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

Vatican City - Tel. 698.4386/698.3071

Prot. N. J. 36/86/e (725/85)

Vatican City, January 11, 1986

Rabbi Marc H. TANENBAUM  
Director  
International Relations Department  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East 56 Street  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

I have much appreciated your nice letter of December 9, which still arrived here at the very end of last year. I thank you heartily for the integrity and honesty with which you state yours and the American Jewish Committee's feelings on the International Liaison Committee meeting last October, the audience with the Holy Father on that occasion and the ensuing developments. I am convinced your opinion reflects the opinion of all the participants in that meeting and in the audience and indeed of many who were not present but were in due time correctly informed about what really happened. Several articles in the Jewish and the Catholic press, in Europe and the USA, are there to prove it.

I would like to add here that the Holy See Commission for religious relations with the Jews and I myself as its President, are unflinchingly committed to the dialogue with the Jewish people, whatever the difficulties now and then troubling its development. As I said in my opening statement in the October meeting, dialogue with the Jews is not, for the Catholic Church, a matter of personal opinion or taste. It is the mandate of a Council, which means for us that the Holy Spirit is behind it. Besides this, we are sure that, notwithstanding our differences and asymmetry in agenda and priorities, it is part of our calling as religions "closely related at the level of their own identities", to dialogue with each other and find together ways and means to serve all men and women, as God's creatures and images, in the present situation of the world. Among these urgent needs, foremost for us both is the need for peace. This is why we

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Prot. N. ....

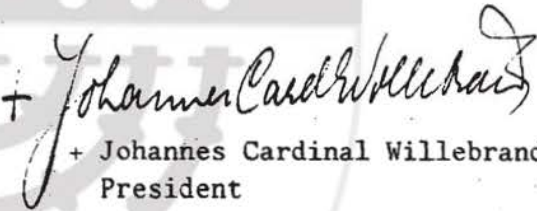
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we wished you to have, with our other IJCIC partners, a copy of the Holy Father's message for this year's day of peace.

I thank you also for your greetings and good wishes for the Christmas and New Year season, while I cordially offer you my own.

Sincerely yours,

  
+ Johannes Cardinal Willebrands  
President



# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE



**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, May 30. . . .An article in the country's leading medical journal, professing to explain the death of Jesus in modern medical terms, has been sharply denounced by officials of two organizations involved in Catholic-Jewish relations, who say that the article perpetuates ancient anti-Semitic stereotypes, "deals a body blow to years of Jewish-Christian dialogue," ignores modern historical interpretations of the Gospels, and treats as factual many events that scholars consider at best conjectural.

The article, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," appears in the March 21, 1986, issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. Letters criticizing the article were sent to the journal by Dr. Eugene J. Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops; and by Theodore Ellenoff, President of the American Jewish Committee, and Rabbi A. James Rudin, AJC national director of interreligious affairs; Rabbi Alan Mittleman, AJC interreligious affairs program associate, and Irwin B. Eskind, M.D., an AJC leader from Nashville, Tennessee.

The article, which says that its source material included "the writings of ancient Christian and non-Christian authors, the writings of modern authors, and the Shroud of Turin," takes Jesus from the Last Supper to the cross and consists in large part of deeply detailed descriptions of scourging and crucifixion and the probable sensory and physiological effects of these inflictions.

Says the letter from the American Jewish Committee:

"In our view, JAMA displayed a marked lack of sensitivity to the delicate issues inevitably raised by any discussion of Jesus's trial and execution. You accept, without suitable scholarly interpretation, the old, invidious assertions that the Jews as a people agitated for the death of Jesus and that Pontius Pilate -- whom history knows to have been a bloodthirsty tyrant -- meekly capitulated to their demand. Serious scholars have long ago laid these untruths to rest."

Noting that narratives of Jesus's Passion "have been a prime source of anti-Jewish attitudes, [chiefly] the idea of collective Jewish guilt for the crucifixion," the AJC letter goes on to say that "authoritative documents of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches have repeatedly repudiated this

Howard I. Friedman, President; Theodore Ellenoff, Chair, Board of Governors; Alfred H. Moses, Chair, National Executive Council; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, Board of Trustees;  
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historical and theological error...[and] most major denominations, and all responsible scholars, strive to take care in the presentation of the gospel story in order to avoid fanning the flames of anti-Judaism anew."

"One sure way of fanning those flames," continue the AJC officials, "is to engage in a pop-historiography innocent of critical method, demonstrated by [the JAMA article]. They treat the gospel narratives as simple reportage of historical events, never mentioning the formidable methodological problems that beset all serious New Testament scholars. They do not bother to inform the reader that the gospels were written a generation or more after Jesus's ministry, that they present not only different but discrepant versions of the events of Jesus's last days, and that they are testimonies of faith, not histories in the modern sense...."

"They follow the lead, not of academic scholars, but of fundamentalist writers who eschew scientific methods of textual analysis."

"By giving them the dignity of a 'scientific' presentation in JAMA," says the AJC letter, "You have dealt a body blow to years of painstaking Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation."

Similarly, Dr. Fisher's letter says that "the picture [the JAMA article] paints of the historical events surrounding Jesus's death is, from the historical point of view, far from certain; indeed, the article appears to ignore the results of most modern biblical and historical scholarship, preferring an uncritical and unjustified attempt to 'conflate' the four biblical accounts into a single narrative."

Pointing to several instances in which the JAMA article ignores discrepancies among the four Gospel narratives, Dr. Fisher's letter continues:

"Much happened between the events of Jesus's death and the later period, toward the end of the first century, when the Gospels were actually set down... [and] insights from these post-Resurrection events are routinely woven into the Gospel accounts of Jesus's life and death by the Gospel authors.

"For example, from the earlier to the later Gospels one can discern a progressive 'whitewashing' of the historical figure of Pilate with more and more 'blame' for Jesus's death being laid on 'the Jews'....From history, we know that Pilate was a viciously cruel governor who crucified thousands of Jews without a thought, closely controlled the chief priest's actions, and was ultimately recalled to Rome to account for his crimes. Yet the JAMA article attempts to portray Pilate as a nice guy forced into ordering Jesus's crucifixion, a portrait that does not conform with known historical facts...."

"Modern biblical scholarship, no less than modern medicine, is a large and complex field of study....The JAMA article...by ignoring completely the findings of a vast accumulation of patient scholarship in New Testament studies over the years, does a great disservice to its readers, and to the New Testament itself."

Dr. Fisher's letter cites several recent scholarly studies of the Passion story, and, similarly, the American Jewish Committee letter concludes:

"When touching on problems of the history of religion, may we suggest that your standard be set by prestigious journals such as the Journal of the Academy

of Religion, Catholic Biblical Quarterly, or the Journal of Biblical Literature rather than by the pre-scientific pseudo-historiography of the fundamentalists?"

The authors of the JAMA article were William D. Edwards, M.D., Department of Pathology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.; Pastor Wesley J. Gabel, M. Div., Homestead United Methodist Church, Rochester, Minn., and West Bethel United Methodist Church, Bethel, Minn., and Floyd E. Hosmer, M.S., Department of Medical Graphics, Mayo Clinic. The article is accompanied by graphic illustrations depicting various aspects of flagellation and crucifixion.

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

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1986

## Historic Visit to the Synagogue of Rome

April 13, 1986

*On Sunday, April 13, 1986, the Holy Father made his historic visit to the Synagogue in Rome. After an address of welcome by Prof. Giacomo Saban, President of the Jewish community of Rome, the Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff then spoke. In reply the Holy Father gave the following address.*

### Address by the Pope

Dear Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community in Rome,  
Dear President of the Union of Italian Jewish communities,  
Dear President of the community in Rome,  
Dear Rabbis,  
Dear Jewish and Christian friends and brethren taking part in this historic celebration,

1. First of all, I would like, together with you, to give thanks and praise to the Lord who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth (cf. Is 51:16) and who chose Abraham in order to make him father of a multitude of children, as numerous "as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore" (Gn 22:17; cf. Is 15:5)—to give thanks and praise to him because it has been his good pleasure, in the mystery of his Providence, that this evening there should be a meeting in this your "Major Temple" between the Jewish community which has been living in this city since the times of the ancient Romans and the Bishop of Rome and universal Pastor of the Catholic Church.

I likewise feel it is my duty to thank the Chief Rabbi, Professor Elio Toaff, who from the first moment accepted with joy the idea that I should make this visit, and who is now receiving me with great openness of heart and a profound sense of hospitality; and in addition to him I also thank all those members of the Jewish community in Rome who have made this meeting possible and who in so many ways have

worked to ensure that it should be at one and the same time a reality and a symbol.

Many thanks therefore to you all.

*Todâ rabbâ* (Many thanks).

2. In the light of the Word of God that has just been proclaimed and that lives for ever (cf. Is 30:8), I would like us to reflect together, in the presence of the Holy One—may he be blessed! (as your liturgy says)—on the fact and the significance of this meeting between the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, and the Jewish community that lives and works in this city which is so dear to you and to me.

I had been thinking of this visit for a long time. In fact, the Chief Rabbi was kind enough to come and see me, in February 1981, when I paid a pastoral visit to the nearby Parish of San Carlo ai Catenari. In addition, a number of you have been more than once to the Vatican, on the occasion of the numerous audiences that I have been able to have with representatives in Italian and world Jewry, and still earlier, in the time of my predecessors Paul VI, John XXIII and Pius XII. I am likewise well aware that the Chief Rabbi, on the night before the death of Pope John, did not hesitate to go to Saint Peter's Square; and accompanied by members of the Jewish faithful, he mingled with the crowd of Catholics and other Christians, in order to pray and keep vigil, as it were bearing witness, in a silent but very effective way, to the greatness of soul of that Pontiff, who was open to all people without distinction, and in particular to the Jewish brethren.

The heritage that I would now like to take up is precisely that of Pope John, who on one occasion, as he passed by here—as the Chief Rabbi has just mentioned—stopped the car so that he could bless the crowd of Jews who were coming out of this very Temple. And I would like to take up his heritage at this very moment, when I find myself not just outside, but, thanks to your generous hospitality, inside the Synagogue of Rome.

3. This gathering in a way brings to a close, after the Pontificate of John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, a long period which we must not tire of reflecting upon in order to draw from it the appropriate lessons. Certainly, we cannot and should not forget that the historical circumstances of the past were very different from those that have laboriously matured over the centuries. The general acceptance of a legitimate plurality on the social, civil and religious levels has been arrived at with great difficulty. Nevertheless, a consideration of centuries-long cultural conditioning could not prevent us from recognizing that the acts of discrimination, unjustified limitation of religious freedom, oppression also on the level of civil free-

dom in regard to the Jews were, from an objective point of view, gravely deplorable manifestations. Yes, once again, through myself, the Church, in the words of the well-known Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (no. 4), "deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone"; I repeat: "by anyone".

I would like once more to express a word of abhorrence for the genocide decreed against the Jewish people during the last War, which led to the *holocaust* of millions of innocent victims.

When I visited on June 1979 the concentration camp at Auschwitz and prayed for the many victims from various nations, I paused in particular before the memorial stone with the inscription in Hebrew and thus manifested the sentiments of my heart: "This inscription stirs the memory of the People whose sons and daughters were destined to total extermination. This People has its origin in Abraham, who is our father in faith (cf. Rom 4:12), as Paul of Tarsus expressed it. Precisely this People, which received from God the commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill' has experienced in itself to a particular degree what killing means. Before this inscription it is not permissible for anyone to pass by with indifference" (*Insegnamenti*, 1979, p. 1484).

The Jewish community of Rome too paid a high price in blood.

And it was surely a significant gesture that in those dark years of racial persecution the doors of our religious houses, of our churches, of the Roman Seminary, of buildings belonging to the Holy See and of Vatican City itself were thrown open to offer refuge and safety to so many Jews of Rome being hunted by their persecutors.

4. Today's visit is meant to make a decisive contribution to the consolidation of the good relations between our two communities, in imitation of the example of so many men and women who have worked and who are still working today, on both sides, to overcome old prejudices and to secure ever wider and fuller recognition of that "bond" and that "common spiritual patrimony" that exists between Jews and Christians.

This is the hope expressed in the fourth paragraph of the Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which I have just mentioned on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions. The decisive turning-point in relations between the Catholic Church and Judaism, and with individual Jews, was occasioned by this brief but incisive paragraph.

We are all aware that, among the riches of this paragraph no. 4 of *Nostra Aetate*, three points are especially relevant. I would like to underline them here, before you, in this truly unique circumstance.



The first is that the Church of Christ discovers her "bond" with Judaism by "searching into her own mystery" (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, *ibid.*). The Jewish religion is not "extrinsic" to us, but in a certain way is "intrinsic" to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers.

The second point noted by the Council is that no ancestral or collective blame can be imputed to the Jews as a people for "what happened in Christ's passion" (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, *ibid.*). Not indiscriminately to the Jews of that time, nor to those who came afterwards, nor to those of today. So any alleged theological justification for discriminatory measures or, worse still, for acts of persecution is unfounded. The Lord will judge each one "according to his own works", Jews and Christians alike (cf. Rom 2:6).

The third point that I would like to emphasize in the Council's Declaration is a consequence of the second. Notwithstanding the Church's awareness of her own identity, it is not lawful to say that the Jews are "repudiated or cursed", as if this were taught or could be deduced from the Sacred Scriptures of the Old or the New Testament (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, *ibid.*). Indeed, the Council had already said in this same text of *Nostra Aetate*, and also in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (no. 16), referring to Saint Paul in the Letter to the Romans (11:28-29), that the Jews are beloved of God, who has called them with an irrevocable calling.

5. On these convictions rest our present relations. On the occasion of this visit to your Synagogue, I wish to reaffirm them and to proclaim them in their perennial value.

For this is the meaning which is to be attributed to my visit to you, to the Jews of Rome.

It is not of course because the differences between us have now been overcome that I have come among you. We know well that this is not so.

First of all, each of our religions, in the full awareness of the many bonds which unite them to each other, and in the first place that "bond" which the Council spoke of, wishes to be recognized and respected in its own identity, beyond any syncretism and any ambiguous appropriation.

Furthermore, it is necessary to say that the path undertaken is still at the beginning, and therefore a considerable amount of time will still be needed, notwithstanding the great efforts already made on both sides, to remove all forms of prejudice, even subtle ones, to

readjust every manner of self-expression and therefore to present always and everywhere, to ourselves and to others, the true face of the Jews and of Judaism, as likewise of Christians and of Christianity, and this at every level of outlook, teaching and communication.

In this regard, I would like to remind my brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church, also those living in Rome, of the fact that the guidelines for implementing the Council in this precise field are already available to everyone in the two documents published respectively in 1974 and in 1985 by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism. It is only a question of studying them carefully, of immersing oneself in their teachings and of putting them into practice.

Perhaps there still remain between us difficulties of the practical order waiting to be overcome on the level of fraternal relations; these are the result of centuries of mutual misunderstanding, and also of different positions and attitudes, not easily settled, in complex and important matters.

No one is unaware that the fundamental difference from the very beginning has been the attachment of us Catholics to the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, a son of your People . . . , from which were also born the Virgin Mary, the Apostles who were the "foundations and pillars of the Church" and the greater part of the first Christian community. But this attachment is located in the order of faith, that is to say in the free assent of the mind and heart guided by the Spirit, and it can never be the object of exterior pressure, in one sense or the other. This is the reason why we wish to deepen dialogue in loyalty and friendship, in respect for one another's intimate convictions, taking as a fundamental basis the elements of the Revelation which we have in common, as a "great spiritual patrimony" (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, no. 4).

6. It must be said, then, that the ways opened for our collaboration, in the light of our common heritage drawn from the Law and the Prophets, are various and important. We wish to recall first of all a collaboration in favour of man, his life from conception until natural death, his dignity, his freedom, his rights, his self-development in a society which is not hostile but friendly and favourable, where justice reigns and where, in this nation, on the various continents and throughout the world, it is peace that rules, the *shalom* hoped for by the lawmakers, prophets and wise men of Israel.

More in general, there is the problem of morality, the great field of individual and social ethics. We are all aware of how acute the crisis is on this point in the age in which we are living. In a society

which is often lost in agnosticism and individualism and which is suffering the bitter consequences of selfishness and violence. Jews and Christians are the trustees and witnesses of an ethic marked by the Ten Commandments, in the observance of which man finds his truth and freedom. To promote a common reflection and collaboration on this point is one of the great duties of the hour.

And finally I wish to address a thought to this city in which there live side by side the Catholic community with its Bishop, and the Jewish community with its authorities and its Chief Rabbi.

Let this not be a mere "co-existence", a kind of juxtaposition, interspersed with limited and occasional meetings, but let it be animated by fraternal love.

7. The problems of Rome are many. You know this well. Each one of us, in the light of that blessed heritage to which I alluded earlier, is conscious of an obligation to work together, at least to some degree, for their solution. Let us seek, as far as possible, to do so together. From this visit of mine and from the harmony and serenity which we have attained may there flow forth a fresh and health-giving spring like the river that Ezekiel saw gushing from the eastern gate of the Temple of Jerusalem (cf. Ez 47:1 ff.), which will help to heal the wounds from which Rome is suffering.

In doing this, I venture to say, we shall each be faithful to our most sacred commitments, and also to that which most profoundly unites and gathers us together: faith in the One God who "loves strangers" and "renders justice to the orphan and the widow" (cf. Dt 10:18), commanding us too to love and help them (cf. *ibid.* and Lv 19:18, 34). Christians have learned this desire of the Lord from the Torah, which you here venerate, and from Jesus, who took to its extreme consequences the love demanded by the Torah.

8. All that remains for me now, as at the beginning of my address, is to turn my eyes and my mind to the Lord, to thank him and praise him for this joyful meeting and for the good things which are already flowing from it, for the rediscovered brotherhood and for the new and more profound understanding between us here in Rome, and between the Church and Judaism everywhere, in every country, for the benefit of all.

Therefore I would like to say with the Psalmist, in his original language which is also your own inheritance:

*hodû la Adonai ki tob  
ki le olam hasdô  
yomar-na Yisrael*

*ki le olam hasdô  
yomerû-na jir'è Adonai  
ki le olam hasdô (Ps 118:1-2, 4).  
O give thanks to the Lord for he is good,  
his steadfast love endures for ever!  
Let Israel say,  
"His steadfast love endures for ever".  
Let those who fear the Lord say,  
"His steadfast love endures for ever".  
Amen.*

### Address by Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff

Your Holiness,

As the Chief Rabbi of this community, whose history goes back thousands of years, I wish to express to you my intense satisfaction at the gesture you have wished to carry out today, visiting a Synagogue for the first time in the history of the Church. This gesture is destined to be remembered throughout history. It shows itself linked with the enlightened teaching of your illustrious predecessor, John XXIII, who, one Sabbath morning, became the first Pope to stop and bless the Jews of Rome who were leaving this Temple after prayer, and it follows the path marked out by the Second Vatican Council, which, with the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, produced that revolution in relations between the Church and Judaism that has made today's visit possible.

We thus find ourselves before a true turning-point in Church policy. The Church now looks upon the Jews with sentiments of esteem and appreciation, abandoning that teaching of disdain whose inadmissibility Jules Isaac—may he be remembered here in blessing—brought to the attention of Pope John.

At this historic moment, my thoughts turn with admiration, gratitude and mourning to the infinite number of Jewish martyrs who serenely faced death for the sanctification of God's Name. Theirs is the merit if our faith has never wavered and if fidelity to the Lord and his Law has not failed in the long course of the centuries. Thanks to them the Jewish people lives still, the only surviving people from antiquity.

Thus, we cannot forget the past, but today we wish to begin, with faith and hope, this new historical phase, which fruitfully points the way to common undertakings finally carried out in a plane of equality and mutual esteem in the interest of all humanity.

We propose to spread the idea of the spiritual and moral monotheism of Israel in order to bring together mankind and the universe in the love, the power and the justice of God, who is the God of all, and to bring light to the minds and hearts of all men, so as to cause order, morality, goodness, harmony and peace to flourish in the world.

At the same time, we reaffirm God's universal fatherhood over all men, taking our inspiration from the prophets, who taught it as that filial love which joins all living beings to the maternal womb of the infinite as to their natural matrix. It is therefore man who must be taken into consideration; man, who was created by God in his image and likeness, with the aim of conferring upon him a dignity and nobility that he can maintain only if he wills to follow the Father's teaching. It is written in Deuteronomy, "You are children of the Lord your God", in order to indicate the relationship that must join men to their Creator, a relationship of Father and child, of love and benevolent indulgence, but also a relationship of brotherhood which must reign among all human beings. If this truly existed, we would not today have to struggle against the terrorism and twisted acts of violence that reap so many innocent victims—men, women, the elderly and children—as happened not long ago even at the threshold of this Temple.

Our common task in society should therefore be that of teaching our fellow man the duty of mutual respect, showing the iniquity of the evils afflicting the world; such as terrorism, which is the exaltation of blind and inhuman violence, and which strikes out against defenceless people, including Jews in every country, simply because they are Jews; likewise, anti-semitism and racism, which we vainly felt to be forever vanquished after the last world war.

The condemnation that the Council pronounced against every form of anti-semitism should be rigorously applied, as well as the condemnation of all violence, in order to keep all mankind from drowning in corruption, immorality and injustice.

The invitation that we read in the book of Leviticus—"I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves, be holy, because I am Holy"—is meant to be an exhortation to imitate the holiness of the Lord in our lives.

In this way, the image of God in potency in man from the first moment of his creation becomes the image of God in act. The "Kedoshim Tiyyu" is the imitation on the part of man of what are called the "Ways of the Lord".

In this way, by seeking to subject all their actions to the spirit, man gives the spirit dominion over material reality.

The reward for this kind of conduct is great, and God already

revealed this to Abraham when he brought him out to gaze at the sky on a starry night: "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur Casdim in order to give you possession of this land". The possession of the promised land is obtained as a reward for having followed the ways of the Lord, and the end of days will come when the people have returned there.

This return is being realized: those who escaped from the Nazi death camps have found in the land of Israel a refuge and a new life in regained liberty and dignity. It is for this reason that their return has been called by our Teachers "the beginning of the coming of final redemption", "*Reshit tzemihat geulatenu*".

The return of the Jewish people to its land must be recognized as a good and an inalienable gain for the world, because it constitutes the prelude—according to the teachings of the prophets—to that epoch of universal brotherhood to which we all aspire, and to that redemptive peace that finds its sure promise in the Bible. The recognition of Israel's irreplaceable role in the final plan of redemption that God has promised us cannot be denied.

We will thus be able to strive together to affirm man's right to freedom, a complete freedom that encounters an inviolable boundary only when it infringes upon or limits the freedom of others. Man is born free, is free by nature, thus all men, no matter to what people they belong, must be equally free, because all have the same dignity and participate in the same rights. There are no men who can consider themselves superior and others inferior, because there is in everyone that divine spark that makes them equal.

Yet even in our own day there are still countries in the world where freedom is limited and discrimination and alienation are practised without any hesitation. I am referring in particular to blacks in South Africa, and, as far as freedom of religion is concerned, to Jews and Catholics in the Soviet Union. Our common task ought to be that of proclaiming the fact that from man's fundamental freedom there arise inalienable human rights: like the right to life, to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The right to life must be understood not only as the right to exist, but to see one's life guaranteed, from its birth, to see one's existence assured against every threat, every violence; it means a guarantee of the means of subsistence through a more equitable distribution of wealth, so that there are no longer people dying of hunger in the world. It means the right of each person to see his honour safeguarded, his good name against calumny and prejudice, including that of a religious nature. It means the condemnation of every attack on a person's self-respect, considered by Judaism to be equivalent to

bloodshed. It means to fight against falsehood because of the disastrous consequences it can have on society, and against hate, which provokes violence and is considered by Judaism the same as hate of the Lord, of whom man is the image.

Freedom of thought also includes freedom of conscience and religious freedom. We have to strive with all our power in order to prevent man even today from being persecuted or condemned for the ideas he professes or for his religious convictions.

The concept of freedom—as we see—is a composite one, and if one of its components is suppressed, it is inevitable that sooner or later the whole complex reality of freedom will be lost, because it is a unity that has an absolute and indivisible value. It is an ideal in and of itself, one of the objects of that reign of universal justice preached in the Bible, by virtue of which men and peoples have the inalienable right to be their own masters.

Your Holiness, at this very important moment in the history of relations between our two religions, as our hearts open to the hope that the misfortunes of the past might be replaced by a fruitful dialogue that—even while respecting our existing differences—might give us the possibility of a concordant activity, of sincere and honest cooperation towards the realization of those universal ends that are found in our common roots, allow me to conclude my reflections with the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Is 61:10-11).

### **Address by Prof. Giacomo Saban**

*The President of the Jewish Community of Rome greeted the Holy Father with the following words.*

Your Holiness,

I have the honour of being the first to welcome you to this Major Temple on the banks of the Tiber. I greet you on behalf of the most ancient Jewish Community of the Diaspora, a Community that I have been given the privilege of serving. In expressing our satisfaction at seeing a Roman Pontiff for the first time cross the threshold of a Synagogue, I feel it my duty to recount briefly the history of the Jewish

Community of this city, a history which goes back several thousand years.

Having settled on the banks of the Tiber almost two centuries prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, the fathers of the Jews that lived in Rome for centuries lived here as free Roman citizens. They wept, together with the multitude, over the mortal remains of Caesar; they applauded, together with the delirious populace, the triumph of Augustus. They were not spared, however, during the reigns of less glorious emperors, suffering, together with the rest of the inhabitants of Rome, from their wickedness and tyranny.

Their number grew with the arrival of the prisoners of the Jewish wars, and—at first slaves, but then quickly freed—they enjoyed a relatively tranquil life: witness to this fact is a stone tablet between the fourth and the fifth mile of the Ancient Appian Way. . . . But I am here speaking of the majority, because there were also those who came to Rome to ascend the glorious stairway of martyrdom, and the names of some of these are inscribed in the lists of the Mamertine Prison, from Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great, the victim of dark political designs, to Simon bar Ghiora, who fought relentlessly for our people's freedom.

Contrary to the legislation of Augustus Caesar, which, inscribed in bronze tablets and hung in the forums of the principal cities of the Empire, safeguarded the rights of our ancestors, the Theodosian Code limited their freedom, activity and development. Nonetheless, they remained—faithful to the city—perhaps the only constant component in the mosaic of populations that converged on Rome from throughout the Empire. Nor did their life consist only of trade and commerce; our commentators speak of flourishing Rabbinical academies, and many inscriptions in the catacombs witness to the fact that they constituted an inviting centre of spirituality and a source of pure monotheistic faith in the midst of a world in which paganism was moving towards its definitive extinction.

The dark centuries which followed and which saw, together with the end of the Western Empire, the decline of the city, were borne by this Community with serene courage. Shortly after the end of the first millennium, when the temporal power of the Popes was being consolidated, a son of this community, Nathan ben Jehiel Anav, whose house is found in Trastevere, not far from here, wrote in Rome the "*Arukh*", the first normative compendium of the Judaism of the Diaspora.

This community escaped the massacres that were inflicted upon Judaism on the other side of the Alps by croziers and Crusades; it did not, however, remain indifferent to the lot of those brothers in the faith, as is documented by the ancient funerary liturgy still in use among the Jews of Rome.

The first centuries after the year one thousand were difficult and painful for both the Jews and the rest of the population of Rome. Relations with the ruling power went through alternating phases, and violent acts were inflicted upon this Community in the persons of its Teachers. But those were the years in which Dante showed his appreciation of Immanuel Romano, who entered the world of Italian literature, bringing his metre, style and same poetic structures into Jewish literature.

The year 1492 saw the community grow with the arrival of refugees from Spain, and the liberal attitude of the Pope assured them a haven in this city.

In the following half century the situation was to change radically. In September of 1553, hundreds of copies of the Talmud were burned not far from here, in Campo di Fiori, and this blaze, which was not the first, would be re-ignited more than once in subsequent centuries. After the accession of Paul IV, with the Bull *Cum nimis absurdum* . . . of 14 July 1555, the Ghetto of Rome was established precisely where we find ourselves today. The measures introduced, harshly restrictive with regards to study and worship, as well as normal everyday activities, reduced the inhabitants of the Ghetto to economic and cultural misery, depriving them of some of their most fundamental rights.

Limitations of every sort and lack of freedom were thus the lot reserved to Roman Jews for a period of more than three centuries. It was only one hundred and fifteen years ago that this complex of restrictions, enslavement and humiliations came to cease, and not without some very sad last eruptions, such as the "*caso Mortara*" . . .

It took more than sixty years for the Community of Rome to begin to refashion a normal existence worthy of the position that it occupies in the framework of Italian Judaism, both in terms of number and historical tradition. This process was cruelly cut short by the events immediately preceding the Second World War, with persecutions which were much more horrible in that they aimed at the complete annihilation of Judaism worldwide.

It does not fall to us to judge what took place in Rome during those years, as we are too near in time to those days. What was taking place on one of the banks of the Tiber could not have been unknown on the other side of the river, nor could what was happening elsewhere on the European continent. Nonetheless, many of our brethren found help and refuge through courageous initiatives precisely within those convents and monasteries that they had learned to fear for so many centuries.

An apostolic nuncio who would be called to the Papacy fifteen

years later was not ignorant of the misdeeds that were being carried out in those days in the heart of our continent.

That Pope, John XXIII, wished to see the development of a spirituality suited to the tormented world that was finally experiencing the healing of the atrocious wounds of the war. With the Second Vatican Council he wished to give the Church an opportunity to begin anew to meditate upon fundamental values. *Nostra Aetate*, that Council document which most relates to us, introduces a different relationship between the faith of Israel and that of the surrounding world, restoring to us not only what for centuries we had been denied, but also the dignity that it had always been our right to see recognized.

The work of that "just man" has always had our praise and total appreciation; that work has been eminently carried on by his successors. That work must continue.

The efforts of men of good-will must in fact tend towards greater understanding of peoples, fully respecting their diversity. It is in this context that I feel I must manifest the aspiration to see abandoned certain reticences regarding the State of Israel. The land of Israel has a role that is central, emotionally and spiritually, in the heart of every Jew, and a change of attitude in its regard would gratify not only those present here, but Judaism worldwide. It would also, in my opinion, make a real contribution to the pacification of a region of the world that today presents threats and perils to the entire western world.

This would be a further step, then, in the "*fraternal dialogue*" of which *Nostra Aetate* speaks. I do not hesitate to believe that this step will be taken. Today's visit, Your Holiness, that you have held to be opportune—I would even say necessary—is a lively testimony to the spirit of the Council. It fills us all with joy, inasmuch as it is a sign which foreshadows better days, days in which all those who believe in the One God—may His Holy Name be blessed—will be able, united, to contribute to the creation of a better world.

## "Relations with Non-Christian Religions" at General Audience

June 5, 1986

At the general audience in St. Peter's Square on Wednesday, 5 June, the Holy Father resumed his series of talks on faith and revelation after a reading from the Book of Revelation (21:23-26). While speaking

of non-Christian religions in general, the Pope singled out the Church's "special relationship" with the Jewish people. The pertinent section, no. 6, follows:

6. A special relationship—with non-Christian religions—is the one that the Church has with those who profess faith in the Old Testament, the heirs of the patriarchs and prophets of Israel. The Council in fact recalls "the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 4).

This bond, to which we have already referred in the catechesis dedicated to the Old Testament, and which brings us close to the Jews, is again emphasized by the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* when it refers to those common beginnings of faith, which are found in the Patriarchs, Moses and the Prophets. The Church "professes that all who believe in Christ, Abraham's sons according to faith, are included in the same patriarch's call . . . the Church cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in his inexpressible mercy deigned to establish the Ancient Covenant" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 4). From this same people comes "Christ in his human origins" (Rom 9:5), Son of the Virgin Mary, as also his Apostles are its sons.

All this spiritual heritage, common to Christians and Jews, constitutes an organic foundation for a mutual relationship, even though a great part of the children of Israel "did not accept the Gospel". Nevertheless the Church (together with the Prophets and the Apostle Paul) "awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him with one accord' (Zep 3:9)" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 4).

## Second Angelicum Colloquium

November 6, 1986

*The second international Catholic-Jewish scholars' colloquium, like the first, was held at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum). The Pope's statement lists the sponsors of both colloquia. There follows here, the statement of Mr. Nathan Perlmutter, president of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and then the response and welcoming statement of the Pope during his audience with the participants.*

### Statement of Nathan Perlmutter

Your Holiness,

We are deeply honored to again visit with you as we did when the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith joined with institutions of the Church in the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

As you know so well, modernity brings its complex challenges to individuals and to their institutions. And the Church and its children, the Synagogue and its children strive to meet these challenges. We strive to retain what has served our ancestors so well and to fashion continuity for our future generations.

The Church stands tall and proud on the foundation of Faith and Tradition. And you, your Holiness have served as its loving and inspired leader.

So too have Jews cherished Faith and Tradition. Central to Judaism is God, Torah and Israel, the Land and its people it has been central to our past, inextricably interwoven with our future.

To profess caring concern for Catholicism without respect for its faith and Tradition is to love it less. So too Jews look to their neighbors' approbation for the bedrock of their Faith, Jerusalem as the spiritual and recognized capitol of Israel.

Your Holiness, we in the ADL were deeply honored to be represented in your Day of Prayer, and Day of Peace in Assisi. How appropriate Assisi, rich in the tradition of St. Francis. Where armies have failed to bring about peace, perhaps in your example, prayer and love will facilitate peace.

The world continues to be beset by acts of terrorism, and Your Holiness knows the ravages only too well. Perhaps what is needed in addition to a Day, of Prayer for Peace, is a day in which we contemplate the evil of terrorism, and as the site for such prayers against the scourge of terrorism and war, where more appropriate than in the City of Peace, Jerusalem? And personally led by whom, more appropriately, than by your prophetic voice of peace.

### Response of the Pope

Dear Friends,

1. I am very happy to welcome you on the occasion of your Second International Catholic-Jewish Theological Colloquium. In 1985 the Theological Faculty of the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Centro Pro Unione

and the "Service de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne" (SIDIC), in cooperation with the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, opened this series of theological research in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*. According to the spirit and the perspectives of the Council, the topic chosen for your Second Colloquium, which has now come to an end, is: *Salvation and Redemption in the Jewish and Christian Theological Traditions and in Contemporary Theology*.

2. Contemplation of the mystery of universal redemption inspired the Prophet Isaiah to wonder: "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" (Is 40:13-14; cf. Rom 11:34). We are hereby invited to receive with humble docility the mystery of the love of God, Father and Redeemer, and to contemplate it in our heart (cf. Lk 2:51) in order to express it in our works and in our praise.

Theological reflection is part of the proper response of human intelligence and so gives witness to our conscious acceptance of God's gift. At the same time the other human sciences, such as history, philosophy and art, also offer their own contribution to an organic deepening of our faith. This is why both the Jewish and Christian traditions have always had such high appreciation for religious study. Honouring our respective traditions, theological dialogue based on sincere esteem can contribute greatly to mutual knowledge of our respective patrimonies of faith and can help us to be more aware of our links with one another in terms of our understanding of salvation.

3. Your Colloquium can help to avoid the misunderstanding of syncretism, the confusion of one another's identities as believers, the shadow and suspicion of proselytism. You are effectively carrying out the insights of the Second Vatican Council, which have also been the theme of subsequent documents of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

This mutual effort will certainly deepen common commitment to the building of justice and peace among all people, children of the one heavenly Father. Let us, in this common hope for peace, confidently express our praise with the words of the Psalm, inviting all people to pray: "Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever. *Hallelû-Yah* (Ps 117).

4. As I said recently in Assisi, Christians are convinced that in Jesus Christ, as Saviour of all, true peace is to be found, "peace to those

who are far off and peace to those who are near" (Eph 2:17; cf. Is 57:19; 52:7; Zec 9:10). This universal gift has its origins in the call directed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and it finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, who was obedient to the Father even unto death on the Cross (cf. Mt 5:17; Phil 2:8). Whereas faith in Jesus Christ distinguishes and separates us from our Jewish brothers and sisters, we can at the same time affirm with profound conviction "the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 4). Thus we have here a bond which, notwithstanding our differences, makes us brethren; it is an unfathomable mystery of grace which we dare to scrutinize in confidence, grateful to a God who grants us to contemplate together his plan of salvation.

Grateful for every initiative promoting dialogue between Christians and Jews, and especially for this International Catholic-Jewish Theological Colloquium, I implore the blessing of Almighty God upon all of you and pray that your work will bear fruit for better understanding and increasing relations between Jews and Christians.

## To the Jewish Community of Australia

November 26, 1986

*The attitude of Catholics toward the Jewish religion "should be one of the greatest respect," Pope John Paul II told Australia's Jewish leaders November 26, 1986, in Sydney. For the Jewish people, "Catholics should have not only respect but also great fraternal love, for it is the teaching of both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures that the Jews are beloved of God, who has called them with an irrevocable calling." The Pope said, "no valid theological justification could ever be found for acts of discrimination or persecution against Jews. In fact, such acts must be held to be sinful." The text of the Pope's talk follows.*

1. Earlier this year, I had the pleasure and privilege of visiting the synagogue in Rome and of speaking with the rabbis and the assembled congregation. At that time I gave "thanks and praise to the Lord, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth (cf. Is 51:16) and who chose Abraham in order to make him the father of a

multitude of children, as numerous 'as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore' (Gn 22:17; cf. Is 15:5)."

I gave thanks and praise to him because it had been his good pleasure, in the mystery of his providence, that the meeting was taking place. Today, I praise and thank him again because he has brought me, in this great southern land, into the company of another group of Abraham's descendants, a group which is representative of many Jewish people in Australia. May he bless you and make you strong for his service!

2. It is my understanding that although the experience of Jews in Australia—an experience going right back to the beginning of white settlement in 1788—has not been without its measure of sorrow, prejudice and discrimination, it has included more civil and religious freedom than was to be found in many of the countries of the Old World. At the same time, this is still the century of the *Shoah*, the inhuman and ruthless attempt to exterminate European Jewry, and I know that Australia has given asylum and a new home to thousands of refugees and survivors from that ghastly series of events. To them in particular I say, as I said to your brothers and sisters, the Jews of Rome, "the church, in the words of the well-known declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 'deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone.'"

3. My hope for this meeting is that it will help to consolidate and extend the improved relations you already have with members of the Catholic community in this country. I know that there are men and women throughout Australia, Jews and Catholics alike, who are working, as I stated at the synagogue in Rome, "to overcome old prejudices and to secure ever wider and fuller recognition of that 'bond' and that 'common spiritual patrimony' that exists between Jews and Christians." I give thanks to God for this.

4. Where Catholics are concerned, it will continue to be an explicit and very important part of my mission to repeat and emphasize that our attitude to the Jewish religion should be one of the greatest respect, since the Catholic faith is rooted in the eternal truths contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the irrevocable covenant made with Abraham. We, too, gratefully hold these same truths of our Jewish heritage and look upon you as our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

For the Jewish people themselves, Catholics should have not only respect but also great fraternal love for it is the teaching of both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures that the Jews are beloved of God, who has called them with an irrevocable calling. No valid theological

justification could ever be found for acts of discrimination or persecution against Jews. In fact, such acts must be held to be sinful.

5. In order to be frank and sincere we must recognize the fact that there are still obvious differences between us in religious belief and practice. The most fundamental difference is in our respective views on the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Nothing, however, prevents us from true and fraternal cooperation in many worthy enterprises, such as biblical studies and numerous works of justice and charity. Such combined undertakings can bring us ever closer together in friendship and trust.

Through the law and the prophets, we, like you, have been taught to put a high value on human life and on fundamental and inalienable human rights. Today, human life, which should be held sacred from the moment of conception, is being threatened in many different ways. Violations of human rights are widespread. This makes it all the more important for all people of good will to stand together to defend life, to defend the freedom of religious belief and practice, and to defend all other fundamental human freedoms.

6. Finally, I am sure we agree that in a secularized society there are many widely held values which we cannot accept. In particular, consumerism and materialism are often presented, especially to the young, as the answers to human problems. I express my admiration for the many sacrifices you have made to operate religious schools for your children in order to help them evaluate the world around them from the perspective of faith in God. As you know, Australian Catholics have done the same. In secularized society, such institutions are always likely to be attacked for one reason or another. Since Catholics and Jews value them for the same reasons, let us work together whenever possible in order to protect and promote the religious instruction of our children. In this way we can bear common witness to the Lord of all.

7. Mr. president and members of the executive council of Australian Jewry, I thank you once again for this meeting, and I give praise and thanks to the Lord in the words of the psalmist:

Praise the Lord, all nations!  
Extol him, all peoples!  
For great is his steadfast  
love toward us;  
And the faithfulness of the  
Lord endures for ever.  
Praise the Lord! (Ps 116).



THE HOLY SEE AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL:  
THE EVOLUTION OF ATTITUDES AND POLICIES

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April, 1986

This paper will attempt to analyze in very broad strokes the evolving attitudes of the Holy See toward the rebirth of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. To appreciate the dynamics behind the Holy See's stance vis-à-vis the Israeli state, one must come to grips not only with the immediate socio-political implications faced by the Holy See concerning its diplomatic relations with Israel (options having, for example, profound implications for the fate of Catholic minorities throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds), but equally the major historical factors involved in Christianity's traditional "stake" in the Holy Land, and finally, the extent to which the church's perception of the issue may have been influenced by its theological attitude toward Jews and Judaism, past and present.

It is the general thesis of this paper that just as theological attitudes towards Judaism and Islam have in the past deeply influenced the Holy See's perception of Jewish and Muslim presence in the Holy Land, so has the reform of those attitudes

as embodied in the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions"<sup>1</sup> enabled the Holy See to perceive different options in its relationships with both the State of Israel and with Muslim and Arab states. In essence, it will be argued that as the theological barriers to interreligious dialogue have fallen (from the point of view of the Church), a wider variety of options has been opened in diplomatic relations as well.<sup>2</sup> However, the consistency of the Holy See's concern for the welfare of the Christian community in the Middle East, especially in the Holy Land, for freedom of pilgrimage to the Holy Places and for a peaceful and just resolution of disputes in the area, rather than theology as such provides the essential framework for understanding Vatican policies in the Middle East today.

The paper will first sketch traditional and present Catholic attitudes toward Judaism, and their implications for Catholic attitudes toward Jewish presence in the Holy Land, both historical and theological. These are necessary to frame an understanding of the church's interest in the area. Within this necessarily general frame, an attempt will be made to interpret the basic concerns that the Holy See has articulated regarding the State of Israel and the future of the city of Jerusalem, which I believe is the major key to the present diplomatic situation from the Holy See's point of view.<sup>3</sup>

## I. The Theological Framework

Catholic attitudes toward Jewish sovereignty over the Holy Land cannot be understood in isolation from Catholic attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. Those attitudes, in turn, can be traced back to late apostolic times. Very early in Patristic times, those passages of the New Testament which reflected the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.<sup>4</sup> began to be used in Christian apologetics against Jews and Judaism, Justin Martyr, for example, utilized the destruction of the Temple as a proof for his thesis that the Mosaic Law had been abrogated in favor of the new, Christian dispensation. Since God foreknew that after the death of Jesus Jerusalem would be destroyed, Justin believed, God commanded that the sheep of the Passover could only be sacrificed in Jerusalem. Thus, the Mosaic Law was only temporary within the divine plan of history.<sup>5</sup> Various of the Fathers argued (often against Christian "Judaizers" such as the Quartodecimans, who celebrated Passover according to the Jewish calendar on 14th Nisan) that the Jews themselves could no longer celebrate Passover because Jerusalem had been destroyed and the Temple priesthood with it.<sup>6</sup>

The developing self-definition of emerging Christianity in the early centuries of the Church's history was of necessity an attempt to define itself in relation to Judaism, both biblical, which it claimed as its own source and validation, and rabbinic,

which was emerging in parallel fashion to Christianity during the same period. Since rabbinic Judaism also claimed the validation of the Hebrew Bible, rabbinism's very existence was perceived by some Christians as a threat to Christianity's claim of exclusive continuity with biblical Judaism.<sup>7</sup>

Schooled in the rhetorical styles of late antiquity,<sup>8</sup> the Church Fathers did not scruple over mixing argumenta ad hominem in with their theological and exegetical apologetics.<sup>9</sup> The debate over the interpretation of biblical prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel<sup>10</sup> which earlier had to do with issues such as the meaning of the Law and the identity of verus Israel, gradually came to be intertwined with the polemic against the Jews and Judaism, with the deicide charge, and with the political situation of the times. St. Jerome, for example, for whom the biblical references to an eschatological restoration of Eretz Israel to the Jews was a major preoccupation, argued that the biblical prophecies referred either to events that had already occurred (e.g. in the return from the Babylonian captivity) or to the new spiritual reality that was the Church.<sup>11</sup>

While Jerome reflects growing Christian interest in the Holy Land as a place of pilgrimage, St. John Chrysostum's debates with Judaizers led to some of the most virulent anti-Jewish rhetoric in Christian history. As Patristic scholar Robert L. Wilkin has reminded us<sup>12</sup>, Chrysostum lived in Antioch, a city with a large

and prosperous Jewish community. The Christian community Chrysostum sought to lead as bishop was already split between Arianism and Orthodoxy. When Chrysostum began to fear a further split of his dwindling flock due to those attracted to Jewish ritual and practice, he preached a devastating series of homilies using every device known to the rhetorics of his time. In these sermons, the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jews played a major role. That role was intensified by remembrance of the promise of the Emperor Julian in the previous generation to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Though Julian's plans were thwarted by his untimely death, the very possibility caused, according to Wilken, a shock wave in the Christian community "for generations afterward."<sup>13</sup> The destruction of the Temple and the Disapora had come to be seen as a sort of inverted proof for the divinity of Jesus and the abrogation of the "old" covenant in favor of the new. The destruction of Jerusalem, it was argued, represented divine punishment on the Jews for their alleged rejection and killing of Jesus. The diaspora was thus seen as a continuing "proof" that the Jesus whom "the Jews" had killed was, in fact, divine. Why else would God want to punish them so severely? Because Jews suffer, the logic went, they were to be seen as an "accursed" people. As they had broken their covenant with God by refusing

to acknowledge Jesus, the "fulfillment" of that covenant, so God had passed the Covenant to a new people, one taken from among the nations (goyim), who believed in Jesus. This people formed the Church, the "new" people of God who had replaced the "old" people, the Jews, in God's plan of salvation.

Christian anti-Jewish polemics surrounding the Land, now set forth also the context of the deicide charge, intensified in the period after Chrysostum. By the fifth century, it was clearly a political as well as theological issue for the Church. Under Byzantine rule, Palestine had become a major center of monasticism and the site of numerous churches. Pilgrims streamed to Jerusalem to worship at the holy places where Jesus walked and where the great events of the bible had taken place.<sup>14</sup> The Church, in short, had come to have a major institutional stake in Eretz Israel. Wilken describes the dynamic that took place:

During this period Christians began to use the term 'holy land' with specifically Christian overtones to describe the actual land of Palestine. The term had been rejected by earlier Christians as inappropriate. Christian hope was set on a heavenly kingdom...Now, however, Christians began to appropriate a new symbol, the land of Israel itself. The earlier debates between Jews and Christians centered on the meaning of the Law, on the interpretation of Christ...and on the

significance of the destruction of the second temple. But Christians had made no claim on the land. Indeed they claimed to be devoted only to a heavenly city. Now they had a real interest in the actual city, and the consequences were far reaching.<sup>15</sup>

While Christian aspirations for actual control of the Holy Land were blunted by the Arab conquest and the subsequent failure of attempts to recapture the Land in the Crusades, the theological frame established in this period and the tradition of biblical interpretation developed to buttress its claims continued to influence Christian attitudes toward Jewish presence on the Land for centuries. The fears represented in the following quotation from the fourth century works of Theodoret of Cyrus' commentary on Ezekiel, for example, have a curiously contemporary ring. Indeed, remarkably similar fears were articulated in editorials in the Catholic press from the time of the first Zionist Congress of Basle in 1897 until the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948.<sup>16</sup>

There is today in Jerusalem the Church of the cross, the Church of the Resurrection, the Church of the Ascension, the Church in Holy Bethlehem, and many other churches. If the temple of the Jews is rebuilt, will these be destroyed, or will they continue to be held in honor?... And once again there would inevitably be

conflict and strife, we following our way of life according to our beliefs, and they preferring a form of worship according to the Law.<sup>17</sup>

Christian theology was never solely negative toward Jews and Judaism. Alongside the ancient "teaching of contempt"<sup>18</sup> outlined above, one can also find a more positive acknowledgment of the indebtedness of Christianity to biblical Judaism and a sense of the importance of Jewish witness to the Hebrew Bible as God's Word. For example, during the Middle Ages it was an excommunicable offense to disrupt Jewish worship services. While all remnants of paganism were ruthlessly stamped out, Jews were the only non-Christian group legally recognized in Christian Europe.<sup>19</sup>

As the traditional Christian attitude toward Jews and Judaism in general was one of theological ambiguity, so was the attitude of the Catholic Church ambiguous toward the Zionist movement in the decades before the declaration of the Jewish state. On the one hand, the interpretation of the diaspora as divine punishment on the Jews lead some Catholics to view a reborn state of Israel as virtually a theological impossibility -- unless the Jews repented first their "rejection" of Jesus, converted and were thus reconciled with God, who would then no longer impede their return to the Land of Promise. Such a Return, however, could be seen by both Jews and Christians as a



sign of the End Time. This latter potential quite naturally made many people very cautious about the whole question.

The famous reply of Pius X to Theodor Hertzl's plea for papal support of the Zionist cause may illustrate the influence of ancient theological categories on his thought, and certainly reflects this eschatological caution.

We are unable to favor this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem-- but we could never sanction it. As head of the Church I cannot answer you otherwise. The Jews have not recognized our Lord. Therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people, and so, if you come to Palestine and settle your people there, we will be ready with churches and priests to baptize all of you.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, and this many have forgotten, two weeks after the meeting, Cardinal Merry del Val, the Vatican Secretary of State communicated the following to Hertzl, which I believe reflects the more positive side of the Holy See's traditional role as protector of the Jews. "If the Jews believe they might greatly ease their lot by being admitted to the land of their ancestors, then we would regard that as a humanitarian question. We shall never forget that without Judaism, we would have been nothing."<sup>21</sup> That is, while very cautious about possible theological interpretations of a Jewish Return to the

Land, the Church could deal positively with such an eventuality if it were understood on primarily moral or humanitarian grounds. Such official ambivalence toward the Zionist cause appears to have continued over the years. Nahum Sokolow, a leading Zionist figure at the time of the Balfour Declaration reported that an audience with Pope Benedict XV had "led to a most satisfactory attitude on the part of the Vatican towards Zionism."<sup>22</sup> Michael J. Pragai, in his study of Christians and Zionism, concluded that this audience "served as an important encouragement for the Zionist Movement and facilitated the assigning of the Mandate to Britain."<sup>23</sup> While not wishing to oppose Zionism perhaps out the same sense of theological caution that prevented an official endorsement, expressions of concern for the Holy Places and the local Christian communities continued to be made over the years in the pages of such influential Catholic journals as Civiltà Cattolica and L'Osservatore Romano.<sup>24</sup>

No official condemnation of Zionism was ever issued by the Holy See, and the UN partition plan was passed with positive votes from the Catholic countries of Latin America. The Holy See's attitude over the years leading to the emergence of the State of Israel, then, cannot be seen as either overwhelmingly pro-Zionist or as anti-Zionist, though it has articulated a set of concerns remarkably consistent with the Church's ancient

"stake" in the Holy Land, as will be seen below. In other words, seen as a secular event, the Church can take a positive view toward the State of Israel. But if the state is interpreted as itself a fulfillment of the biblical promises, a more cautious reaction emerges. In any event, policy protective of the access to the Holy Places and the survival of Christian communities surrounding them is clearly articulated in all periods.

## II. Renewed Theological Understandings of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel

The declarations of the Second Vatican Council on Religious Liberty, Ecumenism, and Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate) revolutioned the Church's attitudes toward non-Catholics in general and toward the Jews in particular. It is a curious but significant fact that no previous Council of the Church had ever taken a systematic, doctrinal look at the Church's relationship with the Jewish people.<sup>25</sup> The framers of Nostra Aetate, no. 4, were thus able to draw on the positive elements of the Church's ambivalent tradition in seeking to frame a theological understanding at the dawn of the third millenium of an often tragic history. One may say that the Council's selectivity represents in itself a certain hermeneutic regarding that tradition.

There is no doubt that awareness of the Holocaust was on the

minds of the 2,221 Church Fathers who voted placet on the declaration on October 28, 1965.<sup>26</sup> Yet more than the Holocaust lay behind the declaration. As Professor Tommaso Federici has written, behind the document also lay the fruits of the biblical, liturgical and even ecclesiastical movements of the 20th Century.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Nostra Aetate, no.4, can properly be seen as a miniature (the section comprises only 15 sentences in Latin) prism of the renewal efforts of the Council as a whole.

While leaving open a number of traditional questions and opening still more for future consideration, what Nostra Aetate achieved is a two-fold clarification of ancient misunderstanding. First, it ended definitively all speculation that the Jews as people could be held collectively responsible for the death of Jesus: "what happened in his passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today... the Jews should not be represented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this followed from Holy Scripture." Secondly, reading Romans 9:4-5 in the present tense ("Theirs are the sonship and the glory and the covenant and the law..."), the Council opened the way to a more positive articulation of the Church's relationship with the Jews as People of God: "Now as before, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their fathers; he does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the calls he issues"<sup>28</sup>.

These two statements effectively destroy the basis for the negative theological assessment of the destruction of the temple and the diaspora discussed above. If the Jews as a people cannot be held responsible for Jesus' death, then there exists no reason for an angry God to destroy their temple in retribution. If rejection of Jesus cannot be cited as the reason for the exile, then the Return of Jews to the Land is no longer to be feared on theological grounds.

Subsequent official documents of the Holy See and major statements of the Popes on Catholic-Jewish relations have successively clarified and reinforced these two basic theological affirmations. Speaking in Mainz on November 17, 1980, for example, Pope John Paul II characterized Catholic-Jewish dialogue as "the meeting between the people of God of the old covenant never retracted by God (Rom 11:29), on the one hand, and the people of the new covenant on the other," and as "the encounter between today's Christian churches and today's people of the covenant concluded with Moses."<sup>29</sup> The Mainz declaration affirms both the continuity of the Jewish people (and today's Judaism) with biblical Israel, on the one hand (thus refuting all "replacement" or "supercessionist" theologies of fulfillment), and the permanent, ongoing validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people in the present era, i.e. post christum,<sup>30</sup> on the other.

A text issued by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jewish People<sup>31</sup> in 1985 goes farther than any previous official church document in applying the general theological affirmations of the Second Vatican Council to the specific issues of this paper. Because it has been misunderstood, and consequently negatively received by some, the text deserves to be treated here at some length. Speaking in the context of "the permanence of Israel" (as a people) as "a historic fact and a sign to be interpreted within God's design," the statement mandates that Catholics "must rid ourselves of the traditional idea of a people punished or preserved as a living argument for Christian apologetic."<sup>32</sup> The rebuttal here of the theories of Justin Martyr and Chrysostom, as sketched above, could not be more clearly stated.

The document goes even farther in defining a positive theological understanding of the Diaspora (to replace the negative assessment of the "teaching of contempt" as "divine retribution") and in acknowledging (the promise of the Land) (Eretz Israel) as an essential aspect of God's eternal covenant with the Jewish people. There is here, it should be noted, no hint of the notion, presented, I believe erroneously, by some biblical scholars, that the Jewish covenant or its Land aspect (cf. for example Genesis 28:10-22)<sup>33</sup> is in any sense "conditional" upon the people's moral behavior. The full statement reads:

The history of Israel did not end in A.D. 70. It continued, especially in a numerous Diaspora which allowed Israel to carry to the whole world a witness - often heroic - of its fidelity to the one God and to 'exalt him in the presence of all the living' (Tobit 13:4), while preserving the memory of the land of their forefathers at the heart of their hope (E.g. Passover Seder).

Christians are invited to understand this religious attachment which finds its roots in biblical tradition, without however making their own any particular religious interpretation of this relationship (cf. Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, U.S.A., Nov. 20, 1975).

The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged not in a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law.

(Notes, Section VI).

Bishop Jorge Mejia, then Secretary of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and one of the signers of the document noted in an explanatory text published in L'Osservatore Romano on the same page as the Notes themselves, that this was the first time the Commission had made reference "to the land and

the state" (of Israel), and that the section was "taken up with extreme precision" by the Commission. Given this, the text deserves careful scrutiny as a major articulation, though concise, of the Holy See's present attitude toward Land and State. How does it read, then, in terms of the schema of ancient and modern theological attitudes described thus far in this paper?

First, the explicitness and, indeed, pointedness of its rejection of certain interpretations of the Galuth (Diaspora) and destruction of the Temple, as noted above, give the statement a very strong "edge" for a Vatican document and should disabuse any lingering suspicions that ancient anti-Jewish polemics are any longer a functioning element in the way in which the Holy See perceives the return of Jews to Eretz Israel and the establishment of a Jewish state there. The Diaspora is not seen as the result of divine retribution but as part of "God's design," allowing the Jewish people to give universal witness to God's fidelity to his promises to them as "a chosen people" precisely through their continuing fidelity to God's eternal covenant with them.

Secondly, the promise of the Land is acknowledged as an essential aspect of this permanently valid covenant, so that the relationship between the Jewish people and Eretz Israel ("religious attachment") is acknowledged as having its origin



"in biblical tradition" and is therefore to be seen as an aspect of Christian faith to be presented as such in Catholic teaching and preaching.<sup>35</sup> The theological and, indeed, doctrinal "stake" of this statement, therefore, is not to be underestimated.

Having made this remarkably strong affirmation of the validity of the people Israel's claim to the "possession" of the Land (biblically understood, as in Genesis),<sup>36</sup> the Notes add a word of caution against jumping beyond the biblical relationship to the relatively extreme views floating around in various circles today. I believe that this caveat constitutes a warning for Catholics against adopting a fundamentalist interpretation of the biblical promises, for example as espoused by the Rev. Jerry Falwell or Rabbi Meir Kahane. This understanding of the caveat is clear in the Notes' reference to the 1975 Statement of the U.S. bishops. This reference, interestingly is the only such direct reference in the Notes (or in any previous such document issued by the Vatican Commission) to a statement made by an Episcopal Conference. Hence, it is not to be taken lightly as an interpretative tool for judging the intent of the Notes. The Statement of the U.S. bishops on this point reads:

In dialogue with Christians, Jews have explained that they do not consider themselves as a church, a sect, or a denomination, as is the case among Christian communities, but rather as a peoplehood that is not

solely racial, ethnic or religious, but in a sense a composite of all these. It is for such reasons that an overwhelmingly majority of Jews see themselves bound in one way or another to the land of Israel. Most Jews see this tie to the land as essential to their Jewishness. Whatever difficulties Christians may experience in sharing this view, they should strive to understand this link between land and people which Jews have expressed in their writings and worship throughout two millenia as a longing for the homeland, holy Zion. Appreciation of this link is not to give assent to any particular religious interpretation of this bond. Nor is this affirmation meant to deny the legitimate rights of other parties in the region.<sup>37</sup>

In short, the Notes do not intend to qualify the validity of the "bond" between people and land. But, given the wide range of views within Judaism regarding its nature and implications even today, reflect that the Holy See is not quite ready to hazard a final judgment on those complex questions. Further dialogue with Jews and internal theological reflection within the Church on the results of that dialogue are clearly necessary.

Only within the context of this strong affirmation of the continuing validity of the covenant and therefore of the continuing validity of the land-promise as an essential element

of that living covenant, does the document approach the modern State of Israel, which is here distinguished from the Land. The existence of the State is unequivocally recognized, de jure as well as de facto, on the basis of "the common principles of international law." Again, a caveat is imposed to warn against biblical fundamentalism. The Holy See recognizes the validity of the Jewish State without question, but will relate to it and "its political options" as a state on the basis of the same principles of international law which validate Israel's existence. That is, for example, it will not debate the boundaries of the State (currently in legal dispute) on the basis of "proof texts" from the Bible, but rather urge negotiations between the parties involved, as is the normal way with state to state relations

This section again needs to be read carefully. It does not preclude the possibility of the Church developing, in dialogue with the Jewish community, a religious interpretation of the State of Israel. (The often overlooked phrase, "in itself" is of great significance here). Rather, it urges a perspective that is primarily founded on internationally-recognized legal principles, as with all other states. Again, given the range within contemporary Zionist literature itself on the question of the religious significance of the State, one could hardly expect the Holy See to take any other position than that of caution. To try, for example, to choose which Jewish religious interpretation

is "the" most valid one would be, of course, both precipitate and a serious breach of the essential rubric of dialogue that each partner must be allowed its own self-definition. Here, Catholics can for now only "listen in," sympathetically and affirmatively, on the crucial internal discussion now taking place within the Jewish community.

The Church's caution, noted at the end of the first section of this paper regarding theological interpretations of the State, is thus seen once again in this section. Having cleared away at least some of the misconceptions regarding the theological reaction of the Holy See to Zionism, the Return, and the State, we can now turn to the chief questions facing this paper. What are the central concerns of the Holy See in the area? How have these been articulated since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948? And in what way do they shed light on Vatican policy toward Israel in general, and on the issue of an exchange of ambassadors between the Holy See and the State of Israel in particular?

### III. Catholic Interests in the Holy Land

The history of Christian interest in the Holy Land goes back to the origins of the religion itself. While the theological negatives are gone today, certain of these interests remain.

Jesus, of course, was a Jew and a faithful one. The Holy Land given to the Jewish people is the very land on which Jesus

walked and preached, the very land where he lived, died, and was raised to new life. Geographically, it is thus sacred land, indeed for the Catholic, the most sacred in the world. While the Holy See could, theoretically, be rebuilt anywhere (given the proper juridical adjustments and decisions), only in Jerusalem can the church of the Holy Sepulchre be placed, and only in Bethlehem the Church of the Nativity.

Catholic interest in the holy places is thus two-fold. First, there must at all times be access to these holy sites for Christian pilgrimage. Second, since these are the holiest sites on earth, it is fitting that active Christian communities reside there, where Jesus lived and taught and where the sacred mysteries of the Christian faith took place. This two-fold need has remained a consistent policy of the church from the earliest days, through the crusades (which were fought for their sake)<sup>38</sup> and to the very present. Whatever the issues of political sovereignty, the church claims access to its holy places and feels that it has a crucial stake in the survival of a Christian community in the area.

This can be clearly seen in the original charge given by Pope Clement VI in 1304 naming the Franciscan Order as official custos of the Holy Land: "To preserve the holy shrines of our religion and to keep alive the faith in these places which were hallowed by the life and death of the redeemer."<sup>39</sup>

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) was established in the United States in 1926 to collect funds nationally and to care for Catholic communal interests in the Middle East as a whole. By 1977, CNEWA had trained some 12,900 native clergy, established 1,000 churches, 91 schools, 11 hospitals and 107 orphanages in the region. 40

Obviously, such institutional interests require political stability to flourish, so that Zionism, which was seen as a potentially destabilizing factor, was regarded with caution by many Catholics in the early decades of this century. 41

It needs to be noted here that neither of these two interests on the part of the Church, access to the holy places and the survival of Christian communities there, represent points of fundamental conflict with the state of Israel. Israel has always guaranteed such access and, as a democracy, espoused the goal of pluralism and freedom for its minorities.

It also needs to be emphasized that none of the Catholic agencies have conversion of Jews as their goal. This must be emphasized because of the so-called "anti-missionary law" passed by the Knesset (in dubious circumstances), which went into effect April 1, 1978. This very bad law, which prominent Jewish organizations in this country such as the American Jewish Committee and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, among others, publicly opposed, was accompanied by explanations and by

a legislative record which cast unfortunate and false aspersions on the Catholic Church. In fact, there are today no religious orders or official Catholic organizations which exist for the purpose of converting Jews. Indeed, the only religious orders which were, in the last century, founded for this purpose have for some time now completely reversed their position and are today in the forefront of honest dialogue.<sup>42</sup>

Other factors which need to be taken into account in assessing Catholic reactions to Israel are related to the two major interests mentioned above. They range from a sincere and often repeated concern for a peaceful and just resolution for all parties in the conflict to the ever present fear of provoking Arab reaction against the highly vulnerable Christian minorities throughout the Middle East. Though Catholics and Jews may weigh various factors and solutions differently, I believe that there is no fundamental opposition between the Holy See and Israel on these points.

#### IV. Statements of the Holy See on Israel and Jerusalem

The major statements of the Holy See regarding the State of Israel since 1948 reflect the interests of the Church described above. They also tend to center concern, as we shall see, on the city of Jerusalem.

The basic concerns of the Holy See were staked out in three statements made by Pope Pius XII within the first year following

the founding of the state in 1948. In Auspicia Quaedam (May 10, 1948), Pope Pius XII expressed his initial "keen anxiety" for the safety of the holy places and called for a just resolution of the conflict.<sup>43</sup> Subsequent statements in that period added a call for "international guarantees for the right of free access to the holy places" and "freedom of religion and respect for customs and religious traditions."<sup>44</sup>

These statements also gave Vatican support to the United Nations resolution of Dec. 8, 1949 calling for the "internationalization" of the city of Jerusalem. Pius XII's encyclical In Multiplicibus (1948) asked that "an international character be given Jerusalem," and Redemptoris Nostri (1949) called for an "international status for the city."

The concept of an international status for Jerusalem remained a basic plank of Vatican policy until the Six Day War in 1967. In the year following the Israeli take-over of the old city, however, a subtle but significant shift in policy articulation occurred which may indicate that the Vatican is happier with the Israeli style of governing the city than with the Jordanian, perhaps because of Israel's firm and consistent guarantees of access to the holy places and of religious freedom for all its inhabitants, Christian, Jewish and Muslim.

Without formally eschewing the option of internationalization, the Holy See in 1968 began to call for more



limited goals. Pope Paul VI's allocation of December 23, 1968, for example, expressed hope for "an internationally generated regulation of the question of Jerusalem and the holy places," and on June 24, 1971 the Pope called for an "internationally legal safeguard" for the city's holy places and religiously diverse population."<sup>45</sup> The importance of this shift in language from "international status" to "international statute" regarding Jerusalem should be noted.

On March 25, 1974, Pope Paul VI issued the Apostolic Exhortation, Nobis in Animo, concerning "the increased needs of the Church in the Holy Land." This document describes the ancientness of the Christian tradition of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the needs of the churches and institutions developed over the centuries to care for pilgrims and the Holy Places they come to visit, and especially the need to ensure the "continued survival" of the "Christian community which originated in Palestine two thousand years ago."<sup>46</sup> Nobis in Animo expresses the Pope's distress at the emigration of Christians from the Holy Land, especially from Jerusalem, emphasizing the local community's "need of our understanding and of our moral and material help."<sup>47</sup> The Pope also articulates, and he stresses that it is a religious rather than a political hope, that Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Land may come together there as a model of peaceful cooperation: "In this process of coming

together, the Christian presence in the Holy Land, together with the Jewish and Moslem presence, can be a factor for concord and peace."<sup>48</sup>

Pope John Paul II reiterated this vision of hope in one of his first statements to representatives of world Jewish organizations:

Following in particular the footsteps of Paul VI, I intend to foster spiritual dialogue and to do everything in my power for the peace of that land which is holy for you as it is for us, with the hope that the city of Jerusalem will be effectively guaranteed as a center of harmony for the followers of the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, to whom the city is a revered place of devotion.<sup>49</sup>

On March 25, 1979, Pope John Paul II strongly endorsed the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty as giving "a decisive impulse to the peace process in the entire region."<sup>50</sup> This was seen as a significant step in acknowledging the existence of Israel, especially in view of the hesitancy of European nations to declare support for the treaty in the face of fierce Arab opposition.

In the June 30-July 1, 1980 edition of L'Osservatore Romano, an editorial appeared on the status of Jerusalem. This editorial

was later submitted by the Holy See to the United Nations in response to a U.N. request for its views on Jerusalem during a general assembly debate on the issue. Indicating the Holy See's view of the centrality of Jerusalem in its diplomatic policy vis a vis the State of Israel, the editorial called the question of Jerusalem "pivotal to a just peace" in the Middle East, and established the principle that the three religious communities, Christian, Jewish and Moslem, "should be partners in deciding their own future."<sup>51</sup>

In an apparent reference to the then-pending Knesset resolution declaring Israeli sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem, the editorial warned that "any unilateral act tending to modify the status of the holy city would be very serious." Arguing that "the Jerusalem question cannot be reduced to a mere 'free access for all the holy places.'" The editorial set forth basic principles that the Holy See feels should be binding on "any power that comes to exercise sovereignty over the holy city." These include religious freedom, equality of treatment, traditional rights over the holy places, and "the continuance and development of religious, educational and social activity by each community." These principles, in turn, are to be achieved and ensured "through an appropriate juridical safeguard that does not derive from the will of only one of the parties" but rather constitute a "special statute" under international law that is

"guaranteed by a higher international body."

This "international body," or how it is to be constituted, has not to my knowledge been precisely defined by the Holy See. But just as the concept of a "special statute" is clearly distinct from the U.N. notion of Jerusalem as a "corpus separatum" or "international city," so the envisioned "international body" may be distinct from the United Nations in the tight wording of this portion of the text. In any event, it would seem clear from the Holy See's concern for Jerusalem over the years that a satisfactory resolution of the Jerusalem question is in its view a necessary condition for the exchange of ambassadors between itself and the State of Israel (or the State of Jordan, for that matter, since the Holy See has formal relations on the nuncio level with neither).

In a homily on the hill of Otranto, Italy, on October 3, 1980, Pope John Paul II explicitly linked the foundation of the State of Israel with the tragedy of the Holocaust: "the Jewish people after tragic experiences connected with the extermination of so many sons and daughters, driven by the desire for security, set up the state of Israel."<sup>52</sup> The homily also noted that "at the same time" (this latter linkage is clearly temporal rather than causal as some have attempted to make it) a sad condition of exile developed for many Palestinian Arabs.

As gestures of de jure as well as de facto recognition of

the validity and existence of the state of Israel and its need for security have been dramatically escalated in recent years by the Holy See, so has its expression of humanitarian concern for the plight of Palestinian refugees (e.g. in the audience with Yassir Arafat). All of these themes come together in Pope John Paul II's 1984 Good Friday apostolic letter, Redemptionis Anno, which like so many of the earlier statements, is devoted especially to "the fate of the Holy City," Jerusalem.

V. Redemptionis Anno

One can discern in Redemptionis Anno the development that has taken place within the Church of an appreciation for the link between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, as well as between the Jewish people and Jerusalem. This is especially apparent when it is read in the light of the theological statements of the Holy See outlined in Section II of this paper.

Redemptionis Anno should be taken very seriously as an official acknowledgment and affirmation of the existence of the state of Israel. The pope writes:

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

progress for every society.

This, then, is an entirely unambiguous statement of recognition on the part of the Holy See regarding the state of Israel. It puts into proper perspective the separate question of the precise level of diplomatic relations - whether on the highest, nuncio level, or, as now, on the lower level of regular diplomatic contacts.

It should not be forgotten, of course, that diplomatic relations do exist between the two. The popes have numerous times received prime ministers, presidents, and foreign ministers of Israel, and always arranged and recorded these specifically as visits of State. So the de jure as well as de facto status of the Holy See/Israel relationship is clear. Nor should it be forgotten, as a part of the overall context of Redemptionis Anno, that Pope John Paul II was one of the first (and one of the few) international leaders to voice strong support for the Camp David agreements, stating that the pact "formalizes peace between two countries after decades of war and tension, and gives decisive impulse to the peace process in the entire region of the Middle East." Note the phrase: "two countries." Again, no ambiguity is allowed.

On this latter occasion, as in the homily at Otranto and indeed, in Redemptionis Anno, the pope spoke supportingly also of "the Palestinian Arabs, who are waiting rightly for a just and

adequate solution to their pressing needs." "No people," he added, "can be sacrificed to the destiny of others." The pope neither here nor elsewhere offers a specific political formula for meeting those very real and urgent needs of Palestinian Arabs, urging rather a negotiated settlement acceptable to the relevant groups in the area itself, so long as this does not endanger the security of Israel. A wide range of options, such as put forth by various parties in Israel and elsewhere, is thus left open by Vatican policy. Statements of the Vatican, it is worth noting, consistently use the more general term "homeland" with reference to the Palestinian Arabs, while speaking of Israel as a "nation" or "state." This does not necessarily preclude the possibility of the creation of a third state out of the original Palestinian Mandate, but it does allow for a wider range of creative options to be negotiated by the affected parties themselves.

Redemptionis Anno likewise contains some of the strongest papal language concerning the relationship between the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. The Pope emphasizes, for example, that "before it was the City of Jesus ... Jerusalem was the historic site of the biblical revelation of God, the meeting place, as it were, of heaven and earth, in which more than in any other place the word of God was brought to humanity." This statement, in the context of the Catholic church's official

acknowledgment of the ongoing validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people, is an extremely significant one. It acknowledges both the particularity of the Jewish relationship with Jerusalem, and the universal significance of that Jewish particularity - for Christians no less than for Jews.

The pope in Redemptiois Anno is not content, as some have been, with the simple phrase that all three Abrahamic faiths - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - hold Jerusalem to be holy. This is true. But the pope describes in turn the uniqueness of the relationship each religious tradition has with Jerusalem. Regarding the Jewish attachment, he recognizes both the religious and the historic "peoplehood" dimension of Jewish attachment to Jerusalem:

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

Consider the powerful phrase "as the capital," and the even stronger declaration "sign of their nation." Given the sacramental orientation of Roman Catholic thought, my understanding of this text and the concept of "sign" enunciated there is that it has deep spiritual significance.



Redemptionis Anno, of course, is by no means hesitant to set forth the stake that the church itself has in Jerusalem, not only in access to its holy places for pilgrimages, but also in the viability of its character as religiously pluralist, specifying Muslim along with Jewish and Christian reverence for the city. Redemptionis Anno thus affirms the religious and communal rights of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the city, rights which are already acknowledged and affirmed by the wise administration of Mayor Teddy Kolleck.

#### Conclusion

Redemptionis Anno and the Vatican Notes, I believe, together form the basis for a new assessment on the part of the Holy See of its relationship with the Jewish people in general and with the State of Israel in particular. The present policy is quite consistent with past centuries in holding forth the Church's basic claims in the area. These claims, it has been noted, are essentially religious and moral, as well as historical. Stripped of the anti-Jewish polemics of the past, these claims today deserve close attention and respect from the world community.

While consistent regarding the necessity of Christian access to and a viable Christian presence in Israel, they are not in essential conflict with Israeli sovereignty, even over the city

of Jerusalem. But the Holy See, as it must, takes the "long view" of the present situation, holding out, if my interpretation is correct, for an international recognition of its claims strong enough and clear enough to survive the vagaries of history. That is, the Holy See insists that Christians are present in Eretz Israel as of right, a right not dependent on either Jewish or Moslem "tolerance," and that this right is such as to perdure no matter who has sovereignty, or what political party may happen to preside over the government controlling the area. This issue is especially acute for the Holy See with regard to the City of Jerusalem.

At the present time, both Jewish (e.g. Meir Kahane) and Moslem fundamentalists would seek to deny that right. That is one reason why, in my view, the Holy See still hesitates to exchange ambassadors with either Jordan or Israel. The question is not so much "recognition" of either state as it is recognition by all involved of Christian existence within the Holy Land. Whether the Holy See's strategy of realpolitik for achieving its goals in the area is the most likely to succeed is another question. Many knowledgeable Catholics today, both in the West and in Israel itself, would see a better chance for Christian claims in the long run in making the move now to exchange ambassadors, thus encouraging negotiations and at the same time providing the Church a stronger diplomatic role in whatever

negotiations may ensue in the torturous peace process in the area. Likewise, they argue, only such an action will really convince the Jewish community of the Church's sincerity in breaking with its anti-Jewish past, thus furthering the interreligious dialogue and giving Vatican concerns increased moral credibility within the State of Israel.

Fr. Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P., who was a founding staff member of the Holy See's Secretariat for Christian Unity (1960-70) and in that capacity worked on the Second Vatican Council's declaration, Nostra Aetate, states the argument this way:

"Because the Holy See acknowledges the validity and necessity of the Jewish state, and because the Vatican, as a 'sovereign state,' justifies its active tradition of diplomatic relations with nations now including the United States, many Catholics strongly urge that the Vatican reinforce its recognition of Israel by diplomatic ties. Such a step would be a clear signal in the international arena that the Vatican in no way supports those Arab states that reject even the right of Israel to exist and insist that by political and military means Israel should be forced to disappear from the Middle East.<sup>53</sup>

However one views this, it would be a mistake on the Jewish side, in my opinion, to interpret Vatican hesitation to exchange

ambassadors as some sort of remnant of the "teaching of contempt." Anti-Judaism and even anti-Semitism, of course, still exist among Catholics at all levels. This is a sad reality which the Church must continue to confront with all of its available resources. But the consistency of the Holy See's concerns over the centuries, and the steps already taken to dismantle the "teaching of contempt" make it less and less likely that ancient polemics are in fact guiding Church policy in the Middle East today. To put it another way, Vatican policy can adequately be understood on the basis of its own articulated concerns. One does not need some "darker" motivation to explain its hesitations and doubts with regard to diplomatic relations.

Finally, it would equally be a mistake to view the Holy See's policy in the area solely in terms of Catholic self-interest. The deeper vision of the Popes, as illustrated in Norbis in Animo (Paul VI) and Redemptionis Anno (John Paul II) projects a spiritual challenge to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. Can the children of Abraham, so at odds over the centuries, today come to terms with each other for the sake of the higher duty to which all are called? Jerusalem is the fulcrum of that challenge. Can the three monotheistic traditions, through their encounter in the holy city, come together to give joint witness to the One God, the God of Israel, whom we all serve? If so, the potential for peace in human

history will be immeasurably improved.



## FOOTNOTES

1. Text and commentary in Walter M. Abbott, S.J., the Documents of Vatican II (N.Y.: Guild, America, Association Presses, 1966) 660-668. Subsequent official documents of the church on Catholic-Jewish relations are to be found in H. Croner, ed., Stepping Stones to Further Christian-Jewish Relations (London: Stimulus, 1977) and More Stepping Stones (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1985).
2. An analogy, if imperfect, might be the opening of diplomatic options that attended the adoption of ostpolitik by the Holy See, in which the ideological conflict with communism, while by no means abandoned, was able to be "bracketed" in certain circumstances, allowing a more pragmatic and dialogical approach to Vatican diplomacy with Eastern European nations.
3. While Nostra Aetate also addressed Catholic-Muslim relations (section no. 3), and while its more positive attitudes toward Islam has encouraged dialogue with Muslims and Arabs, thus opening new options on that front as well, this paper will be limited, in the main, to Catholic-Jewish/Vatican-Israel relations. For a different perspective on the issues treated here, cf. Richard P. Stevens, "The Vatican, the Catholic Church and Jerusalem," Journal of Palestine Studies (Spring,

- 1981) 100-110.
4. E.g. The Epistle to the Hebrews, though some scholars would date this to the period just prior to the destruction. Cf. also various sayings of Jesus as presented in the Gospels written after 70 C.E. according to scholarly consensus, e.g. Mark 14:58, on which see D. Juel, Messiah and Temple (Scholars Press, 1977) 197-210.
  5. Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 40:1-5 and 46.2. (F.T. Stylianopoulos, Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law, (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975) 119-121. For early Jewish interpretations of the destruction of the Temple, see H.J. Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, Winston) 32-40.
  6. E.g. Aphrahat, Demonstration against Jews, 12; Chrysostum, Eight Homilies Against the Judaizers, 3. Cf. J. Neusner, Aphrahat and Judaism (Leiden, Brill) 123-7, and S.G. Wilson, "Passover, Easter and Anti-Judaism" in J. Neusner and E. Frerichs, ed's, "To See Ourselves as Others See US:" Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1983).
  7. For essays on the myriad facets of the apologetical/polemical debates on this period, which was formative for both Christian and rabbinic traditions, cf. Neusner and Frerichs, "To See Ourselves..." (above); E. P. Sanders, ed., Jewish

and Christian Self-Definition (Two Volumes, Phila: Fortress, 1980, 1981); A.T. Davies, ed., Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity (N.Y.: Paulist, 1979); and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity (University of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

8. Cf. Robert L. Wilken, John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century (University of California Press, 1983).
9. For convenient surveys of patristic polemics against the Jews, cf. E.H. Flannery, The Anguish of the Jews (N.J. Paulist, 1985); R. Reuther, Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Antisemitism (N.Y.: Seabury, 1974) 117-182; and R. L. Wilken, Judaism and the Early Christian Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). The essays in A. T. Davies, Foundations (above, n. 7) respond to Reuther's thesis. An important recent study is John G. Gager's, The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity (Oxford University of Press, 1983).
10. E.g. Is. 25:6-8; Is. 58:12; Ezek. 39:17-20. For a summary of Jewish attitudes toward the Destruction of the Temple, the Exile, and the hope for the Return, cf. W. D. Davies, "Reflections on the Territorial Dimensions of Judaism" in his Jewish and Pauline Studies (Phila.: Fortress, 1984) 49-71.



11. Jerome is arguing here not only with Jewish interpretations of the biblical text but equally with those whom he calls "judaizers" (iudaizantes) or "half-Jews" (semiudaei), among whom he includes Tertullian, Irenaeus, Victorinus, Lactantius, and Apollinaris. All of these, as Wilken points out, were Christian millennialists (R. L. Wilken, "The Restoration of Israel in Biblical Prophecy: Christian and Jewish Responses in the Early Byzantine Period," in Neusner and Frerichs, "To See Ourselves...," 450.
12. Wilken, Chrysostom, fn. 8, above.
13. Ibid., 129-130.
14. John Wilkinson, Jerusalem Pilgrimages Before the Crusades (Jerusalem, 1979). For ancient documents describing pilgrim routes see ed. by P. Geyer in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1898) Vol. 39, p. 25, and G. Gamurrini, Studie Document di Storia e Diretto (Rome, 1888) 97-184.
15. J. Wilken, "The Restoration of Israel," 463, 467. Wilken notes too that recent archaeological evidence has established that there were numerous vibrant Jewish communities throughout Israel in the Byzantine Era. These in fact increased dramatically throughout the period. Such communities would have served as a constant reminder that the Hebrew Scriptures were open to another interpretation than

that of the Christian, and thus been a source of continuing theological irritation to Christian spokespersons.

16. Cf. Esther Yolles Feldblum, The American Catholic Press and the Jewish State 1917-1959 (N.Y.: KTAV, 1977) and R.P. Stevens, cited above, fn. 3.
17. Cited in Wilken, "The Restoration of Israel," 465-466.
18. The term was coined by French Jewish historian Jules Isaac in the late 1940's. See his The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1964) and Jesus and Israel (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1971). Both works were translated from the French by Claire Huchet Bishop.
19. Edward A. Synan, The Popes and the Jews in the Middle Ages (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1965). A major shift toward the negative in Christian treatment of Jews and Judaism began approximately in the 13th century and had reached its peak by the 16th. Cf. Jeremy Cohen, The Friars and the Jews The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism (Cornell University, 1983). One can see anti-Jewish rhetoric and legislation escalating as the crusades failed and as all Europe felt itself more and more besieged by the external onslaught of Islam. The efforts to enforce the internal "unity" of Christendom are thus understandable today.
20. January , 1904. Cited in The Diaries of Theodore Herzl, ed.

- B.M. Lowenthal (N.Y.: Dial Press, 1956) 429-430.
21. Cited in A. James Rudin, Israel for Christians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).
  22. Nahum Sokolow, History of Zionism, 2 Vol's. (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1919) Vol. II, p. 53.
  23. Michael J. Pragai, Faith and Fulfillment: Christians and the Return to the Promised Land (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1985) 152.
  24. Stevens, 102-105.
  25. Previous Conciliar statements, such as the suppressive legislation of the Fourth Lateran Council in the Century were disciplinary, not doctrinal in character, and had fallen into desuetude by the time of Vatican II. Cf. E. J. Fisher, "The Evolution of a Tradition: From Nostra Aetate to the Notes," Jewish-Christian Relations: A Documentary Survey (London, Vol. 18:4, Dec. 1985) 32-47.
  26. "The step taken by the Council finds its historical setting in circumstances deeply affected by the memory of the persecution and massacre of Jews which took place in Europe just before and during the Second World War," Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate" (n.4), Rome, December 1, 1974, "Preamble."
  27. T. Federici, "Study Outline of the Mission and Witness of the

- Church," SIDIC (Rome, Vol. 11:3, 1978) 25-34.
28. Cf. Romans 11:28-29. The Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church significantly uses the same language with reference to the Jewish people.
29. Origins, Dec. 4, 1980, reprinted in E. Fisher, Seminary Education and Christian-Jewish Relations (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Education Association, 1983) 87-89.
30. For commentary on Pope John Paul II's Mainz statement, see the address of Archbishop John R. Roach to the Synagogue Council of America on March 12, 1981. Speaking as President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Roach comments: "The phrase 'never retracted by God' needs to be underscored. It at once rebuts all old claims of Christian triumphalism (the so-called teaching of contempt') and opens up the way for an entirely new relationship between two living traditions on the basis of mutual respect for each other's essential religious claims... Note also the pope's insistence on the church's acceptance of the continuing and permanent election of the Jewish people." Origins, May 7, 1981; reprinted in Seminary Education, 93-96.
31. Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis of the Roman Catholic Church," L'Osservatore Romano (Rome, June 24, 1985), available in English from the

U.S. Catholic Conference, Office of Publishing and Promotion Services (OPPS), Publication no. 970. Hereinafter, "Notes."

32. Notes, VI, OPPS Edition p. 18.
33. An excellent treatment of the Land Promise in Gn 28:10-22 from the perspective of Catholic biblical scholarship can be found in Manuel Oliva, Jacob en Betel: Vision y Voto (Valencia, Spain: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, 1975) 101-108.
34. "Catechesis," it should be noted, is a much stronger term in this context than, for example, "religious education," since it connotes the official handing on of the faith tradition of the Catholic Church. The dynamic underlying Notes is thus one dealing, by definition, with aspects of the Church's own self-understanding and not simply with "external" relations with non-Catholics.
35. The document thus has a certain hermeneutical force as an authoritative interpretation of the meaning of the biblical text.
36. Cf. footnote 33, above.
37. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations," Nov., 1975. USCC Publications. (Italics added).
38. This despite the condemnable greed, avarice and butchery of many of the crusaders themselves.

39. The Crusader's Almanac, 1896, as cited in American Catholic Interest in the Holy Land: 1880-1980, by Joseph G. Kelly, paper delivered at the University of Rochester, April 3, 1978.
40. Kelly, op. cit., p. 6.
41. See Esther Yolles Feldblum, The American Catholic Press and the Jewish State 1917-1959 (N.Y.: KTAV 1977) for an excellent treatment of this whole question.
42. This refers to the fathers and sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Sion which, among other things, publish SIDIC
- 43 Cf. E. Fisher, "The Church's Stance Toward Israel and Jerusalem," Origins (1979) 158-160.
44. In Multiplicibus (Oct. 24, 1948) and Redemptoris Nostri (April 15, 1949).
45. Cited in Edward H. Flannery, The Controversy Over Jerusalem (October 1971) and A. Second Report on Jerusalem (April 1972), Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
46. Pope Paul VI, Nobis in Animo (USCC Publications, 1974) 6. Nobis in Animo also illustrates that the question of a "heavenly" and/or "earthly" Jerusalem (cf. Footnote 15) is still in need of theological resolution by the Church. Pope Paul VI tried to reconcile the two through application of sacramental terminology: "Sentiments of faith and piety

impelled the first Christians to seek almost physical contact with the Holy Places and to hold impressive liturgical ceremonies there. It is of course true that Christianity is a universal religion... But it is also a religion based upon an historical revelation. Alongside the 'history of salvation' there exists a 'geography of salvation.' Thus the Holy Places possess the invaluable quality of providing faith with an indisputable support, enabling the Christian to come into direct contact with the setting in which 'the word became flesh and dwelt among us.'" Catholic-Jewish dialogue, especially in Israel today, holds great hope for resolving this ancient theological dilemma. The particularity, one might say "incarnation" of the Jewish people in the Land offers deep insight for Catholic theology today. Cf. Michael Wyschogrod, The Body of Faith: Judaism as Corporeal Election (N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1983).

47. Nobis in Animo 3.

48. Ibid., 6.

49. March 12, 1979. See Origins (Vol. 8:43, Apr. 12, 1979) 691.

50. Cited in E. Fisher, "The Church's Stance," 160.

51. National Catholic News Service, Wed., July 2, 1980, p. 2.

52. Cf. Eugene Fisher, "Rome Looks at Jerusalem," Commonweal (Jan. 11, 1985) 16.

53. Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P., "The Catholic-Jewish Dialogue:

Twenty Years After Nostra Aetate," America (Vol. 54:5; Feb. 8, 1986) 96.





- o Global War & Peace, arms control?
- o South Africa, Philippines,
- o Relations with US?
- o Implication that entire book is on MIF?
- o Insufficient discussion of OI!!

## THE HOLY SEE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

### AN INTERPRETATIVE HISTORY

The purpose of this chapter is to depict the role of the Holy See in a global framework so as to place Middle Eastern papal diplomacy in its appropriate context. The chapter will present an overview of the Holy See as a transnational actor in world politics. Discussion of the major strands of papal policy and involvement will be undertaken. Emphasis will be placed on the actions of the Holy See when it is confronted with multi-faceted challenges which are ideological, religious, or socioeconomic in nature. Contemporary conflict situations in two major geographical areas of the world—Latin America and the Soviet bloc—are reviewed in order to compare the Holy See's role. In addition, a brief assessment of papal involvement in two recent crises--the civil war in Biafra and the Vietnam War--will be offered. These two conflicts were selected because the strife in Biafra has aspects similar to the Lebanese situation and the Vietnam War is representative of an ideological war. The question postulated is: How does the Holy See define its role in given situations which are characterized by contradictory claims or by instances of war?

As a result of Vatican II and the decentralization that occurred inside the Church, the Pope was transformed from an absolute monarch to a moderator and conciliator in world affairs. Three inter-

related aims frame the Holy See's fundamental policy: (a) to preserve the faith--that is, maintain the capacity to appoint bishops and to preserve the spiritual needs of Catholics in a given society; (b) to preserve and foster peace--that is, the Holy See imparts moderation to secular leaders; and (c) to act as a moral guide--that is, the Holy See focuses increasingly its attention on issues of social justice, hunger, and the arms race, which have become more threatening in light of the East-West and North-South conflicts.

Human rights,  
refugees (Caritas)  
terrorism

The peculiarity of the Church resides in its religious character. It is the Pope's moral authority that gives to his words and actions a weight that reaches far beyond the resources available to him. Unlike other transnational actors, such as oil companies or other MNCs, which, in order to gain access to a given country, rely on their skills in providing technical assistance and know-how, the Roman Catholic Church has to rely on its diplomatic channels and its moral prestige to carry out its pastoral work and to achieve its goals.

According to Ivan Vallier, the spectrum of relationships between the Holy See and nation-states varies from those governments which allow unhindered access and operation to the silenced and repressed Catholicism in the Soviet bloc. In all of these situations, the Holy See tries to adapt and mobilize its resources accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the effectiveness of the Holy See's role

has different consequences at the national level depending on the issue, the relationship to and importance of Catholics in the society, the history of the church's posture towards Rome,<sup>2</sup> and the degree and basis of unity and divisions among Catholics.

Therefore, the diplomatic means usually adopted by the Holy See vary from the signing of a Concordat which clearly defines the spheres of interests between church and state to the formulation of a modus vivendi whenever a Concordat appears improbable.

There are also several kinds of threats with which the Holy See must contend in contemporary international relations. The first is the ideological threat exemplified by Marxism and the regimes inspired by its tenets. The second is primarily socioeconomic in nature and is related to the issue of the unequal distribution of wealth inside a given society and in the global system between rich and poor countries. The third type of threat is epitomized by ethnic, ideological, or religious conflicts which have become a recurring feature of the post World War II era.

These threats have an immediate implication for Catholics and determine the presence of three strands in the Holy See's involvement. For instance, when the fate of the Catholic Church is seriously in jeopardy, the Holy See concentrates all its energy on reaching agreement with secular powers. This is the case of the church in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. There, the totalitarian aspect of the regimes results in a very narrow margin of maneuverability for papal diplomacy. In order to overcome this obstacle, the Holy See has tried to open a dialogue with Soviet bloc governments and integrate its policy towards the East in its global call for peace and respect for human rights.

Another major strand emerges when the fate of the Church is not in jeopardy. For example, in Latin America, the Catholic Church, with

the approval of the Holy See attempts to foster justice and to oppose arbitrary policies. The Latin American Church has become a laboratory for all kinds of experiments both in the religious and political realms. The Holy See in this case acts to strengthen the transnational ties of Catholic hierarchies in order to be well-prepared to confront the challenges coming from within the church and from the ideologically oriented groups that predominate in contemporary Latin American politics.

The third strand of Holy See diplomacy that emerges in reaction to these threats is found in cases of civil wars or ideological conflicts. The Holy See attempts to encourage negotiations and does act as a mediator between warring groups, often using the transnational network of the Church to provide relief and aid. The Papacy in contemporary conflicts has also adopted to oppose attempts at secession and partitions of sovereign nation-states.

The history of the Catholic Church is rich in events and happenings that would require a separate study. The intent in the following paragraphs is to illustrate major milestones in Church history that led it to the contemporary era.

The power of the Church through the ages was based on the territorial possessions that the Papacy had in Italy and the prestige of Catholicism that led temporal rulers to seek a religious stamp of approval to their authority. The peak in the Church's power was reached under Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) when the pontiff's dictates had an impact on both temporal and spiritual matters. The spiritual foundation of Christianity served as a strong instrument to legitimize

temporal rulers such as Constantine and Charlemagne.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1600s the Church began to experience an erosion of its power and influence. The decline in the prestige of the Papacy became pronounced when temporal rulers actually refused to obey papal orders. European monarchs claimed for themselves the authority to rule on both temporal and spiritual matters. The Church, while offering the skills of its clergymen as intellectuals and bureaucrats, had to subordinate its power to the whims of absolute rulers, e.g., Henry VIII and Louis XIV. Furthermore, the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) was another major source in the decline of papal diplomacy. In fact, the Treaty was a recognition in interstate relations of the full sovereignty of secular, juridical orders which could take completely autonomous actions in international relations.

Other historical events occurred that forced the Papacy to reshape the role it played in secular matters. Among these events, the most relevant were the consolidation of Protestantism in the XVIIth century, the rise of the Age of Enlightenment with its stress on rationalist humanism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, and, last but not least, the wave of anti-clericalism that swept Western Europe and Latin America at the end of the Nineteenth century. The last vestiges of the Church's temporal power and influence were whittled away when the Kingdom of Italy annexed the Papal States in 1870. The Papacy's response was one of retreat from all secular affairs. Popes went into seclusion, and for all practical purposes were unavailable to world leaders.<sup>4</sup>

In 1929, the Lateran Treaty recognized the juridical status of the Holy See as a sovereign spiritual entity with Vatican City State as its territorial base. This Treaty considerably reduced the temporal power of the Church in world politics. The 1984 updated version of the Concordat with Italy further limited the influence that the Holy See had in Italian internal temporal and religious affairs. For example, religious education is no longer required in Italian public schools.<sup>5</sup>

Following the loss of its territories, the Holy See opted to foster a policy based on the development of spiritual needs, the consolidation of world peace and support to ecumenical and inter-faith relations.<sup>6</sup> The basic objective of the Papacy then became one of ensuring the survival and welfare of Catholic communities worldwide. Because of this policy with its stated goals, the Holy See has consistently had to strike a balance between the Church's religious mission and the impact of societal changes on human needs.

Furthermore, the Papacy had to address the issues stemming from the shift in world power from Western Europe to the United States and the Soviet Union. It also had to revise and adapt its structures and message to accommodate the newly independent states of the post-colonial era.

In 1962, Pope John XXIII made an important historical decision—he called the Second Ecumenical Council—a decision which changed the course of the Catholic Church and gave a new definition to the Holy See's role in international affairs. Papal diplomacy was given a major impetus by the encyclicals issued by Pope John XXIII (Mater et

Magistra 1961, Pacem in Terris 1963) and Pope Paul VI (Populorum Progressio 1967). These encyclicals made concrete the principles of the Holy See's new role in world affairs.

In his encyclical on the "Development of Peoples," Paul VI emphasized that the Catholic Church could not, in light of the inequities stemming from economic and social development, remain aloof. The improvement of the well-being of millions of human beings was not enough. Such efforts must be accompanied by a struggle for peace through justice (Opus Justitiae Pax):

When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man's spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefitting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day towards the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God with a more perfect form of justice among men.<sup>7</sup>

The Holy See became more involved in international efforts to promote peaceful relations among nations and improve the lot of developing countries. Peace with justice and the total respect for human rights have become the leitmotiv for papal diplomacy since Vatican II.<sup>8</sup> A case in point is found in the Holy See's role and attitude towards the Soviet bloc.

#### The Holy See and the Soviet Bloc

In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the totalitarian aspect of the regimes constitutes a threat to the very existence of the Church itself. Since their inception, Communist governments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have actively pursued a policy intended to liberate all men from all kinds of religious "alienation." The steps

followed by Marxist-Leninist regimes against the Church included the expropriation of its property, the scattering of monasteries and religious orders, and the forcing of some Uniate Churches (i.e., in the Ukraine) to disband and integrate with the Orthodox Church.<sup>9</sup>

An indication of the Holy See's interest in the USSR and Eastern Europe is given by the large number of Catholics living there and the fact that Catholicism is an integral part of the national heritage of important minorities such as the Croats in Yugoslavia, the Lithuanians and Ukrainians in the Soviet Union and the Slovaks in Czechoslovakia. In 1979, Catholics constituted 90% of the population in Poland, 80% in Lithuania, 78% in Hungary, 68% in Czechoslovakia, and 35% in Yugoslavia.<sup>10</sup> Before Vatican II, the countries of the Eastern bloc had severed all their diplomatic ties with the Holy See and created state-controlled religious leaderships and priest movements.

The Holy See could not stand by idly in the face of an ideology which advocated values and beliefs that directly contradicted basic Christian teachings. The Holy See countered these moves by following a policy of confrontation and condemnation. On March 19, 1937, Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical, Divini Redemptoris, in which he rejected Communism as "a pseudo-ideal of justice, equality and fraternity."<sup>11</sup> In 1949, Pius XII decreed excommunication for all those who supported Communism.

With the advent of Pope John XXIII a new era began for Holy See-Soviet bloc relations. In his famous encyclical Pacem in Terris, the pontiff made a distinction between false philosophical theories and



the practice based on them. John XXIII denounced Communism as an ideology but not those who had chosen to adopt it. In his encyclical, the pontiff wrote that "a man who has fallen into error does not cease to be a man. He never forfeits his personal dignity; and that is something that must always be taken into account."<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the Pope said:

Again it is perfectly legitimate to make a clear distinction between a false philosophy of the nature, origin and purpose of men and the world, and economic, social, cultural, and political undertakings, even when such undertakings draw their origin and inspiration from that philosophy. True, the philosophic formula does not change once it has been set down in precise terms, but the undertakings clearly cannot avoid being influenced to a certain extent by the changing conditions in which they operate.<sup>13</sup>

Pope John's encyclical was interpreted as a cautious beginning for further contacts between the Holy See and the Soviet Union. The first steps towards a rapprochement occurred when the Holy See understood that Eastern European Marxist regimes were there to stay for the time being and that an accommodation, mainly with Moscow, was overdue. Since then, a series of agreements with communist countries have been negotiated. Two countries, Cuba and Yugoslavia, have established official diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

At the heart of the Papacy's concern lies the fate of Catholic communities in Eastern Europe and the USSR. In fact, one of the main objectives of the Holy See's Ostpolitik was to maintain a link with Eastern European Catholics and to avoid the possibility that clandestine churches would begin to emerge. According to Rome, this situation would slowly lead to the fragmentation of the Catholic community into sects outside any control, and the subsequent demise of the church.

The Holy See's Secretary of State, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli,  
was the architect of the Papacy's eastern policy.<sup>14</sup> In the aftermath  
of Vatican II and the policy promoted by John XXIII and Paul VI,  
Casaroli believed that a dialogue based on mutual respect could be  
initiated with the countries of the Soviet bloc. The Holy See's chief  
diplomat had four objectives when he initiated his negotiations with  
the communist regimes: (1) the appointment of bishops with Holy See  
approval, (2) the freedom of worship, (3) the establishment of semi-  
naries to educate priests under episcopal supervision, and (4) the  
state's recognition of parental rights to give children a Christian  
education.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Cardinal Casaroli saw a link between the en-  
hancement of détente in East-West relations and securing the rights  
of the Church.

As a universal institution, the Holy See could not foreclose  
the possibility of a dialogue with Marxist-inspired regimes. Cardinal  
Casaroli thought that the defence of the cause of peace was of para-  
mount importance to the Church. In fact, the consolidation of peace

constitutes a grave moral duty for Christian consciousness.  
The dialogue, as far as the Holy See is concerned, knows no  
limit except that which is imposed by the persistent refusal  
of others. . . . Only those who are unaware of the extreme  
gravity of this moral imperative would be surprised--or pre-  
tend to be scandalized--by the Holy See's offer of collabora-  
tion, and by its search for dialogue with all those responsible  
for the destiny of their people, most especially with those  
leaders who carry the burden of deciding issues of war and  
peace.<sup>16</sup>

As a concrete step towards its goal, the Holy See decided to support  
diplomatic initiatives such as the signing of the Nuclear Nonprolifera-  
tion Treaty (February 25, 1971), and the Conference on Security and

Cooperation in Europe where the Holy See attended as an observer (Helsinki, 1973-1975).

The Holy See's objective in normalizing its relations with the Soviet bloc provoked much criticism. Several Catholic leaders in East and Western Europe deplored the participation of the Holy See in international peace conferences together with communist representatives.

✓ Their argument was that the Church with its presence at these meetings served to consolidate the Soviet bloc regimes and to encourage the persecution of Christians in the Marxist-dominated states and the secrecy surrounding diplomatic negotiations. Finally, the Holy See's Ostpolitik has been criticized for overlooking the views of local bishops while searching for compromises with communist governments.<sup>17</sup>

To all these objections directed against his policy, Cardinal Casaroli replied:

It would not be wise to reject what is possible today, provided that this is no hindrance to the final goal. . . . The policy of "all or nothing," or "now or never," cannot be morally defended even in emergencies. . . . In the short run, no comprehensive results may be reached, but dialogue complies with what seems to be the course of history--determined for Christians by Providence. . . . The action (Eastern policy) is designed for the long run, and there is no alternative to it.<sup>18</sup>

This statement by the Secretary of State summarizes the policy that the Holy See has decided to follow towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Casaroli's Ostpolitik had both positive and negative results depending on the governments' willingness to negotiate. For example, in Czechoslovakia, the Holy See could hardly obtain any concession regarding the appointment of bishops and other matters related to the church. On the other hand, in Yugoslavia and Hungary, the Holy See

succeeded in guaranteeing the welfare and survival of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, the diplomacy of the Holy See towards the Soviet bloc was dramatized by the election of a Slavic Pope who had personal experience and intimate knowledge of the working of communist regimes. For instance, John Paul II's visits to Poland were clear messages to the Polish authorities and their allies in Moscow that the Holy See and the Catholic Church constituted a force with which these powers must contend.

In summary, the Holy See's behavior in the countries of the Soviet bloc is primarily determined by its responsibility to protect the welfare of Catholics at all costs. The attitude of the Papacy towards Communism evolved from one of total condemnation to one that seeks a pragmatic dialogue with totalitarian regimes. The dialogue fostered by the Holy See is not without risk. Cardinal Casaroli stated that "of course Communism was a much easier problem for the Holy See when there was no dialogue. It was simple for the church to condemn and protest. The problem emerges only now that there are some elements of dialogue and negotiation."<sup>19</sup>

The Holy See's acknowledgment of the Soviet Union's grip on its own citizens and those of its satellites was dramatized by the election of the first Polish Pope in the history of the Church. The activism of John Paul II in favor of his country together with the Holy See's readiness for dialogue constitute the apparently contradictory aspects of papal diplomacy. If the Holy See is willing to concede to the national interests of Marxist regimes, it nevertheless must continue to maintain

✓ its distance and self-respect as far as its basic principles are concerned.

Finally, there is the question that, for the Holy See, it is easier to deal with countries which have drawn a clear distinction between faith and politics than with those totalitarian systems where there exist "an inseparable unity between ideology and state power."<sup>20</sup>

Where there is no separation between church and state as in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the transnational network of the Church becomes blocked. The Holy See must rely on its prestige to have access and obtain concessions from totalitarian governments.

The situation is totally different in Latin America. There the strength of Catholicism and the separation that exists officially between temporal and spiritual matters render the task of the Papacy easier and the reliance on the transnational network of the Church more significant.

#### The Holy See and Latin America

✓ The Church in Latin America accounts for approximately half of the worldwide Catholic population. Consequently, the Holy See is extremely concerned about the fate of the church in this area.

The major issues that confront the Latin American Church are two: social inequality and the violation of human rights. The key actors are the Latin American bishops, and militant priests and lay groups inspired by liberation theology, the members of the Catholic grassroot communities, and the governments of the leftist and rightist regimes.

The Latin American Church can be considered as a microcosm of the challenges facing papal diplomacy in the contemporary world.

Peter Nichols, a respected Vatican observer, asserted that the Latin American Church is important for three reasons:

About one-half of Catholicism is already to be found in Latin America, and the population is increasing very quickly. Politically, Latin America gives a deeply worrying indication of what the rest of the world would be like if it were to lose its ballast of political wisdom and moderation. . . . A third reason why this region is so vital is that the Catholic Church there has made a remarkable attempt at renewing itself, including the rare step of publicly apologizing for its past mistakes.<sup>21</sup>

1400s  
Since its inception in the XVth century, the Catholic Church in Latin America identified with the Spanish conquistadors, ignoring the cultures and traditions of native populations. The alliance of the Church with the colonizers and, later on, with local oligarchies alienated the majority of Latin Americans from their religious leaders.

1800  
During the colonial era, Holy See diplomacy was limited by a system of "royal patronage" whereby the Spanish sovereigns had the right to appoint bishops and interfere in church affairs.<sup>22</sup> After independence in the early nineteenth century, the newly established Latin American republics decided to pursue the old patronage system in their relations with the Church and obtain the recognition of their independence by the Holy See.

Two major consequences ensued from this new development in Latin American history: First, internal tensions erupted in the Latin American countries between Liberals and Conservatives regarding the question of relations between church and state. When the Liberals predominated, they usually opted to keep their country's post at the

Holy See vacant. Second, Vatican authorities had to contend with a split that occurred inside the clergy between those favoring independence from Spain and those opposing it. Moreover, Rome was not particularly effective when Latin American Liberals expropriated church property and imposed secularization as a result of the wave of anti-clericalism pervasive on the Continent.

By 1870, diplomatic relations between the Holy See and most of the Latin American countries were re-established, except for Mexico which, throughout its recent history, has systematically imposed a strict and intransigent secular policy.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the influence that the Catholic Church has in Mexican society is still very strong. Apostolic Nuncios have been and still are important elements in papal diplomacy in Latin America. Their role has varied depending on the personality of the Holy See's representative and on both the religious and political attitudes of the local hierarchy. A case in point is that of the Papal Nuncio in Cuba, who, following the Castro Revolution (1959), opted to stay in Havana, thus allowing the Holy See to maintain diplomatic relations with the Cuban regime.<sup>24</sup>

In Latin America, papal diplomacy has been subordinated to the transnational network of the Church both in the Continent and outside. Nevertheless, in cases of serious challenges, the Holy See will side with the local Catholic hierarchy. In addition, where there exists a split within the Catholic community regarding a relevant issue, the Holy See becomes reluctant to intervene. Such is the case in the ongoing El Salvadoran civil war. According to Margaret Crahan, a respected observer of the role of the Church in Latin America, "mediation

by the Vatican is even more unlikely" in light of the controversial role played by the Archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Arnulfo Rivera Y

Damas.<sup>25</sup> "The Bishop has been criticized by both the right and left among the Salvadoran clergy and religious for not having fully supported their respective interpretations of the conflict in El Salvador."<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to its stand in the conflict in El Salvador, the Holy See has decided to act as a mediator in the territorial dispute opposing Chile and Argentina and has succeeded in narrowing the disparate views of the two governments.

It was not until the 1950s that a large network, linking Rome with the Latin American communities, was firmly established. Among the vast array of institutions that were and are operating in Latin America, the most prominent is the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), which unites all the bishops and cardinals working on the continent. CELAM, which is an effective instrument for Holy See influence, was founded in Rio de Janeiro (1955). Since then, the Conference has held two important meetings in Medellin (Colombia) in 1968 and Puebla (Mexico) in 1979. These two encounters, which were attended by Pope Paul VI and John Paul II, respectively, reflected the changes that occurred both in the Church and Latin American societies. Concurrent with the establishment of these Catholic institutions in Latin America was the formation of an organization in Rome whose task was to deal with Latin American affairs: The Pontifical Commission for Latin America was created in 1958 to supervise the activities of European and North American Catholic efforts for aid and relief.



In the 1950s and 1960s, most of the regimes in Latin America followed populist or liberal policies. Peron in Argentina was an example of the populist policy and the Christian Democratic Party in Chile championed the liberal approach. By the end of the Sixties, the growth of an urban-based working class, population shifts, and the failure of import-substitution policies led to internal instability in several countries of the subcontinent and gave way to military dictatorships. Moreover, the increasing dependence of Latin American economies on United States-based multinationals, encouraged the formulation of revolutionary ideas which found a fertile ground among leftist groups.<sup>27</sup> All these changes had a deep impact on Holy See policy.

The Holy See does not have a dominant role in the day-to-day affairs of the Latin American Church. In fact, following Vatican II, major autonomy was given to Latin American bishops regarding the policy to adopt towards the challenges--both temporal and spiritual--they had to cope with. The Church itself reflected the ideological polarization in Latin America between Left, Right, and Center.

From the leftist side of the Catholic spectrum, Father Camilo Torres, a Colombian priest, who was influenced by Marxist ideas, believed that "the revolutionary struggle is a priestly and Christian struggle."<sup>28</sup> For Torres and his followers, religion and politics are intimately entwined to achieve a concrete application of Christian teachings. In 1966, Torres was killed in a guerrilla action in which he was involved, and became the symbol of a new strand in Latin American Catholicism. This perspective was known as "liberation theology." The followers of this theology held that the Church should not act as

a passive institution but should strive actively to liberate human beings from all kinds of bondages, such as ignorance, poverty, and repression.<sup>29</sup> Liberation theology attempts to respond to the given historical circumstances of a country or a region, in this case Latin America. Furthermore, there are "several" liberation theologies or liberation theologies done in different settings and therefore with different political answers to the issues faced.

Liberation theology was a Latin American answer to the changes that occurred in the Church following Vatican II. In fact, the Second Ecumenical Council

established two radically new principles: that the Church is of and with this world . . . and that it is a community of equals, whether they be laity, priests or bishops, each with some gift to contribute and responsibility to share.<sup>30</sup>

But for the champions of liberation theology, the Catholic Church did not go far enough in its opposition to poverty and repression in Latin America. The Holy See expressed its discontent with and disapproval of the leftist Catholic and Marxist groups' approach to the Church's true pastoral mission. During his trip to Mexico in February 1979, Pope John Paul II stated that "the conception of Christ as a politician, a revolutionary, the subversive agitator of Nazareth, is not in accordance with the teaching of the church. . . . Liberation, in the mission of the church, cannot be reduced to a pure and simple economic, political, social or cultural dimension. . . . The church wishes to remain free vis-à-vis opposing systems so as to opt only for man."<sup>31</sup>

In March 1983, during John Paul II's visit to Central America, the papal stand clashed with that adopted by clergy and laity in Nicaragua. In fact, following the overthrow of the Somoza regime in 1979, the

Sandinista movement favored the creation of a "parallel church" based on a Marxist interpretation of the Gospel.<sup>32</sup>

From 1972 onward, the Holy See supported the efforts of the then-Secretary General of CELAM, Monsignor Lopez Trujillo. Trujillo, together with other bishops and laity in Latin America, developed a three-pronged strategy to counter the effects of liberation theology. The first aspect of the strategy was mostly of an intellectual nature concretized by the publication of journals and articles which warned of the contagious nature of liberation theology. The second aspect was to mobilize the Latin American Church so that it would be prepared to confront the dangers of liberation theology and isolate its advocates in the framework of the conference of Latin American bishops (CELAM). The third aspect of the strategy was to back local bishops with material and consultant support in the education of religious personnel, the setting up of study groups, and the strengthening of lay movements.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, as a reaction to liberation theology, Catholic right-wing groups emerged, defending the traditional values of religious practice (Latin mass, etc.) and the sacrosanct importance of private property. The most prominent among these groups were the Societies for the Defence of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP).<sup>34</sup>

The military joined in the fray with their "national security" doctrine, the purpose of which was to defend Christian values against communist subversion. In response, the Catholic Church expressed its strong opposition to the "national security" doctrine on the grounds that

this doctrine leads regime to rule by force to incur the characteristics and practices of the communist regimes--the abuse of power by the state, arbitrary imprisonment, torture and suppression of freedom of thought.<sup>35</sup>

As a consequence of its stand towards authoritarian regimes, the Latin American Catholic Church decided to follow a policy of defending pluralism and fostering consensus. This decision placed the Latin American Church in the middle of the conflicting ideological claims from the right and the left. Latin American bishops gave concrete expression to their views in their third meeting held at Puebla (Mexico, 1979). The Puebla Documents dealt with the problems of injustice, inequality, dependence, violence and repression. While recognizing the pernicious effects of both capitalism and socialism, the bishops "served notice that, while the episcopacy was critical of inequities resulting from capitalist development, it was not supporting socialism."<sup>36</sup>

Another aspect of the Latin American Church's reaction to criticism from the left, i.e., that the church does not actively help the poor, was the emergence of Basic Christian Communities. These were groups of people, mostly from the poor section of the population, who met together to discuss their daily living problems in light of the Gospel.<sup>37</sup> These grassroot communities constitute both an opportunity and a challenge to Latin American Catholicism. The opportunity resides in the fact that they are the clearest example yet of the Church's commitment to those on the margins of society. The challenge comes from the fact that if these communities are not closely controlled by the hierarchy, they could become the nucleus of sects independent from any control.

The Church in Latin America has also to contend with the challenge from the right which was articulated by the authoritarian regimes, in Brazil, Chile, and other countries of the subcontinent. This challenge prodded the Church to take a more active stand in defense of human rights.

According to one expert on the Church in Latin America, Catholic opposition was

facilitated by the growing network of communication and exchange of religious and lay personnel across national borders, which makes churches one of the few effective private transnational actors in the region capable of counteracting the international reach of the military.<sup>38</sup>

In fact, the harshness of the repressive policies followed by the military juntas strained the relationship between church and state and pushed some bishops together with other religious groups (Protestants and Jews) to adopt a more outspoken position. Moreover, the policies followed by Latin American dictators awakened Church leaders to the violation of human rights that were occurring pervasively. However, the Church's impact on affecting the repressive nature of the military's policies has been minimal.

In summary, the Catholic Church in Latin America has attempted to adapt its institutions to the realities of Latin American societies and politics. The Holy See has decided to give more autonomy to the local hierarchies and to follow a path which calls for moderation and consensus. The two fundamental challenges facing Catholicism in Latin America emanate from the "national security" doctrine advocated by the military and from liberation theology which is the answer that some Western-inspired clergymen have found for the social inequities

pervasive in Latin America. These two "doctrines" are similar in their sympathy with totalitarian ideologies. Both the national security doctrine and liberation theology serve to reduce the separation between the temporal and the spiritual and attempt to confine the individual in an ideological straightjacket. Finally, these two phenomena are the clearest expression of the malaise--socioeconomic, religious, and political--which has characterized developing Latin American societies in the last two decades.

In spite of the totalitarian aspects of the policies implemented by the dictatorships, military rulers in Latin America are aware of the power that the Church can muster either for or against them. Additionally, as far as liberation theology is concerned, the Holy See might attempt through conservative and moderate prelates on the continent to neutralize its success. When tensions ease and if there are changes towards democracy, the Church may well play the role of consensus-builder between government and opposition.

There are both parallels and differences in the Church's and the Holy See's stance in Latin America and the Soviet bloc. The Church, especially in Poland, is the last fortress for believers. In Poland and Eastern Europe in general, it is a refuge for citizens against the atheist onslaught and the arbitrary decisions of the Communist Party. In Latin America, the Church is the last institutional recourse for those opposing the authoritarian rule of military juntas.

The fundamental difference lies in the fact that in Latin America, the Holy See and the Church enjoy a greater level of autonomy with respect to decisions and practise. Secular authorities have recognized

the boundaries of Church activities, intervening when their popular base is weakened. Moreover, while the Church in Latin America has more room to maneuver given its solid institutional presence, in the Soviet bloc the Holy See must rely on its international prestige as well as on the goodwill of communist governments in order to obtain concessions. The low level of resources and the high level of threats render the Holy See's diplomatic skills more relevant and more critical. Finally, Catholics in Latin America have the luxury of experimenting with several ideologies and concepts while, in the Soviet bloc, the predominant concern is one of survival. In this case, the Holy See tries to build consensus between the Catholic hierarchies and the communist governments, whenever a reasonable basis for consensus can be found.

Another strand in the tapestry of papal diplomacy is found in the Holy See's behavior in cases of ideological or ethno-religious conflicts. The assessment of the main elements of this strand is presented in the following analysis of the civil war in Biafra and the Vietnam War.

#### The Holy See and the Civil War in Biafra

The civil war that erupted in Biafra (Nigeria) in 1967 opposed the Hausa-Fulani in the Northwest to the Ibos in the Southeastern part of the country. On May 30, 1967, the Ibos in Biafra proclaimed their secession from the federal government and their action was backed by some African states. A conflict broke out between these two ethnic groups leading to bloody massacres of genocidal proportions, mostly against the Ibos.

The Holy See opted to secure food and medicine for the Biafrans and issued public statements calling on the parties to stop the bloodshed. Such a response was not forceful enough and surprised some church observers. They felt that the Pope's stand should have been stronger and should have emphasized the urgency of the crisis.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the pastoral constitution of Vatican II (Gaudium et Spes) defined as "horrendous crimes" the "methodical extermination of an entire people, nation, or ethnic minority."<sup>40</sup>

The issues confronting Pope Paul VI were: (1) Catholics were in the minority, i.e., of the fourteen million Biafrans almost three millions are Catholics; (2) the Nigerian government might interpret any pontifical action as supporting the rebels; and (3) the Christian-Islamic dialogue would be put in jeopardy in view of the fact that the large majority of Nigerians were Muslims.

However, the Pope did dispatch a mission to investigate the possibilities of Vatican relief for war victims. The pontiff's humanitarian concerns did provoke criticisms from the federal government and the Holy See was accused of siding with the Biafran rebels. Given the tension that existed between the Holy See and Nigeria, local bishops had to take upon themselves the task of defending the "noble efforts of the Holy Father to establish peace."<sup>41</sup>

The Holy See, through its representatives, stressed the ethnic character of the war and played down any Muslim responsibilities in the onslaught.<sup>42</sup> In August 1969, Paul VI decided to visit the African continent. For political and logistical reasons the pontiff decided to avoid Nigeria and landed instead in Kampala (Uganda). There Paul VI



met with Nigerian and Biafran delegations. These meetings did not produce any concrete results as far as the outcome of the war was concerned.

To place the Pope's action into its proper perspective, it should be noted that the plight of the Catholic Church in Africa was of fundamental importance to the Holy See for three major reasons: religious, ideological, and territorial. Since they have gained independence, African countries have tried to free themselves from the remnants of European colonialism. African Catholics had a similar response and tried to adapt their church to local ethnic and religious traditions. Furthermore, beginning in the 1960s, Marxist ideas were spreading throughout African societies and constituted another major challenge to Catholicism. Finally, given the precarious nature of African states' geographical borders, the Holy See has always emphasized its opposition to micro-nationalistic threats that would lead to the total reshaping of the geographical borders in Africa.

In summary, what emerged from the Holy See's role in the Nigerian civil war was that the Papacy, given its reluctance to take sides and its fear of backing secessionist groups, opted for humanitarian aid and reconciliation. However, in Nigeria's case the Holy See's humanitarian objective faltered due to the suspicions and accusations of the federal authorities. The interfaith nature of papal policy was another obstacle to Holy See diplomacy. In fact, humanitarian concerns were overshadowed by political and religious factors. Paul VI did not want to look as if he were backing Catholic Biafrans against Muslim Haussas.

## The Holy See and the Vietnam War

Another major conflict in which the Holy See attempted to mediate was the Vietnam War. The conflict that raged in Indochina for more than thirty years was of great importance to the Holy See. The fate of the Catholic community in the Northern and Southern parts of Indochina and the heavy ideological content of the war were the two primary factors which led the Papacy to adopt the posture of an impartial activist.

Catholics in Vietnam suffered from the polarization that existed between the communist-led government in the North and the French/US backed government in the South. For example, in November 1951, North Vietnamese bishops issued a pastoral letter condemning Communism and all those who collaborated with the Vietminh. This action led to an exodus of Catholics and their hierarchy from North Vietnam. The exodus did not become massive until the partition of Vietnam in 1954-55. Moreover, the government of Ho Chi Minh adopted a policy towards clergymen and church property similar to that adopted in the Soviet bloc. Also, Catholic schools and parishes were being bombarded by United States' planes and Catholics were being massacred by the Vietcong.

In South Vietnam, the Catholic Church did not have such severe problems, especially at the beginning of the war. Problems for South Vietnamese Catholics erupted when clashes occurred between Buddhists and Catholics in 1963. This confrontation was mainly political in nature given that the Buddhists were protesting martial law proclaimed by President Ngo Dinh Diem, himself a Catholic. The Church attempted

to improve relations between Catholics and Buddhists. According to the Vatican daily L'Osservatore Romano, the clashes in South Vietnam were a communist provocation designed to increase tensions and "multiplying ambushes and traps" between Catholics and Buddhists.<sup>44</sup>

The conciliatory moves adopted by the bishops was consonant with basic papal diplomacy, namely the fostering of consensus and pluralism. As the Vietcong became stronger in the South, the Vietnamese Catholics softened their staunch anti-communist stand and adopted a more moderate tone. By 1966, Vietnamese bishops were denouncing the corruption that characterized the regime of South Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Van Thieu.<sup>45</sup>

At this point, the Pope himself decided to become involved. In September 1966, Paul VI dispatched Monsignor Pignedoli to the extraordinary assembly of Vietnamese bishops. The papal envoy in addressing the episcopal gathering said: "We represent here the two Vietnams and all Catholics are united in us in prayer to ask God for peace in Vietnam."<sup>46</sup> This statement is characteristic of papal diplomacy which consistently advocates reconciliation and peace. Throughout the war, the Pope continued to express his concern about the welfare of Vietnamese Catholics and increased his appeals for a peaceful resolution of the war in Vietnam. After the collapse of the Saigon government (April 30, 1975) and the anti-Catholic decisions implemented by the Provisional Revolutionary Government, Pope Paul VI issued a statement expressing his constant preoccupation with the Christian community in Vietnam whose "religious and civil rights" were under great threats.<sup>47</sup>

At the diplomatic level, Paul VI used the Holy See's confi-

dential diplomatic channels to encourage negotiations between the United States and the Vietcong. The pontiff, while stressing his impartial attitude, welcomed several United States and Vietnamese officials: President Johnson in 1967; President Nixon in 1969 and 1970; South Vietnamese Premier Thieu in 1973; and Mr. Xuan Thuy, head of the North Vietnamese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in February 1973.

The involvement of the Holy See in the Vietnam War could not but provoke debate and criticism. For example, following the visit of Thieu, the Holy See was accused of favoring a dictatorial regime in South Vietnam. Commenting on the pontiff's action, Father Dupuy wrote: "Why should the Pope refuse to welcome Van Thieu when he had already accepted to meet with North Vietnamese leader Xuan Thy?"<sup>48</sup> The same kind of polemic occurred following the visit of President Johnson to the Holy See in 1967. Then, several United States publications speculated that Paul VI and the American leader had divergent point of views regarding American bombardments against North Vietnam.<sup>49</sup>

In conclusion, the role of the Holy See in Vietnam was dictated by its concern for the fate of Catholic communities and by the desire of Paul VI to illustrate the Papacy's posture of impartiality. The Vietnamese war was the first major conflict which provided an opportunity for the Holy See to put into practice the teachings of the Second Ecumenical Council. Diplomatically, the Pope succeeded in making his views known to all the parties involved in the war and he acted as a facilitator in the talks that led to the Paris peace talks in 1973. At the religious level, the Catholic Church paid a heavy

price because of inter-Catholic bickering, Catholic-Buddhist feuds, and because of the communist victory in Vietnam.

### Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to put the role of the Holy See in perspective in order to understand its involvement in the Levant.

A brief historical background depicting the loss of temporal influence by the Holy See and its emergence as a spiritual and moral guide in world affairs was given.

Four case studies were selected to illustrate the Holy See's behavior. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where the Holy See's choice is constrained by the totalitarian aspects of the regimes, its fundamental concern is to save the Catholic communities. Cardinal Casaroli has advocated a pragmatic approach to the Holy See's dealings with the Soviet Union in the framework of the Papacy's preoccupation with the defence of peace and the respect for human rights. As long as détente was working and as long as dialogue with the Communist bloc was possible, the Holy See could insure that its right would be respected. The election of Pope John Paul II brought home to Catholics the realities of the Soviet bloc. The pontiff was and is perceived as a beacon of hope for his own people in Poland and the other Catholic communities in Eastern Europe. He also represents a threat to Marxist-inspired regimes.

In Latin America, the Holy See adopted a pragmatic approach by electing to strengthen the transnational network of the Church. Rome allowed ample discretion, on the part of the bishops, to protect Church interests and to save Christian teachings from Marxist and totalitarian

threats. In this context, it is interesting to mention that the Holy See and the Church are continually confronted by both left-wing and right-wing radical groups, either in power (i.e., the military in Chile, Paraguay) or vying for power (i.e., the various leftist groups operating on the continent). This ideological polarization reflected on the Catholics themselves, resulting in fragmentation and dissent. For example, not all the bishops have been against the authoritarian regimes or against liberation theology. Furthermore, the Church in Latin America has been faced with the problem of the dwindling number of priests (who, until now, came from Europe and the United States) and with the success of Basic Christian Communities which, in turn, could become too independent of the hierarchy.

As an institution zealous for the preservation of its moral principles, the Holy See has encouraged the fostering of consensus in Latin America between the various ideas and interests. The Church has wished not to take sides and has preferred to defend the cause of Latin Americans and their dignity above all other concerns.

In the civil war in Biafra, the Holy See opted to use its good offices between the warring groups and to send aid and relief, a decision which led the Nigerian federal government to express its displeasure. It looked as if the Holy See had decided to become involved because some Biafrans were Catholics. Moreover, the Holy See was very careful to emphasize the ethnic characteristic of the war and to play down the religious element. Given that the survival of Catholics is always of paramount importance to the Holy See, the Pope has to accommodate the sensitivities of Nigeria's Muslim majority.

In the Vietnam War, the Holy See succeeded in acting as a go-between while paying a heavy price for the tragic plight of those Catholics who had to flee from North Vietnam. Discrete and efficient diplomacy exercised by the Holy See led to the peace talks in Paris. Notwithstanding this papal activism, the Catholic Church in Vietnam was effectively muzzled and human rights were violated in the name of ideological imperatives.

Some conclusions are warranted here in the light of the preceding analysis. First, when the Holy See is dealing with states that have separated the temporal from the spiritual, its diplomacy is rendered easier. This is due to the fact that political pressures can be handled by local hierarchies while Rome plays the role of a watchful and strong backer. Second, in states where there is a totalitarian view of society, the local Catholic Church is left helpless and has to rely on the active but cautious involvement of the Holy See. It is a sign of shrewdness that papal diplomacy adopted a strategy that highlights world peace and dialogue and keeps open the door to all kinds of regimes. This demonstrates the strength of Casaroli's Ostpolitik and gives to the Holy See the unique role of acting as a mediator between East and West. Such a role is in a way forced on the Church by the fate of Catholic communities in communist countries. If the challenge in Latin America comes from both the right and the left of the political spectrum, the challenge in Eastern Europe comes from an ideology that is in total opposition to religion. Such a situation is easier to handle, given the clearcut nature of the opponent but more difficult to accept in light of the repressive nature of Marxist gov-

ernments' policies. In Latin America, the ideological kaleidoscope is in some ways more threatening but is also a source of continuous renewal and revision in the Catholic Church's attitude towards issues that are crucial in contemporary societies: development, unequal distribution of wealth, dependence, violation of human rights, and the use of violence.

In comparing the role of the Holy See in the Middle East with the four cases selected in this chapter, one fundamental point emerges.

There are deep differences between the Holy See's Middle Eastern policies and the situation in Latin America and the Soviet bloc and some similarities with the Nigerian civil war and the Vietnamese conflict.

In the Middle East, religion and politics are so entwined with nationalistic feelings so as to make the resolution of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis almost impossible. This is particularly so, given that in the Near East there are three religious groups-- Jews, Christians, and Muslims--which are vying for power and survival sometimes at the expense of the others. In this context the Holy See adopted to stress its ecumenical and interfaith concerns together with its preoccupation with the fate of Catholics.

In Latin America, the question of national identity was settled in the past century and the pressing problem today is one of social inequities along with the modalities of economic development. Liberation theology and national security doctrine are attempts at an answer. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union too, except for some important minorities, the question is fundamentally the absence of freedom and



the fact that East Europeans are hostages to the rigid and totalitarian policies of the Soviet government.

The uniqueness of the Middle East lies in the fact that it is still at the stage of defining itself, especially in the case of non-Muslim minorities and in the clash between the claims of two peoples--the Palestinians and the Israelis--towards Palestine. Furthermore, the stakes for the Holy See are, in a certain sense, higher because the Holy Land has a special claim on the attention of the Papacy.

In the final analysis it becomes clear that there exist three strands of papal diplomacy. When the fate of the Catholic church is at stake, the Holy See mobilizes all its resources to reach a compromise with secular powers. This was the case in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. There the choice for the Holy See was already clear: save the Catholic communities at all costs. This choice does not preclude the fact that, on the doctrinal level, the Holy See will not relinquish its total disapproval of the atheistic nature of Marxism. Moreover, given the global dimension of the Soviet Union as a super-power, the Holy See has linked the fate of its flock to the fate of world peace.

Another strand of papal policy emerges when the fate of the Church is consolidated and secure as it is in Latin America. The Catholic Church with the approval of the Holy See tends to focus on socioeconomic issues, the fostering of justice, and opposition to arbitrary policies. The Catholic hierarchy, with the support of the Holy See, adopted a policy based on consensus and the defence of democratic values. The Latin American Church is even ready to go further whenever

human rights are so patently violated. But in the final analysis, the choice adopted by the Holy See and the Church is that of a moderating and conciliating force. In some ways, the struggle in Latin America is indicative of how the Church and the Papacy intend to mediate and survive among the clashing views of communism, liberalism, and authoritarian regimes.

The other major strand of papal policy is seen in the fact that in cases of civil wars or ideological conflicts, the Holy See attempts to act impartially and to encourage negotiations and counsel moderation. Variations in this behavior of the Papacy emerge in light of its role in the Biafran civil strife and the Vietnam War. The war in Biafra was mostly an ethnic conflict. It had also religious implications, because of the presence of the large Muslim community in Nigeria. The fact that the Holy See emphasized the ethnic aspect of the war leads to the conclusion that interfaith relations are paramount in papal calculations. Also, there are similarities between the Biafran War and the conflict in Lebanon. The Holy See's concern to preserve a united Lebanon in order to save the Christians emanates from the same principle that prompted the Papacy's opposition to alterations in African territorial borders.

Finally, the Vietnam War was an instance where the Holy See had to balance its concern for peace with its fear for the Catholic communities in Southeast Asia. When the Holy See is confronted with ideological warfare, it opts for the role of arbiter and protector of Catholic interests.

The review of the various strands in papal diplomacy was

presented in a comparative context in order to frame Holy See's involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The following chapters include a more detailed examination of the role of the Holy See. Chapter Three will assess papal diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Chapter Four offers a detailed historical, juridical, and political background related to Jerusalem and the Holy Place and examines the evolution in papal attitude toward the Holy City and its communities. Chapter Five completes the tapestry of papal diplomacy in the Levant, by examining the role of the Papacy in the Lebanese War since 1975.



NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ivan Vallier, "The Roman Catholic Church: A Transnational Actor," in Transnational Relations in World Politics, eds. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 129-52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>3</sup>For an historical background on the Holy See, see Roger Aubert, The Church in a Secularized Society, Vol. V of The Christian Centuries (New York: Paulist Press, 1978); J. Derek Holmes, The Papacy in the Modern World (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Francis X. Murphy, The Papacy Today (New York: Macmillan, 1981); André Dupuy, La Diplomatie du Saint-Siège (Paris: Tequi, 1980); Jacques Mercier, Vingt Siècles d'Histoire du Vatican (Paris: Editions Lavauzelle, 1979); the most comprehensive work to date from the legal point of view is H. E. Cardinale's, The Holy See and the International Order (England: Colin Smythe, Ltd., 1976).

<sup>4</sup>Mercier, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

<sup>5</sup>For further details see, "Il nuovo Concordato fra Italia e Santa Sede," Relazioni Internazionali, 48, No. 9 (3-10 March 1984), 256-58.

<sup>6</sup>Vallier, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>7</sup>Claudia Carlen Ihm, compiler, The Papal Encyclicals 1958-1981 (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing, 1981), pp. 196-97.

<sup>8</sup>For further details on the Holy See's involvement at the United Nations and in the North-South Dialogue, see Philippe Laurent, "L'Eglise et l'Onu à travers les Discours de Paul VI et Jean-Paul II," Politique Etrangère, No. 1 (March 1980), 115-27; and Philippe Laurent, "L'Eglise Catholique et le Dialogue Nord-Sud," Politique Etrangère, No. 4 (Dec. 1981), 863-73.

<sup>9</sup>Regarding the fate of the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe and Holy See diplomacy, see Ernest Milcent, A l'Est du Vatican: La Papauté et les Démocraties Populaires (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1980); John M. Kramer, "The Vatican's Ostpolitik," The Review of Politics, 42 (July 1980), 283-308; also Hansjakob Stehle, Eastern Politics of the Vatican, 1917-1979 (Athens, OH: Ohio Univ. Press, 1981).

<sup>10</sup>C. Alix De Montclos, "Monsignor Casaroli et l'Ostpolitik," Relations Internationales, No. 28 (Winter 1981), p. 428.

<sup>11</sup>Stehle, op. cit., p. 170.

- <sup>12</sup> Ihm, op. cit., p. 125.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Regarding Casaroli's own views on East-West relations and Holy See's relations with the Soviet bloc, see his La Santa Sede Fra Tensioni e Distensione (Turin: Elle Di Ci, Collana "Vita Della Chiesa," No. 22, 1978).
- <sup>15</sup> Milcent, op. cit., pp. 179-80.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 184.
- <sup>17</sup> Dupuy, op. cit., pp. 209-10.
- <sup>18</sup> Quoted in Stehle, op. cit., p. 7.
- <sup>19</sup> Quoted in Peter Nichols, The Pope's Divisions: The Roman Catholic Church Today (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981), p. 286.
- <sup>20</sup> Vallier, op. cit., p. 144.
- <sup>21</sup> Nichols, op. cit., p. 314.
- <sup>22</sup> For an historical background on the Latin American Church, see Renato Poblete, S.J., "The Church in Latin America: A Historical Survey," in Henry A. Landsberger, ed., The Church and Social Change in Latin America (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1970); and F. B. Pike, "Catholicism in Latin America," in Roger Aubert, op. cit., pp. 321-81.
- <sup>23</sup> E. Poulat, "Mosaique Religieuse, Continent Ecclésiastique: l'Amérique Latine," Relations Internationales, No. 28 (Winter 1981), pp. 457-71.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 462-63.
- <sup>25</sup> See Margaret E. Crahan, "International Aspects of the Role of the Catholic Church in Central America," in Central America: International Dimensions of the Crisis, ed. Richard E. Feinberg (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), p. 221.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> On the evolution of the Latin American Church in the Sixties and the Seventies, see Ivan Vallier, Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization in Latin America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970); and Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> Daniel H. Levine, "Religion and Politics, Politics and Religion," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1979), p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> Regarding Christian Marxist groups in Latin America and liberation theology, see Michael Dodson, "The Christian Left in Latin American Politics," in Levine, *ibid.*, pp. 111-34. The best overall statement to date on liberation theology is Gustavo Gutierrez's, A Theology of Liberation, Politics, and Salvation (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973).

<sup>30</sup> Mark G. McGrath, "Church Doctrine in Latin America after the Council," in Landsberger, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Stehle, *op. cit.*, pp. 376-77.

<sup>32</sup> Ronald T. Libby, "Listen to the Bishops," Foreign Policy, No. 52 (Fall 1983), pp. 80-81.

<sup>33</sup> François Houtart, "La peur d'une Contagion Marxiste," Le Monde Diplomatique, No. 363 (June 1984), p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Levine, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Robert Calvo, "The Church and the Doctrine of National Security," in Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>36</sup> Crahan, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>37</sup> See Bruneau's, "Basic Christian Communities in Latin America," in Levine, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-37.

<sup>38</sup> Brian Smith, "Churches and Human Rights in Latin America," in Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

<sup>39</sup> See Jean Chevalier, La Politique du Vatican (Paris: S.G.P.P., 1969), p. 214.

<sup>40</sup> Walter M. Abbott, S.J., Gen. ed., The Documents of Vatican II (Piscataway, NJ: New Century Publishers, 1966), p. 292.

<sup>41</sup> Dupuy, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>42</sup> Chevalier, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>44</sup> Dupuy, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>47</sup>Dupuy, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 93-94.

<sup>49</sup>Chevalier, op. cit., p. 238.



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DRESS TO JEWS AT COLOGNE

# Against racism let us build together the civilization of love

In the afternoon of Friday, 1 May, the Holy Father met the members of the Jewish Central Council at the residence of the Bishop of Cologne, and addressed them as follows:

gentlemen, dear Brothers, I am filled with joy and gratitude for the chance to meet you during my second pastoral visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. This meeting provides me with an opportunity to make special reference to the fact that today there still exist Jewish communities in this country. The Vatican guidelines for the correct depiction of Jews and Judaism in the sermons and catechism of the Catholic Church (1985), which I highly recommend to all Catholics, call to mind Jewish history in the diaspora, a phenomenon which has allowed Israel to bear what often has been heroic testimony out to the entire world of its faithful-

ness to the one God (see VI, 25). As early as antiquity the Jews brought this witness of their faithfulness up to the Rhineland and established a strong and fertile Jewish culture.

2. My dear brothers, you are preserving a valuable historical and spiritual legacy in your communities today, and you continue to develop it. Furthermore, your communities are particularly significant in view of the attempt of the National Socialists in this country to

annihilate the Jews and their culture. The existence of your communities is evidence of the fact that God, who is "the fountain of life" (Ps 36:9), and whom the psalmist praises as "Lord, Father and Master of my life" (Sir 23:1), does not allow the power of death to speak the last word. May the one, benevolent and merciful Father of Life watch over your communities and bless them, especially during the times you are assembled together to hear his holy word.

### We must speak out, when necessary

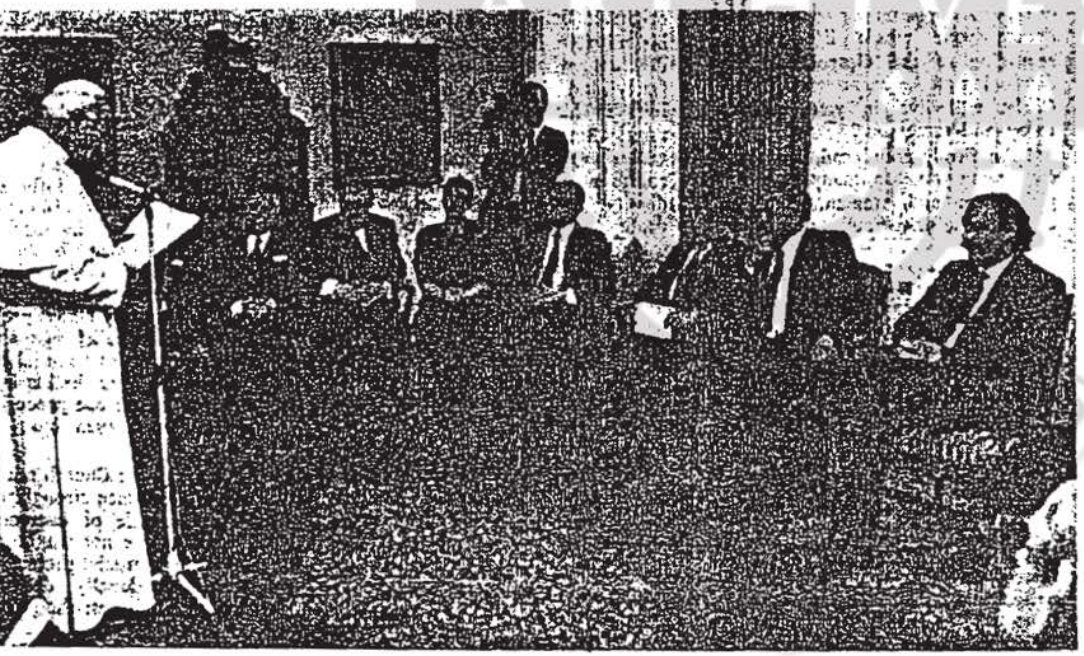
3. Today the Church is honouring a daughter of Israel who remained faithful, as a Jew, to the Jewish people, and, as a Catholic, to our crucified Lord Jesus Christ.

Together with millions of fellow believers she endured humiliation and suffering culminating in the final brutal drama of extermination, the Shoah. In an act of heroic faith

Edith Stein placed her life in the hands of a holy and just God, whose mysteries she had sought to understand better and to love throughout her entire life.

May the day of her beatification be a day for all of us to join together in praising God, who has done marvellous works through his saints and exalted himself through the People of Israel. Let us pause in reverent silence to reflect on the terrible consequences which can arise from a denial of God and from collective racial hatred. In this connection we recall the suffering of many peoples in Europe in recent times, and we declare our commitment to a common effort on the part of all people of good will to establish a new "civilization of love" here in Europe, inspired by the highest Jewish and Christian ideals. At the same time we must speak out when necessary, not lose sight of our examples, and remain alert for all new forms of anti-Semitism, racism and neopagan religious persecution. Such a joint effort would be the most precious gift Europe could give the world in its arduous effort to develop and attain justice.

4. By virtue of the life she lived, the blessed Edith Stein reminds us all, Jews and Christians alike, of the call of the Holy Scriptures: "You shall be holy because I am holy" (Lev 11:45). This summons to all of us also embraces a common responsibility to help build the "City of God", the city of God's peace. We spontaneously think of Jerusalem, the "City of Peace", of which the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Yes, the Lord shall comfort Zion and have pity on all her ruins; her deserts he shall make like Eden, her wasteland like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of" (Is 51:3). With this hope for peace we entreat the Lord to show us the fullness of his merciful peace.



The Holy Father addresses members of the Jewish Central Committee.

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ADDRESS TO JEWISH REPRESENTATIVES AT BUENOS AIRES

**"We should deepen the awareness  
of the spiritual bond that unites us"**

*In the late evening of Thursday, 9 April, the Holy Father met representatives of the Argentinian Jewish community at the Apostolic Nunciature in Buenos Aires. He addressed them as follows:*

Dear representatives of the Jewish Community of Argentina:

First of all, I thank you for your presence here and for your desire to meet the Pope on the occasion of his visit to this country, where your community is so active and numerous.

Meeting representatives of the Jewish community has been a frequent occurrence during my visits to different countries from the beginning of my pontificate. This is not just a casual meeting, nor is it a

mere expression of an obligation of courtesy.

You know well that, since the Second Vatican Council and its Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4), the relations between the Catholic Church and Judaism have been built on a new foundation, which is in fact very old, since it refers to the closeness of our respective religions, united by what the Council precisely called a spiritual "bond".

The years that followed and the constant progress of the dialogue on both sides, have deepened even more the awareness of that "bond" and the need to strengthen it always through mutual knowledge, esteem and the overcoming of the preju-

dices which succeeded in separating us in the past.

The universal Church, as well as the Church in Argentina, is committed to this great task of bringing us closer in fraternal friendship and collaboration in all the areas where this is possible.

From your part, I ask you to contribute, as you already do, to this openness and convergence, which will undoubtedly redound to the good of our respective religious communities, as well as the entire Argentinian society and of the men and women that compose it.

Peace be with you: *Shalom alehem.*

Thank you very much: *todah rabah.*



## SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

### Post-Conciliar Period — Organizations of the Holy See

#### INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC-JEWISH LIAISON COMMITTEE

#### COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH JUDAISM

- 1966**  
Oct. 1 Very soon after the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of the *Declaration of the Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions: Nostra Aetate*, notably paragraph 4 dealing with the Jewish Religion, Cardinal Augustin Bea, President of the *Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity* (SPCU), created within the Secretariat an *Office for Catholic-Jewish Relations* (OCJR)<sup>1</sup> with Fr. Cornelis Rijk in charge.
- 1969**  
Apr. 8-12 The OCJR hosted in Rome an international consultation of 21 Roman Catholic experts from 14 countries to study the best way to implement the conciliar declaration.<sup>2</sup>
- Nov. 18-28 The document drawn up at the April meeting was presented, after some emendations, to the participants at the plenary meeting of the SPCU. After further re-working, the final text was presented for approbation to the supreme authority of the Church.<sup>3</sup>
- 1970**  
Dec. 20-23 Together with the *International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations* (IJCIC),<sup>4</sup> the OCJR organized at the SPCU in Rome the first meeting between Jews and Catholics on an international level. At the end of the meeting the participants proposed the creation of a *Liaison Committee* that would guide the two parties in their collaboration. After this meeting the *Liaison Committee* was officially established. It is an *International Jewish-Catholic Committee* composed of representatives of the Holy See and of IJCIC. Catholic members were: Roger ETCHEGARAY, Francis MUGAVERO, Jerome HAMER, Bernard DUPUY, Cornelis RIJK.<sup>5</sup> Jewish members: Arthur HERTZBERG, Gerhart RIEGNER, Henry SIEGMAN, Marc TANENBAUM, Zvi WERBLOWSKY and Joseph LICHTEN as observer. The aims of the *Liaison Committee* were defined as follows:
- . the improvement of mutual understanding between the two religious communities;
  - . the exchange of information;
  - . possible cooperation in areas of common responsibility and concern.
- In a *Memorandum of Understanding* drawn up on that occasion, the committee indicated two areas in which both parties could study together:
- . the way in which the relationship between religious community, people and land is conceived in the Jewish and Catholic traditions;
  - . the promotion of human rights and religious freedom.<sup>6</sup>
- 1971**  
Dec. 14-16 **PARIS:** First meeting of the *Liaison Committee*, P. Jerome HAMER and Rabbi Arthur HERTZBERG presiding. The two questions proposed in the *Memorandum* were studied. The respective competencies of the two groups were studied likewise. Fr. Hamer referred to articles 28 and 94 of the Apostolic Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* on the Roman Curia (15 Aug. 1967), indicating the competence of the Catholic delegation, limiting it to the religious aspects of problems, since relations with governments are reserved to the Council for Public Affairs. This separation of roles raised difficulties for the Jewish delegation, accustomed to treating questions comprehensively.<sup>7</sup>
- 1972**  
Dec. 18-20 **MARSEILLES:** Second meeting of the *Liaison Committee*, Archbishop Roger ETCHEGARY, Prof. Zvi WERBLOWSKY presiding. Rabbi Balfour BRICKNER replaced Rabbi Arthur HERTZBERG in the Jewish delegation. The Committee continued examining the two themes proposed by the *Memorandum* as well as those of antisemitism, terrorism, proselytism, religious questions in Israel, Jewish studies concerning Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

1973

Dec. 4-6

**ANTWERP:** At the third meeting of the *Liaison Committee*, Mgr. Charles MOELLER and Prof. Zvi WERBLOWSKY were presidents. Fr. Pierre-Marie de CONTENSON, who had recently taken charge of the OCJR, replaced Fr. Cornelis RIJK. Two study documents on the theme: *People, Nation and Land in their Respective Religious Traditions* were presented by Jewish and Catholic specialists. It was decided to pursue this study and to undertake also a study of the moral and spiritual foundations of Human Rights and Religious Freedom in the two religious traditions. Other subjects discussed were the Middle East situation and its implications for Jewish-Christian Relations; cooperation between Catholic and Jewish agencies at the U.N. in relation to Human Rights and Religious Freedom and in particular with regard to the proposed Declaration and Convention on the "Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance"; the situation of Christians in Israel and the proselytizing activities of some missionary groups there; the situation of Jews in the USSR; the recrudescence of antisemitism and concerted effort in combating it.<sup>9</sup> It was principally at this meeting that the suggestion arose of creating a commission for religious relations with Judaism to replace the OCJR.<sup>10</sup>

1974

Oct. 22

Paul VI decided to constitute officially in the SPCU a *COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH JUDAISM* (CRRJ). While within the Secretariat it is distinct from it. The president of the SPCU is likewise its president — Cardinal Johannes WILLEBRANDS (at that time and to this date); its vice-president is the general secretary of the SPCU — Mgr. Charles MOELLER; its secretary, Fr. Pierre-Marie de CONTENSON, until that point in charge of the OCJR.

The specific aims of the Commission are as follows:

- the promotion of relations between Jews and Catholics on the level of the universal Church;
- the pastoral and catechetical application of the conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate No. 4*.<sup>11</sup>

Dec. 1

The newly-formed Commission published a document which may be considered its initial charter: *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate No. 4*.<sup>12</sup>

1975

Jan. 7-10

**ROME:** The fourth meeting of the *Liaison Committee* was presided by Rabbi Joseph LOOKSTEIN, Henry SIEGMAN and Frs. Edward FLANNERY, Bernard DUPUY.<sup>13</sup>

1976

Jan.

Paul VI named 8 consultors to the CRRJ: Bernard Francis LAW, Pietro ROSSANO, Carlo Maria MARTINI, Roger LE DEAUT, Clemens THOMA, J. Marcel DUBOIS, Humberto PORTO, Tommaso FEDERICI. (*L'Osservatore Romano* Feb. 1, 1976).

1976

Mar. 1-3

**JERUSALEM:** Fifth meeting of the *Liaison Committee* with the theme: *Evaluation of ten years of relations between the Catholic Church and Judaism. Critical reflections on what has happened since the Vatican II declaration Nostra Aetate with a view to seeking lessons and prospectives for the future.* Discussion was based on two reports, those of Rabbi H. SIEGMAN and Fr. Laurentius KLEIN.<sup>14</sup>

July 7

Death of Fr. P.-M. de Contenson: At the end of the year Mgr. Jorge Mejia was named Secretary of the CRRJ.

1977

Mar. 28-30

**VENICE:** Sixth meeting of the *Liaison Committee*. Principal subject: *The Mission and Witness of the Church* introduced by Prof. Tommaso FEDERICI.<sup>15</sup>

1978

Apr. 5-7

**MADRID:** Seventh meeting of the *Liaison Committee*. Central theme: *The Image of Judaism in Christian Education and the Image of Christianity in Jewish Education.* Reports were presented by Mgr. Jorge MEJIA, Frs. Clemens THOMA, Bernard DUPUY, Vicente SER-RANO, Eugene FISHER and the Jewish representatives, Profs. Sidney B. HOENING, Shemaryahu TALMON.<sup>16</sup>

1979

Oct. 22-25

**REGENSBURG:** Eighth meeting of the *Liaison Committee*. Subjects: *Religious Freedom and Education for Dialogue in a Pluralistic Society.* The first theme was introduced by Mgr. Franco BIFFI and Dr. Robert GORDIS; the second by Dr. Eugene FISHER and Dr. Günter BIEMER.<sup>17</sup>

1981

Mar. 31 -  
Apr. 2

**LONDON:** Ninth meeting of the *Liaison Committee*. Theme: *The Challenge of Secularism to our Religious Communities.* Reports were given by Mgr. Pietro ROSSANO and Rabbi Nahum RABINOVITCH. Other themes treated: Antisemitism, education, religious freedom...<sup>18</sup>

1982

Mar. 2-5

The CRRJ organized at Rome, at the SPCU, the first meeting for *Delegates of Episcopal Conferences and other Experts* with a view to examining relations between the Catholic Church and Judaism; 35 persons came from 5 continents. There were representatives also from the Orthodox Churches, the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches. Themes were introduced by the following speakers: Maurice GILBERT, S.J. *Covenants between God and Israel*; J. Marcel DUBOIS, *The Theological Context of Jewish-Christian Relations*; Eugene FISHER, *Politics and the Jewish-Christian Dialogue*; Sofia CAVALLETTI, *The Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catechesis*.<sup>18</sup>

Oct. 6-9

MILAN: The Tenth meeting of the *Liaison Committee*. Theme: *The Sanctity and Meaning of Human Life in the Present Situation of Violence*. The biblical aspect of the subject was presented by three Jewish and two Catholic speakers.<sup>20</sup>

1983

Fr. Pierre DUPREY was appointed General Secretary of the SPCU and Vice-President of the CRRJ.

1984

Mar. 27-29

AMSTERDAM: The eleventh meeting of the *Liaison Committee*. Theme: *Youth and Faith*. Speakers: Prof. Riccardo TONELLI, SDB and Prof. Gordon TUCKER.<sup>21</sup>

1985

Jun. 24

The CRRJ published *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*. This important document resumed and developed the conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate*, the *Guidelines* of 1974 and the discourse of John Paul II of Mar. 6, 1982.<sup>22</sup>

Oct. 28-30

ROME: The twelfth *Liaison Committee* meeting, devoted to a *Commemoration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration, Nostra Aetate*.

Representatives of the Holy See were: Jacques-Marcel DUBOIS, Pierre DUPREY, Bernard DUPUY, Eugene J. FISHER, Gerald MAHON, Jorge MEJIA, Erich SALZMAN, Johannes WILLEBRANDS.

IJCIC was represented by Fritz BECKER, Balfour BRICKNER, Leon A. FELDMAN, Jean HALPERIN, Jordan PEARLSON, Gerhart M. RIEGNER, Norman SOLOMON, Shemaryahu TALMON, Marc TANENBAUM, Mordecai WAXMAN, Geoffrey WIGADOR, Walter S. WURZBURGER.

The list was completed by Jewish and Catholic guests.

Discussion centered around the *Notes* published on June 24 by the CRRJ.<sup>23</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> M.-T. Hoch & B. Dupuy: *Les Eglises devant le Judaïsme*, Documents officiels 1918-1978, Cerf, Paris 1980, p. 355 note 33.

<sup>2</sup> Information Service of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), No. 7, May 1969/2, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> SPCU No. 9, 1970/1, pp. 19-20, text of the introductory document at the plenary session; p. 4, official document at the close of the session.

<sup>4</sup> IJCIC: International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, created in 1970 to establish relations with the Catholic Church. It consisted at its formation of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) with constituents in 65 countries, the Synagogue Council of America (SCA) representing Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism in the United States and the American Jewish Committee (AJC) which, since 1906, has been active in the field of civil and religious Jewish rights throughout the world, as well as different interreligious activities. SPCU No. 14, 1971/2, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Persons mentioned in this document: BEA, Augustin, Cardinal, President of the SPCU, died Nov. 15, 1968. BECKER, Fritz, Representative of WJC, Rome. BIFFI, Franco, Rector of Pontifical Lateran University, Rome. BIEMER, Günter, Prof. of Religious Education. BRICKNER, Balfour, Director of Interfaith Activities, Union of American Hebrew Congregations. CAVALLETTI, Sofia, Catechetical specialist. de CONTENSON, Pierre-Marie, O.P., 1973, named in charge of OCJR; Oct. 1974, Secretary of CRRJ; died July 7, 1976. DUBOIS, J. Marcel, Prof. of Hebrew University, Jerusalem; named Consultor of CRRJ in 1976. DUPREY, Pierre, P.B., named in 1983 Secretary of SPCU and vice-President of the CRRJ. DUPUY, Bernard, Secretary of the Episcopal Commission of France for Relations with Judaism; named member of the Liaison Committee. ETCHEGARAY, Roger, Archbishop of Marseilles, President of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences; member of Liaison Committee in 1970; named Cardinal in 1979; President of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace and of "Cor Unum" in 1984. FEDERICI, Tommaso, Prof. of Biblical Theology at Pontifical Urbaniana University and the Liturgical Institute of S. Anselmo, Rome; named Consultor to the CRRJ in 1976. FELDMAN, Leon, A., Professor, Consultant to the Synagogue Council of America, New York. FISHER, Eugene J., Dr., 1977, Secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, U.S.A. (NCCB), Consultor to the CRRJ. FLANNERY, Edward, Fr., 1967-1977, Secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of NCCB. GILBERT, Maurice, S.J., Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute,

Rome. GORDIS, Robert, Prof. of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. HALPERIN, Jean, Professor, Consultant to the WJC, Geneva. HAMER, Jerome, O.P., named member of the Liaison Committee in 1970; General Secretary of the SPCU in 1973. HERTZBERG, Arthur, Rabbi, President of IJCIC, named member of the Liaison Committee in 1970. HOENING, Sidney B., Professor of Dropsie College, Philadelphia. KLEIN, Laurentius, Abbot of Dormition Abbey, Jerusalem. LAW, Bernard F., Bishop of Springfield, Cape Girardeau, named Consultor to the CRRJ in 1976. LE DEAUT, Roger, C.S.Sp., Prof. of Targumic Literature, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, named Consultor to the CRRJ in 1976. LICHTEN, Joseph, Dr., Observer for Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; named member of Liaison Committee in 1970. MAHON, Gerard, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, member of the Liaison Committee. MARTINI, Carlo Maria, S.J., Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome; Rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome; named Consultor of the CRRJ 1976; Archbishop of Milan 1980; appointed Cardinal in 1983. MEJIA, Jorge, Mgr., named Secretary of the CRRJ in 1976. MOELLER, Charles, Mgr., Secretary General of the SPCU in 1973; 1974-1981, vice-President of the CRRJ. MUGAVERO, Francis J., Bishop of Brooklyn, New York, Chairperson of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the NCCB; named member of the Liaison Committee 1970. MUSSNER, Franz, Mgr., Prof. of Theology, University of Regensburg; Consultor to the CRRJ. PEARLSON, Jordan, Rabbi, Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), Toronto. PORTO, Humberto, Co-President of the Jewish-Christian Fraternity, Sao Paulo, Brazil, named Consultor to the CRRJ 1976. RABBINOVITCH, Nahum, Rabbi, Director of Jews College, London. RIEGNER, Gerhart, Dr., Secretary General of World Jewish Congress (WJC), 1970, member of the Liaison Committee. RIJK, Cornelis, Prof., in charge of the OCJR and member of the Liaison Committee 1970. Died Aug. 29, 1979. ROSSANO, Pietro, Secretary of the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions; named Consultor of the CRRJ in 1976. Ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Rome 1982. SALZMAN, Erich, O.M.I., member of the SPCU. SERRANO, Vicente, Director of the Centre for Jewish-Christian Studies, Madrid. SIEGMAN, Henry, Rabbi, Executive Vice-President of the Synagogue Council of America (SCA), member of the Liaison Committee in 1970. SILVERMAN, David, Prof. of Philosophy of Religion at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. SOLOMON, Norman, Rabbi, Director of Centre for Study of Judaism and Christian-Jewish Relations, Birmingham. TALMON, Shemaryahu, Dr., Prof. at Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Chairperson, Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Consultations. TANENBAUM, Marc, National Director of Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee (AJC), member of Liaison Committee 1970. THOMA, Clemens, SVD, Director of Institute for Jewish Studies, Catholic Faculty of Theology, Lucerne; Consultor to CRRJ, 1976. TONELLI, Riccardo, SDB, Director of Pastoral Institute of Faculty of Theology, Pontificio Ateneo Salesiano (PAS). TORELLA, Ramon Cascante, 1975-1983, Vice-President of SPCU; 1983, Archbishop of Tarragona. TOSATO, Angelo, Prof. of Sacred Scripture, Rome; Consultor to CRRJ. TUCKER, Gordon, Prof. at Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. WAXMAN, Mordecai, Rabbi, President of IJCIC and of Synagogue Council of America (SCA), New York. WERBLOWSKY, Zvi, President of Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Consultations, 1972; member of Liaison Committee, 1970. WIGADOR, Geoffrey, Dr., Hebrew University of Jerusalem. WILLEBRANDS, Johannes, Cardinal, 1968, President of SPCU, 1974, President of CRRJ. ZAGO, Marcello, OMI, Secretary of Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions.

<sup>6</sup> SPCU, No. 17, 1972/2, pp. 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> SPCU, No. 19, 1973/1, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> SPCU, No. 23, 1974/1, pp. 21-22.

<sup>10</sup> SPCU, No. 25, 1974/3, p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., also No. 27, 1975/2, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> SPCU, No. 26, 1975/1, pp. 1-7; No. 27, 1975/2, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> SPCU, No. 27, 1975/2, pp. 35-36.

<sup>14</sup> SPCU, No. 31, 1976/2, pp. 17-18.

<sup>15</sup> SPCU, No. 34, 1977/2, pp. 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> SPCU, No. 37, 1978/2, pp. 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> SPCU, No. 41, 1979/4, pp. 11-12; 40, 1979/3, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> SPCU, No. 45, 1981/1, pp. 29-30.

<sup>19</sup> SPCU, No. 49, 1982/2,3, pp. 63-64; 51, 1983/1,2, pp. 35-36.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> SPCU, No. 54, 1984/1, pp. 21-22; 56, 1984/4, p. 119.

<sup>22</sup> SPCU, No. 57, 1985/1, pp. 16-21. The present Consultors to the CRRJ are: Jacques-Marcel DUBOIS, Tommaso FEDERICI, Eugene J. FISHER, Roger LE DEAUT, Franz MUSSNER, Pietro ROSSANO, Angelo TOSATO, Marcello ZAGO.

<sup>23</sup> SIDIC - doc. No. 1691.

## INFORMATION

### Twelfth Meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, Rome, Oct. 28-30, 1985: Press Release

The International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee committed itself to a program of action for the immediate future. The six points of the program are: 1) to disseminate and explain the achievements of the past two decades to our two communities, 2) to undertake an effort to overcome the residues of indifference, resistance and suspicion that may still prevail in some sections of our communities, 3) to work together in combatting tendencies toward religious extremism and fanaticism, 4) to promote conceptual clarifications and theological reflection in both communities and to create appropriate forums acceptable to both sides, in which this reflection can be deepened, 5) to foster cooperation and common action for justice and peace, 6) to undertake a joint study of the historical events and theological implications of the extermination of the Jews of Europe during World War II (frequently called the "Holocaust" or, in Hebrew, *Shoah*). A steering committee will be established to work out the details of this program.

This, the twelfth meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, took place on October 28-30, 1985 at the offices of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Holy See. The event was timed to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, *Nostra Aetate*, n. 4. That document, whose Latin title, taken from its opening words, means "In Our Times", was promulgated on October 28, 1965, by Pope Paul VI together with the 2,221 Council Fathers.

The International Liaison Committee was founded in 1970 as a means of implementing the Council's call for the institution of ongoing dialogue between the Church and the Jewish people after centuries of mistrust and often tragic conflict. The Committee is composed of representatives of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC).\*

\* IJCIC, the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, is composed of the World Jewish Congress, the Synagogue Council of America, the American Jewish Committee, the Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Consultations, and B'nai B'rith.

Highlighting the event was an audience with Pope John Paul II on the afternoon of October 28th. Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Holy See's Commission, introduced the Liaison Committee to the Pope, who has met previously with its members on earlier occasions. Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, chair of IJCIC, hailed *Nostra Aetate* and subsequent papal statements as documents which had revolutionized Christian-Jewish relations and created new opportunities for dialogue. Rabbi Waxman pointed out that the creation of the State of Israel was likewise a revolution in Jewish history which calls for new thinking by both Catholics and Jews.

The Pope, for his part, reaffirmed the Church's commitment to *Nostra Aetate* and the uniqueness of the sacred "link" between the Church and the Jewish people which he called one of "parentage, a relationship which we have with that religious community alone, stemming from the mysterious will of God". The Pope added: "I am sure you will work with even greater dedication, for constantly deeper mutual knowledge, for even greater interest in the legitimate concerns of each other, and especially for collaboration in the many fields where our faith in one God and our common respect for his image in all men and women invite our witness and commitment."

At the meeting of the Liaison Committee, Cardinal Willebrands and Dr. Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress assessed developments since the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. Both areas of remarkable progress and areas where further efforts toward understanding are needed were cited. Cardinal Willebrands declared: "Let us try to see very clearly where we are going, how we should move to get there, and in which way we can already translate our relationship into concrete forms of collaboration towards all men and women, in a world torn by hate, violence, discrimination and also indifference for the poor, the sick, the elderly and the oppressed."

Dr. Riegner stated: "On the eve of the meeting of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops which will review the achievements of Vatican Council II, we turn with confidence to its members. We are convinced that they will ensure... that the process of renewal of our relationship so hopefully initiated by the Council will be further advanced."



Dr. Eugene J. Fisher, Secretary for Catholic-Jewish Relations for the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference, presented a detailed analysis of *Nostra Aetate* in the light of the two major documents of the Holy See designed to implement its teaching: the "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing *Nostra Aetate*, n° 4" (1975) and "Notes for the Correct Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church" (1985). The analysis revealed the dynamic and still developing character of the Church's continuing renewal in the light of its dialogue with the Jews as God's People. "Judaism, no less than Christianity, comes from God", Fisher concluded. "This was the central message of the Second Vatican Council, and one to which we Catholics must re-commit ourselves in each generation."

Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and representative of the Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Consultations, presented a Jewish reaction to the Notes in which he analyzed both its positive aspects (e.g., on the Jewish roots of Christianity, the appreciation of the Pharisees) with those that had caused disappointment (e.g., the failure to appreciate deep levels of Jewish self-understanding and the inadequate treatment of the Holocaust).

From within the context of the self-understanding of the Catholic Church, Msgr Jorge Mejia, Secretary of the Vatican Commission, proposed some appropriate "hermeneutical keys" for the proper understanding of sections of the "Notes" which have raised problems of interpretation.

In the light of the exchanged views which followed these presentations, significant areas for further study and clarification were raised by the participants.

Regional reports were given on the status of relations between Catholics and Jews in Latin America, Europe, Israel, Africa and North America. These provided a survey of concerns on all levels of the relationship, from local communities to national and international perspectives. A special report was made by Sisters Shirley Sedawie and Margaret McGrath of the Congregation of our Lady of Sion on the work in Rome of SIDIC (Service International de documentation Judéo-Chrétienne) and the Congregation's centers in various parts of the world dedicated to fostering Catholic-Jewish reconciliation.

On the evening of October 30, the Liaison Committee attended a special symposium held at the Pontifical Lateran University to commemorate the 850th anniversary of the birth of the great Jewish philosopher Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides). Papers on the thought of Maimonides were presented by Rev. Jacques-Marcel Dubois, O.P., director of the department of philosophy of Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, professor of philosophy at Yeshiva University in New York.

## Dialogue in Latin America

A four-day conference on Catholic-Jewish relations in Latin America was held in Bogota, Colombia, sponsored by the Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM), the Latin American Jewish Congress and ADL. Delegates from nearly every country in Central and South America attended.

The conference agenda was based on a series of guidelines prepared by Rabbi Leon Klenicki, Director of ADL's Department of Interfaith Affairs, tracing the relationship between Catholics and Jews since the 1965 promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican II declaration that included the Catholic Church's statement on the Jews.

The participants discussed teaching about Judaism in Catholic educational facilities, educating about the evils of anti-Semitism, the significance to Jews of the State of Israel and Catholic-Jewish cooperation in such areas of mutual concern as poverty, civil and human rights.

(Taken from *ADL Bulletin*, November 1985).

## Israel: Award to Cardinal Etchegaray

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace and former Archbishop of Marseilles, is the first recipient of an Ecumenical Award given by Ben Gurion University of the Negev. It has been endowed by the late Prof. Ladislaus Laszt, a specialist in Cardio-angiology who, shortly before his death in 1981, entrusted to the Ben Gurion University a perpetual fund that would provide for the bestowal, every two years, of the *Prof. Ladislaus Laszt International Ecumenical Award*. The Nomination Committee chose the Cardinal as the first recipient of this prestigious award in order to acknowledge his long and dedicated activities on behalf of the Jewish-Christian dialogue at the hierarchical level of the Roman Catholic Church. He has been involved in the International Liaison Committee — the Committee for official dialogue between the Church and Judaism — from its beginning (see documentation on pp. 22ff of this issue); was very much involved in the promulgation, in 1973, of the declaration of the French Bishops' Commission for Relations with the Jewish People: *Pastoral Orientations on the Attitude of Christians to Judaism*; he made an important intervention at the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1983 concerning *Reconciliation and the Jewish People*, to mention the highlights of his involvement in the cause of Jewish-Christian relations.

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JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS, PAST AND PRESENT

**CHRISTIAN MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

By *DANIEL ROSSING*

In what follows, I have chosen to restrict myself to a consideration of no more than a few of the Christian groupings and elements historically and contemporaneously present in the Middle East. Thus, I will not, except indirectly, discuss the attitudes and activities of Christians hailing from the West, even though these Christians are very obviously, and not insignificantly, overwhelmingly in the majority in the activities of such groups as the Ecumenical Fraternity and the Rainbow Group. Rather, I will focus my attention on those religious communities variously referred to as Eastern Christians, Arab Christians, arabised Christians, indigenous Christians or, in some Western circles, perhaps, as "those Christians on the other side." Even among these Christians, I have chosen to concentrate mainly on those groups which have emerged from what historically can be referred to as "Syrian" Christianity — namely, the Orthodox (principally the Syrian, or Syriac, and Melkite, or Greek Orthodox); the Uniates (principally the Maronite and Melkite or Greek Catholics); and, to some extent, the less numerous Protestants and Anglicans. I have chosen to impose these strictures, first of all because of the limitations of space, but more importantly because, in our immediate area, these groupings constitute the dominant Christian population.

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For the sake of perspective, it might be of value to present some statistical data on these communities.<sup>1</sup> First, we may estimate the number of Melkite or Greek Orthodox Christians in the Middle East at approximately 650,000. With regard to the second grouping, the Heterodox Christians, often also referred to as Monophysite or pre- or non-Chalcedonian Christians, accurate statistics in general have become very problematic, due to their constant and massive emigration in recent years, particularly from Lebanon. It is very difficult today to know the situation, especially as regards the Armenians, who number somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000, depending on how many have permanently left the region as a result of the protracted civil war in Lebanon, in which they have tried desperately not to become involved. There are also some 175,000 Jacobite or Syrian Orthodox Christians. Finally, included in this group are the Coptic Orthodox Christians, who number anywhere between four and eight million faithful, depending upon whose statistics one accepts: The third group is that of the Catholic Churches, both Latins and Uniates. The largest community among the Uniates, the Maronites, numbers about 750–800,000. The Melkite (Greek) Catholics number some 350,000; the Chaldeans, 250,000; the Coptic Catholics in Egypt, 150,000; the Syrian Catholics, 100,000; and the Armenian Catholics, 50,000. The Latin Church has about 110,000 faithful. Finally, the Protestants and Anglicans together total about 250,000, some 200,000 of whom are in Egypt. One ought also to mention the some 80,000 Nestorians. These dry statistical facts clearly indicate that, together with the Copts in Egypt, the Maronites, the Melkite Orthodox, and the Melkite Catholics make up the vast majority in our more immediate region.

It should be remarked that the analytical survey of these communities which I intend to present is born out of a deep sympathy with and respect for them. It is not my intention to make value judgments, whether political or religious in nature, although such judgments, when occasionally implied, are hopefully in a constructive and positive vein. As for my frame of reference, I write as an amateur scholar and as a student of the vast field of Jewish-Christian relations. I must confess that, at least as concerns historical materials, my knowledge of the subject with which I am dealing is limited by the fact that I am almost entirely

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1. It is extremely difficult to obtain accurate statistical data on the Christian communities in the Middle East today. The estimates offered here relate to the area composed of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, and are based upon a comparison of information gleaned from conversations with Church leaders in Israel and from the following sources: Robert B. Betts, *Christians in the Arab East: A political study* (London, 1979); *Oriente Cattolico, Cenni storici e statistiche* (Vatican City: Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches); and Slimane Zeghidour, "Des Millions de Chrétiens orientaux," *La Croix*, Special Edition: "Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient," December 25–26, 1983.

dependent upon secondary sources. Such dependence on the observations and analyses of others is, of course, a very dangerous exercise. I would hope, however, that my intensive contact with these communities — which in the academic world would be called field-work — might serve as a compensation for my linguistic disabilities.

### **I. The Situation of Marginality**

Having made these introductory remarks, I would like first to establish something that is perhaps obvious, but which I feel is often neglected or forgotten when considering the Christian communities in the Arab East — namely, the essential difference between the history of these communities and that of Western Christianity. Western Christians have, since early days, enjoyed the benefits, privileges and possibilities which came with being politically, religiously and culturally dominant communities. As such, they have defined not only their own position and fate in society, but often also that of marginal minority groups, most particularly that of the Jews. Christians in the Middle East, on the other hand, began, from a relatively early date, to find themselves increasingly in a minority and marginal situation, in which mere survival became a prominent and pervasive concern.

The history and fate of the Christian communities in the Middle East parallel, in many respects, the history and fate of the Jewish people in the Christian West. I wish to draw a certain analogy with the history of the Jewish people as a persecuted minority in the Christian West, rather than with the equally important history of the Jewish people in the Middle East itself,<sup>2</sup> because the former is, I feel certain, better known to the Western reader. Neither the Christians in the Middle East nor the Jewish people have historically evidenced the triumphalism which has characterized and plagued, and in many respects continues to characterize and plague, both the Christian West and the Moslem East. Rather, as particularistic and marginal minority groups, they have both suffered, and again in many respects continue to suffer, as the objects — in thought, word and deed — of triumphalistic theologies, whether emanating from the West or the East.

In stating this, it is in no way my intention to malign the Moslem world, any more than I would seek to malign the Christian West in an honest and frank discussion of traditional Christian attitudes towards and treatment of the Jewish people. Rather, my basic aim is to understand the Christian communities and peoples in the Moslem world, and here I believe that, unless one is shackled by ideological or political considerations, one must be prepared to call a spade a spade. I hasten to

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2. See, for example, Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia, 1979); Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, 1984).

add that Islamic "tolerance" was perhaps on the whole relatively greater than that shown by the Christian West. In some respects, this tolerance served to ensure Christian survival in the Middle East, even while the centuries of Islamic rule worked to erode the energies and resources of the Christians. In the words of Robert Brenton Betts:

By the middle of the 8th century, the Christian communities and their leaders had come to recognize that the official Muslim toleration, which had seemed so attractive a century earlier [i.e., relative to the Persian and Byzantine treatment of those communities — D.R.], was in fact a rigid prison from which there was no escape, other than apostasy or flight. The *dhimmi* system [i.e., the system of "protected" status for the "peoples of the Book" — D.R.], while allowing the Heterodox Christians to keep their religion, churches, and property, and to live according to the canon law of their particular sect, condemned them in effect to a slow but almost inevitable decline and death.<sup>3</sup>

Robert M. Haddad expresses this salient feature of the history of Syrian Christians in the following manner:

If, on the one hand, the considerable autonomy granted tended to preserve the various Christian sects, their marginal status could effect ultimately only their cultural and numerical impoverishment. At few times in the course of the Muslim centuries was it other than perfectly clear to the non-Muslim that most mundane interests would be served by conversion to the faith of the prophet. Only apostasy offered the full range of possibility. Most non-Muslims were to take that step.<sup>4</sup>

On the eve of the Moslem Arab conquest, Christians constituted the dominant population in the region. Yet, by the time of the Crusades, the Christian population of Syria and Egypt was perhaps only half of the total population, and Arabic was rapidly replacing Aramaic, Syriac and Coptic as the first language of the indigenous inhabitants. By the 14th century, the Syriac literary tradition was, for all significant purposes, dead. By the 16th century, the Christians had been reduced to no more than 30% of the native population in the region. The reduction of the Nestorians and Jacobites was greatest, perhaps in part because they were the most exposed geographically and culturally, perhaps in part because in earlier centuries "their role... in the construction of medieval Moslem civilization was," as Haddad notes, "of a magnitude sufficient to lead many of them to complete identification with it."<sup>5</sup>

It is not possible here to trace in full detail the complex history of the struggle of Christians in the Middle East for simple survival in the face of a militant faith which was no less successful for substituting a policy of measured tolerance and

3. R.B. Betts. *op. cit.*, p. 10.

4. Robert M. Haddad. *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: an Interpretation* (Princeton, 1970), pp. 8-9.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

studied humiliation for one of open persecution. Until our century, no attempt was made by any Moslem government to exterminate the Christians, and only relatively rare and isolated attempts were made to forcibly convert them. Nevertheless, the process of apostasy and flight, albeit gradual, was relentless. Although I do not wish to belabor this point, I cannot conclude my observations concerning the constant struggle for survival which has been the lot of Christians in the Middle East without pointing out certain details of the struggle in our own century.

Most readers are no doubt familiar with the fate of the Armenians in the early part of this century. A symposium on the subject, "Jews and Armenians facing Genocide," was held at the Van Leer Foundation in Jerusalem in early 1983. The same symposium could just as well have dealt with the subject, "Jews and Jacobites facing Genocide," "Jews and Nestorians facing Genocide," "Jews and Chaldeans facing Genocide," or "Jews and Maronites facing Genocide." What is often forgotten today is the extent to which many of the other ancient Christian communities in the Middle East have suffered. For example, for the Christians of Syria and Mesopotamia, as well as of Anatolia, World War I was a purgatory from which they emerged broken and decimated, a tragic chapter in a history of suffering which today, decades later, remains an omnipresent memory even to those born long afterwards.

One of the most important points which I recall from that symposium was made by an Armenian participant who noted that, after all the parallels and comparisons have been drawn between Jews and Armenians facing genocide, it must be remembered that the Armenians bear an additional burden. The genocide against the Jewish people has for the most part been admitted and acknowledged in one way or another, and only fringe groups undertaken to prove that it never took place. Some form and some degree of guilt have been expressed, and Jews have someone with whom to discuss the burdens they bear. The Armenians, by contrast, must bear the additional pain that the perpetrators do not even admit or acknowledge that there was a genocide committed, and there is relatively little discussion of it in the world today.

What was said that evening about the Armenians may also be said, perhaps even more emphatically, about the other Christian groups which I have mentioned. The scars and pains which they bear, not only from past centuries of suffering and persecution, but most significantly from the persecutions and massacres of this century, remain buried deep within their souls, and anyone who is closely connected with them knows that this pervades their thinking and influences their lives and attitudes. The fact that they do not shout their pain from the mountaintops has its reasons, to some of which I shall allude. It does not mean that the pain has subsided or that the tragedies are forgotten.

I now return to a brief and very limited survey of some of the details of this suffering in our own century. An estimated 100,000 Jacobites and Syrian Catholics are known to have perished during World War I from privation and massacre in their foothill strongholds of Urfa (Edessa) and Mardin. The Chaldean Rite, which at the outset of World War I counted slightly over 100,000 faithful, suffered the loss of six bishops, a score of priests and untold thousands of its membership, as well as the total destruction of four dioceses, which are defunct to this day. The Nestorian community lost its Patriarch, the greater part of its clergy and over half its number. In Lebanon, the previously autonomous Christian governate was abolished and an estimated 100,000 Lebanese, virtually all of them Christians, mainly Maronites, died of disease, starvation and execution.<sup>6</sup>

In 1933, a wave of anti-Christian sentiment swept over Iraq, culminating in the machine-gun massacre of several hundred Syrian men, women and children by the Iraqi army. Thousands of individual Nestorians, who had been pressing the League of Nations for the creation of a national homeland since 1931, fled into French Syria and were resettled along the Khabbur River in the Jazira region. If I am not mistaken, the word "genocide" was originally coined by a Jewish scholar in reference to those massacres of the Nestorians.

The Chaldean Patriarch, too, called for the creation of an autonomous state for Chaldean, Nestorian and Syrian-Jacobite peoples in Mesopotamia and in the land to the west of Mosul lying between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. In 1937, the same Jazira region to which the Nestorians had previously fled was placed under the direct administration of Damascus, against the wishes of the overwhelmingly Christian urban population. A massacre of Christians soon followed, giving rise to a strong movement for local autonomy and even independence, led by the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, a movement which was finally abandoned only in 1946. One could add endless details, but I trust that the above is sufficient to explain why I am prone to perceive certain parallels between the histories of the Christians in the Middle East and of the Jews in the Christian West.

Perhaps I might summarize this first part of my paper with what I have found to be an extremely meaningful passage by Francis B. Sayre:

A minority, sometimes welcome, sometimes not, is often wounded. It is drawn to its own community, where corporate strength is a precious resource. Survival requires special skill, special faith: the community is constantly winnowed by the loss of those without courage

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6. On the massacre of the Maronites in the mid-19th century, see Colonel Charles Henry Churchill, *The Druze and the Maronites under the Turkish Rule, from 1849 to 1860* (London, 1862). As I read that book a few months ago, I continually had to ask myself whether I was reading a historical study or that morning's *Jerusalem Post*.

and those too selfish to persevere. So the little band is purged and matured, until it has a unique and precious contribution to make to the very society which is at the same time its scourge and its nourishment.

Such as been the role of Christians in the Moslem lands of the Middle East. Here [in this book — D.R.] is traced the history of their several communities in each country; complex, often tragic in the divisions among Christians themselves, but always exciting in the tracing of faith against adversity. How often it happens that special destiny is given, not to the great and complacent majorities in the world, but to the little bands of people who never succeed so well as to be able to forget the Source of their strength and life.<sup>7</sup>

This quotation provides a succinct summary of what I have tried to convey in this part of my paper, especially inasmuch as its essential content could just as well have referred to the Jewish people.

## II. Strategies for Coping as a Minority

I would now like to move on to a consideration of that which, in the present context, I consider the most important and significant issue — namely, how, particularly during the last two centuries, Christians have sought to deal with their precarious situation as minorities in the domain of Islam in which, by virtue of Moslem definition, sustained by Moslem power, they have remained marginal minority communities. Robert M. Haddad notes that the power of marginal communities to “influence and shape [the politically dominant community] is greatest at those junctures when the characteristic institutions of the dominant community are in the process of formation, radical modification, or destruction by forces which the marginal community may or may not have helped generate but which it is able to accelerate and focus.”<sup>8</sup>

Such a situation indeed prevailed in the early years of Islam, when the salient institutions of Islamic civilization were taking shape, a process in which Christians played a significant and important role. The opportunity to influence and to shape society arose once again, and indeed was seized upon by many Christians in the middle East, beginning with the 19th century and especially in the wake of the Egyptian occupation of Syria (1832–1849) and the welcome reforms of Muhammed Ali, which represented the first tacit admission by a major Moslem head of state that the Islamic definitions of citizenship were unequal to the task at hand, primarily those tasks created by the increasing bankruptcy of Ottoman policy and the concurrent confrontation of Islamic society with political, cultural and economic pressures originating in the West. A similar opportunity to influence society was afforded to Jews in the Western Christian world in the wake of the so-called “Enlightenment” and “Emancipation.” In both

7. F.B. Sayre's introduction to Betts, *op. cit.*, p. xiii.

8. Haddad, *op. cit.*, p. 3.



the case of Christians in the Islamic world and that of Jews in the Christian West, the more aware and ambitious individuals among them seized the seeming opportunity to attempt to put an end to their marginality.

At this point, I would like to try to further extend the analogy to which I find myself constantly returning. To do so, I must digress and indicate a number of major trends which I feel can be observed in modern Jewish history, and in the reaction of Jews to emancipation. Again, the limitations of space force me to make rather broad generalizations, for which I hope that I will be excused. I will point to three or perhaps four major trends or paths which one finds Jews following in reaction to apparent promises of emancipation.

The first trend is that which I would label the path of assimilation: now that the dominant community and society has seemingly opened itself to us, we need no longer build fences and fortifications to protect ourselves; let us go out to embrace society and to be embraced by society. Many Jews did so, some to the extent of conversion, others to lesser degrees. At the same time, other Jews were engaged in absorbing elements from the dominant culture and religion into Judaism, often to an extent and in a manner that drastically altered the very shape of their Judaism.

A second trend or path which can be observed is that of devoting one's energies and being to the framing of ideologies and institutional arrangements which are essentially designed to radically alter the traditional social structures, and to detach the new structures from the old religious foundations, which of course had been the Christian foundations. This is the path of attempting to create what later became known as "post-Christian" Europe. It is no accident that Jews comprised the vanguard of revolutionary and radical movements in nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe, and for that matter continued to do so in Western Europe and the United States even into the 1960's and beyond.<sup>9</sup> Jews participating in these movements intended to radically alter society and to broaden its base against the background of their own situation of marginality, of minority status and of persecution. I hasten to stress that this path also involved a degree of assimilation, or at least the abandonment of the very Jewish particularity whose continued existence this approach was intended to secure or to ensure. There is something ironical about this: setting out as a Jew to alter society in a way that will give the Jew a place in society, in the process one

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9. See, for example, R.V. Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 158-170, 189-190; Charles Liebman, "Towards a Theory of Jewish Liberalism," in Donald R. Culter, ed., *The Religious Situation, 1969* (Boston, 1969), pp. 1034-62; Ernest van den Haag, *The Jewish Mystique* (New York, 1969).

sacrifices his identity as a Jew. When all is said and done, this represents yet another form of assimilation.

A third trend is, of course, that of national particularism or Zionism: I can neither assimilate into nor alter society; I have no confidence in the promises of emancipation and therefore I must carve out my own little corner of the world, which of course can only be in the Land of Israel. But even here there were, and are, a wide range of opinions and approaches, apparent to anyone who studies the history of Zionism, as to what should and could be created. Some of the approaches, I suggest, also represent a form of assimilation — assimilation on the level of the community and the nation, a process of becoming a nation like all other nations until there remains little that is unique or particular.<sup>10</sup>

These are three major trends which one can observe in contemporary Jewish history. Perhaps we should add a fourth — to follow the path of continued ghetto life. There are those who follow this path to this day: neither assimilating into the dominant society nor attempting to alter society or even to carve out one's own corner in the world, one simply retreats behind walls and into fortresses in order to protect oneself and one's community.

I now return from my digression on modern Jewish history to the Christian communities of the Middle East. I am obviously implying that there are parallels here to the ways in which these Christians have sought, in the modern period, to deal with their minority situation. New possibilities, as I have indicated, opened up for them at the beginning of the last century and especially towards the middle of the last century. How, then, did they respond?

We can observe, first of all, the approach of those who chose the path of assimilation, whether through actual conversion to Islam — which option had been available throughout the centuries — or through the lesser measure of assimilation into the dominant Islamic society. As an example, I would point to the following phenomenon: though most Christians in the Arab East were not traditionally branded with physical marks of their identity, such as the crosses tattooed on the inside of the wrists of many Copts and Jacobites at an early age, the great majority of Christians in the Middle East had in the past been immediately identifiable as Christians by virtue of their name, the one means by which a person raised in the culture could, with rare exceptions, recognize the broad religious background of his neighbor. However, in this century and in our

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10. Among the myriad articles and books written on the subject of Zionism and its meaning, I would especially recommend Michael Rosenak, "Three Zionist Revolutions," *Forum on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel* 34 (1979), pp. 18-30.

own day, many Christian families have often preferred to give their children names of Arab origin devoid of specifically Islamic connotation, yet employed by Moslems: on the other hand, instances of Moslems bearing names generally associated with Christians are extremely rare.<sup>11</sup> This certainly brings to mind a similar phenomenon among many Jews in the Christian West.

A second trend has been evident in the significant role played by Christians in the attempt to radically redefine Middle Eastern society and to detach it from its traditional Islamic bases and structures, mainly through the introduction of Western norms of political and social organization, especially the territorial, ethnic, linguistic, secular and constitutional elements which seem to be the bases of the political order of liberal Europe.<sup>12</sup> Christians, with their long tradition of connection with the West, have played a dominant role in this attempt, partly successful, to introduce such "radical" notions into the Moslem world. The founders of most of the modern Arab nationalist movements in our region were very often not Moslems, but Christians. In following this course, Christians have been motivated largely by the desire to finally be freed from the constraints and dangers of marginality.

In the course of following either the path of assimilation or that of attempting to radically alter traditional Islamic society, a severe conflict has been created in those Christians who chose these paths between the desire to identify with one's own minority community and, on a wider scale, with the Christian West and its cultural values, and the seemingly contradictory effort to establish one's Arab identity as a justification for one's presence in a predominantly Moslem society. The problem facing these Christians as citizens of the newly independent Arab and, with the exceptions of Lebanon (so far) and Israel, Moslem states, has arisen over the question of which of these two main streams in world society is to be emphasized in their own personal identity and outlook. Sadly, one of the ways in which many have sought to resolve this severe crisis of identity is by attacking the Jewish State. I would suggest that the often-negative views of these Christians towards Israel are generally not the result of an actual and honest encounter with the Jewish State and the Jewish people, but are, in large measure, the result of traditional Christian theological attitudes vis-a-vis Jews and Judaism, which have not been reexamined in the Eastern Churches, as they have to some degree in the

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11. See Betts, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-119, for discussion and examples of names illustrating this point.

12. See, for example, George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (Beirut, 1939); Leonard Binder, *The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East* (New York, 1964); Albert H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (London, 1962), esp. Ch. 10, "Christian Secularists," and pp. 273-289; and Donald M. Reid, "The Syrian Christians and Early Socialism in the Arab World," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974), pp. 177-193.

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Western Churches, and which have been enhanced by the struggle to justify the Christian presence in predominantly Moslem society. It is a sad irony of contemporary history that, among the persecuted Christian minorities in the Middle East, some have sought to prove themselves to the Moslem majority by standing in the forefront of the attempt to malign and condemn another indigenous minority, namely, the Jewish people and its sovereign, autonomous existence in the State of Israel, which is threatened and terrorized by the same intolerant triumphalism faced by Christians in the Middle East for centuries.

Permit me to illustrate my point by two telling examples. The first concerns the celebrated decision of Vatican Council II in the 1960's to reexamine the historical position of the Catholic church with regard to the role of the Jews in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Almost from the moment the decision was announced, the Christian Arab leadership, lay and clerical, Catholic and Orthodox, came under heavy Moslem pressure to thwart the Vatican move. Due largely to the subsequent pressures exerted on the Vatican by this Christian Arab leadership, as well as by certain conservative elements in the Church, the final declaration ruled simply that responsibility for the death of Jesus "cannot be attributed to all Jews." An earlier passage, much more specific in its content and particularly odious to the Eastern Christians, which stated that the Jews should not be considered guilty of deicide, was omitted in the final draft. But even after the adoption of the watered-down final version, Christians demonstrated in large numbers in Aleppo and even in Jerusalem. The Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, Theodosius VI, publicly asserted that the cry of the Jews before Pilate — "his blood be upon our children" — implicated all unconverted Jews, living and dead, in the responsibility for "this odious crime." The Jacobite Patriarch, Ya'qub III, charged that the freeing of the Jews of the blood of Christ is the greatest of sins. He was joined by Theodosius in charging that the Council's decision "undermines the basic principles of Christianity." The then Patriarch of Jerusalem, the late Benedictus, who was later frequently to be charged as a collaborator with Israel, stated simply and, I would say, diplomatically, that the decision was "inconsistent with Holy Scripture." In Aleppo, the city's Grand Mufti railed for three hours against the Council's decision, while the Syrian Catholic Bishop and other clergy listened with fear and trembling.<sup>13</sup>

My second example can be stated much more briefly. It concerns the prominent role played by certain Orthodox and Protestant Arab Christian delegates at the 1975 Nairobi convocation of the World Council of Churches, in the concerted but thankfully unsuccessful move to condemn Zionism, not only as a racist but also as an atheistic movement, obviously in emulation of the infamous UN declaration in the same vein.

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13. Betts, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-161.

We also, of course, find advocates among Christians in the Middle East of the path of national particularism. I have indicated that, in fact, several Christian groups in this century have attempted to follow the path of "auto-emancipation" or of national particularism. In most cases, following this path proved disastrous, particularly after the departure of Western co-religionists, most especially the French. That this approach is still championed by some Christians is all too obvious to anyone who reads the morning newspaper.

Finally, there are those Christians in the region who tend to seek the preservation of some kind of "ghetto" setting. To some extent, it has been the policy of the Armenians to protect themselves by not becoming involved on anybody's side — politically, religiously or culturally — and to preserve and protect their own separate and particular identity, language and customs.<sup>14</sup>

We can observe, as I have already begun to do, that the advocates of the various paths are fairly clearly divided along the lines of the divisions among the Christian communities themselves. It is not possible in the present context to trace in detail all of the reasons why a particular group of Christians has tended to follow one path rather than another, and one can only briefly indicate some of the factors involved. The first and second paths — those of assimilation into the majority group or of attempting to radically alter society — have been dominant among the Orthodox Christians. I believe that the Orthodox tendency to follow the paths of assimilation or of attempting to alter society in a way that emphasizes Arab unity and the ethnic and linguistic commonality of Christians and Moslems is in part the result of the dictates of demographic realities. The Orthodox have been the most widely dispersed of the Christians in the Middle East and were everywhere a minority; it was thus only natural that the pressures to follow these paths were greatest for them. A further reason can be found in the rather deep resentment of the West which one can note among the Orthodox Christians as a consequence of those efforts of Western Christianity that gave rise to the Uniate Melkite Rite, which greatly drained the elite of the Orthodox community, leaving those who remained even more exposed to the pressures of the dominant society in which they were dispersed. We might also point to certain Russian influences on the Orthodox. Beginning in the middle of the last century, Russian Christianity tended most frequently to side with the Arab Orthodox in the well-known Arab-Greek conflict, and to encourage and promote the "Arabness" of these Christians.<sup>15</sup>

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14. See, for example, Avedis K. Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion* (Cambridge Mass., 1965).

15. See, for example, Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843-1914* (Oxford, 1969).

We can note that the first two paths have also been adopted for the most part by the Protestant and Anglican Christians, many of whom were formerly Melkite Orthodox. These small communities are the creation of Western missionaries, who brought with them Western notions of ethnicity and linguistic unity. It seems only natural that, having been trained in these Western notions in a network of schools, beginning with the Syrian Protestant College (later called the American University), many Protestant and Anglican Christians in the Middle East have been among the most vocal advocates of "Arab" unity and "Arab" nationalism.

The Maronites have obviously been preeminent among those following the path of national particularism. The reasons behind this are, again, complex; most important among them have been the communal security afforded by a long tradition of close links with Western Christian allies and by geographical concentration in fairly easily defended areas in the mountains of Lebanon. We can observe a similar trend, and for similar reasons, among the Melkite (Greek) Catholics in Lebanon, though far less so among their co-religionists hailing from Syria. Melkite Catholics in Lebanon have generally, though perhaps less forcefully, supported the Maronite position of Christian particularism, while those influenced by the Syrian setting have tended to stress Arab unity and identity in a manner similar to the approach of their Melkite Orthodox counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, as I have indicated, the Armenians and perhaps to some extent the Jacobites have tended towards the "ghetto" solution to their problem as minorities in the predominantly Moslem society.

### **III. Conclusion: Possibilities for Dialogue**

I would like, in conclusion, to share some reflections on the question of the possibilities for dialogue between Jews and the Christian communities and their representatives about whom I have written above. As I indicated at the beginning, it is neither insignificant nor unexpected that literally no one representing these Christians participates in the existing forums of Jewish-Christian dialogue. For the most part, they will argue that the dialogue which Western Christians carry on with Jews does not concern them and does not deal with the problems which preoccupy them. I basically agree with them; while I believe that some form of dialogue between Jews and Eastern Christians is both possible and desirable, given properly qualified individuals, it seems to me that it must, at least initially, be conducted separately from the Jewish-Christian dialogue in which Western Christians engage. We must recognize that that which motivates Western Christians to enter into dialogue with Jews cannot similarly motivate Eastern

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16. R.M. Haddad, *op. cit.*, pp. 62, 74-75.

Christians. Western Christians, in seeking to engage in dialogue with Jews, do so, it seems to me, for essentially religious and theological reasons, related to a religious crisis growing out of the Nazi Holocaust and its exposure of the bankruptcy of traditional Christian attitudes towards and treatment of Judaism and the Jewish people. Most Jews, on the other hand, come to the dialogue not for religious reasons, but mainly for historical or sociological reasons, most especially with a view towards combatting anti-Semitism and to ensure for Jews a better and safer future in this world. This lack of symmetry between the Christian concern for theological safety and security and the very different Jewish concern for physical safety and security is, regrettably, not always recognized by the participants in the dialogue, and has thus at times given rise to misunderstandings and disappointments. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the dialogue between Jews and Western Christians will and must continue to be thus structured, at least for the foreseeable future.

From the survey presented above, it should be understood that the Eastern Christian communities cannot easily be fitted into this dialogue. That which preoccupies them has far more similarity with the preoccupations of Jews than with the theological concerns and crises of their Western co-religionists. Therein may lie the basis for conversations between Jews and these Christians. We could, for example, on the basis of our common predicament, fruitfully compare notes on the merits and dangers of the various paths to which I have referred, and concerning which Jews and Eastern Christians have accumulated considerable experience in the course of the last two centuries. To what extent has the path of assimilation been a successful one? Was there any country where Jews were more assimilated than Germany at the beginning of this century? To what extent has the path of attempting to radically alter society borne the promised fruits? Has the so-called post-Christian society in Europe and Russia truly made room, without question, for Jews? What has been the ultimate fate of those Christians in the Middle East who fostered and championed Arab nationalism? Jews and Christians in the Middle East could share notes as well regarding the advantages of national particularism, though certainly each must reach its own conclusions independently.

Needless to say, there are many difficulties to be overcome if such a dialogue is to take place on a significant level and on a permanent basis. Christians in the Middle East are clearly preoccupied with the tensions between East and West, between Christian and Moslem, between Christian and Christian, to an extent and in a way that makes it extremely difficult for them to consider a dialogue with Jews. Jews, on their part, find it difficult to distinguish among different Christians, particularly as Eastern Christianity, too, has its share of triumphalistic anti-Jewish theologies and attitudes, even while there have been fewer opportunities and possibilities to put them into practice. Nevertheless, I

would like to believe that such a dialogue is possible. In so far as it is to take place in this country, each side will have to accept the burden of responsibility for the welfare of the other side. Jews, as the majority in this land, must bear the full responsibilities incumbent upon them in their treatment of and relations with the Christian communities who are minorities not only in the Middle East, but in Israel as well. Meeting these responsibilities is the essence of my duties within my official capacity. In working with these communities on behalf of the Government, we are constantly conscious of the heightened sensitivities, fears and suspicions which their history has produced in them — fears and suspicions not unlike those understandably imbedded, today no less than in the past, in the Jewish psyche. Like Jews, these Christians desire respect and acceptance as they are, without demands or pressures to abandon their unique and particularistic identities, traditions and customs. As Jews, we must ensure that they effectively receive and enjoy such respect and acceptance.

For their part, Christians, in their struggle with the Islamic world, a struggle which has little to do with the State of Israel, must avoid or free themselves of the tendency which I have noted to make of Israel and the Jewish people a scapegoat to be sacrificed in order to appease those Moslem overlords who desire to maintain their traditional colonial hegemony over the Middle East and over its many and diverse ancient ethnic and religious communities.

These are some of the elementary requirements, both on the Jewish and on the Christian side, if such a dialogue is to get off the ground. As I have said, I believe that, at least initially, it will have to be conducted as a separate enterprise, which I believe could be tremendously fruitful and which might eventually have implications for and influence upon the dialogue between Jews and Western Christians.

*Immanuel* 19 (Winter 1984/85)



FEB 18 1986

יידישער וועלט-קאנגרעס

הקונגרס היהודי העולמי

# WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

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February 14, 1986,

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Rabbi Mordecai Waxman  
Chairman, IJCIC  
Synagogue Council of America  
327 Lexington Avenue  
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Dear Rabbi Waxman,

Our differing roles in Jerusalem did not give me an opportunity to speak with you, as I was a purveyor and you were a consumer. Nevertheless, I am sorry that we did not get a chance to continue the frank discussion that we started on the telephone immediately after I received the letter which you wrote to Cardinal Willebrands. I understand from Dr. Riegner that, through some machination, he succeeded in informing the good Cardinal that your missive was a personal one and not written as chairman of IJCIC. I doubt very strongly that in the archives of the Vatican that oral communication will historically carry any weight, as I doubt many of the oral exchanges which gave rise to so much unfounded optimism on the part of some of our colleagues in their relationship with the Vatican.

I received this morning a transmission of a letter written by Pierre Duprey of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. I find the letter offensive, organizationally. Substantively an attack from the Vatican on an IJCIC constituent is inadmissible and requires a formal IJCIC response, stating that.

IJCIC is in danger, not because of our substantive or even procedural differences in recent times, of not existing as a body, but because there has been far reaching effort to appease friends in the Vatican at the expense of organizational Jewish unity. I feel that, although we are committed to continue the dialogue in principle, the World Jewish Congress cannot, as suggested by Duprey, continue with business as usual, until IJCIC has met and been consulted. As a constituent member, we will not accept any letter from the chairman of IJCIC which has not been approved by all the constituent agencies,

I would like to make one more point: the minutes have been sketchy and faulty. I would like the minutes of the meeting in which we decided not to respond to the Vatican in any way to be re-circulated,



February 14, 1986,

I am also concerned, on a substantive level, with Duprey's comment, on page 2, suggesting that the meeting that took place in Rome was "of a religious nature." We have taken great pains over the years to make sure that this is not the nature of meetings between the Jews and the Vatican, and have endeavoured to couch these meetings in other frameworks. We have suddenly been thrust back many years by a lack of Jewish coordination. It is one thing for an organization to speak for itself: it is another for a chairman of IJCIC to become the spokesman for world Jewry. Please consider your responsibilities very carefully.


This is an internal IJCIC communication. The Vatican should not be getting copy of this: it is not a constituent agency of IJCIC and therefore should not be privy to our internal communications.

Finally I wish to convey to you the sense of my most recent discussion with Edgar Bronfman on this subject. Suffice it to say that the future role of the World Jewish Congress in IJCIC is being seriously examined.

I look forward to being in touch with you on the text of IJCIC's formal rejection of Pierre Duprey's offensive letter,

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



Israel Singer  
Secretary General

IS:hm

CC: AJCommittee  
Israel Jewish Council for  
Interreligious Consultations  
Synagogue Council of America  
B'nai B'rith  
Dr. G.M. Riegner

FOR YOUR INFORMATION  
Marc H. Tanenbaum

## REPLY

### Editor:

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

I have served in Jewish public life for some 30 years. My commentary on "The New Jewish Revisionists of History" which appeared in the *B'nai B'rith Messenger* was the second or third time during the past three decades that I have blown my gasket publicly over what to me became an absolutely morally intolerable episode. Like the news-commentator in Paddy Chayevsky's film, "Network," I felt the human need to open the window and cry out, "I'm madder than hell, and I just ain't going to take it anymore." (Rabbis occasionally should also be allowed to act humanly.)

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

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

The person in question—whom I prefer not to name in order not to prolong the needless controversy—participated fully in careful preparations for the Vatican meetings, agreed to the strategy that six major international Jewish organizations had worked out, and then betrayed that agreement by arbitrarily attacking all

other Jewish leaders—including three Chief Rabbis—who took part in the October 1985 deliberations with the Vatican and Pope John Paul II.

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



leaders and Judaism itself were merely puppets of Israel's foreign policy.

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

To say it plainly, this was the worst and most damaging experience I have had in my 25 years of work in Catholic-Jewish relations. While struggling to contain my genuine outrage, I had a

rational intention in writing that column: I believe that people, especially people who presume to leadership, must be responsible for their words and actions. If there is no accountability for such absurd behavior, impetuous—and, indeed, narcissistic—people take encouragement from silence to repeat their tantrums.

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

**Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum**  
Director  
International Relations  
Department  
American Jewish  
Committee

*B'nai B'rith*  
**Messenger**

Vol. 90 No. 6  
Friday, February 7, 1986  
28 Shevat, 5746

*B'nai B'rith Messenger* is a consolidation of *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, founded January 1, 1997, with the *California Jewish Review*, the *Jewish Community Press*, *Jewish Publications*, *California Jewish News Publishing Co. Inc.*, the *Valley Jewish News*, and the *California Jewish Voice*, published weekly by *Jewish Publications, Inc.*, a California corporation, 2510 West 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90067 (213) 380-5000.  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 57991, Los Angeles, CA 90057.

Subscription \$20.00 per year, outside California \$27.00; single copies 50 cents. Back issues \$1.00. Canada, Mexico \$38.00; other foreign subscriptions \$52 per year.

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