und zwar ohne Anstoss aus dem Ausland. Richtig ist dagegen, dass durch die umfangreiche Berichterstattung über den Eichmann-Prozess die Aufmerksamkeit nicht nur der deutschen sondern auch der ausländischen Öffentlichkeit in stärkerem Masse auf die NS-Verbrechen gelenkt wurde und dass dadurch Bemühungen von Organisationen oder Einzelpersonen im Ausland, auf die in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland geführten

<sup>46</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 259 and Rückerl, NS-Verbrechen vor Gericht, 153-155.

<sup>47</sup> Hannah Arendt was herself involved in a controversy over her report of the Eichmann Trial. Originally published in four issues of the New Yorker, she prompted a response from many scholars. (See esp. Die Kontroverse Hannah Arendt - Eichmann und die Juden, (München, 1964)). She claimed that the Jews were partially responsible for the Holocaust because they cooperated with the Nazis.

<sup>48</sup> Rückerl, NS-Verbrechen vor Gericht, 156-157.



Verfahren in irgendeiner Form Einfluss zu nehmen, wuchsen.

The German authorities responsible for prosecuting these criminals had started to gather material in archives around the world, including the United States. Here, the head of the Zentralstelle and two of his co-workers looked through files gathered in connection with the Nürnberg Trials. It was much harder to get information from Poland because there were no diplomatic relations. The Federal government was blamed for not pushing harder for materials. Only in 1963, did the Polish government finally provide the necessary documents to its military mission in Berlin, and from there they went on to the Zentralstelle. The German Democratic Republic had already repeatedly provided material to Western authorities. The material concerned mostly people who were in West German public life, and did have a propaganda aim. The federal prosecutor decided not to answer the letter of his East German counterpart because he was sure that there was a propaganda ploy behind it. He was, however, prepared to accept the documents through the Federal Archives in Koblenz. In other countries the Zentralstelle did have the possibility to look into materials and make extensive use of them, such as in Belgium.

#### Hesitations

The DKR did not express any strong opinions concerning relations with Israel because they understood the difficulties

West Germany had maneuvered itself into as a result of the Hallstein Doctrine. There was an appreciation that the Federal Republic was not going to act immediately on any demand for better relations. It is also evident that there was a vast difference of opinion in terms of how to approach the issue. On the one side were those, headed by Dr. Heinrich Vockel, who were opposed to pressure, and preferred a wait-and-see tactic. It was felt by these people that there wasn't enough information to make an informed decision.<sup>48</sup> The protocol of this officers' meeting mentions that the Jewish participants were cautious about voicing an opinion. Although no further details are supplied, it is reasonable to assume that part of the reason was the position the Jewish community felt itself in at the beginning of the 1960s. Eichmann had just been captured and brought to Israel, and the Federal Republic was not inclined to budge on the issue of Israel. On the other side were those who had been in Israel and who felt that that country was worth the establishment of a diplomatic mission. Several educators' trips had been organized and carried through from 1960 onwards, with great success. The feedback had been so good that more and more of them were going to be held. At first, the process took a time because of fears, real or perceived. The Eichmann trial had strained relations somewhat, and needed to be processed before a greater number of these could be held.

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<sup>48</sup> BA, B259, File 630, "Mitgliederversammlung 1960", "Protokoll über die Geschäftsführerkonferenz, 13 Juni, 1960, Düsseldorf".

Later on, however, trips to Israel became so much more popular. Many of the Associations sponsored several young people to go and be in Israel for a time. An example is the Göttingen Association. In May, 1962, a number of youths came together to prepare for a two-month trip in March to May of the next year. There were extensive briefings about Jewish history, culture, religion, antisemitism, Hebrew, the State of Israel and learning an international repertoire of songs.<sup>50</sup>

#### Calls for Diplomatic Relations with Israel

In 1960, Leopold Goldschmidt was asked by the executive committee of the DKR to send a letter to the chancellor concerning the antisemitic outbreaks at the beginning of the decade. The executive felt it appropriate to mention relations with Israel as well. On February 1, 1960, a letter was sent which contained the following points.<sup>51</sup> Although the difficulties in establishing relations are well known, several things should be taken into consideration. The Federal Republic might be creating the impression that it was not sure that the State of Israel will be able to exist. Especially in view of the antisemitic graffiti, it would display great "Haltung und Gesinnung" if relations were

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<sup>50</sup> "Die Arbeit trägt Früchte; Aus den Tätigkeitsberichten der Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XVII, no. 51, 15 March, 1963, 4.

<sup>51</sup> BA, B258, File 737, "Diplomatische Beziehungen zu Israel" letter to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

established expressly at this time. Another consideration was that German students on campuses were subject to great amounts of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish propaganda from Arab students. Especially at this time this would not be the best form of public relations, to put it mildly. From a purely pragmatic point of view planning trips to Israel was much harder because of a lack of an embassy in West Germany. The letter was never acknowledged or answered by Adenauer. At first, the DKR naively thought that due to the heavy travel schedule of the Chancellor answering simply took a long time. When after several months still no reply had been received, another letter was written. Vockel was opposed to sending both letters because it was an issue of foreign policy, and the DKR did not have the competence to address it. Goldschmidt retorted by saying that the idea of the letter came from several people in the Aachen Association. Goldschmidt felt that this issue was of sufficient importance to be pursued further by the DKR.<sup>52</sup>

This exchange of letters also reveals the workings of the DKR. Its function was more to bring together different opinions voiced in the member associations than an independent policy-making body. If the members did not send in requests, suggestions and so forth, there was little the DKR could do. The board was made up of officers from different associations around the

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<sup>52</sup> As mentioned in a filed memorandum on the subject. Goldschmidt met with Dr. Adolf Freudenberg, one of the co-presidents of the DKR, on May 7, 1960. Both felt that it was necessary to continue on this path despite reservations voiced by Dr. Vockel.

country. There was of course a varying level of activity and thought in each association. The most prominent ones tended to be the Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne, and sometimes the Munich associations. Each had its own set of problems and challenges. Few of these passed on to the attention of the DKR as a whole. The root of the complaints about the inactivity of the various associations stems from this lack in communication and feedback.

### The Nazi Trials

One of the issues the DKR did respond to with great vigor was the handling of the Nazi trials during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Those suspects who were eventually sentenced received such ridiculously low sentences that real doubts arose about the ethics of the judges. Jörg Friedrich is correct in putting his finger on the basic underlying problem.<sup>53</sup>

Die [bundesrepublikanische] Justiz hätte klarstellen müssen, dass der Verbrecherstaat nach verfassungsrichterlichem Urteil eine vom Volk "faktisch anerkannte Kompetenzordnung" gewesen ist. Dass darum auch nicht im Namen des Volkes Recht gesprochen werden könne, weil der Souverän befangen sei und die Rechtsprechung insbesondere. Die Justiz hätte vorschlagen können, einen nationalen Sondergerichtshof zu gründen, der ob der geschichtlichen Einzigartigkeit dieser Taten zu einmalig vom Gesetzgeber zu beschliessendem Ausnahmerecht befugt sei, da zur Tatzeit ausnahmsweise kein Recht gegolten habe. Sie hätte vorschlagen können, ein internationales Gericht einzuberufen, damit die Völker, die von den Tätern geschädigt

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<sup>53</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Anesthetie, 333.

worden sind, an ihrer Aburteilung beteiligt werden könnten.

In other words, the judicial system had to come up with a method of evaluating these crimes according to a system which was not identical with the present post-war one. The basic presumption was that there was a functioning legal system in Germany, and that it was also applicable to crimes no legal system could ever envisage. Superimposing the ordinary judicial system on these crimes of necessity revealed the severe limitations of a system not geared for judging crimes of genocide.

This was aggravated by the fact that many of the people who held positions of influence in the late 50s and 60s had been there during the Third Reich, some even serving on the notorious Sondergerichte of Freisler and his colleagues. The impetus to look into the actions of judges serving in special courts came from an exhibition prepared by Reinhard M. Strecker, a student from Berlin, and shown in Karlsruhe. This exhibition started a whole series of inquiries into cases where there could have been a bending of the rules. Friedrich supplies us with an example of such an inquiry, citing the actual decision of 11 April, 1944, and the decision reached by a commission of inquiry of 1960. The question the commission asked was whether the judge overstepped his competence in condemning this person to death. The verdict of death in 1944 was passed against a certain Georg Hopfe.<sup>54</sup> During an aerial bombing raid on the city of Weimar, he had helped

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<sup>54</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Amnestie, 361-363.



evacuate an older woman from her house, together with her furniture, before her residence was consumed by fire. At one point, he was left alone in the house, and took the opportunity to take half a bottle of perfume, and a small sausage, weighing about half a pound. The court reached the decision that this act constituted plundering, and had to be punished by the severity of the law. No leniency was granted due to the insignificance of the crime itself. The only punishment that could be meted out under the "Volksschädlingsverordnung" was death. That the bottle of perfume and the sausage would be destroyed by fire a few minutes later, did not have any weight, neither did any other form of state sanctioned plundering, such as pulling gold teeth out of corpses. The inquiry into the case did not see anything wrong with the sentence, or with the course of the trial. Hopfe had been found guilty of plundering. This was not the only case of such a miscarriage of justice. Another case was that of a French worker who had, out of his own volition, come to Germany to work. While helping to clear away rubble after a bombing raid, he had salvaged some small items from the ruins. The courts saw this as an example of plundering, and had him executed. Had there been another measure of justice which could deal with such cases, a different conclusion would have been reached. Again, the court reached the decision that the judge was acting within the bounds of the law.<sup>55</sup> All these cases reveal that the judges were engaging in some kind of self-amnesty. They were so absorbed in

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<sup>55</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Amnestie, 359-360

the little details of the trial that they failed to see the absurdity of it all. They refused to consider the possibility that the Nazi courts could be applying a different scale of justice.

The verdicts reached on the issue of the bending of justice were almost all similar. One case based itself on its precedent. By this method the accused judges could be cleared of wrongdoing. This was at the time of the Eichmann trial, so the federal government did not want to create any great sensations. They offered retirement benefits for those judges implicated. One by one, they left their posts and could enjoy the rest of their life in retirement.

The way the judicial system dealt with the "Final Solution" is illustrated by the case of a dog in Treblinka called Barry. He was owned by a guard, who trained him to kill. Upon a command, he would attack prisoners, usually killing them. As soon as the owner was not there, Barry could be patted and stroked without fear. The court felt that Barry's owner was actually the one who bit people, but that Barry was the tool.<sup>58</sup> Projecting this onto a larger scale, guards who mechanically shoved people into gas chambers, or into trenches, were only following orders. They were only the tools of those in charge, namely, Hitler, Himmler and Eichmann. These guards did not feel that they were guilty in any way. They had been taught to be blindly obedient. The archetype of the criminal in the extermination camps was the person who

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<sup>58</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Amnestie, 333-334.

used the setting to satisfy his or her own drive for murder, who used "excessive" means to kill Jews. Those who worked there in "production line" style did not fit the mold. Those who had "disinterestedly" pushed people into the gas chambers were eligible for extenuating circumstances. Those who were engaging in an orgy of beating were more culpable than those who had mechanically inserted the Zyklon-B crystals into the right receptacles. It was not enough that someone had killed 200,000 people in the extermination camp, he or she must have been doing it with the "intent to murder".

A further outrageous decision concerned a pharmacist at Auschwitz, called Dr. Victor Capesius. He had instructed an inmate to sort out teeth packed into fifteen suitcases and melt down the gold he could salvage, and to sort out watches which could be resold. The court held that Dr. Capesius, who engaged in the Selektion, had no interest in killing Jews. He was guilty, however, of greed, wanting to spirit away the gold. The court felt that Dr. Capesius could have been able to get at the gold and the watches without having to kill people going through selection.<sup>57</sup>

Before however condemning the "small cogs" involved with shipping people off to concentration and extermination camps, we have to look at the complex issues involved. Friedrich cites part of the reason for a sentence passed on politically motivated

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<sup>57</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Annestie, 342-343.

murder.<sup>58</sup>

Politische Morde sind in der Welt wie in Deutschland immer vorgekommen. Neuerlich sind jedoch gewisse moderne Staaten unter dem Einfluss radikaler politischer Auffassungen, in Deutschland unter dem Nationalsozialismus, dazu übergegangen, politische Morde oder Massenmorde geradezu zu planen und die Ausführung solcher Bluttaten zu befehlen. Solche blossen Befehlsempfänger unterliegen nicht den kriminologisch erforschten oder jenen jedenfalls ähnlichen persönlichen Tatantrieben. Vielmehr befinden sie sich in der sittlich verwirrenden, mitunter ausweglosen Lage, vom eigenen Staat, der vielen Menschen bei geschickter Massenpropaganda nun einmal als unangezweifelte Autorität zu erscheinen pflegt, mit der Begehung verwerflichster Verbrechen geradezu beauftragt zu werden. Sie befolgen solche Anweisungen unter dem Einfluss politischer Propaganda oder der Befehlsautorität oder ähnlicher Einflüsse ihres eigenen Staates, von welchem sie im Gegenteil die Wahrung von Recht und Ordnung zu erwarten berechtigt sind. Diese gefährlichen Verbrechensantriebe gehen statt von den Befehlsempfängern vom Träger der Staatsmacht aus, unter krassem Missbrauch dieser Macht.

There is of course a danger in hiding behind this ruling, as the High Court of Justice was aware. It said that any person must stay away from state sanctioned crime. If a person does, however, participate in such a crime, extenuating circumstances can have an effect. Participation, according to the court, should of course not be accompanied by enthusiasm. This ruling gives the opportunist who would otherwise not have handled a gun some kind of legal cushion. This ruling did have an effect on the Nazi trials of the 1960s. In the so-called Auschwitz trial of 1965, for example, only eleven people were indicted for the murder of more than two million people. The rest of the defendants were

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<sup>58</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Amnestie, 345.

found not have been capable of withstanding state authority or did not have the intelligence to find a way out. Mostly, the courts could not determine beyond the shadow of a doubt that the defendant was acting out of an urge to murder.<sup>58</sup> The origin of this difficulty is that the courts could not prove that the defendant made a conscious decision to murder the people he dealt with. Following this logic, it is true that such a thing will be very hard to prove. But Friedrich is correct in saying that the whole structure functioned in such a way that only very few people had to be confronted with the decision of whether to murder **these** people, as opposed to **those**.<sup>59</sup> Most of the employees only had to put the Zyklon-B crystals in the receptacle, or push open the doors to let people in. There was no decision to be made. Everything was organized to such a degree that it all functioned automatically.

The DKR monitored the trials for a period of time, and wanted to act on what was going on. The Executive decided to approach professors of jurisprudence, especially criminal justice, and ask them to make their opinions known. Letters, signed by Leopold Goldschmidt, were sent to about fifty professors in West Germany, with exactly the same contents.<sup>61</sup> He laments the fact that in mass murder trials against ex-Nazis, the

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<sup>58</sup> "Es konnte ihm der Täterwille nicht mit letzter Gewissheit nachgewiesen werden".

<sup>59</sup> Friedrich, Die kalte Annestie, 347.

<sup>61</sup> BA B259, File 635, "Mitgliederversammlung 1963", Letter to professors of law at German universities, 12 March, 1963.



courts are using two measures to evaluate the crimes. Most of the sentences handed down imposed only minimum sentences as accessories to murder on the defendants. There were cases where a person was sentenced to three years for the murder of 220 people, or to ten years for killing 15,000. In another case a person was sentenced to four years for the murder of 40,000 Jews, but actually had to be in prison for only one additional month. The rest of the time had already been spent waiting for the trial to begin. Goldschmidt says that the DKR did not want to call the whole judicial system into question, but said that these things worried certain portions of society. He therefore asked these professors to discuss this phenomenon in articles and lectures. There are several newspaper articles which dealt with the problem too. Finally, Goldschmidt called upon these professors to take a position on the subject as soon as possible.

On the very next day, the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland came out with a statement on the very same subject.<sup>82</sup> It asked why it took almost twenty years after the end of the Second World War before the courts started to deal with the criminals of the Nazi time. Now the courts were faced with a mountain of cases, where it was difficult to prove exactly the guilt of the defendants. There were, however, several things which had to be taken into consideration. State terror did not make the options of the defendants numerous. One also had to take the years of

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<sup>82</sup> BA B259, File 635, pamphlet by the Rat der EKD, 13 March, 1963.



refined propaganda into account and its effect on them. It is clear that the German courts could not "purify" the whole of the German people, but could only sentence a few individuals. What they could do, however, was to restore the confidence of concerned people in the judicial process. For this to happen, those found guilty should receive their fair punishment. The courts would also have to deal with the hostility of certain portions of the public who were consternated that ex-Nazis were caught after 17 years, and not left at peace, now that such a long time had already passed. Especially in this hour, the Church should not leave the courts to their own devices, but should offer moral support. The bottom line, however, is that justice must remain justice.

This document is interesting because it perpetuates the myth that the State was extremely powerful, and that every opposition to it would of necessity mean death. Furthermore, it puts itself in the position of the average congregant, who wants to get on with life without being burdened by the trials. The statement tries to achieve some kind of balance between the general feeling of the people and the need to have a credible judicial system.

Later on, the DKR sent a cover letter, together with one with the same contents as the one sent to the professors to all the members of the Bundestag, all the ministers of justice of the individual Länder, and to all the editors-in-chief of the daily

newspapers of West Germany.<sup>83</sup> Goldschmidt says that he was asked by the annual general meeting of the DKR to send the packet to the various addressees. All of these people were asked to respond. In a circular letter sent to the executive of the DKR, Goldschmidt said that responses were still coming in, much more than from the professors. He pointed to the 31st conference of the ministers of justice from all the Bundesländer in Stuttgart, July 30, 1963, in which the letter was discussed.<sup>84</sup> Beforehand, the regional parliament of Baden Württemberg devoted a special session to the Nazi trials on July, 11, 1963. A unanimous decision was passed that the regional government would continue its efforts to get the prosecutions of the various cases pending to demand punishment commensurate with the gravity of the offenses. At the end of 1963, Hermann Langbein published a book called Im Namen des deutschen Volkes in which he notes that most of the accused got away with sentences as accessories to murder, and almost nobody was sentenced to more than ten years behind bars, even though some killed more than 15,000. Another book, by Reinhard Henkys, Die Nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen, notes that the courts defined the perpetrators in a much more restricted way, and said that only Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich fit the category. All others were only accessories. These facts

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<sup>83</sup> The letter to the Bundestag members was dated 8 July, 1963, and the second was dated 16 August, 1963. BA, B259, File 658, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen 1961-1964".

<sup>84</sup> BA B259, File 658, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen".

form part of a second letter sent to professors of criminal law more than two years later, on April 30, 1965.<sup>85</sup> In it, Goldschmidt mentions that only nine of the 58 professors asked bothered to answer the earlier letter. Still, there is no discussion of the trials in academic journals. Again, the DKR appealed to the professors to take position on the increasingly questionable state of the judiciary system in relation to the Nazi trials. This time again, a whole list of cases is supplied where the defendants received light sentences for the murder of thousands of people. One example was that of six main defendants sentenced to terms ranging from three and a half to fifteen years for the murder of 150,000 people. The prosecution had demanded four life-long sentences. Such cases of mild sentences became the rule, not the exception. An earnest plea was directed at these professors to deal with the phenomenon. This time there was more of a response. In a letter sent by the new general secretary of the DKR, Wolfgang Grimmig,<sup>86</sup> to all the members of its committee for public affairs, he summarizes what had happened. There were

<sup>85</sup> BA B259, File 636, "Mitgliederversammlung 1965", letter to professors of criminal law at German universities, April 30, 1965.

<sup>86</sup> Grimmig took over from Goldschmidt, who resigned for reasons of age after thirteen years of service. Right at this time, there was also a change in the leadership of the DKR. Three younger chairmen took over, Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson (HUC '48) Father Willehad Paul Eckert, and Pastor Martin Stöhr. They were voted in at the annual general meeting of 1965. The old guard had groomed the next generation for the task, although the records do not reveal that such a thing was on the horizon. Grimmig was a young man in his thirties when he took over, but was to be general secretary only for a short time. He died in a mountain climbing accident while on vacation in March of 1966.

more responses the second time around, 27 out of 72. Although the desired goal of having many more legal experts answer was not entirely reached, Grimmig was happier. Among the responses there were also one from the chairman of the permanent committee connected with the German Jurists Association. This body was the policy-making organ of all German legal personnel, and this carried weight. It was evident that the topic was being discussed in various forums.<sup>87</sup>

#### A Statute of Limitations on Genocide?

As time progressed, there were several instances where the question was posed what to do when a statute of limitations comes into effect concerning crimes which took place fifteen, twenty years previously. This question came up once before, in 1960. The first time was when the statute of limitations was to apply to cases of manslaughter, fifteen years after the end of the Nazi regime. It was decided ultimately to let the statute take effect, because the nature of the crimes was minor in comparison to cases of murder in the concentration camps. In 1965, the question of the policy on murder came up. The closer this cut-off date came, the more questions were being asked in Germany and abroad. It had become clear that not nearly all the major crime complexes had been uncovered, and that there still was a lot of work to be

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<sup>87</sup> BA B259, File 705, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen Juli 1964-Juli 1967".

done. The signs seemed to be right for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. Not dealing with the question of a statute of limitations would have put a burden on the beginning of dialogue, something it would not have been able to bear. There were therefore enough arguments to deal with the question, and not simply to procrastinate, and have time solve the issue. The Federal government was not inclined, in 1964, to tamper with the statute of limitations, despite the pressure building up from abroad. The Nazi trials were extremely unpopular, general elections were just around the corner, and no political party wanted to bring in such an unpopular suggestion. Even though the majority of the center-right coalition was opposed to a change in present law, three proposals were put forward.<sup>88</sup> One was to do away with any statute of limitations on mass murder and genocide, thus adjusting to current international law, another was to extend the limit to thirty instead of twenty years. The third, Adenauer's suggestion, was to create a legal fiction which stated that counting twenty years should begin only with 1949, when the Federal Republic gained its de jure sovereignty. For the government the first option was the least favorable because it would create a second scale to measure crime, which would be in contravention to equality before the law. The second suggestion could be accepted more readily. The twenty year statute of limitation was enacted in 1871, when life expectancy was much lower than in 1965, so extending it to thirty

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<sup>88</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 262.



years seemed to be appropriate. Adenauer was opposed to eliminating the statute altogether because, in his opinion, it was in contravention to the Basic Law. The sentiment in Israel was completely different. The government appealed to all states, in particular West Germany, that the statute of limitations be eliminated, so that other criminals could be tried and sentenced. All this pressure did not lead to much in 1964. On the 11th of November, the spokesperson of the government stated that the statute would have effect in 1965 in all of Germany. It was apparent that Chancellor Erhard had been outvoted. In conjunction with this, the government called on all states which still possessed material against suspected Nazis to make it available to the Zentralstelle, so that cases could be made against these people before the deadline. All cases registered before the cutoff date would not be affected by the limitation. Until the beginning of 1964, 30,000 files were opened, 12,882 went to court. 5,445 people were convicted, 172 for murder, 248 for manslaughter, the rest for excessive cruelty. More than 4,000 were acquitted, and 2,500 cases were laid to rest for lack of evidence.

World public opinion was not on the side of the German government. The opposition Social Democrats managed to persuade the government to postpone its final decision to let the statute of limitations take effect until after the first of March, 1965, when foreign documents should be arriving. Very soon it became apparent that under no circumstances could all the material even



be seen while sticking to the deadline. The state attorneys of the Zentralstelle received permission to look for material in the archives in Warsaw. They soon saw themselves confronted with a huge quantity of material.

One of the proponents of a change in the statute of limitations was Ernst Benda, of the CDU. He felt that a thirty year time period would be sufficient to prosecute Nazi criminals. This was clearly in contradiction to the view of the CDU leadership, especially Adenauer. The SPD had put forward a proposal to dispense with a limit on genocide altogether, in addition to changing the Basic Law to reflect this change. The CDU representatives who had brought in another proposal the previous day also came to the conclusion that this last proposal should be endorsed. The only difference was that the CDU did not feel that the Basic Law would have to be touched. ✓

The session started out on the 10th of March with a report by Ewald Bucher, federal minister of justice. He said that the cabinet was unable to reach a decision in the matter, instead would allow each individual member of the Bundestag to vote according to his or her conscience.<sup>88</sup>

"Das Kabinett hat erklärt, dass es bereit sei, den Deutschen Bundestag in seinem Bemühen zu unterstützen, in dieser Frage eine Lösung zu finden, die der Gerechtigkeit Genüge tut und den rechtsstaatlichen Voraussetzungen und Bedingungen, unter denen unser Staatswesen steht, Rechnung trägt".

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<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Ernst Benda, "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit - die Verjährungsdebatte des 10. März 1965" in Barzel (Hrsg.), Sternstunden des Parlaments, 172.

The main positions were clear. Benda says that the two major ones were, on the one side questions of whether changes in the law, and in the Basic Law were possible. On the other side there was the position that because the Germans had not done enough during the Holocaust, there was a moral obligation to be responsible for doing the utmost to prosecute the perpetrators. For this to happen, it would be necessary to effect changes in the Basic Law to reflect the new legal situation. The main proponent of this view, Adolf Arndt, put it this way:<sup>70</sup>

"Ich weiss mich in der Schuld. Denn sehen Sie, ich bin nicht auf die Strasse gegangen und habe geschrien, als ich sah, dass die Juden aus unserer Mitte lastkraftwagenweise abtransportiert wurden. Ich habe mir nicht den gelben Stern ungemacht und gesagt: ich auch!"

Ich weiss mich in der Schuld. Ich kann nicht sagen, dass ich genug getan hätte. Ich weiss nicht, wer das von sich sagen will. Aber das verpflichtet uns, das ist ein Erbe."

The debate was conducted in a very open manner, with people speaking not necessarily according to party lines. Ernst Benda read a portion of a letter of a "a person on the street" who said that he was unable to believe in the judicial system when a robber would be put behind bars, but not a mass murderer. This was greeted by sneers from the FDP party which held that such a comparison was unfounded. The present laws were sufficient to deal with the issue.

At the start of the third hearing of the bill, there was a delay. The heads of the two big parties held consultations in

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<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Benda, "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit", 177.

which it was decided that the proposal to put no limit on genocide was to be discarded. There was confusion as to what really was happening. The CDU delegates heard that the SPD no longer supported the lifting of all limitations, while the SPD heard that Ernst Benda, who had brought in this proposal, had reconsidered. Benda himself does not shed light on this turn of events. The two heads of the parties had agreed to use this trick to dupe both parties, and come up with a solution which did not take care of the problem, but only postponed dealing with it.<sup>71</sup> They created a legal loophole. They maintained that since the Federal Republic was not fully sovereign until 1949, they did not have complete freedom to pass judgment on cases of Nazi crimes. Twenty years from 1949 were counted, extending the limit to 1969. It is clear that the trick was less than kosher, just by looking at the two articles dealing with the subject.<sup>72</sup> Both say that the debate was one of the best hours of the Bundestag where personal opinion was valued more than party line. They do not wish to mar that impression by talking about the process leading to the compromise. Both deem it sufficient to report what the outcome was.

The issue of an extension of the statute of limitations on Nazi crimes was very important to the DKR. We see extensive discussions about the subject in the minutes of various meetings

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<sup>71</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 255.

<sup>72</sup> Annemarie Renger's article "Juden und Israel im Deutschen Bundestag" and Ernst Benda's "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit", both in Barzel, Sternstunden.

of the DKR. The three chairmen met to discuss several pressing issues in March of 1965. They dealt with the state of relations between West Germany and Israel, but also about the question of the statute of limitations. Although the minutes do not reveal much about the actual meeting, it stands to reason that it was of extreme importance. This is true especially when considering that the DKR was busy with its campaign to get university professors to react to the developments surrounding the Nazi crimes. That they would not be interested in letting the statute of limitations take effect is only reasonable.

#### Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

From the late 1950s there were secret military agreements between Israel and West Germany for the supply of equipment and officer training. Their existence was leaked out to the press, resulting in Arab protests. They had threatened to use recognition of the German Democratic Republic as a weapon, trying to dissuade the Federal Republic from pursuing its course. Since there had been no indication that West Germany might consider establishing relations with Israel, the Arab states, with Nasser at their head, felt confident that they could successfully pressure Bonn. The peak of the crisis came when Nasser invited Walter Ulbricht, the Secretary General of the East German Communist Party for an official visit. Although this did not necessarily mean that diplomatic relations would be established,

it did alarm officials in Bonn. Many political analysts have maintained that the invitation extended to Ulbricht was a reaction to the revelations about the secret military treaties. Deutschkron does not agree with this. She says that Nasser knew of their existence for at least two years, and used the opportunity to cover up the real reason. According to her, the Soviets were applying pressure on Nasser to do something which would have underscored the theory of two independent German states.<sup>73</sup> The first part of Deutschkron's argument does not sound convincing. I would tend to follow Deligdisch, who says that the Soviets had knowledge of the secret trade, but waited to leak its existence to the press at the right time, with the intent that Nasser would react. Although it was never substantiated who was responsible for the leak, some authorities pointed the finger at the Soviets. It is, however, true that they wanted to have something in their hand to underscore the division of Germany.<sup>74</sup>

Within the DDR, a sentiment was forming to pressure the Federal Government to take a step to foster diplomatic relations, despite the internal opposition, primarily from the Berlin Association. Goldschmidt had been asked by the board of directors

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<sup>73</sup> Deutschkron, Israel und die Deutschen, 298-299. The two state theory, expounded by the East Germans held that two new states had been created out of the ashes of the Second World War. The West Germans refused to accept this, claiming that they were the sole legitimate representative of all the Germans. The policy reflected this. The West Germans went to great lengths to avoid being part of a commission with East Germans for fear that they would de facto be recognizing the second German state.

<sup>74</sup> See Deligdisch, Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik..., 95 n.39.



to write a letter to Gerhard Schröder, minister of foreign affairs.<sup>75</sup> The letter, dated January 22, 1963, talked about the recent trip of a number of educators who had gone to Israel organized by the DKR. They reported that the question of relations is of great value to many Israelis. There was consternation that the decisive step was not yet undertaken by West Germany. Goldschmidt asked Schröder to communicate to him what the intentions of the government are. Schröder replied on February 12. He started out by saying that since the conclusion of the reparations treaty of 1952, the Federal Republic had offered diplomatic relations, but due to "internal political matters" in Israel this suggestion was not accepted. He acknowledged that a large part of the Israeli population was not ready for these relations, and that West Germany accepted this. By now, the political constellation in Europe had changed. In the meantime, the FRG formulated the policy that any country establishing diplomatic relations with "the Soviet zone of occupation, the so-called German Democratic Republic", would jeopardize its relation with West Germany. On the other hand, there was the issue of Arab states threatening to break off relations with West Germany should it establish them with Israel. It is therefore, Schröder maintains, only questions of the future of Germany and Berlin which cause a pause in any further action. He effectively circumvented the issue of the Hallstein Doctrine,

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<sup>75</sup> BA B259, File 658, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen 1961-1964", Rundschreiben 2/1963, 2 April, 1963.



not mentioning it by name.

This reply did not dampen the efforts of the DKR. A few weeks later, it sent a telegram to Konrad Adenauer urging that relations be established without delay. A reply came back on June 11, 1963. Again the same reason was given.<sup>76</sup>

"As you know, the Federal Republic tries to further German-Israeli relations conscientiously. However, the general foreign-political situation of the Federal Republic does not allow for the moment to undertake steps which will not only change our relations with the states of the Middle East, but will also have a detrimental effect on our German policy [Deutschlandpolitik]. In this connection I would like to point to the explanations of Minister Dr. Schröder before the Bundestag on 8 May, 1963".

Still, the DKR persisted. This letter-writing was turning into a cat-and-mouse game, with the DKR putting forward its demand, and the government producing the same response each time. This next time, a petition signed by thirty-four participants in a DKR-sponsored trip to Israel was sent.<sup>77</sup> They felt that the money coming in from the Wiedergutmachung was extremely helpful in building up the country. They were, however, afraid that this achievement might be jeopardized if diplomatic relations did not follow as the next step.

The opinion expressed to members of the executive of October

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<sup>76</sup> BA B259, File 658, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen 1961-1964", circular letter to all the members of the Executive of the DKR, 4 September, 1963. My translation.

<sup>77</sup> BA B259, File 737, "Diplomatische Beziehungen zu Israel" Letter to the foreign ministry by participants in the educational trip to Israel, 12 January, 1964.

13, 1964 sums up the position of the DKR.<sup>78</sup>

Der Vorstand des DKR ist im Auftrag seiner Mitgliedgesellschaften während der letzten Jahren wiederholt an Bundestag und Bundesregierung mit der Bitte herangetreten, die längst überfälligen diplomatischen Beziehungen ohne Verzug aufzunehmen. Auch haben einzelne Gesellschaften und darüber hinaus viele Einzelpersonlichkeiten immer wieder auf die wachsende Bedrohung des Friedens im Nahen Osten hingewiesen, wobei insbesondere die Mitarbeit deutscher Wissenschaftler bei der Entwicklung ägyptischer Waffen als starke Belastung angesehen wurde.

Der DKR weiss um die besondere Interessenlage in der bisherigen Deutschlandpolitik, und wir sind trotzdem der Meinung, dass in dieser Situation jetzt neue Überlegungen mit dem Ziel der baldigen diplomatischen Anerkennung Israels fällig sind.

One of those considerations was to hold a nation-wide petition demanding diplomatic relations. The Cologne Association was at the forefront of the effort. It suggested that a demonstration should take place in Cologne to kick off the campaign. The petition would be circulated around the country through the various Associations. We learn later that not all the Associations could come to an agreement about it. The Bavarian Associations agreed with the petition in principle, but felt that it was being pushed through too fast. The Kassel Association felt

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<sup>78</sup> BA B259, File 705, "Rundschreiben und Aussendungen Juli 1964-Juli 1967". The German technicians referred to helped build up a missile capability for the Egyptians. They were also active in the German project to make the V-1 missiles which wreaked havoc on Britain. Aside from the military threat those missiles posed, the Israelis were very consternated that it was Germans who were engaged in such work. The Federal government maintained that it did not have the power to send them home, since they were there on private contracts. The crisis was finally solved when the technicians were awarded attractive jobs back in Germany.

that it could not agree to it for reasons of conscience.<sup>79</sup> Berlin was deadlocked over the issue, so it decided to have it distributed by the other Associations outside Berlin.

In order to reach the largest possible audience, the DKR felt that it needed to have the cooperation of a powerful body. This body was found in the German Federation of Labor Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB). Its chairman, Ludwig Rosenberg, had been in Israel for a longer visit and felt that the past was still very much alive in everybody's mind. He pointed towards the danger that other countries might follow suit and use political blackmail to dictate West German foreign policy. He said that the Germans should follow their conscience in this issue, because the past had shown them what happened when they did not listen to it.<sup>80</sup> The joint petition received over twenty thousand signatures after a little more than a month.

In November, too, an open letter was sent to the government by fourteen university professors, later signed by many more. One of the most influential people who signed it was Helmut Gollwitzer, active participant in DKR affairs, theologian from Berlin, and former head of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland. He had argued elsewhere that Germany was partially responsible for the establishment of Israel.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> No details were supplied in the minutes.

<sup>80</sup> Deligdisch, Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik..., 90-91

<sup>81</sup> Helmut Gollwitzer, "Der Staat Israel und die Araber", Diskussion, Jhrg. 4, Nr. 1/2, Juli 1963, 15. See also Deligdisch, Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik..., 91.

Wir Deutschen können über das Verhältnis zwischen Israel und den arabischen Staaten nicht nachdenken, ohne ausdrücklich zu fragen, was wir dazu heute beitragen und was wir dazu beitragen sollen. Denn wir stehen nicht ausserhalb dieses Verhältnisses, sondern sind in den Konflikt hineinverflochten auf mehrfache Weise: Einmal dadurch, dass wir mitschuldig sind an der Entstehung des Staates Israel, an dem Einwandererstrom, der vor und nach 1945 sich nach Palästina ergossen und die Frage der Staatsgründung unausweichlich gemacht hat, und zum anderen deshalb, weil wir wegen der im Namen des deutschen Volkes betriebenen Judenausrottung verantwortlich sind für das Geschick der überlebenden Juden... und zum dritten deswegen, weil wir mit beiden verfeindeten Lagern in ein und derselben Welt leben, mit ihnen Handel treiben und vielfältig persönliche, politische und kulturelle Beziehungen haben und weil deshalb die Art, wie diese Beziehungen von uns gestaltet werden, positiv oder negativ auf den Konflikt zwischen den beiden Lagern, dem israelischen und dem arabischen, einwirkt.

The open letter also drew attention to the fact that West Germany was denying recognition to the State of Israel despite the fact that the latter had no intention to recognize the German Democratic Republic.

One person who was a strong moral voice, and who had been active before in German-Israeli relations was Erich Lüth.<sup>82</sup> In 1951, he was in the forefront of those striving for a reconciliation between Germans and Jews. He published an open letter to Chancellor Erhard entitled "Machen Sie Frieden, Herr Bundeskanzler". He attempted to communicate the feelings of the majority of Israelis. The Wiedergutmachung was a very good start, but what came afterwards was less than satisfactory. The interim solutions proposed by the Germans created a lot of bad feelings.

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<sup>82</sup> Deligdisch, Die Einstellung der Bundesrepublik..., 82.

There was a real danger that the trust put into the "official" Germany was going to be breached again. The episode of German technicians in Egypt did not help solve anything.

There were also certain circles within Germany which tried to put obstacles in the way of the normalization of relations. The Deutsche National-Zeitung was one of the organs at the forefront of this. The editorials tried to explain away the significance of the DKR-DGB petition, by saying that it had very little response in the general population. The DKR had an ongoing feud with the newspaper, which ultimately led to charges being filed. The DKR spelled it out in the following manner in a telegram to the chairman of the Committee for Internal Affairs of the Bundestag:<sup>83</sup>

Die Jahresversammlung der 39 Gesellschaften für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit hat sich am 9. Mai in Frankfurt unter anderem mit den gefährlichen Auswirkungen von Blättern wie der Deutschen Nationalzeitung und Soldatenzeitung befasst. Sie ist der Auffassung, dass diese Publikationen durch Verächtlichmachen unserer demokratischen Einrichtungen und der Representative unseres Volkes in Parlamenten und Regierungen das immer noch junge Fundament unserer Demokratie untergraben. Insbesondere die Nationalzeitung mit ihrer erstaunlich hohen Auflage schürt neuen Hass und kann gerade junge Menschen zu verworrenen Vorstellungen verleiten. Der ständig steigenden Verbreitung dieses Blattes müsste namens des deutschen Volkes gebührend entgegen gewirkt werden, um zugleich eine erneute Schädigung des deutschen Ansehens zu verhindern.

This was followed in December of 1965 with an official charge

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<sup>83</sup> BA B259, File 705, "Rundschreiben und Aussendungen Juli 1964-Juli 1967". The telegram was sent directly after the close of the annual general meeting of 1965.



submitted to court against the Deutsche Nationalzeitung und Soldatenzeitung. In a letter sent to all the members of the DKR, he reproduced the main parts of the accusation.<sup>84</sup>

Hiermit erstatte ich Anzeige gegen den Redakteur der "Deutschen National-Zeitung und Soldaten Zeitung" Dr. Willy Glasebock der für das politische Ressort dieser Zeitung verantwortlich ist und der als Autor des Artikels "Der Skandal von Bűsum" in Nr. 49 obiger Zeitung vom 3.12.65 völkerverhetzende und verleumderische Darstellungen verbreitet hat.

In diesem Artikel nimmt Dr. Glasebock Stellung zu dem Vorwurf gegen Studienrat Dr. Endrichkeit, der beim Unterricht im Nordseegymnasium Bűsum gesagt haben soll, die Amerikaner hätten in ehemals deutschen Konzentrationslagern Gasöfen eingebaut, um damit die Deutschen zu belasten.

Dr. Glasebock schreibt (Nr. 49, S.11 der DNZSZ):

"Für seine Behauptung, die Amerikaner hätten in ehemaligen deutschen Konzentrationslagern nachträglich Krematorien eingebaut, um uns Deutschen damit zu belasten, braucht Dr. Endrichkeit keine Entlastung, denn diese Behauptung ist zutreffend und bedarf keines Beweises mehr".

Mit seinen Ausserungen hat Dr. Glasebock in einer die Menschenwürde verletzenden Weise die Beziehungen zwischen Völkern gestört und er hat ganz offen Regierung und Volk der USA verleumdet.

After the visit of Ulbricht, relations between West Germany and Egypt deteriorated. Nasser and Ulbricht distributed a joint communique, and signed several agreements which point to some kind of financial support from East Germany. It was obvious that this was not seen amicably by Bonn. The agreements set off a chain reaction which led to a break in diplomatic relations. Relations had been given a fatal blow. West Germany initiated a

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<sup>84</sup> BA B259, File 705, "Rundschreiben und Aussendungen Juli 1964-Juli 1967", letter dated December 28, 1965. Much later, during the 1970s a law was passed which made it an offense to deny the existence of the crematoria or to allege that the Holocaust never took place.



final stop to all aid to Egypt.

Several higher German officials were reporting about the American attitude towards the development of affairs between West Germany and Egypt. The goodwill the FRG had earned over the past twenty years was being jeopardized by a potential submission to Egyptian pressure. Boycotts of German products were being organized by several organizations. It was now time to act. A press conference was called for the afternoon of March 7, 1965. The reporters were convinced that the official proclamation of a break in relations with Egypt was the agenda. The spokesman of the government stated, however:<sup>85</sup>

Die Bundesregierung strebt die Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen zu Israel an. Dieser Schritt ist geeignet, zu einer Normalisierung der Verhältnisse beizutragen. Er richtet sich gegen keinen arabischen Staat.

The government was no longer willing to have other countries dictate its foreign policy. It states, further, that the visit of Ulbricht represented an "unfriendly act". It had given added recognition to a state which had not respected the right to self-determination of the German people in the Soviet zone. No weapons would be sent to areas of tension. The rest of the agreement would be renegotiated, with adequate compensation to Israel. Together with its allies, the Federal Republic would strive towards better relations in the Middle East.

It goes without saying that the DKR was very satisfied with

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<sup>85</sup> Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, March 8, 1965, found in BA B259, File 737, "Diplomatische Beziehungen zu Israel".

the abrupt turn of events. The petition campaign could now be closed. The objective had been reached. It had taken quite some effort to come to this point in the face of internal opposition. There was, however, universal agreement that relations with Israel was very welcome.

## CHAPTER 3

### Christian-Jewish Relations

#### Vatican II and Nostra Aetate

The 1960s were a time of vast changes in the field of interreligious relations. There were stirrings in the Vatican where the cardinals were looking into a different type of relationship with the Jews. There were meetings of the World Council of Churches which came out with statements. Inside Germany, the Oberammergau passion play was going to be performed in 1960, hopefully now with a greater sensitivity towards the portrayal of the Jews.

On the scene of interfaith relations the biggest event was the promulgation of Nostra Aetate during the Second Vatican Council. In order to understand the consternation expressed by the DKR when it did raise its voice, it is essential to lay out the contortions the document on the Church's attitude towards the Jews went through. The mood alternated between euphoria and disgust at the events which were transpiring in Rome. The council was meeting to introduce all kinds of changes into the structure and liturgy of the Catholic Church. The issue of relations with

non-Christian religions, especially the Jews, turned out to be the most controversial subject. The views of conservative and progressive circles within the Church had to be weighed against each other. There were more than only religious aspects to the declaration concerning the Jews.

The single person who can be credited with starting the process going within the Catholic Church was Pope John XXIII. He had already started to look for a new attitude towards the Jewish people. In the liturgy of Good Friday there was traditionally an intercession for the perfidis judaeis, the unbelieving Jews. Pope Pius XII, Pope John's predecessor, had ordered that the worshippers should genuflect when reciting this intercession. Now, in April 1959, John ordered its removal and replacement by a prayer for the Jews.

Father Albrecht Schröder, one of the most active members of the Düsseldorf Association wrote the following in the Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung at that occasion.<sup>1</sup>

Während es in früheren Zeiten Brauch und Sitte war, bei den allgemeinen Fürbittengebeten auch der Juden zu gedenken, aber mit Auslassung der Kniebeuge und mit ausdrücklicher Erwähnung der Ungläubigkeit der Juden ("perfidis Judaeis"), haben die beiden letzten Päpste aus dem Geiste der christlichen Versöhnung und Gerechtigkeit kleine, aber entscheidende Veränderungen vorgenommen. Papst Pius XII ordnete die Kniebeuge an im Fürbittengebet auch für die Juden und Papst Johannes XXIII verfügte, dass die Benennung der Juden als treulos und ungläubig gestrichen werden soll. Wir messen dieser Verfügung des Papstes um so grössere Bedeutung bei, weil seine Entscheidung bestimmend ist für das

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<sup>1</sup> "Eine historische Tat" in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XIV no. 1, 3 April, 1959.

geistige Denken der katholischen Christen... Die Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit hat hier einen besonderen Anteil am Erfolg und sollte aus Sprache und Zeichen der katholischen Kirche erkennen, dass es in jedem Fall Wege und Möglichkeiten gibt, um auch in Bereichen des verschiedenen Glaubens zu einer Gemeinschaft der Gerechtigkeit und des Friedens zu kommen.

The accompanying remarks hail this change as one of the biggest and most important things done by a pope in the modern era. It would no doubt have a positive influence on Jewish-Christian dialogue in the future. A widely spread anti-Jewish stereotype had just been removed by this deed, making the road to greater interfaith dialogue much easier to navigate.

Another stepping stone on the way to Vatican II was the arrival of Jules Isaac in Rome, with the sanction of the French chapter of B'nai B'rith. In the audience on June 13, 1960, Pope John started by affirming his reverence for the "Old Testament" and other introductory remarks. Isaac however came straight to the point and urged the Pope to follow up the overtures of the previous year with further statements. He supplied a three-part dossier which included a brief correction of false and unjust statements about the people of Israel in Christian education, an example of such a statement, and an extract from the so-called "Catechism of Trent" which emphasized the guilt of all sinners as the fundamental cause for the suffering of Jesus on the cross.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the audience, which lasted almost half an hour, Isaac asked whether he had reason for a little hope. Pope John

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<sup>2</sup> John M. Oesterreicher, The New Encounter between Christians and Jews, (New York, 1966), 105.

responded that there was room for more than that, but it would have to be passed by the appropriate authorities. Oesterreicher says that Jules Isaac had a lasting impact on the Pope, but his influence should not be overrated. The amendment of the perfidis judaeis prayer is evidence, as is the visit of a delegation of the United Jewish Appeal. They came to Rome to thank him for his efforts to save Jews during the Holocaust.<sup>3</sup> He greeted them by saying "I am Joseph, your brother", using his baptismal name.

In addition to the overtures of the Pope himself, petitions were submitted by various institutions. A proposal of the Pontifical Biblical Institute contained the suggestions that the Jewish people and its relationship to the Catholic Church should be included in a statement on ecumenism. The Institute for Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University sent a petition in June 1960. Oesterreicher, one of the signatories, lists the main points. The Church should acknowledge that the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt should be seen as the genesis of the Church. It also claimed to be the people of God. Misleading statements should be eliminated, those distorting the relation of the Church to the Jewish people. In addition, a group of Catholic priests and laypersons met in Apeldoorn, Holland at the end of August, 1960 and came up with an eleven-point memorandum. Its aim was to reshape preaching and catechesis. I will summarize the

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<sup>3</sup> Pope John XXIII was Apostolic Delegate in Bulgaria and Turkey during the Holocaust. He personally took note of all the deportations to the East. He managed to prevent numerous transports from Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria.



most important points.<sup>4</sup> The Old Testament should be seen as part of the Christian Bible too, just as the New Testament, without pitting one against the other. The conflict between Jesus and the leaders in Jerusalem was an intricate one, and it would be erroneous to blame the Jews of that time or of today for Jesus' death. The Church is the true "remnant of Israel", into which the children of Abraham by faith entered. The portion of Israel which stayed apart from the Church has survived in present-day Judaism. It is misleading to interpret the destiny of the Jewish people in terms of their rejection by God. There is no sentence of rejection on the Jews. Finally, "the divinely guaranteed hope of the reunion of the Church and Israel is an integral part of the Christian hope. At the same time, it is the key to the mysterious destiny of the Jewish people, so that without it there can be no real Christian understanding of that destiny. When and wherever this hope is obscured or forgotten, the Christian vision is distorted".

Oesterreicher maintains that this document did have an influence on the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which was responsible for the declaration on relations with the Jews.

From the Jewish side there were also memoranda. The American Jewish Committee outlined the way Jews are portrayed in Catholic instruction. Abraham Joshua Heschel pointed out in his memorandum that antisemitism is an ancient evil and cannot be attributed to

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<sup>4</sup> Oesterreicher, The New Encounter, 123-125. See appendix no. 1.

one single source. He urged the Catholic Church to investigate and block every possible source. Further he asked that Jews be accepted as Jews, recognizing the integrity and continuing value of Jews and Judaism.<sup>5</sup>

The Secretariat for Christian Unity was entrusted with the task of drafting a statement on theological relations with the Jews. Gregory Baum and John Oesterreicher were the two who were immediately responsible. From the very outset, there were difficulties. Cardinal Augustin Bea, the chairman of this Secretariat spoke about the forthcoming endeavor to a journalist. He thought this confidential conversation was an ordinary interview and published it. The response was not late in coming. The Arab governments made the announcement of a theological document into a political declaration. Their reasoning was as follows. If the Vatican expressed interest in better relations with Jews, the next logical step would be to recognize the State of Israel. The document would then intrude into the political sphere. The first draft did not come up for discussion because of the so-called "Wardi affair". Dr. Chaim Wardi was sent as representative of the World Jewish Congress to Rome to monitor the progress of the deliberations. He was an official in the Israeli ministry of religious affairs, responsible for Christian communities. When his presence became known, there was an uproar. Officials at the Vatican and Arab diplomats complained that Israel was trying to influence the proceedings through the back

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<sup>5</sup> See appendix no. 2.

door, through the WJC. Wardi was not officially accredited to play the role he did. As a result, the Central Preparatory Commission decided to remove the draft from the agenda.

The second draft was composed with few, but significant differences. One of the most important points is a hope that the unification of the Jewish people with the Church was a basic Christian hope. Another major point contained a rebuttal of the charge of deicide and a warning to preachers and catechists not to give a hostile picture of the Passion story. The third point included other religions too. This was a result of pressure from clergy from Arab countries who felt that the Church should also address other non-Christian religions. This was couched in language rejecting discrimination of individuals or groups of people because of national or religious affiliation, race, color or social status. This declaration was to be put in the context of a statement on ecumenism.

The draft was submitted to the scrutiny of the Council Fathers at a relatively late time during the third session, thereby not providing enough time to discuss it fully. When it finally did come up on the agenda, the leaders of the Eastern Churches suddenly struck out against it. Oesterreicher<sup>8</sup> categorizes the opposition into two main groups. On the one hand there were those who wished to give in to pressure from the Arab governments, and those who were in favor of the draft in principle, but felt that it should not be included in a statement

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<sup>8</sup> Oesterreicher, The New Encounter, 169-170.

on ecumenism. The concern of the first dissenters was for the safety of Christians in Arab countries should the statement be promulgated. Oesterreicher himself, and Gregory Baum, another person involved with the declaration on Christian-Jewish relations, defended the inclusion of the statement in the present context. They felt that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity was of a much deeper-going nature than that of any other religion. Both share a series of sacred events, one is an outgrowth of the other. Christians believe that in the end, Israel and the Church will be reunited, as specified by Paul in the New Testament.

The German Catholic bishops felt that a statement on relations with the Jews was very much needed for the Catholic Church. In a press release of 29 September 1964, they stated their position.<sup>7</sup>

Wir deutschen Bischöfe begrüßen das Konzilsdekret über die Juden. Wenn die Kirche eine Selbstaussage macht, kann sie nicht schweigen über ihre Verbindung mit dem Gottesvolk des Alten Bundes. Wir sind überzeugt, dass diese Konzilsdeklaration Anlass zu einem erneuerten Kontakt und einem besseren Verhältnis zwischen der Kirche und dem jüdischen Volk gibt. Wir deutschen Bischöfe begrüßen das Dekret besonders deshalb, weil wir uns des schweren Unrechts bewusst sind, das im Namen unseres Volkes an den Juden begangen worden ist.

Mario von Galli<sup>8</sup> puts much more emphasis on the political

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<sup>7</sup> BA B259, File 705, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen Juli 1964-Juli 1967".

<sup>8</sup> Mario von Galli, "Die Konzilserklärung zum Verhältnis der Katholiken zu den Nichtchristen, besonders zu den Juden; II. Der Hintergrund. a) Juden und religiöse Freiheit: Zwei

component for the failure of the second draft. He points to the intense diplomatic efforts of Arab governments to bring about the fall of the whole declaration. They viewed it as a strategic move on the part of Zionism. When it became clear that a full retraction of the draft was not going to happen, the eastern churches tried to introduce major changes. The rebuttal of antisemitism was changed into a general repudiation of racial and religious discrimination. The role the Jews played in the scheme of salvation was also to be downplayed.

This pressure did have an effect on further action on the draft. The Secretariat for Christian Unity under Cardinal Bea was asked by the Coordinating Commission to hold further consultation on the proposal. This effectively assured that it would not be dealt with and voted upon during the third session. The draft was to be discussed in a mixed commission made up of members of the Secretariat for Unity and of the Theological Commission. After protests by a number of cardinals, Pope Paul VI assured that the text would not be changed greatly. This opened the way for the second draft to be accepted by a majority of the cardinals. There were 242 cardinals who agreed to the draft with certain reservations. This meant that it could not immediately be endorsed as the official document of the Vatican Council. The draft was sent back for further consideration before the final version could be promulgated.

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schicksalsverbundene Erklärungen" in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVI/XVII 1964/65, Nr. 61/64, Juli 1965, 7-9.



In order to satisfy the misgivings of the Eastern Churches and the Arab governments, the declaration had been embedded in a statement on non-Christian religions. Buddhism, Islam are also mentioned. The following quotation is an abridged version of the whole declaration. In my opinion, this was the most progressive of all the drafts.<sup>9</sup>

With a grateful heart, the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's design, the beginning of her faith and her election were already from the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets.

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament from the [Jewish] people with whom God in his inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant.

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.

All that happened to Christ in His passion cannot be attributed to the whole people then alive, much less to those of today.

Moreover, this synod, in her rejection of injustice of whatever kind and wherever inflicted upon men, remains mindful of that common patrimony and so deplores, indeed condemns, hatred and persecution of Jews...

May, then all 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.

This draft was much more explicit on antisemitism and the link between Judaism and Christianity. It gave a clear directive to people in teaching positions as to the correct way to approach

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Judith Hershcopf, "The Church and the Jews: The Struggle at Vatican Council II", in American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 67, 1966, 58-59. For the complete text on the Jews, see appendix no. 4.



the issue of this link. There was a clear and unambiguous condemnation of the charge of deicide.

The road from the third to the final draft turned out to be a long and arduous one. A counterattack was launched against the statement, based both on conservative theological considerations as well as political pressure. Bishop Luigi Carli of Segni, Italy, was the spearhead. He held that the Jews of that day as well as today are to be held responsible for the death of Jesus. They can be reprimanded and are cursed by God.

A few weeks later, the Pope himself preached about a text in the New Testament. He said that the day's Gospel lesson was "a grave and sad page narrating the clash between Jesus and the Jewish people - the people predestined to await the Messiah but who just at the right moment - did not recognize him, fought him and slandered him, and finally killed him".<sup>10</sup> There was an immediate reaction from Jewish and Christian sources in Italy and abroad. Some Catholics tried to explain away the words of Pope Paul VI, while others offered apologies. The Vatican went into all kinds of contortions to explain the words, never admitting that it was a slip. It was not a healthy atmosphere. All the while, rumors kept surfacing that the whole declaration was in real trouble. In April, 1965, these rumors were substantiated when a New York Times correspondent reported that a powerful conservative attack was underway. An ad hoc committee outside the Council was being formed to study the document. It was rumored

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Hersheopf, "The Church and the Jews", 47-48.

that Bishop Carli was one of the members, but this was denied by Cardinal Bea. Two months later, several newspapers reported that the draft had been dropped altogether from the fourth session of the Council.

At this point, The DKR, which had not interfered with the deliberations felt it necessary to raise its voice. A new leadership under Eckert, Levinson and Stöhr had emerged. These were much younger than the previous leadership. As stated before, the changing of the guard looked like a coup, with all three chairmen new to the leadership of the DKR, but seems to have been masterfully orchestrated. Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson was rabbi in Berlin up to this point, Reverend Martin Stöhr was student minister at the university of Darmstadt, and Father Willehad Paul Eckert, from Cologne, was a Dominican monk, who had already been involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue. He had written extensively in Freiburger Rundbrief and other periodicals with a similar vocation.

There was a qualitative difference between the old and this new leadership. All three were, and still are, clergy people. They had been involved with Jewish-Christian relations before in other settings, not necessarily related to the DKR. When they did take over, we notice that much greater attention was paid to religious subjects. It is instructive that the DKR came out with its statements on Vatican II under this new leadership. Taking a cue from renewed interest in interreligious dialogue after the promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the DKR started to hold

conferences on implementing it. Under the old leadership there was a theologians commission, but it was far less effective. The committees under Freudenberg, Goldschmidt and Cahn were a reflection of their time. The DKR spent much more time dealing with educational and social issues, such as Nazi trials and relations with Israel. The new leadership, while not neglecting these concerns, felt that the religious issues had not been addressed adequately.

The London Observer had bluntly stated on June 20 that the whole declaration about the Jews had been dropped. It repeated the rumor that a four-man commission had been set up to review the document. The head was to be Bishop Carli, according to the paper. A day later the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported that the Pope had sent a written note to the Vatican Council's coordinating commission instructing the removal of the document from the agenda. The New York Times said that the document was "under study", according to influential Church sources. They refused, however, to confirm or deny reports that the declaration was being taken off the agenda.

The three chairmen of the DKR decided to send a letter, dated 25 June, 1965, to all the German bishops expressing concern over rumors that the whole draft had been dropped from the agenda of the fourth session scheduled to begin in September.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Hershcopf, "The Church and the Jews", 51-56. The letter is found in "Ein Brief des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates der Gesellschaften für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit an die deutschen Bischöfe" in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVI/XVII, Nr. 61/64, Juli 1965, 4.

Eure Exzellenz!

Mit tiefer Beunruhigung lesen wir die Berichte, die in der inländischen und ausländischen Presse, in der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung, im Observer, im Messaggero erschienen sind, wonach der Heilige Vater persönlich die Declaratio Relatione Catholicorum ad non Christianas (sogenannte Judenerklärung) gestrichen haben sollte. Zwar wird inzwischen von dem Vatikanischen Presseamt dieser Entscheid dementiert, wie wir jedoch der Dienstaussage der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung entnehmen, ist dieses Dementi lediglich nur taktisch gemeint und dient zur Verschleierung des wahren Sachverhaltes. Die Meinung, die der römische Korrespondent der Frankfurter Allgemeinen äussert, wird gestützt durch die wahrhaft beunruhigenden Vorgänge, die seit Monaten aus Rom gemeldet werden. Dazu gehört insbesondere die Erklärung des Bischof Carli von Segni, der zu der vom Papst eigens berufenen Koordinierungskommission gehört, nicht nur die Juden zur Zeit Christi, sondern auch die Juden der Gegenwart seien des Gottesmordes schuldig. Dazu gehört des weiteren die Ansprache, die der Heilige Vater selbst am Passions-Sonntag gehalten hat und in der er ausführte, das jüdische Volk sei Schuld am Tode Jesu. Dazu gehört weiter die Beunruhigung, die das Vorgehen höchster vatikanischer Kreise seit Oktober des vergangenen Jahres innerhalb und ausserhalb der Konzilsaula erweckt.

An zwei Dinge möchten wir erinnern: erstens an das Ergebnis einer Enquete des vorigen Jahres, wonach antisemitische Vorurteile nicht zuletzt auf Grund des Religionsunterrichts und der Predigt auch heute noch erweckt werden. Insbesondere ist das Verdikt, die Juden seien ein Gottesmörderisches Volk, geeignet, Judenhass hervorzurufen. Zweitens aber möchten wir an die Presseerklärung erinnern, die sämtliche deutsche Bischöfe anlässlich der Konzilsdebatte über die Declaratio am 28./29.9.1964 herausgegeben haben. In dieser Presseerklärung war zu lesen, dass der deutsche Episkopat, nicht zuletzt angesichts des ungeheuren Ausmasses der Verfolgung, die die Juden unserer Zeit getroffen hat, eine Erklärung, die den Antisemitismus eindeutig mit christlichem Glauben für unvereinbar hält, begrüsst. In der Überzeugung, dass Sie zu Ihrem Wort auch heute noch stehen, wagen wir es, in kindlicher Verehrung, Sie darauf hinzuweisen, dass eine tiefe Beunruhigung unsere jüdischen Mitbrüder und nicht nur sie ergriffen hat. Es ist wohl nicht zuviel behauptet, wenn wir sagen, gegenwärtig

besteht eine Vertrauenskrise gegenüber der katholischen Kirche. Unter diesen Umständen wagen wir es, unseren dringenden und flehentlichen Appell an Sie zu richten, erstens dafür einzutreten, dass die Declaratio nicht von der Tagesordnung der vierten Session des zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils abgesetzt wird und zweitens, dass sie in ihrem wesentlichen Stand unverändert erhalten bleibt und drittens, dass sie bis zum Abschluss der vierten Session auch tatsächlich promulgiert wird.

A circular letter sent to all the members of the DKR took up the issue. It contained the letter quoted above, together with the press release of the bishops from the previous year. Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson maintained that the DKR had to receive some credit for making the declaration on the Jews possible.<sup>12</sup> He did not go into details as to what exactly that role was. He argued that the position taken by the German bishops had a great impact on the final promulgation of the document. He said that the plea was well received by the public and the bishops. The New York Times of August 8, 1965, however, reported that the response to the letter was meager.<sup>13</sup> Only five bishops had responded until then, all of them without commitment. One had even complained that the Jews were trying to convert the declaration into political capital for Israel. No further reference is found to such responses. I would conjecture that most bishops refused to make public statements while developments concerning the fate of the document were taking place. Later on, when the storm had been weathered, the bishops ventured more positive responses. By the

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<sup>12</sup> BA B259, File 637, "Mitgliederversammlung 1966", minutes of the annual general meeting, May 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Hershcopf, "The Church and the Jews", 57.



time Levinson evaluated the response, the final document had already been passed.

The point of view of the German bishops, with Cardinal Bea at their head, received support from other quarters as well. At the end of July, 1965, the twelfth Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag was held in Cologne. The Kirchentag is a meeting of thousands of Christians, predominantly from West Germany, which takes place every two years. Father Eckert, Reverend Stöhr and Rabbi Levinson all participated in the meetings of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Juden und Christen" at this laypersons' meeting. On July 29, this commission published a statement in support of the bishops. The most important passages will be quoted here.<sup>14</sup>

Mit grosser Freude haben wir den kräftigen Aufbruch zu gleicher Neubesinnung [to a renewed attitude towards the Jewish people] in der katholischen Kirche wahrgenommen. Dies ist für uns ein besonders hoffnungsvolles Zeichen dafür, dass wir uns über die Trennungen hinweg, die Gottes Volk auf Erden so lange zerrissen haben, zusammenfinden können und werden. Die erste und tiefste Trennung im Volke Gottes ist die zwischen Juden und Christen. Rechte Verständigung und Zusammenarbeit zwischen den christlichen Kirchen ist aber nicht zu haben ohne eine neue Gemeinschaft zwischen Christen und Juden. Indem evangelische und katholische Christen ihre Verbindung mit dem erwählten Volk Israel besser erkennen und bewähren, werden sie sich auch gegenseitig näherkommen...

Wir danken Kardinal Bea, seinen Mitarbeitern und vielen Mitgliedern des Vatikanischen Konzils in Rom für ihre Bemühungen um eine Konzilserklärung...

Deshalb fordern [wir] alle Christen in

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<sup>14</sup> "Eine Bitte der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Juden und Christen auf dem zwölften Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag in Köln" in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVI/XVII, 1964/65, Nr. 61/64, Juli 1965, 176.



Deutschland... im Sinne des Entwurfs von Kardinal  
Bes zu denken, zu sprechen und zu handeln.

Until September there was uncertainty as to whether the text would be dealt with at all. There were several reasons, according to Hershcopf. She says that the silence of the American hierarchy was a contributing factor, even though they had taken strong stands between the second and third sessions. Some observers speculated that silence had been imposed from above. Another, more disconcerting, reason was the consistent reappearance of rabidly antisemitic viewpoints. The most famous was a book, published under the pseudonym Maurice Pinay, called The Plot Against the Church. It had been distributed to all the cardinals during the second session of the Council. Its gist was that the American bishops had been taken in by "a fraternity of deceivers too close to the centers of authority in the affairs of the Church".<sup>15</sup> This reference is to Monsignor Oesterreicher and Cardinal Gregory Baum, both of whom converted from Judaism.

In September, then, rumors were confirmed that a reworking of the text had been going on, with a reformulation of the section on the repudiation of deicide. The Vatican leaked out information that the essential text had not been changed, but that only minor revisions were made to suit those who had agreed to the text in principle in the previous draft, but had reservations. The Vatican tried to downplay the significance of those changes, but they are sufficiently different. They do

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<sup>15</sup> Hershcopf, "The Church and the Jews", 54-55.

constitute, in my opinion, a regression from the third version.<sup>18</sup>

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets.

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament **through** the [Jewish] people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant.

As the Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews, in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers.

True, Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, [sic] directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

...Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this follows from the Holy Scriptures...

The fourth paragraph points out that the Jewish authorities did actively reject Jesus, while the third draft makes no such explicit remarks. It does convey the same opposition to the charge that all Jews living then and now are to be held responsible. In the fifth paragraph, we find the statement

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<sup>18</sup> Hershcopf, "The Church and the Jews", 58-59. Hershcopf's emphasis. See appendix no. 5 for full text.

condemning antisemitism. The disclaimer is inserted that the Church is not moved by political considerations. Its function is to make it clear that the Church is not thinking about relations with Israel. The other side of the argument is that it will not be pressured by political forces in the Arab countries. Concessions had already been made to this pressure, but no more would be tolerated. The major amendment, in my mind, is found in the last two paragraphs mentioned above. First of all, the instruction sent to all catechists and preachers to refrain from teaching hatred and contempt of the Jews is watered down. Now it opposes all teachings which are in contradiction to the truth of the Gospel. This implies that teaching contempt is permissible under certain circumstances, as long as it does not transgress the truth of the Gospel. Secondly, the document explicitly states that the Church is the new people of God, not making such a claim in the previous version. It does not follow the more progressive theology which emphasizes the Church being the people of God along with the Jewish people. It also dropped mention of the rebuttal of the charge of deicide, as stated in the 1964 text.

The promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration on the Jews, was a major boost for Jewish-Christian relations. The only previous time when there had been a similar boost after the Ten Points of Seelisberg had come out. In 1948, the International Council of Christians and Jews was established under auspices of Everett Clinchy and William "Bill" Simpson. The first associations for Christian-Jewish cooperation were founded in

Germany, followed by the roof organization, the DKR. Afterwards, World Brotherhood came into the picture. After a few years, however, the ICCJ and World Brotherhood failed. A seed had been planted which took time to grow. For the next fifteen years, the associations for interfaith understanding kept extolling the achievements of Seelisberg, or its spinoff, the Bad Schwalbach points. Those engaged in dialogue were few and far between, and did not have the tools for an effective discussion. Slowly, however, a change started to take place.

Vatican II was another such major boost. We suddenly see many more periodicals for Christian-Jewish understanding being published.<sup>17</sup> Emuna, the official organ of the DKR, issued its first number to coincide with the 1966 Woche der Brüderlichkeit. Stöhr, Levinson and Eckert all were the editors at the beginning. In the very first editorial, they explained their reasons for publishing the periodical:

An fast vierzig Orten der Bundesrepublik sind eigene Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit im Laufe der Nachkriegsjahre entstanden. Weitere Gründungen sind in Vorbereitung. In Gesprächen, Vorträgen, Arbeitswochen haben viele Gesellschaften bereits einen wesentlichen Beitrag zu Begegnungen mit dem Judentum geleistet. Aber wie weit hat bisher eine Gesellschaft von der Tätigkeit der anderen näheres erfahren? Wieviele Anregungen könnten gewonnen werden, wenn wir um die Pläne der Schwester-Gesellschaften wüssten, wenn wir miteinander die Erfahrungen austauschen könnten, an den Erkenntnissen von Tagungen und Studien teilnehmen könnten?...

Diese Erwägungen haben den geschäftsführenden

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<sup>17</sup> The DKR itself came out with EMUNA, previously called Blätter des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates der Gesellschaften für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit.

Vorstand des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates veranlasst, die Gründung eines Mitteilungsblattes zu wagen, dessen erste Nummer wir... allen Mitgliedern unserer Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit in Hände legen.

That Emuna was not the only periodical to be published in light of the new relationship between Jews and Christians is borne out by the fact that many other such magazines came out. Others included Encounter Today, previously called The Jews and Ourselves. It aimed to "supply Catholics and especially teachers with up-to-date information concerning modern Judaism and Christianity. It also aimed to meet a contemporary need for wider knowledge among Catholics of the Jewish background, faith and liturgy".<sup>16</sup> It is published in Paris, France by the Sisters of Zion, a catholic order on the forefront of interfaith dialogue. The order, divided into several regions, maintains houses in Europe, North Africa, Israel and the United States, finds its roots with the brothers Ratisbonne, Jewish converts to Catholicism. They had tremendous missionary zeal when they started out in the 1850s. The order was one of the first to realize that it had to change its theological relationship with the Jews. It has been one of the strongest Catholic voices for interfaith dialogue. SIDIC, another periodical, was also started in 1966. Like the previous one, it was also published by the Sisters of Zion, but in Rome. This one is published in a number of languages, including English and French. The order operates the Service de Information et Documentation Judeo-Chretienne. The

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<sup>16</sup> From the back page of Encounter Today, no. 1, 1966.



periodical publishes abridged academic articles for the lay reader, making the most recent scholarship in Jewish-Christian dialogue available to a wider audience.

The Catholic Church started to implement the declaration, organizing conferences on the manner in which textbooks could be amended. In West Germany, the Catholic Bishops' Conference had an expert take *Nostra Aetate* and implement revisions for religious education.

Willehad Eckert evaluates the declaration, contrasting it with the one promulgated at the first Vatican Council of 1870.<sup>19</sup> This contained a declaration to the Jews, hoping that they would come out of their misery and see the light of Christianity. *Nostra Aetate* was one about the attitude of the Catholic Church to the Jews. He felt that the ecumenical dialogue was doomed to failure if it did not address the attitude of Christianity towards Judaism. It would have been easier to deal with the issues between Catholic and Protestant Christianity. Several Protestant authorities also saw the document as a contribution to dialogue. The first separation is between Jew and Christian. Some of the intentions of *Nostra Aetate* figured already in the statement of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi in 1961, Eckert continued. It deplored antisemitism and called on its member churches to do all in their power to stop its spread. The

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<sup>19</sup> Willehad Paul Eckert, "Zur Erklärung des Verhältnisses der katholischen Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen" in Blätter des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates der Gesellschaften für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit, vol. 1, no. 1, March, 1966, 3-15.



rest of his article is devoted to the compromises which went into the making of the final draft of the document about the Jews.

The DKR sent the bishops a letter on October 26, 1965, in which it expressed its gratitude that the document was in fact going to be discussed by the Cardinals in Rome. It felt that an erasure of passages which could lead to misunderstandings or to anti-Jewish sentiments was a major contribution to creating the groundwork for Christian-Jewish dialogue. In a circular letter, the DKR mentioned that the Protestant Church was also calling together a commission to come up with recommendations to reflect the new relationship between Jews and Christians.<sup>20</sup> Vatican II had an impact far beyond the Catholic Church. It was the trigger for other Churches to engage in theological reevaluation.

The DKR organized an international conference on 25 and 26 February, 1966 in Frankfurt. The topic was the portrayal of Jews and Judaism in Catholic religious education.<sup>21</sup> Experts in catechesis, exegesis and ecumenical theology from Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and West Germany attended. As preparation, the list of recommendations made to the Catholic bishops was passed out. Although it dealt exclusively

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<sup>20</sup> BA B259, File 705, "Rundschreiben und sonstige Aussendungen Juli 1964-Juli 1967", letter dated 26 October 1965.

<sup>21</sup> Willehad P. Eckert, "Die Darstellung von Juden und Judentum im katholischen Religionsunterricht" in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVIII, 1966, Nr. 65/68, 25 September, 1966, 67-71. See Judith Hershcopf Banki, "Religious Education Before and After Vatican II" in Eugene J. Fischer (ed.), Twenty Years of Jewish-Catholic Relations, (Mahwah, NJ, 1986), 127, for the most common preconceived ideas held by young Catholics in several European countries before Vatican II.

with the situation in Germany, it was also applicable in other European countries. The aim was not so much to pick out those individual passages and points of view which were offensive to Jewish ears. It was much more to ask for guidelines along which Catholic religious education about Jews and Judaism could be formed in the future. Prof. R. Schmid from Lucerne felt that the declaration on the Jews should not be seen in isolation, but only within the context of the Church's attitude towards non-Christian religions. The way the Catholic Church would speak to atheists, for example, would facilitate dialogue with the Jews. He felt that not having dialogue with other belief systems could lead to a renewed ghettoization. Rabbi Levinson expressed the Jewish fear that behind the term "ecumenism" lurked the term "missionizing". Dr. Hermann Müller, chairman of the educators' commission of the DKR, addressed the more technical and practical aspects. Aside from the impact various antisemitic passages might have, one also has to inquire about the impact the books on religious education have. Merely having an overview over what has been published is not sufficient. Some good books might have a very limited readership, while others with horrifying stereotypes are widely used. A book which might have few offensive passages but whose general tenor is unsatisfactory can do much more harm.<sup>22</sup> Müller said further, that, from his experience, the amount of information about Judaism is much too small. Wherever there is mention of the Jews it seems contrived. Just as a reappraisal of

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<sup>22</sup> Eckert, "Die Darstellung von Juden und Judentum", 68.

relations with the Jews should be done in the context of the Church's attitude to other belief systems, the same should be done in related fields. The portrayal of Jewish history within the context of general history is an example. The next part of the conference was devoted to an analysis of the catechetical situation in various countries in Europe.

The consultation wanted to take the Jewish reservations into account too.<sup>23</sup> The document which was finally drawn up did just that. Rabbi Levinson and Dr. Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich of Zurich were responsible for this part. First of all, the diversity of the religious, cultural and political setting at the time of Jesus is essential. One has also to differentiate between the guilt of the leadership and the whole people for the death of Jesus. The image of the Pharisees in the New Testament is a skewed one, which has no bearing on the reality of the time. Terms like "Spätjudentum" are misleading because the Jewish people sees itself as having a bond with God which was never revoked. Talking about the "unbelieving" Jews is offensive, as well as attempts to convert Jews.

In the document which was drawn up at the end, the Catholic point of view was also expressed.<sup>24</sup> The following aspects have to be borne in mind. The "Old Testament" and the New Testament both convey one Heilsgeschichte. Calling the "Old Testament" a

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<sup>23</sup> Eckert, "Die Darstellung von Juden und Judentum", 70-71. See appendix no. 6 for the full text.

<sup>24</sup> See appendix 6.

religion of the Law is misleading. In order to understand the mystery of the anthropofication of Jesus, one has to see him in his Jewish context. The earliest Christians were themselves Jews. The message of the new Testament conveys the struggle between the Church and the Synagogue. The role Israel plays in Christian salvation has to be spelled out more clearly. It cannot be denied that anti-Judaism has used the death of Jesus for its own purposes. One has to bear in mind here especially the role of Judas and Peter in the betrayal of Jesus, the attitude of the rest of the apostles, as well as the impotence of those members of the Supreme Council, Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers, who were favorably inclined to him. Christians also meet Judaism throughout history. Greater effort should be expended to explain those aspects, such as the role of Jewish Christianity, the break between the Church and the Synagogue and other related topics.

At the end, the participants said that revision of textbooks is a good start, but it is not enough. Attention should also be paid to the teachers of the material being reviewed. They should also be exposed to Judaism much more than they are currently.

A month later, the DKR organized a study seminar on anti-Judaism in the New Testament.<sup>25</sup> Twelve professors of exegesis

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<sup>25</sup> Eckert, "Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament? Bericht... über eine Studientagung des DKR in Zusammenarbeit mit der "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Juden und Christen beim Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag", dem Herausgeberkreis des "Freiburger Rundbrief" und der "Evangelischen Akademie in Hessen und Nassau" in Arnoldshain/Taunus vom 31.5 bis 3.6.1966" in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVIII, 1966, Nr. 65/68, 25. September 1966, 76-79.

from German universities were invited, with Prof. David Flusser of the Hebrew University as special guest. The conference was going to deal with a very sensitive and central issue:<sup>26</sup>

Das Thema rückte nun das Neue Testament direkt ins Blickfeld: Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament? In so umfassender Weise war noch nicht danach gefragt worden, ob denn nicht die tiefste und damit am schwersten ausrottbare Wurzel im Neuen Testament selber steckt. Vertreter dreier Konfessionen machten die [Evangelische Akademie Arnoldshain] zu einem Lehrhaus, in dem in einem faszinierenden lebendigen Dialog - nicht zuletzt durch die temperamentvollen und ein reiches Wissen verratenden Kommentare Professor Flussers - um das rechte Verständnis des Neuen Testaments gerungen wurde.

The object was to pick out those anti-Jewish passages, and to try to interpret them. Father Norbert Lohfink, who gave the first lecture, said that the Catholic interpretation of the Bible is that God is the author (Verfasser), but human beings are the writers (Schriftsteller). He asked whether a passage can lose its supposed anti-Jewish slant through "correct interpretation. Only by interpreting the whole of the Bible, one could make a correct appraisal of any one particular passage.

Other lectures dealt with the difficult chapters nine to eleven in the Letter to the Romans, the Christology of Paul, the struggle within early Christianity and its role in exclusion of Judaism from it, Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity in the second century, the attitude of Jesus to the Law, the passage "His blood be on us and on our children" in Matthew, among

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Stöhr, "Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?", in *Emuna*, vol. 1, nos. 3/4, November, 1966, 166.



others. David Flusser, Franz Mussner, Günther Harder, Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich and Helmut Gollwitzer were some of the lecturers. The question of anti-Judaism was a difficult one, with no clear answer. The Gospel of John, which is the most virulent, was the focal point of the discussion, The anti-Judaism should be seen in the context of the struggle of the early Church against Judaism of that day.

Eckert felt that the conference was a great success because of the high quality of the lectures, and the willingness of the individual scholars to listen and talk with the others, even if they disagreed.<sup>27</sup>

Das Bemühen, aufeinander zu hören und miteinander neue Wege zu finden, trägt sowohl dem Aufbruch innerhalb der evangelischen Kirche, wie er in den Kirchentagen sichtbar wurde, als auch innerhalb der katholischen Kirche Rechnung. Letztlich war ja gerade durch das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil und die im Jahre 1965 verabschiedete Erklärung über das Verhältnis der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen der Anstoss gegeben, nun weiterzuarbeiten.

Stöhr also gives his assessment of the conference. The general sense was that tampering with the text itself would not do the trick. The task was to interpret of various passages concerning the Jews. The actual context of the New testament was one of the most important factors in determining anti-Jewish statements. The professors felt that, as a tool to spread the word, the early Christians used polemical and one-sided accounts in order to illustrate their points. They had a much harder time explaining

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<sup>27</sup> Eckert, "Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament", 79.



that salvation comes from the Jews, and therefore neglected that aspect. One of the aims of this conference was, then, to highlight those neglected aspects.<sup>28</sup>

On the Protestant side, there was also talk about the new openness between Jews and Christians. Kurt Scharf, bishop of one of the regional churches of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, talked about *Nostra Aetate*.<sup>29</sup> At the beginning, he compared the first draft to the final version. He said that the location of the document is significant. While the draft was intended to be included in a statement on ecumenism, the final one was in the document on non-Christian religions, placing the issue of Israel among those of "Heidentum".<sup>30</sup> He remarked further that while the original made it clear that the Jews were not condemned by God, nor that they were responsible for the death of Jesus, the final version said something else. No reference was included on the guilt of the Jews. After his criticism, he said that the fact that the Vatican actually dealt with the issue of relations with the Jewish people must be seen as something very positive. Another positive element is that the document does not stay with dogmatic formulations, but actually suggests a way to proceed for the average teacher.

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<sup>28</sup> Stöhr, "Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?", 167.

<sup>29</sup> Kurt Scharf, "Das christlich-jüdische Verhältnis und das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil in evangelischer Sicht", Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVIII, 1966, Nr. 65/68, 25. September 1966, 39-42. The lecture was given to the Berlin member of the DKR.

<sup>30</sup> It is unclear whether he means heathens or Gentiles.

In his opinion, Nostra Aetate underscored another point. The document talks about the Jewish people as being the people of God only in the past tense. This implies that, although they are not rejected, a new people has arisen, the Church. The Protestant Church, however, does not see it that way. The Jews are, along with the Christians, still the people of God. The Church needs the Jewish people, because otherwise it loses its *raison d'être*. The Jewish people needs the Church too, according to him. The existence of the Church is the recurring question to the Jewish people about its future, about the beginning of its future, the fulfillment of its hope.

The final part of Scharf's lecture was devoted to the task of Jewish-Christian cooperation in Germany. Jews and Christians should sit down and study the text of both traditions, and ask questions about beliefs of Jews and Christians. The aim is, however, not to missionize. The context of Germany adds another dimension. Germans should visit Israel, not only to tour, but also to work in the kibbutzim. Our role in Germany, according to Scharf, is to equip the youth with the tools to talk about the Holy Scriptures, and as far as feasible, have a religious dialogue. In addition, visits from Germany to Israel should be organized, help should be extended to develop the country. Finally, the Churches should address the political situation in the Middle East, especially the threat posed to Israel. Through all kinds of channels, Christians should draw attention to it. German Christians are especially called upon because of guilt the

Germans have for the treatment of the Jews.

#### Other Developments in Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Germany

Every ten years, the famous Passion Play is staged in the south Bavarian town of Oberammergau. It is an immensely popular play with portrayals of the Jews as seen through Catholic eyes for centuries. The play was staged for the first time in 1634 in fulfillment of a vow made during a plague epidemic the previous year. The Church intended to make the Passion story more understandable for the general population. Using plays to convey religious messages was nothing uncommon in medieval societies. They afforded entertainment along with a religious message. At first, the Church was very satisfied with it, but later on, changes were introduced. It became so different from the original, that it was even banned by the Church for a while.<sup>31</sup> It has been performed in at least five different versions over the years.<sup>32</sup> It has become a major tourist attraction over the last century, with its picturesque setting in the Bavarian Alps. During the Nazi era, the play was performed in 1934, to mark its three hundredth anniversary, with Jesus portrayed as an Aryan

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<sup>31</sup> Frau Cremers talking at the meeting of the executive officers the DKR, 13 June 1960. She is citing an article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung from 17 May, 1960.

<sup>32</sup> See: Oberammergau 1960 and 1970: a Study in Religious Anti-Semitism, (New York, American Jewish Committee, 1970), 24 pp. The main body of the booklet is a comparison of the play before and after Vatican II.

hero. Hitler even attended the showing, pretending that he was a devout Christian. In 1950, the next time it was staged, the version dating back to 1860 was used. It did not contain the racism of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, but did have the anti-Jewish religious prejudices prevalent already for centuries. This did not change in 1960 either.

There were organizations which were not satisfied with the general tenor of the play already in 1960. Negotiations had been taking place to effect some changes in the portrayal of the Jews. The Bavarian members of the DKR had been engaged in them, but without concrete results. At the annual general meeting of the DKR in Düsseldorf in 1960, the Bavarian Associations were criticized for this procrastination. Dr. Fingerle of the Munich Association reported that the negotiations were taking place in a much calmer atmosphere than ever before. He seemed to imply that there was no big hurry in changing the text of the play. He assured that not all people coming away from the play would become antisemites. He cited, further, the opinion of the former Protestant pastor of Oberammergau, who could not find any anti-Jewish tendencies in the play at all. The latter rhetorically asked how often the Christians have sold God. This reveals a lot about his own prejudices. His interpretation is not the one the average viewer would apply to the play. For them, all the Jews are responsible for Jesus' death. In terms of the casting, all the Jews have black hair, while all the supposed Christians are portrayed as having blond hair.

The general feeling at the annual general meeting was that the Munich Association should not be dealing with the issues alone. Other Associations should also be allowed to have a say because it is of more than mere local importance. Frau Cremers of the Düsseldorf Association also addressed the topic. She quoted an article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. After a bit of history on the play, she quotes the author as saying that after centuries of critical Biblical study, one cannot have a staging of the play. She does not clarify her point, however. Does this mean the play should be ignored because biblical scholars know better? Should the play be discontinued?<sup>33</sup>

Other people within the Associations see nothing wrong with the play. It is written in such a way in order to keep the attention of the audience focused. Others felt that it was an internal Catholic issue. Coming out with statements would do more damage than good. There seems to have been very little outcome from the DKR treatment of the issue. The causes may lie in several factors. There may have been a genuine sense of perplexity as to how to deal with religious issues between Jews and Christians. The DKR had been dealing with issues common to Christians and Jews, but they were not religious ones. Antisemitism, reparations and the like preoccupied them. Another reason may have been that changes were starting to take place in the Vatican's relationship with Jews. Until that had been dealt

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<sup>33</sup> BA B259, File 630, Mitgliederversammlung 1960, "Protokoll über die Geschäftsführerkonferenz, 13 Juni, 1960, Düsseldorf".

with, nobody wanted to venture to amend the text without being assured the backing from Rome. On the other hand, that people were concerned with the issue at all I see as a positive sign.

On the plane of interreligious dialogue, Nostra Aetate clearly was a major turning point. Now for the first time, religious issues came up for discussion. Beforehand, organizations for interfaith understanding, including the DKR, dealt mostly with political and social issues common to Jews and Christians. In Germany, the main themes were denazification, reparations, Nazi trials, diplomatic relations with Israel and the like. After October, 1965, both the Protestant and the Catholic Church started to deal with relations with the Jews on a much more concentrated level. The DKR was invigorated by the new climate. Several key conferences looked into the achievements of the past few years, and came up with proposals for enhancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. The seeds of Seelisberg were starting to come to fruition.



## CHAPTER 4

### 1967 and beyond

#### The DKR and the Six-Day-War

June 1967 was a difficult time for Israel and Germany for a number of reasons. The most obvious was the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East. In a preemptive move, Israel attacked Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian forces on June 5, early in the morning. After three hours, the Egyptian air force had been crippled, and Israeli tanks were moving across the Sinai peninsula. Despite repeated warnings, Jordanian forces started shelling Israeli positions, resulting in an attack whose outcome was the occupation of the West Bank. Two days later, Israel attacked the Golan Heights, in order to put an end to Syrian shelling of kibbutzim, towns and settlements in the northern part of the country. After six days, hostilities were terminated, with Israel holding on to the Sinai peninsula, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. The military victory turned out to be a political defeat because no peace resulted. The Arab states came out with the famous "three no's" of Khartoum: no recognition, no negotiations, no peace. The Arab states were in no mood for talks

after this resounding defeat. Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt, even submitted his resignation, but was called back into office. Arab pride had been severely tarnished.

As coincidence would have it, the DKR was holding its annual general meeting from June 4 to 6, 1967, in Berlin. The delegates had already felt on the fourth that a war was imminent. This necessitated a change in the agenda to deal with the emerging situation. Leo Waltermann, editor of church affairs with the regional television network WDR in Cologne, gave a talk about the current social situation and its repercussions, and its relevance to the DKR.<sup>1</sup> He was able to deliver his lecture, but all the others had to be adapted to the course of events. Right at that moment, students from the Free University of Berlin were boycotting classes and campus events in protest against the killing of a student amid demonstrations against the visit of the Shah of Iran. This made the lecture all the more significant. That evening, Dr. Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich held a lecture on the Passion story in the New Testament and the alleged Jewish guilt. He defended holding it right at that time. One should not neglect basic research into the foundations of Christianity even at a most critical time.<sup>2</sup> He continued by analyzing present-day Jew-

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<sup>1</sup> The minutes do not elaborate at all on the contents of the lecture. Eckert also refers to it in the report about the activities of the DKR, Emuna, vol. 2, no. 3, September, 1967, 215.

<sup>2</sup> Willehad Paul Eckert, "Solidarität mit Israel" in Emuna, vol. 2, no. 3, September 1967, 216. Eckert gives no details about the lecture itself, just about aspects which have a bearing on the situation as it is pertinent in the face of the war.

hatred. It did not use theological or pseudotheological arguments. Many antisemites dress their hatred in anti-Zionism. The model of imperialism versus socialism is superimposed on the Arab-Israeli conflict, leading to anti-Israeli positions being taken by the leadership of the German students.

Despite the crisis in the university, Helmut Gollwitzer, professor at the university and long-time sympathizer of the DKR, managed to get thousands of students to appear at an evening organized by the DKR for a discussion on the current situation. Hostilities had broken out in the meantime. The lecture originally planned was abandoned. The new topic was, "Solidarity with Israel; How can the Germans help Israel". Gollwitzer began by spelling out the dangers poised at Israel's borders. He stated that being pro-Arab means that one is automatically anti-Israel, while this is not the case the other way around. One can be pro-Israel without being anti-Arab. On the other extreme, he cautioned against becoming anti-Arab. This would not do justice to the totality of the loss of life in the region.

Günther Grass, the famous German author, was another speaker. He gave his impressions about his visit to Israel. He recounted that the Arabs in Israel had a much higher standard of living than their neighbors; they had the right to vote in the Knesset. No Israeli had been matching the vitriolic rhetoric of the Arab states. They were threatening to initiate a second "Final Solution" and to set up a camp that would have rivalled Treblinka. Finally Grass pleaded for monetary help for Israel. He

said that it was in an especially precarious situation, with the additional burdens of war. The reply from the students was overwhelming. That evening, more than DM 6000 was raised through spontaneous donations.

At midnight, there was an ecumenical and interfaith prayer meeting in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche. The service only consisted of singing, prayer and scripture readings. Notables in attendance included Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson, Rev. Martin Stöhr and Father Willehad Eckert, plus representatives of the Churches, and of the Berlin Jewish community. Thousands filled the pews in the church. Eckert felt that any words by a clergyperson would not have been appropriate.

The individual associations of the DKR also had their own events in conjunction with the war. The Cologne Association held a public gathering at the city's university, on June 9. By this time, the situation in the Middle East was becoming clear. The auditorium was not fully occupied because the students of the university were also boycotting campus events due to the death of the Berlin student six days prior. The general tenor of the event was that now that the outcome of the war was becoming apparent, the watchword must be peace. This was followed by a march of silence in the city. At the final rally, Heinz Kühn, prime minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, said that "the other side of the coin of our sympathy for Israel is not hatred of Arabs".

Hannah Vogt, one of the leaders of the DKR, and intimately involved with the educational commission, provided the readers of

Emuna with some background information on the conflict, intended for educational purposes.<sup>3</sup> She laid out the history of immigration to Palestine under the British, and the reaction of the Arabs. Vogt held that the Palestinian refugees were being used as bargaining chips, without tending to their needs. When it became apparent that a direct military confrontation would not yield any results, the Fedayeen started to engage in border skirmishes. She came to the conclusion that the Arabs were engaging in an emotional, rather than a rational, policy. The defeat of 1948 was so devastating that they refused to accept it. It was compensated by an unabated hatred of Israel, much like the German refusal to accept defeat after the World War I, mutatis mutandis. She felt that much more could be achieved through cooperation. Vogt recalled the contribution of the Arabs to Western civilization. Adhering to this vicious circle of defeat, refusal to cooperate and preparation for additional military conflict is disastrous.<sup>4</sup>

Vielleicht könnte gerade die Bundesrepublik einen Beitrag zum Frieden leisten, weil wir allzu bittere und fürchterliche Erfahrungen mit diesem Teufelskreis selbst gemacht haben. Nichts spricht gegen die deutsch-arabische Freundschaft... Aber sie kann nicht mit der Freigabe Israels bezahlt werden. Alle künftige Hilfe, alle möglichen und wünschenswerten Investitionen haben den Frieden und den Willen zur Kooperation im Nahen Osten zur Voraussetzung. Es genügt nicht, dass die Waffen schweigen.

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<sup>3</sup> Hannah Vogt, "Israel und die Araber: Zur Vorgeschichte des Konflikts; eine Handreichung zur Behandlung des Themas im Unterricht" in Emuna, vol. 2, no. 3, September, 1967, 153-160.

<sup>4</sup> Vogt, "Israel und die Araber", 160.

This short account reflects the general sentiment within the DKR, as well as within the German population in general. A tremendous outpouring of sympathy and support was the manifestation. Emuna highlighted several such activities.<sup>5</sup>

During the development of the crisis and the actual outbreak of war, the government of the German Democratic Republic had been engaging in wild accusations against Israel. They unconditionally supported the Arabs. The annual general meeting of the DKR felt that it had to say something about this. It instructed the chairmen to write a letter to Willi Stoph, prime minister of East Germany. They protested the denigration of Israel. The East German propaganda stopped at nothing to criticize the Israelis. As Germans, they too should do everything possible to prevent another genocide.

In addition to the donations solicited from the DKR, the German-Israeli Society (DIG) also held such a drive. For a period of time, special bank accounts were opened for the general population to donate money for Israel. By the middle of July, more than two and a half million DM had been raised. The society was very appreciative. In a letter to the three chairmen of the DKR, Heinz Westphal, vice-president of the DIG expressed his

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<sup>5</sup> "Fest an der Seite Israels - Sympathie und Hilfe aus dem ganzen Volk - einige Beispiele" in Emuna, vol. 2, no. 3, September, 1967. About 3000 German doctors and nurses registered with the Israeli embassy in Bonn for volunteer work in Israel. Huge amounts of money also came together in various fundraising efforts.



thanks.<sup>6</sup>

Bei unseren Beratungen haben wir die grossen Leistungen der Gesellschaften für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit für das Zustandekommen des guten Ergebnisses der Aktion besonders gewürdigt. Wir wissen, dass die Einheitlichkeit unseres gemeinsamen Handelns, die insbesondere auf dem grossmütigen Verzicht des Koordinierungsrates auf eine gesonderte, eigene Aktion beruhte, zu dem Erfolg erheblich beigetragen hat. In der Presseerklärung, die unser Präsident im Anschluss an die Sitzung (vom 10. Juli) veröffentlichte, haben wir auf die Mitwirkung der Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit hingewiesen. Das Präsidium der Deutsch-Israelischen Gesellschaft hat mich beauftragt, Ihnen sehr geehrten Herren, unseren herzlichen Dank für Ihre Bemühungen auszusprechen.

After this session, the Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft was able to give Israel a second check for 1.3 million DM.

Despite the crisis in the Middle East, the DKR also had to tend to business at the annual general meeting. Father Eckert gave a report of the activities of the previous year. He reported about an international exegetical conference in 1966.<sup>7</sup> He submitted a report of the second international conference of Christians and Jews in Cambridge. The topic was, "Jewish-Christian Cooperation, Streams at Present, and Prospects for the Future". It was to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the first international conference in Oxford in 1946 and was organized by the International Consultative Committee of

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<sup>6</sup> Willehad Eckert, "Dank für gemeinsame Aktion" in Emuna vol. 2, no. 3, September 1967, 217-218

<sup>7</sup> Referred to in the previous chapter.

Organizations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation.<sup>8</sup> Sixty-nine people from ten countries participated. This was the first time that there was such a meeting after the promulgation of Vatican II. It took the New Delhi declaration of the World Council of Churches on antisemitism into account,<sup>9</sup> and, in four commissions, dealt with the topic. The first commission drew conclusions from the New Delhi and Vatican II declarations. It criticized Nostra Aetate for using terms which are foreign to Jews, while not doing likewise with the other religions. In dealing with Hinduism, the declaration talked about the value of meditation, Hindu myths and philosophy and so forth. The treatment of the Jews was different. The document reiterated that the Church is the people of the New Covenant, although Jews do not differentiate between an old and a new covenant. The Jews are characterized as the people with whom God has made an old covenant. Furthermore, the document only speaks of the Jews as the chosen people in pre-Christian times. It did not address the religious importance of the Jews after Jesus. Nor did the Church see a connection between Judaism as a religion and Jews as a people. It also failed to understand Jews on their own terms. Now that Nostra Aetate had come out with a clear repudiation of manifestations of hatred, persecutions and

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<sup>8</sup> After the demise of the International Council of Christians and Jews, this organization was founded toward the end of the 1950s. It brought together the executives of a number of interfaith organizations. The DKR was one of the members. See Wilhelm Richter "Die internationale christlich-jüdische Konferenz in Cambridge," in Emuna, vol. 1, no. 3/4, November 1966, 187-197.

<sup>9</sup> See Rendtorff, Henrix (Hrsg.), Die Kirchen und das Judentum, 339-340.

antisemitism, it should do things which will back up words with deeds. In reference to the New Delhi document, there was a statement that the Jews are not the only people which has not yet accepted Jesus. The conference asked what is meant by "not yet".

The second commission dealt with the opportunities and limits of Jewish-Christian dialogue. Engaging in it is a tremendous enriching experience for believing people. Against the backdrop of less than amicable relations between Judaism and Christianity, the aim is to enhance understanding for God's likeness. Great caution would have to be exercised not to undermine the belief of the other partner.

Commission number three dealt with the recurrence of prejudice against minorities, with an emphasis on neo-Nazism. The hope that the victory over National Socialism meant the end of racial and religious persecution did not come true. Yet, those groups who combatted these manifestations are to be commended for their efforts. This in the face of indifference to the cultural and religious life of people who are different. The duty of all educational institutions is to instill their students with tolerance for the otherness of the other.

The fourth commission discussed points of emphasis in maintaining intact group education. It asked itself how educational programs and techniques have adapted to the changes taking place today. It wanted to know, furthermore, how education aided in bringing about better relations between Jews and Christians. The influence of Jewish-Christian dialogue on the

sociological aspects of education was also discussed. It felt that the climate had changed dramatically after the promulgation of the two key documents. The goal is to instill in the younger generation a Weltanschauung based on those values common to Christians and Jews.

The conference did make significant progress in the field of interreligious relations, calling for improvements on both the New Delhi and the Vatican II documents. But, even the most noble declarations can be made at conferences, but if they are not heeded, they are worth little. This seems to be the problem in this case. There is no ongoing discussion afterwards. Except for recommendations made by the education committee, this is also the case with pronouncements of the DKR on other subjects.

Several participants at the Cambridge conference mentioned that they would have loved to have an organizational structure as strong as the one of the DKR. The only countries which had similar ones were the United States with its National Conference of Christians and Jews, and Great Britain with its Council of Christians and Jews.<sup>10</sup>

That having a relatively powerful organization sometimes cannot do much is documented by a curious incident that happened in February 1967. Rabbi Max Nussbaum, president of the American section of the World Jewish Congress, visited Cardinal Joseph Frings. During the meeting, which was made public prematurely,

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<sup>10</sup> BA B259, File 638, "Mitgliederversammlung 1967", Protokoll über die Mitgliederversammlung des DKR in Berlin 4-6 Juni, 1967.

Frings told Nussbaum that he did not see the rise of the extreme right-wing party, NPD, as a threat.<sup>11</sup> He then proceeded to analyze the causes of antisemitism during the Holocaust. Frings said, according to Nussbaum, that the cause was that the Jews had too much money and showed it off too. Frings further questioned whether the number of six million Jews murdered was correct. Nussbaum, who was obviously taken aback, said that antisemitism has nothing to do with the existence of Jews. Nazism would still have been around had all the Jews been angels, he added.

A week later, the Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung published a response by Cardinal Frings. In essence, he said that the remarks were taken out of context. He had not meant to talk about Nazi antisemitism, but rather about popular feeling towards the Jews during the 1920s. Further, he said that major parts of the conversation were not reported. Alfred Wolfmann, the newspaper's reporter, however, contradicted that statement. To patch up the differences representatives of the Cologne Jewish community held a meeting with Frings subsequently, in which both sides said that they deplore the misunderstandings, and recalled the good relations between the synagogue and the archbishops during the centuries. Frings also recalled his activities during the Holocaust, which deepened the friendship.

The DKR was very interested in keeping the controversy under control because Cardinal Frings had been asked to give one of the

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<sup>11</sup> Alfred Wolfmann, "Kardinal Frings und der Antisemitismus: Ein Gespräch mit Rabbiner Nussbaum," in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XXI, no. 45, 1.



keynote addresses at the forthcoming Woche der Brüderlichkeit, little over a month away. The three chairmen published a statement in which they deplored the misunderstandings.<sup>12</sup>

Fairness und Klugheit hätten geboten, dass verantwortliche jüdische Gremien in Deutschland bzw. der Vorstand des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates hiervon in Kenntnis gesetzt worden wären....

Der DKR hat es sich mit seinen Schwestergesellschaften zur Aufgabe gemacht, den Dialog zwischen Christen und Juden zu fördern. Sensationelle Interviews oder Ultimata sind nicht der geeignete Weg, dieses grosse Anliegen zu verwirklichen.

From the minutes of the annual general meeting of 1967, it was clear that the general sense was that more controversy was not wanted under any circumstances.<sup>13</sup> There were only very oblique references during the short discussion of the affair. By that time, it had already been taken care of, but it did bring to mind the continued misconceptions and prejudices which were still prevalent.

Cardinal Frings made a point of writing a pastoral letter on the occasion of the Woche der Brüderlichkeit starting March 5, 1967.<sup>14</sup> He talked specifically about the legacy of the Nazi dictatorship. Here he stated that at least six million Jews died in the concentration camps, among them at least a million children. Frings called upon Germans to do everything possible to

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<sup>12</sup> "Berichte: Der Deutsche Koordinierungsrat", in Emuna, vol. 2, no. 1, March, 1967, 57-59.

<sup>13</sup> BA B259, "Mitgliederversammlung 1967", Protokoll über die Mitgliederversammlung, Berlin, 2-4 Juni, 1967.

<sup>14</sup> "Hirtenwort von Kardinal Frings zur Woche der Brüderlichkeit" in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XXI, no. 49, 1.



make some kind of restitution.

In other matters, the annual general meeting also paid attention to the continued resurgence of the extreme right wing in Germany. Ilse Neugebauer analyzed the phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> She noted that there was a party already in 1945 which saw itself as the continuation of the Nazi party NSDAP. Various follow-up parties were made illegal during the next ten years. The fortunes of these parties declined steadily from 1959 to 1964. This changed in 1965, when the Nationalsozialistische Partei Deutschlands, just recently established, reached a membership of 16,000. This was a result of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel and its repercussions on relations with the Arab states, the Auschwitz trial and the debate surrounding the statute of limitations. The NPD could not surmount the five percent hurdle to be represented in the parliament, but in several regional elections, it did have an alarming appeal.

The mouthpiece of many of these right-wing parties was the Deutsche Nationalzeitung und Soldaten Zeitung. The DKR appealed to the relevant authorities to take steps to revoke the license of the newspaper because it was spreading antisemitic and right-wing propaganda. The DKR felt it was its duty to raise its voice wherever Jews or Judaism were being defamed. If, however, the nature of this defamation was more of a local character, the nearest Association would be consulted before any action was to

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<sup>15</sup> Ilse Neugebauer, "Zur Analyse des Rechtsradikalismus in der Bundesrepublik: Informationen über die NPD", in Blätter des DKR [Emuna], vol. 1, no. 2, June 1967, 71-81.

be taken.<sup>16</sup>

### The Six-Day-War and the Churches

The response of the DKR was not the typical one. In many of the Churches, there was much less willingness to come to terms with Israel. Both the Protestant World Council of Churches, and the Catholic Church had not defined their attitude towards the State of Israel. The New Delhi resolution was little more than a condemnation of antisemitism. There was also sufficient opposition to a more daring statement on the Jews in Vatican II.

With the Six-Day-War, the Churches were forced to take a position. They had remained completely silent, save for a few exceptions, in the wake of a massive buildup of forces along the borders with Israel. When, after six days, it became clear what the outcome of the war was, the Churches started worrying about access to the holy places. They had never worried about it when the places were under Moslem sovereignty, but voiced misgivings when they fell under Israeli, Jewish rule.

Arab churches urged the World Council of Churches to reiterate its statement about the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. In the letter to the WCC, they listed the history of Jewish "conquest" of Palestine from the Balfour Declaration, through 1947, 1948, 1956 and up to the war.

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<sup>16</sup> BA B259, File 638, "Mitgliederversammlung 1967", Protokoll, Berlin 4-6 June 1967.

The Israelis were portrayed as aggressors each time; they were accused of using napalm bombs, and the expulsion of the Palestinians was equated to the extermination of the Jews under the Nazis. The creation of the state of Israel was seen by the Arabs as sanctioned by the West, after the Holocaust. They should have found suitable space for settling Jews on their continent, instead of shipping them overseas. The West is therefore responsible too, and should deliver Palestine from the hands of the Jews. The heads of the Arab states never wanted to annihilate the Jews, they claimed, just terminate the existence of the "racial State of Israel".<sup>17</sup>

The World Council of Churches found itself in a bind. On the one hand there was the pressure from the Arab Churches, but on the other, there was the Western Christian enthusiasm about the existence of the state, and the vast support during and after the war. It therefore came out with ambiguous statements, saying that it could not have a say in the Israeli-Arab conflict because the Church does not have a rosy history in relations with Moslems and Jews.

One of the things the Churches had to realize was the bond between the Jews and Israel. Massive Jewish support poured into Israel from around the world, now that the country was faced with such a dire threat. Many Christians had never contemplated the relation of the people to the land. This war made it abundantly

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<sup>17</sup> Y. Malachi, "The Christian Churches and the Six Day War", in Wiener Library Bulletin, vol. XXIII, nos. 2 & 3, 18

clear that Israel was a tremendous source of pride for most Jews. It also made it clear that the Churches had much to learn.

Individual clergymen, theologians and seminary leaders continued to make their pro-Israeli views known. Among them Monsignor Oesterreicher and Rev. Edward Flannery, of the Center for Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, and nine Dutch Protestant and Catholic theologians, who supported the Israeli point of view completely and said<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish people, the Promised Land and the City of Jerusalem are linked together in a unique way through the Bible and history; the wish to separate the Jewish people in thought or in deed from this land or from Jerusalem is tantamount to calling on them to relinquish their identity.

The attitude of many of the more liberal churches was influenced by what their missionaries, working primarily in Arab countries were saying about the conflict. There was a fundamental contradiction in their outlook. These Churches said that Zionism is only a chauvinistic nationalistic movement, which is even in contradiction to what Judaism maintains(!). They did not, however, hesitate to support the nationalist movements in Africa and Asia.

Y. Malachy asks at the end of his article what the deeper reasons were for the Churches' attitude to Israel.<sup>19</sup> He quotes Roy Eckardt who says that "the return of the Jews to Palestine

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Y. Malachi, "The Christian Churches and the Six Day War", 20

<sup>19</sup> Malachy, "The Christian Churches and the Six Day War", 23-24.

and the establishment of the State of Israel was a traumatic blow to the general Christian consciousness, from which it has not completely recovered". The so-called cursed people would not be able to build up a state of its own, according to traditional Christian theology. On the other hand, the Holocaust and Christians' feelings of guilt did not allow an outright condemnation. This produced such a strange set of reactions from the churches. The total identification of world Jewry with Israel, and the solidarity within the country did teach the Churches a lesson that one cannot talk about the Jewish people without taking Israel into account.

Emuna, and its editors, were among those who supported the Israeli point of view. This is reflected in the articles of the periodical, which carried a series of articles about Jerusalem, its reunification and the status of the holy places. Pere Jean Roger who lived in Jerusalem wrote that Israelis were dismayed at the lack of trust in their capability to respect free access to the holy places. He maintained that ever since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Churches had kept a distance towards it. They were afraid that Jews might try to rebuild the Third Temple should they gain control over the Old City and the Temple Mount. He also discounted the concern that Christian life in Israel was hard. He conceded that Christian Arabs were subject to some restrictions, but this was because they were a minority. Many young Arabs left the country not due to religious persecution, but because of adverse economic conditions.

Comparing the religious freedom accorded Christians in Israel with that in Jordan would tip the balance decidedly in favor of Israel, he continued.<sup>20</sup> The general tenor of all these Emuna articles was that the misgivings expressed by people who are unfamiliar with the situation were unfounded. The authors did not understand the concern of the Churches who did not raise their voices when the holy places were under Jordanian rule. They attributed this to some form of overreaction. Emuna also published an eyewitness report by a Christian woman who experienced the Six-Day-War first-hand in Haifa.<sup>21</sup> She talked about the feelings of a common fate, and the relief when the first news from the front became public. She also said that Israelis didn't understand the calls for guarantees for the holy sites. There is no question that they are protected, she was certain.

In December of 1967, the International Consultative Committee of Organizations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation sponsored an international conference on the crisis in the Middle East and Jewish-Christian relations.<sup>22</sup> The reports of the

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<sup>20</sup> Jean Roger et al. "Der Staat Israel: Die christliche Welt und die Heiligen Stätten, Erwägungen von Christen in Israel", in Emuna, vol. 2, no. 3, September, 1967, 167-170.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Berliner, "Ich erlebte den Krieg in Israel: Augenzeugenbericht aus Haifa" in Emuna, vol. 3, no. 3, September, 1967, 205-210.

<sup>22</sup> Willehad Paul Eckert, "Nahostkrise und jüdisch-christliches Gespräch: Konferenz des Internationalen Konsultativkomitees der Organisationen für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit", in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XXII, no. 38, 15 December, 1967, 6.



delegates revealed that the war was not without consequences for dialogue. The French organization for Christian-Jewish cooperation was being confronted with the anti-Israeli policy of French President Charles de Gaulle. The council was asking itself whether to engage in more political affairs rather than remain in the theological domain. Prof. Zwi Werblowsky spoke about the situation in Israel. He said that there was little Christian-Jewish dialogue going on in the country because of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Most of the indigenous Christians are Arabs, and see themselves within this context. The first task is to lay the groundwork for living together peacefully. Only later can the topic of interfaith dialogue be addressed.

The participants unanimously agreed that the Churches should pay greater attention to the relationship of the Jews to the Land of Israel. This had become very manifest during the crisis, with the tremendous outpouring of Jewish support for the embattled state. The Consultative Committee therefore drafted a call to its various member organizations.<sup>23</sup>

Das Komitee glaubt, dass es von entscheidender Bedeutung ist, im Lichte der verwickelten und verschiedenartigen Reaktionen im Nahostkonflikt die christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen von Grund auf zu überprüfen. Dabei geht es vor allem um die Frage, wie die Juden sowohl in Israel als auch in der Welt überhaupt den Sinn und die Bedeutung ihres Volkseins und ihrer jüdischen Identität verstehen, ferner um die Bände, die die Juden in allen Ländern miteinander und mit dem Land ihrer Väter verbinden, sowie um die Beziehungen zwischen den Juden in Israel und den andern Völkern in Nahost. Die

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Eckert, "Nahostkrise und jüdisch-christliches Gespräch", 6.

gegenwärtige Lage wirft ähnliche Fragen für die Christen auf, wenn sie versuchen, die Stellung der Juden in Israel und ihr Verhältnis zu den Nichtjuden im allgemeinen und den Christen im besonderen zu verstehen. Sie dürfen ihre Augen nicht vor der Tatsache verschliessen, dass Juden betroffen sind, weil so viele führende Kirchenmänner und christliche Organisationen angesichts der offen angedrohten Massenvernichtung schwiegen. ...Daher müssen die Ereignisse, die den Krieg im Juni 1967 auslösten, sein politisches Nachspiel, die aus ihm folgenden Leiden von Arabern und Juden in ihren Auswirkungen auf den Nahen Osten und die ganze Welt studiert werden.

There is no doubt that the DKR was very concerned with the attitude towards the Jews in the various Churches. Uncertainty concerning their attitude had led to a marked increase in antagonism between Jews and Christians. Together with several other organizations for Jewish-Christian understanding in Germany, the DKR held an interreligious conference at the Protestant academy in Arnoldshain, near Frankfurt. After consultations, the organizers decided to tackle a subject which had been neglected by Christian theology: "Israel and the Galut: The Land of Israel and its place in Theology".<sup>24</sup> In one of the lectures, Prof. Rolf Rendtorff, professor of Bible at Heidelberg University, said that after the war, Protestant theology started to deal with the "Old Testament" more seriously. Yet this did not translate into a greater appreciation of Jews and Judaism. Prof. Hans Werner Bartsch augmented this in his lecture on Israel and the New Testament. At the latest since the Bar Kochba revolt, he

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<sup>24</sup> W.P. Eckert, "Israel und die Theologie; das dritte christlich-jüdische Treffen in Arnoldshain" in Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung vol. XXIII, no. 11, 14 June, 1968, 4.

said, Israel and the Jewish people had been relegated to the periphery of Christian theological thought. The Jewish participants unanimously agreed that Israel had a very central place in the life of the Jews around the world. Prof. Pinna Nave, who dealt with the issue of center and periphery in Jewish history, cited Rabbi Leo Baeck, who said that Jewish history can be drawn as an ellipse. At one focal point is Israel, with the other one changing over time.

### The Rise of the New Left

In West Germany, there were other concerns, at the beginning of June, 1967, which had repercussions nationwide. It was going to affect the DKR in that the support for Israel started to wane when the New Left was going to gather strength. On June 2, during a demonstration in Berlin against the arrival of the Shah of Iran, Benno Ohnesorg, a student was shot and killed by a police officer. A riot ensued. This marked the beginning of the so-called Ausserparlamentarische Opposition (APO), and an increasing radicalization of the students.

Germany had had a long history of student activism, beginning with the Burschenschaften of the nineteenth century. Between the two world wars, there was general drift towards the Right, specifically the antisemitic Right. The most ardent supporters of Hitler were found among the students and faculty of the universities. After World War II this activism almost

disappeared. The economic affluence of the post-war period, the revelations of what was going on in the Soviet Union, and the Cold War were strong persuasive arguments to maintain the status quo.

What galvanized the German students into action was the emergence of a radical student movement in the United States, after the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, which was monitored very closely from Europe. In fact, we see series of lectures on the situation across the Atlantic throughout 1965 in the programs of several Associations of the DKR. The United States had been the model of power and economic prowess in the 1950s. In the 1960s, with the extensive coverage of the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement, this emulation turned into disgust. Students, watching the events of America on TV, became disillusioned with that system, and by extension, with that of European states. The way was now open for an assault on traditional society, and the advent of utopian radicalism.<sup>25</sup> The first to feel the influence of the New Left in the United States was West Germany. The movement became the prototype of other continental student radicals. Anti-Americanism became the rallying point of German leftists. The conditions had been prepared earlier when the left-leaning student organization split off from its parent organization, the Social Democrats (SPD). The SPD had renounced its Marxist principles in 1959. Its youth

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<sup>25</sup> Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter, Roots of Radicalism: Jews, Christians, and the New Left, (New York, Oxford, 1982), 350-353.

affiliate, the Sozialistische Deutsche Studenten (SDS) was outraged. In 1961, the SDS formally broke with the SPD. The university associated first and foremost with this radicalism was the Free University of Berlin, created in 1947 as a protest against the communist domination of the Humboldt university in the city.

Student demonstrations had taken place in Berlin since 1964, when a riot broke out over the visit of the Congolese prime minister. In 1965, the first-ever student strike at a German university took place. But this was only the beginning. In 1967, the big change occurred. On June 2, the Shah of Iran was scheduled to arrive in Berlin. There were protests and counter-protests, and a clash with the police. The result was that a policeman shot and killed a student bystander, Benno Ohnesorg. This set off a whole process. Twenty thousand students marched behind Ohnesorg's coffin, and a further twenty thousand attended his funeral. Afterwards, they formally organized the Ausserparlamentarische Opposition (APO). The West German student movement now entered its anti-authoritarian phase, its most important.<sup>28</sup> Its main target was the American and Western political system. The German system was seen as an extension of an imperialist American one. The Vietnam war was going on in full force, with no prospect that it could be concluded soon. The students, in their anti-establishmentarian mode, supported the underdog, the Vietcong. By extension, this applied also to other

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<sup>28</sup> Rothman; Lichter, Roots of Radicalism, 359-360.



conflicts. It was to have a strong influence also on the May 1968 riots in Paris and the emergence of that student movement.

Tilman Fichter agrees that the attitude of leftist students changed with the Six-Day-War.<sup>27</sup> Both the right and the left looked at the Israelis from another perspective from then on. For the right, the Jews were characterized as victors. It is, however, not warranted to see this support as entirely "innocent", without some motive behind it. The Israelis were doing what European Jews had not been able to do. They fought back and won. Intense admiration was the result, relieving some of the burden of having turned away from the Jews little over twenty years before. The left, on the other hand, saw it a little different. The Jews had now turned from victims to oppressors, in their mind, equated with the Nazis.

Martin Stöhr, one of the chairmen of the DKR, took issue with the views of the New Left on Israel, and the conflict in the Middle East in Emuna.<sup>28</sup> A number of people on the Left, he said, had rebelled against the claim that their anti-Zionism and their criticism of the State of Israel were antisemitic. This argument can only be called valid, according to Stöhr, if one defines antisemitism as the prejudice enunciated and practiced by German fascists. He says that those who refuse to accept the right of

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<sup>27</sup> Tilman Fichter, "Der Staat Israel und die neue Linke in Deutschland" in Karlheinz Schneider and Nikolaus Simon (eds.), Solidarität und deutsche Geschichte: die Linke zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik, (Berlin, 1984), 92.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Stöhr, "Israel und neue Linke" in Emuna, vol. 4, no. 4, August, 1969, 276-278.



Israel to exist, contribute to preparing for another war. Making two and a half million Jews a threat to 100 million Arabs is either pure cynicism or blindness, as is brushing aside Arab threats to push Israel into the sea. Leftists explain this away by saying that claiming such a thing is a product of their mentality. This approach does not, however, take Arabs seriously. Stöhr also criticized the means by which the PLO was trying to achieve its goal of independence and peace in the Middle East. There are enough partners in dialogue in Israel to talk about the peace, if the Arab states want to embark on such a road.<sup>28</sup>

Die antiisraelischen Teile der neuen Linken täuschen sich, wenn sie die Auseinandersetzung in Nahost in das Koordinatensystem eines Kampfes des "imperialistischen" Israels gegen "sozialistische" arabische Länder zeichnen. Es geht um soziale Gerechtigkeit und Emanzipation für alle. Die realen demokratischen und sozialistischen Experimente und Strukturen in Israel bedeuten im gewissen Sinn einen eigenen Weg zum Sozialismus, der sich mit dem sehr berechtigten Streben der arabischen Völker nach Gerechtigkeit und Demokratie treffen könnte.

Stöhr then turns towards the attitude of the Churches. He says that they feel satisfied with a superficial rebuttal of antisemitism as do the students of the New Left. One is proud to have done something which will lead towards the future without realizing that one has not done the first step yet. And that is:<sup>30</sup>

...In der Gegenwart die politische Arbeit zu leisten, einem bedrohten Staat, dessen Bevölkerung gerade einen Völkermord entging, das Lebensrecht zu

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<sup>28</sup> Stöhr, "Israel und neue Linke", 277.

<sup>30</sup> Stöhr, "Israel und neue Linke", 277.

sichern und den arabischen Flüchtlingen und Nationen zu grösserer ökonomischer, politischer und sozialer Gerechtigkeit und Sicherheit zu helfen. Es gibt eine fatale Ähnlichkeit zwischen der traditionellen christlichen Judenfeindschaft und dem traditionellen sozialistischen Antizionismus... Beide Positionen definieren den Juden und Israel von aussen, nach dem Bild, das man sich von ihnen macht. Hier wie dort gerät man in Widerspruch zu seinen eigenen humanen Ausgangspunkten und Zielen... Im Grunde handelt es sich um die Variation des Satzes, den Clairmont-Tonnere [sic] in der französischen Nationalversammlung sagte: "Den Juden als Nation ist alles zu verweigern, den Juden als Menschen aber ist alles zu gewähren". Die Judenpolitik der christlichen und sozialistischen Staaten handelt nach diesem Schema, das den Menschen in seiner Besonderheit negiert, also inhumanen Zwang zur Assimilation ausübt... [Die Juden] sollen sich von ihrem Judesein emanzipieren, sonst werden sie als rassistisch, theokratisch oder zionistisch der anachronistischen Reaktion zugerechnet.

Finally, he warns that being left does not make one immune to antisemitism. Both anti-Zionism and antisemitism refuse to recognize Jewish identity; both use the stereotype of the Jew as their enemy.

Other than Stöhr's article, there was little reaction within the DKR. A far more potent threat was coming from the extreme right wing, especially with the advent of elections in 1969. Another reason was that the leftist ideology had not taken root yet. The beginnings could be seen in late 1967, and in a more pronounced form after the Israeli attack on Karamah in 1968. After this battle, the Palestinians were seen as the "better Jews", instead of the Israelis who no longer fit the traditional

stereotype of the weak Jew.<sup>31</sup>

### Statute of Limitations Considered Again

In 1965, the Bundestag had resorted to a trick in order not to deal with the question of a statute of limitations on Nazi crimes. It decided that, for the purpose of the law, the Federal Republic had not attained full sovereignty in 1945, so the courts were not completely free to pass their own verdicts on these crimes. The problem had been postponed another four years, and as 1969 came closer, lawmakers and other individuals started to worry about it. Between 1965 and 1969, there had been over three hundred trials related to the Holocaust.<sup>32</sup> The Zentralstelle started another 690 cases in this four-year time period. The subcommittee on legal affairs of the SPD held a consultation to find out about the state of actions against ex-Nazis. The Zentralstelle reported there that it could under no circumstances hold initial inquiries into all the cases which had come to light, and still comply with the statute of limitations which was to be imposed on December 31, 1969. This consultation led the government to bring in legislation on April 25, 1969, which would annul all limitations. Two months later, with a two-thirds

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<sup>31</sup> Fichter, "Der Staat Israel und die neue Linke in Deutschland", 92-93.

<sup>32</sup> The trials were related mostly to crimes in Treblinka, Sobibor, Mauthausen, the Warsaw ghetto, activities of the Sicherheits Dienst in Yugoslavia, Ukraine and the Baltic Republics. See Rückerl, NS-Verbrechen vor Gericht, 192-193.

majority, the Bundestag decided to shy away from this annulment. Instead it extended the period until December 31, 1979.

Two days before the Bundestag dealt with the issue, Martin Stöhr sent a letter containing a resolution by the DKR to Chancellor Kiesinger (CDU), Helmut Schmidt (SPD), Rainer Barzel (CDU) and Wolfgang Mischnick (FDP) regarding the statute of limitations.<sup>33</sup>

The letter warns of the repercussions that could emerge from the amendment of Paragraph 50,2 of the Code of Criminal Law, specifically in relations to Nazi trials. The new rendering would only make accessories to murder accountable when it could be proven that they had "niedrige Beweggründe". This means, Stöhr said, that such crimes must have been committed with the intent of accumulating the victim's possessions, or lust for carnage, but otherwise there is no cause for concern. Such an interpretation would fly in the face of any "sittliche Aufarbeitung" of Nazi crimes. This law could lead to the impression that the person who murders without personal "interest" is not as accountable as another who has clear antisemitic intent. The DKR therefore demanded that this law be rendered invalid by legislative means. Stöhr stressed the point that the aim of the Nazi trials was not to exact belated revenge, but only to restore ethical and legal standards, which also bind

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<sup>33</sup> Letters to von Hassel, speaker of the Bundestag, in addition to Schmidt, Barzel and Mischnick and Chancellor Kiesinger. BA B259 File 687, "Mitgliederversammlung 1969", dated 23 June, 1969.

the individual in states of injustice. This means that the excuse of living in a state which practices lawlessness cannot be accepted as valid.

The minutes of the annual general meeting reveal other subjects the DKR had been dealing with during the previous year. It had tried to influence the Bundestag to pass legislation prohibiting printing material which denigrates understanding between nations and peoples. The plan had been to get the authorities to amend the constitution to incorporate this new law. No details are supplied as to the success of this endeavor.

The DKR continued organizing trips to Israel, but the one to be discussed presently was a special one. It brought together Germans who, under great danger, had saved Jews during the Holocaust. There was a whole program which surrounded the trip, including briefings in Germany, the accompaniment of several academics and educators to analyze the outcomes for pedagogical purposes. The letter of invitation said the following:<sup>34</sup>

Wir möchten mit dieser Studienfahrt einem Teil derjenigen Deutschen, die in der Zeit der NS-Herrschaft unter Gefährdung ihrer Existenz politisch, rassisch und religiös Verfolgten uneigennützig Hilfe gewährten, Gelegenheit geben, zusammen mit einigen der von ihnen Geretteten den Staat Israel und seine Menschen, seine politischen und kulturellen Einrichtungen usw. kennenzulernen.

Herta Zerna, the author of the report about the trip, recounted the preparations. There was an introductory seminar at a

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<sup>34</sup> Herta Zerna, "Unbesungene Helden: Jerusalem-Reise, veranstaltet vom DKR", in Emuna, vol. 3, no. 4, November, 1968, 285-286.



Protestant academy outside Frankfurt dealing with the history of the State of Israel, a lecture on the resistance. Many, including Herbert Hoss, general secretary of the DKR, asked these "unsung heroes" whether they interpreted giving Jews cover as resistance. The lecturers answered that this was a manifestation of humanity rather than pure resistance. Some of the accompanying Jews who had been saved disagreed. They felt that these were very much acts of defiance, of resistance. Zerna reflects on the tree-planting ceremony along the Avenue of the Righteous at Yad Vashem:<sup>35</sup>

Nach dem sechsten Tag in Jerusalem und allen Begegnungen weiss ich, was ich freilich auch damals wusste: ich wollte Jüdisches retten. Das, was Hitler auslöschen wollte. Und das war kein Widerstand? Meine Freunde waren keine orthodoxen Juden, aber wir haben 1928 in Leipzig zusammen hebräische und jiddische Lieder gesungen, der Zionist von damals ist stellvertretender Bürgermeister in Tel Aviv geworden.

Ich durfte als Nichtjüdin damals mitsingen, und sie stossen uns heute nicht fort.

Zerna's moving account of the trip takes us through Israel. She is constantly reminded of her childhood. For her, it is obvious that Israel is not merely another tourist attraction, but a journey into the past. Seeing how the young state struggles to put down roots is reminiscent of the 1920's and 30's. She is reliving her experiences of that time, admiring the spirit which prevails in Israel just after the Six Day War.

The time between 1967 and 1969 was a very exhilarating one for the DKR. The manifestation of support for Israel at its most

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<sup>35</sup> Zerna, "Unbesungene Helden", 288.



embattled time was overwhelming. Real progress was taking place in Jewish-Christian relations, despite several awkward mishaps. It even reached the dimensions that Jews and Christians were venturing to pray together. The first time this had happened was during the midnight service in June, 1967. The challenge was taken up in the Woche der Brüderlichkeit around the country in 1968 and 1969. A whole discussion of the topic appeared in the pages of the Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung, vol. XXIV, nos. 15, 18, 20, 23 and 26, 1969.

## CONCLUSION

In his introduction to a volume of collected essays about Jewish existence and Christian theology, Martin Stöhr identified six major steps in Jewish-Christian dialogue in West Germany.<sup>1</sup> Although these points deal with theological discussions, they do have value to explore the stages the Deutsche Koordinierungsrat went through. The first stage, according to Stöhr, was to ask how to overcome prejudice and injustice towards minorities. Discrimination against foreigners and people who are different was not permissible, and a process of reeducation was to be started. This can be equated, in the case of the DKR with the early years of the organization, from the time when Dr. Everett Clinchy and the staff of the national Conference of Christians and Jews were commissioned by the US military authorities to establish associations for Christian-Jewish cooperation around the US zone of occupation. Further, it corresponds to the efforts at Wiedergutmachung on the part of the Germans.

Stöhr's second step consisted of dealing with the most recent past, specifically the lack of response from Christian churches, and the population in general to the plight of the European Jews. This corresponds to the late 1950s and early 1960s, when more attention was paid to bringing Nazi criminals to

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Stöhr, "Lebendiges Judentum und die christliche Theologie; eine Einführung" in Martin Stöhr, (ed.), Jüdische Existenz und die Erneuerung der christlichen Theologie: Versuch der Bilanz des christlich-jüdischen Dialogs für die Systematische Theologie, München, 1981, 7-12.

justice. The period is of course dominated by the trial and sentencing of Adolf Eichmann. The trial was followed by a number of trials of people involved in the execution of the Final Solution. When, after a time, it became clear that the defendants got away with minimum sentences, the DKR raised its voice, concerned about the moral and legal fabric of West Germany in the face of such clear violation of legal practice. At first, response was very meager, but two years later, after a follow-up letter, we witness a response from legal experts.

That this schematization is not perfect is borne out by one major issue, not addressed by Christian theology until very much later. That is the chapter of establishing diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. Calls for such relations had been voiced long before the Churches considered the topic. The DKR sent a series of letters and telegrams to various high government authorities, pressing for relations. The Federal government was not ready for that because of its Deutschlandpolitik and the Hallstein Doctrine.

One of the major concerns of the DKR was education. It organized various educators' conferences to deal with different aspects of German-Jewish relations, the presentation of Judaism in religious education textbooks and so forth. This was probably the DKR's most important success. The commission had received good cooperation from state authorities on implementing these changes into the curriculum.

The aforementioned two steps sum up the activities of the

DKR during the first part of the 1960s. The second part was dominated by very different issues. The major event, the boost of Jewish-Christian relations, was the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, defining the relationship of the Catholic Church to the Jewish people. After much political wrangling and pressure from Arab Churches and leading personalities in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, the document was finally passed in its fourth version. It was clearly a compromise, not satisfying everybody fully. At one point, when rumor had it that the whole declaration was being shelved, the chairmen of the DKR wrote a letter to the German Catholic bishops, urging them to make sure that the document pass during the fourth session of the Vatican Council.

At this time, there was a change in the leadership of the DKR. The old guard stepped aside for a dynamic trio of rabbi, minister and priest, who steered the organization to deal with theological issues. Stöhr identifies this as the third phase. In his scheme, the Churches started to consider the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. We see a number of conferences, both national and international, which deal with various aspects of the connection between Jews and Christians. Coupled with it is Stöhr's fourth phase, which explores Christian prejudices with respect to Jews, such as the issue of deicide, the scapegoat theory, the exemplification of Christianity by negating Judaism<sup>2</sup> interpreting Jewish suffering as divine retribution for non-

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<sup>2</sup> i.e. Juxtaposing law versus grace, the letter and the spirit of the law, revenge and love. The latter in each pair being the better, Christian virtue.

acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. The DKR dealt with these themes in a number of conferences, with the intent that it would spark some kind of interest from the establishment churches to reconsider their theological positions.

Stöhr's fifth phase deals with the question of the meaning the State of Israel. While this phase can be placed at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, the roots go back to 1967. The DKR happened to have its annual general meeting in Berlin when the war broke out. Regular scheduled events were altered to accommodate the new situation. There was an overwhelming outpouring of sympathy from members of the DKR, and large segments of German society. The DKR, along with the German federation of labor unions, sponsored a money drive for Israel. They were able to raise a substantial amount of money. Enthusiasm among the Germans was, however, short-lived. Student unrest in Berlin had given way to the rise of the New Left with strong Marxist overtones. The war in the Middle East was seen in terms of a struggle between imperialism and socialism. Adherents of the ideology had, of course, to support the exploited masses. Criticism of Israel and Zionism were becoming dangerously close to antisemitism. At the same time, Churches worldwide remained silent in the face of a potential threat to Israel's existence. Jews all over the world were turned off from Jewish-Christian relations. Within the DKR, the new situation was reflected in conferences which dealt with the significance of the land of Israel within Judaism, and Jewish identity. Only much later did

the mainline Churches start to deal with this topic, and the process still has not ended.

Stöhr's sixth phase, which lies outside the scope of this study, dealt with the positive meaning of the Jewish "no" to Jesus as Messiah. This meant that such a "no" did not mean a condemnation of the Jews, but an appreciation that they have a different concept of Messianism than do Christians.

The policy of the DKR was not carried out with unanimous approval. Specifically, on the issue of speaking out about political matters, there was great controversy. The movement was spearheaded by Dr. Heinrich Vockel, one of the chairmen of the Berlin Association, and representative of the Federal government to Berlin. He felt that it was much more opportune to challenge communism than to press for relations with the State of Israel. Those who had misgivings about the style the DKR took did not oppose its position on the issues themselves. There was unanimous support for establishing diplomatic relations, only differences as to the process and the means of action. Resolving this conflict became a watershed. From then on, there was much involvement with Federal policies. The DKR criticized the treatment of Nazi criminals by judicial authorities, by writing letters to professors of jurisprudence, and asked them to comment on the practices.

That this thesis is not the last word on the subject is clear. There are a number of topics within the subject which can and must be explored further. One topic could be a comparative



study of several individual associations. Since the DKR was dependent on its member organizations, and each one had its own agenda, it would be fascinating to look at the issues each association emphasized. Prominent examples could be comparing and contrasting the Berlin and Munich associations to the Düsseldorf and Hamburg organizations. What were the "ingredients" for large scale activity? Why were some associations much more active than others? What was the extent of Jewish participation in each one? One could also continue and research the history of the DKR in succeeding years, during the 1970s and beyond.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1

#### The Memorandum of the Apeldoorn Working Group<sup>1</sup>

1) In the eyes of the Church, the Old Testament has the same claim to be accepted as God's revealed word as has the New. The revelation given in the Old Testament and the saving history recorded in it must keep their traditional place in Christian education and witness. Any attempt to reduce the value of the Hebrew Scriptures, any attempt to present its imperfections or the unfaithfulness of the Jewish people in a way that engenders contempt or even mere dislike, is contrary to the spirit of the Church.

2) As the Word made flesh, Jesus transcends the Old Dispensation. In his humanity, however, He is part of His people and land, steeped in their traditions. The spirit of the Patriarchs and the Prophets continues to live in Him. He did not "come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them" (Mt. 5:17). Neither He nor the Church can be understood outside this framework.

3) That framework had many facets, and our knowledge of it is incomplete. Nevertheless, we can say with confidence that at the time of Jesus, Jewry presented a picture of exuberant life, not of degeneration. We have to give the faithful a true picture of Judaism of those days, as far as the state of historical studies allows. It would be unjust to draw a caricature of Judaism in order that the greatness of Jesus and His teachings stand out by contrast.

4) It would be contrary to the spirit of the Church to pit the Old and New Testament against each other, the "God of wrath," against the "God of love," the "law of fear," against the "law of love." The same divine grace is progressively revealed throughout both Testaments and the same command of love is present in them.

5) When seen historically, the dramatic conflict between Jesus and the leaders of His people, which led to His condemnation and crucifixion, is an intricate problem. Certain facts have, in any case, to be borne in mind. In Jesus' time, most Jews were already dispersed throughout the Mediterranean countries; of those settled in Palestine, only a fraction could have known Him. Those who met Him were not only His enemies and opponents, but also the enthusiastic crowds and the disciples. According to the Gospels, the actual opposition came only from a group of spiritual and political leaders, and the condemnation of

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Oesterreicher, The New Encounter, 121-125.

Jesus was their work also. Yet even they - whatever their personal responsibilities may have been - acted, so Jesus declared, and following Him, Peter and Paul, "in ignorance" (see Lk 23:34; Ac 3:17; 1 Cor 2:8). If the events of this vital period are presented in a historically inaccurate way, Christian instruction is itself led into error.

6) Even more important is a theologically accurate understanding and explanation of the drama of Golgotha. Jesus suffered and died on account of the sins of us and for our salvation. No one stands outside the solidarity of sin, no one is excluded from the grace of salvation. (Mary, free of any sin, received an extraordinary favor in that she, in anticipation of the saving sacrifice, was preserved from all guilt.) All the participants in the drama of Golgotha, Jews and Gentiles alike, believers and unbelievers, represented humankind as a whole: they stood there in place of all of us. What makes us accomplices of Christ's enemies and executioners is not nationality or religion, but simply and solely sin, the rejection of grace.

7) It is, therefore, of extreme importance to avoid the fatal error that holds responsible for the death of Christ all Jews of that time, indeed the Jews of all time, and them alone. This gives rise to the absurd conception of a "deicidal people" and works upon the feelings of the faithful in regard to the Passion, instilling in them revulsion against those immediately responsible, and not only against them but against the whole Jewish people. Such errors not only falsify the meaning of the Passion, they also deform the spirit of the faithful. The Cross, this unique source of love, humility and expiation becomes a source of aversion and hatred, and a reason for shifting the blame for one's own sins on to others. In the past, such errors helped feed hostile feelings towards Jews among Christian people, and roused them to scorn and persecution. These false ideas led to situation in which Jews were crushed to the ground under the weight of the Cross, and the appalling consequences of those ideas have helped hide the true meaning of the passion from the Jews.

8) The central place of the Passion in the life of the Christian, the gravity of the errors already mentioned, the extent of the persecution of the Jewish people in the midst of the Christian world, the abysmal depths of the roots of Jew-hatred, all these ought to prompt the Church to warn her priests, catechists, indeed, all believers against these distorted notions. The church ought to call upon them to avoid not only the errors themselves, but also all forms of expression that reflect and nourish those errors, for example, generalizations such as "the Jews rejected Christ," "the Jews crucified Christ." In expounding St. John's Gospel, one must be certain to take into account the fact that, in a great many places, the Evangelist uses the expression "the Jews," to mean simply and solely the

"Jewish leaders hostile to Jesus." The Church is the true "remnant of Israel," increased by the entry of those Gentiles who became children of Abraham by faith: as such, she must unite within herself both Jews and Gentiles. Thus, one should not say that the Jewish people are rejected or that, within the Church, the Gentiles have taken Israel's place. Nor should one depict the reality of salvation as if the Church had supplanted Israel, as people might another. Certainly, the transition from the Old to the New Dispensation was accompanied by radical changes-institutions were superseded, a new all-embracing structure appeared - but what had happened was that the same people of God had been thus transformed in moving forward the fullness of their vocation.

9. That portion of Israel which kept apart from this transformation has survived in present-day Judaism. Its preservation and the presence in the world are a basic element of God's plan of salvation, and, therefore, cannot be without significance for the Church. Christians may not disregard this present reality, nor may they consider it from a purely human and political point of view, as do those who lack faith. They should rather draw near the Jewish world with the insight and awe due its past, its faith, and its trials. The Church expects of her children that they leave nothing undone to tear down the wall of separation between themselves and the Jews, a wall which the misunderstandings of centuries have rendered almost impenetrable; and, further, that they leave nothing undone to establish amicable relations with the Jews.

10) To interpret the destiny of the Jewish people over the centuries as a result of their rejection by God is misleading; the teaching of the New Testament, especially that of St. Paul, leaves no doubt that this perspective is wrong: "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew" (Rom. 11:1-2). Despite resistance to the Gospel, "their election stands, they are [God's] beloved" (11:28), and "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (11:29). And does not the Apostle teach that "all Israel will be saved" (11:26)? Day by day, the providential preservation of the Jewish people gives evidence to the faithfulness with which God stands by His plan for the salvation of the world. It would therefore be contrary to Scripture and to the true spirit of the Church were one to assume, as often happens that there lies upon the Jewish people a sentence of rejection, indeed, a curse. It would be absurd to give such a meaning to, for example, Matthew 27:25, "His blood be on us and on our children." As if God could ratify the outcry of a group of demonstrators, worked up by their ringleaders, and have it descend as a curse upon millions of innocent people! To interpret the destruction of the Temple, the Diaspora (which predated the Crucifixion) and Jewish sufferings and humiliations over the centuries as the result of their rejection by God would be contrary to the Church's teaching on the meaning of suffering.

One would do well to warn priests and the faithful, in all earnestness, never to adopt these inaccurate and hardly Christian ideas about the destiny of the Jewish people.

11) The divinely guaranteed hope of the reunion of Church and Israel is an integral part of Christian hope. At the same time, it is the key to the mysterious destiny of the Jewish people, so that without there can be no real Christian understanding of that destiny. When and whenever this hope is obscured or forgotten, the Christian vision is distorted. If, according to the teaching of the Apostle, the failure of many in Israel furthered the spread of the gospel and with it the salvation of the Gentiles, how much more will Israel's reunification reveal God's mercy and faithfulness? This revelation will be so glorious that the Apostle could portray it as *vita ex mortuis*, "life from the dead" (Rom. 11:15). This eschatological hope has always been present in the Church. It urges believers to be fired with this expectation in thought and prayer, and, not least, their attitude toward the children of the people "of whom is Christ, according to His humanity, who is God over all, blessed for ever, Amen" (Rom. 9:5).

## Appendix 2

### Rabbi Heschel's Memorandum<sup>2</sup>

First: That the Council brand Antisemitism as a sin and condemn all false teachings, such as that which holds the Jews as a people responsible for the crucifixion of Christ and sees in every Jew a murderer of Christ.

Second: That without wishing to impugn the rights of any religious group to win supporters by honest means, Jews feel it a spiritual torment that their sanctity as Jews, in their faithfulness to the Torah, is not accorded recognition. Genuine love, however, requires that Jews be accepted as Jews, as it is their sincere hope that the Council recognize the integrity and the continuing value of Jews and Judaism.

Third: That in order to eliminate ignorance every possible means be used to make Christians truly familiar with Judaism and Jews with Christianity, e.g. through public discussions in which Christian and Jewish scholars exchange opinions and tackle controversial and decisive issues. Plans should also be made for joint research projects and publications.

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Oesterreicher, The New Encounter, 127.



### Appendix 3

#### First Version of the Vatican Declaration on the Jews<sup>3</sup>

Having dealt with the basic principle of Catholic Ecumenism, we do not wish to pass over in silence the fact that these principles are also applied, with due regard to the given situation, to dialogues and acts of cooperation with people who are not Christians, but adore God or, at least, impelled by God's will, try to keep the moral law implanted in human nature according to their conscience. This is particularly true of the Jews who, after all, are linked to the Church to an extraordinary degree.

The Church, the Bride of Christ, acknowledges with a heart full of gratitude that, according to God's mysterious saving design, the beginnings of her faith and election go as far back as to the Israel of the Patriarchs and Prophets. Thus she acknowledges that all Christian believers, children of Abraham by faith (see Gal 3:7), are included in his call. Similarly, her salvation is prefigured in the deliverance of the Chosen People out of Egypt, as in a sacramental sign. And the Church, a new creation in Christ (see Eph 2:15), can never forget that she is the spiritual continuation of the people with whom, in His mercy and gracious condescension, God made the Old Covenant.

The Church in fact believes that Christ, who "is our peace," embraces Jews and Gentiles with one and the same love and that He made the two one (see Eph 2:14). She rejoices these two "in one body" proclaims the whole world's reconciliation in Christ. Even though the greater part of the Jewish people has remained separated from Christ, it would be an injustice to call this people accursed, since they are greatly beloved for the sake of the Fathers and the promises made to them (see Rom 11:28). The Church loves this people. From them sprang Christ the Lord, who reigns in glory in heaven; from them sprang the Virgin Mary, mother of all Christians; from them came the Apostles, the pillars and bulwark of the Church (1 Tim 3:15).

Furthermore, the Church believes in the union of the Jewish people with herself as an integral part of Christian hope. With unshaken faith and deep longing the Church awaits union with this people. At the time of Christ's coming, "a remnant chosen by grace" (Rom 11:5), the very first fruits of the Church, accepted the Eternal Word. The Church believes, however, with the Apostle that at the appointed time, the fullness of the children of Abraham according to the flesh will embrace Him who is salvation

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<sup>3</sup> See "Die Konzilserklärung zum Verhältnis der Katholiken zu den Nichtchristen, besonders zu den Juden" in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVI/XVII (1964/65), Nr. 61/64, Juli 1965, 5.



(see Rom 11:12,26). Their acceptance will be life from the dead (see Rom 11:15).

As the Church, like a mother, condemns most severely injustices committed against innocent people everywhere, so she raises her voice in loud protest against all wrongs done to Jews, whether in the past or in our time. Whoever despises or persecutes this people does injury to the Catholic Church.

#### Appendix 4

#### Die Erklärung der 3. Sitzung des II. Vatikanischen Konzils über das Verhältnis der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen [Judenerklärung]<sup>4</sup>

##### Die Juden

In ihrer Besinnung auf das Geheimnis der Kirche denkt diese Heilige Synode jenes Bandes, welches das Volk des Neuen Bundes mit dem Stamm Abrahams verbindet.

Dankbaren Herzens anerkennt die Kirche, dass nach dem Heilsgeheimnis Gottes die Anfänge ihres Glaubens und ihrer Auserwählung schon bei den Patriarchen, bei Moses und bei den Propheten gegeben sind. Sie bekennt, dass alle Christgläubigen, die Söhne Abrahams dem Glauben nach in der Berufung desselben Patriarchen miteingeschlossen sind und auch, dass das Heil der Kirche auf geheimnisvolle Weise im Auszug des auserwählten Volkes aus dem Lande der Knechtschaft vorgebildet ist. Deshalb kann die Kirche nicht vergessen, dass sie von jenem Volk, mit dem Gott in seinem unaussprechlichen Erbarmen dem Alten Bund zu schliessen sich würdigte, die alttestamentliche Offenbarung erhalten hat, ebensowenig, dass sie von der Wurzel des guten Ölbaumes, dem die wilden Ölzweige, das heisst die Heiden, aufgepfropft wurden, ernährt wird. Die Kirche glaubt ja, dass Christus, unser Friede, Juden und Heiden durch sein Kreuz versöhnt hat und so beide eines werden liess.

Zu allen Zeiten stehen vor den Augen der Kirche die Worte des Apostels Paulus, der von seinen Stammverwandten sagt, dass "ihnen die Sohnschaft, die Herrlichkeit, die Bündnisse, die Gesetzgebung, der Gottesdienst und die Verheissung gehören, wie auch die Väter, von denen Christus dem Fleische nach stammt"

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in "Die Konzils erklärung zum Verhaeltnis der Katholiken zu den Nichtchristen, besonders den Juden", in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVI/XVII, Nr. 61/64, Juli 1965, 7.

(Römer 9,4 bis 5), der da ist der Sohn der Jungfrau Maria. Auch hält sie sich gegenwärtig, dass die Apostel, die Grundfesten und Säulen der Kirche, wie auch die meisten frühen Jünger, die der Welt das Evangelium Christi verkündet haben, aus dem jüdischen Volke stammen. Wenngleich ein grosser Teil der Juden das Evangelium nicht angenommen hat, so sind nach dem Zeugnis des Apostels die Juden auch weiterhin von Gott um der Väter willen überaus geliebt, sind doch seine Gnadengeschenken und sein Ruf unwiderruflich. Mit den Propheten und dem gleichen Apostel erwartet die Kirche jenen Tag, den Gott allein kennt, an dem ihn alle Völker mit einer Stimme anrufen und "ihm Schulter an Schulter dienen werden".

Da das den Christen und Juden gemeinsame geistliche Erbe so reich ist, wünscht diese Heilige Synode, jene gegenseitige Kenntnis und Achtung zu fördern und zu empfehlen, die vor allem die Früchte biblischer und theologischer Studien sowie brüderlicher Gespräche sind. Ausserdem beklagt und verwirft die Synode, die ja jedes Unrecht, wo immer es Menschen zugefügt wird, auf das schärfste zurückweist, eingedenk des gemeinsamen Erbes, die Hassausbrüche und Verfolgungen gegen die Juden, ob sie sich nun in früheren oder in unseren Tagen zugetragen haben.

#### Nicht des Gottesmordes Schuldig

Mögen darum alle Sorge tragen, dass weder im Religionsunterricht noch in der Verkündung des Wortes Gottes irgend etwas gelehrt werde, dass in den Herzen der Gläubigen Hass oder Verachtung gegen die Juden entstehen lassen könnte. Niemals darf das jüdische Volk als ein verworfenes, verfluchtes oder des Gottesmordes schuldiges dargestellt werden. Was immer in der Passion Christi geschah, kann in keiner Weise dem gesamten Volke der damaligen Zeit und erst recht nicht dem Volke von heute zur Last gelegt werden. Im übrigen hat die Kirche stets gelehrt, und so lehrt sie auch heute, dass Christus um der Sünden aller Menschen willen in Freiheit und aus unendlicher Liebe sein Leiden und seinen Tod auf sich genommen hat. Auch ist es Aufgabe der kirchlichen Predigt, das Kreuz als das Zeichen der allumfassenden Liebe Gottes und als den Quell aller Gnaden zu verkünden, die allgemeine Brüderlichkeit, die jede Art von Diskriminierung ausschliesst.

## Appendix 5

### Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate) Final Version.<sup>5</sup>

4. As the 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.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ - Abraham's sons according to faith - are included in the same Patriarch's call, and 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 inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree into which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.

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 law 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 the Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews, in large numbers, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues - such is the witness of the Apostle. 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).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of Biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogue.

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Hershcopf, "The Church and the Jews", 76-77.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this follows from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecution, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone.

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.

[The chapter of Nostra Aetate is embedded in a statement about other non-Christian religions, among them Islam, Buddhism and others. The Church recommended that the quarrels it had with Islam should be forgotten, and that both should work together for mutual understanding for the benefit of social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.]

#### Appendix 6

##### Empfehlung einer Arbeitstagung zur Katechetik 25. bis 26. Februar 1966<sup>6</sup>

"Da also das den Christen und Juden gemeinsame geistliche Erbe so reich ist, will die heilige Synode die gegenseitige Kenntnis und Achtung fördern, die vor allem die Frucht biblischer und theologischer Studien sowie des brüderlichen Gesprächs sind". Angeregt durch diese Aufforderung der "Declaratio de ecclesiae habitudine ad religiones non-christianas" haben sich auf Einladung des Deutschen Koordinierungsrates der Gesellschaften

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Eckert, "Die Darstellung von Juden und Judentum im katholischen Religionsunterricht", in Freiburger Rundbrief, Jhrg. XVIII, 1966, Nr. 65/68, 23. September 1966, 70-71.



für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit aus Belgien, Deutschland, Frankreich, Holland, Österreich und der Schweiz einige Experten auf dem Gebiet der Pastoraltheologie, Katechetik, Exegese und ökumenischen Theologie mit Vertretern des Judentums zu einer Arbeitstagung zusammengefunden. Um die Intention der Declaratio zu verwirklichen, erscheint es notwendig, von konkreten Aufgabenstellungen auszugehen. Der Religionsunterricht, der die Haltung der Christen zu den Juden wesentlich mitbestimmt, muss in diesem Sinne überprüft werden, wie es auch die Declaratio selbst fordert: "Darum sollen alle dafür Sorge tragen, dass niemand in der Katechese oder bei der Predigt des Gotteswortes etwas lehre was mit der Wahrheit des Evangeliums und mit dem Geiste Christi nicht in Einklang steht". Die Arbeitsgruppe ist überzeugt, dass eine christlich-jüdische Begegnung einzugliedern ist in den ökumenischen Aufbruch, wie es der Sicht des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils entspricht. Obwohl die Juden nicht im strengen Sinne zur Ökumene gehören, besteht doch auf Grund der Heilsgeschichte ein einzigartiges Verhältnis der Kirche zu ihnen. Um so mehr scheint es gerechtfertigt, nach den Wünschen der Juden an den christlichen Religionsunterricht zu fragen.

#### I.

Folgende Wünsche wurden jüdischerseits geäußert:

1. Um ein Gespräch zwischen Juden und Christen zu ermöglichen, wäre es bei der Darstellung des Lebens Jesu notwendig, die religiöse, kulturelle, geistige Vielgestalt seiner Umwelt zu berücksichtigen. Aufmerksamkeit verdienen besonders die eschatologischen und messianischen Erwartungen seiner Zeit.
2. Bei der Schilderung der verschiedenen Strömungen des Judentums zur Zeit Jesu sind verallgemeinerungen zu vermeiden. Zum Beispiel entspricht das übliche Bild vom Pharisäer als dem Juden, der in Heuchelei und veräusserlichter Gesetzesbeobachtung verhaftet bleibt, nicht der pharisäischen Richtung der damaligen Zeit und noch weniger den Juden als solchen. Daher sollten zum Verständnis des Judentums die Selbstzeugnisse herangezogen werden.
3. Es genügt nicht, in der Frage nach den Schuldigen an Jesu Tod zu unterscheiden zwischen der Verantwortlichkeit der Führer und des Volkes, weil damit die Gefahr einer verallgemeinerung nicht gebannt ist (Kollektivschuld). Es muss befremden, wenn Christen die Verfolgung des jüdischen Volkes als Gottes Gericht bezeichnen.
4. Das Judentum versteht sich nach wie vor als kontinuierliches Weiterleben des Bundes mit Gott. Daher ist ein Begriff wie "Spätjudentum" irreführend. Es kann auch nicht genügen, wenn lediglich einige Punkte der jüdischen Geschichte (besonders Konfliktsituationen) herausgestellt werden.



5. Sichtbar gemacht werden sollte zum gegenseitigen Verstehen die jüdische Frömmigkeit, wie sie in Heim, Synagoge und Lehrhaus gelebt wird.

6. Die Vorstellung und das Reden von den "ungläubigen" Juden ist kränkend. Die Judenbekehrung entspricht nicht dem Selbstverständnis der Juden als Volk Gottes. Jeder Versuch dazu belastet den Dialog.

## II.

Um diesen berechtigten Wünschen zu entsprechen und zugleich der Aufforderung der Declaratio nachzukommen, erscheint es den katholischen Gesprächspartnern notwendig, folgende Gesichtspunkte zu beachten:

1. Die Kontinuität des Alten und des Neuen Testaments ist hervorzuheben als die ~~eine~~ Heilsgeschichte Gottes mit den Menschen. Das Verständnis des Alten Testaments einseitig als Religion des Gesetzes ist eine Verfälschung. Besondere Beachtung verlangt die Liebesbotschaft, die in der Vergangenheit oft verzeichnet wurde. So entspricht die Gegenüberstellung eines Gottes der Rache im Alten Testament und eines Gottes der Liebe im Neuen Testament nicht der biblischen Wirklichkeit.

2. Um das Geheimnis der Menschwerdung Christi ernstzunehmen, ist es erforderlich, ihn in seiner jüdischen Verwurzelung zu sehen. Würde dies nicht beachtet, so bestünde die Gefahr eines gnostischen Missverständnisses. Jesus ist nicht nur ein geborener Jude, sondern hat auch als Juden gelebt, gedacht, gebetet und gesprochen. Daraus erklärt sich auch, dass vielen seiner Zeitgenossen und sogar den Aposteln es Mühe machte, ihn in seiner eigentlichen Messianität zu erkennen.

3. Auch die Urgemeinde lebte zunächst im damaligen Judentum, und zwar in engerer Verbindung mit dem Tempel als manche andere Zeitgenössischen Richtungen. "Die Kirche hält sich gegenwärtig, dass aus dem jüdischen Volk die Apostel stammen, die Grundfesten und die Säulen der Kirche, sowie die meisten jener ersten Jünger, die das Evangelium Christi der Welt verkündet haben".

4. Bei der Verkündigung der neutestamentlichen Botschaft ist auf die Eigenart dieses Glaubenszeugnisses zu achten. Wie die heutige Bibelwissenschaft zeigt, spiegelt sie den früheren Gegensatz zwischen Kirche und Synagoge. Der Exegese ist damit die Aufgabe gestellt, verschiedene Punkte der neutestamentlichen Botschaft neu zu überprüfen, z.B. die Darstellung der Parabeln des Herrn, die Aussagen der Leidensgeschichte, die Begriffe "die Juden", die Pharisäer, Erlösung, Verwerfung. Die paulinischen Aussagen über die Heilsbedeutung der Juden, besonders Römer 9-11 und Epheser 2, sind in die christliche Botschaft klarer einzugliedern. Es ist leider nicht zu leugnen, dass in der Vergangenheit der

Antijudaismus zu seiner Rechtfertigung auf die Schuld am Kreuzestod berufen hat. Gerade darum darf bei der Verkündigung, in Katechese und Predigt nicht übersehen werden, welchen Anteil an der Passion der Verrat des Judas hatte, die Verleugnung des Petrus, die Flucht der übrigen Apostel, die Ohnmacht der Jesu wohlgesonnenen Mitglieder des Hohen Rates, Pilatus und die römische Soldaten. Vor allem aber muss gesagt werden, dass der tiefste Grund des Leidens Jesu in den Sünden der Menschen aller Zeiten liegt, vgl. z.B. die Lehre des Catechismus Romanus.

5. Das Judentum begegnet uns nicht nur in der Heiligen Schrift, sondern auch in der Kirchengeschichte. Daher wäre anstelle einer nur punktuellen Erwähnung der Juden die Eigenart ihrer Geschichte auch anhand ihrer eigenen Quellen klarer herauszustellen. Als besondere Aufgabe der Exegeten und Kirchenhistoriker drängt sich auf, die Geschichte der Trennung von Kirche und Synagoge sowie die Bedeutung des Judentums aufzuhellen.

6. Das Selbstverständnis der Kirche als Volk Gottes verlangt es, sich des lebendigen Bandes bewusst zu werden, das sie mit dem jüdischen Volk verbindet. Das fordert auch die Declaratio de ecclesiae habitudine ad religiones non christianas, die den Abschnitt über die Juden so einleitet: "Bei ihrer Besinnung auf das Geheimnis der Kirche gedenkt die heilige Synode des Bandes, wodurch das Volk des Neuen Bundes geistlich mit dem Stamme Abrahams verbunden ist". Im Sinne dieses Selbstverständnisses muss die Unterweisung die religiösen Werte auch des gegenwärtigen Judentums erschliessen. Anknüpfungspunkte bietet der biblischen Unterweisung in der Liturgie und im Kirchenjahr.

### III.

Die Verwirklichung dieser Anliegen steht und fällt mit der inneren Haltung der Christen gegenüber dem Judentum. Die Aussprache über die Situation in den einzelnen Ländern zeigte deutlich, dass auch an Orten, wo ein militanter Antisemitismus fehlt, antijüdische Denkschematismen wirksam sind. Dies ist um so gefährlicher, als es sich hier um Vorurteile handelt, die vom Unterbewusstsein gesteuert werden. Daher genügt es nicht, die Lehrmittel (Handbücher) zu überprüfen. Vielmehr müsste auch auf die Haltung der Lehrenden zum Judentum eingewirkt werden. Erfreuliche Ansätze sind, wie das Arbeitsgespräch zeigte, durchaus vorhanden, bedürfen jedoch einer intensiven Förderung und Ausweitung.

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