

**THE INFLUENCE OF JULES ISAAC
ON ROMAN CATHOLIC TEACHING
ABOUT JEWS AND JUDAISM**

By

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**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology,
University of St. Michael's College, and the
Historical Department of the Toronto School of Theology**

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Abstract

The Influence of Jules Isaac on Roman Catholic Teaching about Jews and Judaism

Master of Arts in Theology 2008

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How ironic that the primary catalyst in connection with the reorientation of the Catholic Church's attitudes toward Jews and Judaism should have been a Jew. Having lost his wife, daughter and son-in-law in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, septuagenarian French Jewish historian Jules Isaac emerged from the Second World War to wage a single-handed campaign, in words and in deeds, for the rectification of Roman Catholic teachings about Jews and Judaism, contemptuous teachings, argued Isaac, that overreached the bounds of scriptural and historical accuracy, contemptuous teachings, contended Isaac, that had sustained and nourished other varieties of anti-semitism for nearly two millennia. We now know that it did not occur to John XXIII to add to the agenda of Vatican II the relationship between the Church and the Jews until one week after the close of the pre-preparatory phase of Vatican II when John XXIII met one-on-one with Jules Isaac.

IN MEMORY OF

DORIS KANNER
HARAV PINCHAS JOSEPH (HALEVI) KANNER
AND
HENRI ALEXIS (HALEVI) KANNER

WHO
ON NEW YEAR'S EVE 1942
TOOK FLIGHT FROM VICHY ACROSS THE PYRENEES
AND THEREBY AVOIDED THE FATE
OF SIX MILLION OF THEIR BRETHREN

ל"ה

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Sans doute est-ce un signe des temps qu'un text conciliaire, appelé à avoir un grand retentissement dans le monde entier et, j'espère, d'heureuses conséquences dans la vie de l'Eglise, ait été inscrit par un pape au programme d'un concile oecuménique, ait été étudié, discuté, adopté par plus de deux mille évêques, à la demande d'un laïc, et d'un laïc qui n'était pas chrétien.¹

*Mgr Charles de Provençères
Archevêque d'Aix, Arles et Embrun
January, 1965*

¹ Jean-Léon Cohen, "Jules Isaac: L'unité d'une vie," *Sens* 12 (December 1996): as quoted at 460.

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-CHAPTER ONE-

PROLOGUE

It was February 1946. Eighteen months had elapsed since the liberation of Paris. Twelve months had passed since the liberation of Auschwitz. And it had been only nine months since the military act of surrender had been signed on behalf of the Nazi armed forces in Reims and in Berlin. The scale of the crime that had been perpetrated upon European Jewry by the Nazis was only beginning to emerge. The first-ever international conference of Christians and Jews organized with the specific purpose of discussing (as the report of the conference would put it) "...their mutual responsibilities and the possibilities of joint action in relation to human welfare and order on the basis of their common convictions and with proper regard for differences of faith and practice"² had yet to take place. This conference would be held at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford from July 30, 1946 to August 6, 1946 under the joint auspices of the National Conference of Christians and Jews of the United States, by that time almost 20 years old,³ and the more recently-established British Council of Christians and Jews. The outcome would be the formal establishment of an International Congress of Christians and Jews, headquartered in Geneva and under the direction of Dr. Pierre Visseur. Christian and Jewish members of such joint bodies as were then known to exist or to be in the process of formation, attending in their personal rather than their officially representative capacities, were to congregate in Oxford, one hundred and fifty in total. "Of all the various group tensions,"

² William W. Simpson, *Freedom, Justice and Responsibility: A Retrospective Prospect* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1987), 3.

³ Christian M. Rutishauser, "The 1947 Seelisberg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 2, no. 2 (2007): 36.

stated one of the conference commission reports, "that known as anti-Semitism concerns the whole world and calls for special treatment. Recent history shows that an attack on Jewry is an attack on the fundamental principles of Judaism and Christianity on which our ordered human society depends. Accordingly it is advisable to deal with anti-Semitism as a special case requiring special treatment, though suggestions for dealing with anti-Semitism may be applicable to other types of group tensions."⁴ Thus was born the need for a separate emergency conference to address anti-semitism as well as the establishment of an international council of Christians and Jews.

In February 1946, Jules Isaac was in 69th year, formally retired and not in good health. He had just emerged from the most traumatic years of his existence or, in any event, the most traumatic since the loss at age 14 of both parents within six days of each other. He had come into this world in Rennes on November 18, 1877 of French-Jewish parentage, the youngest of three children.⁵ But his parents were not Breton. His birth in Brittany had been happenstance; his father, a professional army officer, had been stationed in Rennes at the time. His mother, Mathilde Léonie Massenbach, the daughter of a grain trader, hailed from Strasbourg, his father, Edouard Marx Isaac, from Metz. Isaac's paternal grandfather, Isaac Marx,⁶ born in 1791, had fought in Napoleon's Grande Armée at Waterloo. Isaac had experienced the childhood of the son of any officer stationed in a French provincial town until his carefree existence had been brought to a sudden end by the deaths of his parents in September of 1891, his father from a stroke

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Elder sisters were Laure, born in 1867, and Henriette, born in 1873. Four years later, on November 25, 1881, in the village of Sotto il Monte, Lombardy, a 27 year-old peasant woman, the wife of a sharecropper, would give birth to her fourth child, a boy of Italian-Catholic parentage. Fate would bring these two together in a pivotal encounter, but not before the Italian Catholic had become Pope.

⁶ Edouard decided to invert his given name and surname producing "Marx Isaac" to which he prefixed the French name "Edouard." Jules Marx Isaac was to drop the name "Marx."

and his mother six days later from diabetes-related complications. Custody of Isaac had passed to Salomon Blum (husband of Laure, the elder of Jules' two older sisters) who had decided that young Jules should be sent off to board at Lakanal.

Who was Jules Isaac in February 1946? Graduate of the Sorbonne, eminent French historian, author and updater of a multi-volume manuel d'histoire under the generic title *de Cours d'histoire Malet-Isaac à l'usage de l'enseignement secondaire*,⁷ but known by generations of French secondary students who had been fed historical truth through this multi-volume work, simply as "le Malet-Isaac,"⁸ wounded at Verdun and commander of the French Legion of Honor (Croix de Guerre 1914-1918 for bravery), Isaac had held the office of Inspecteur général de l'Instruction publique for France (Inspector General of French National Education) from 1936 until December of 1940 when he had been stripped of his office by Vichy. In reaction, Isaac had written to Maréchal Pétain,

...L'historien que vous avez convoqué naguère, en votre bureau des Invalides, et à qui vous avez bien voulu témoigner de l'estime, se rappelle respectueusement à votre souvenir. On a lu dans les journaux d'hier: 'Le conseil des ministres a poursuivi la mise au point de statut des israélites.' Par cette simple formule, me voici déjà exclu de la communauté nationale française, et avec moi – Français jusqu'à la moelle des os – combien d'autres, depuis Bergson notre maître à tous jusqu'aux jeunes des classes 38 ou 39, qui ont bien servi la France de tout leur génie ou de tout leur sang.⁹

Pétain had left it to his secretary to respond. Pursuant to the *statut des Juifs*, passed by Vichy, "...M. Isaac Jules, Inspecteur Général de l'Instruction Publique

⁷ André Kaspi, *Jules Isaac ou la passion de la vérité* (n.p.: Plon, 2002), 88.

⁸ Prior to the First World War, Hachette had engaged historian Albert Malet to write the manuels scolaires. Malet, with whom Isaac began to collaborate, died in 1915. In 1923, Hachette formally engaged Jules Isaac to write these manuels, but decided to maintain the name "Malet," adding to it the name "Isaac." Thus was born le Malet-Isaac, but a multi-volume manuel d'histoire that issued forth from the pen of Jules Isaac alone.

⁹ Kaspi, as quoted at 142.

(Enseignement Secondaire), qui a cessé ses fonctions le 19 décembre 1940, est admis à faire valoir ses droits à une pension de retraite à dater du 20 décembre 1940.”¹⁰ From February 23, 1941 to April 19, 1942, Jérôme Carcopino, professor of ancient Rome at the Sorbonne, would serve as minister of education for France. Isaac’s name was removed from the newly authorized multi-volume manuel d’histoire. As Abel Bonnard, Caropino’s successor, would put it, “Il est inadmissible...que l’histoire de France soit enseignée aux jeunes Français par un Isaac.”¹¹

In 1942, apprehensive for his own safety and that of his family, Isaac had sought refuge with his wife, Laure, in the Haute-Loire. There he would encounter a young Algerian Jew, André Chouraqui, director of the network of resistance in the Haute-Loire, who had been assigned the task of procuring false papers for the Isaacs.¹² When Isaac learnt that Chouraqui was pursuing studies at the Rabbinical School of France, he had shown Chouraqui a thin notebook on the cover of which was written, “Chrétiens, n’oubliez pas!” The thoughts and reflections inside this notebook, prompted by the question of whether anti-semitism might have roots in Christianity, represented the earliest stages of what would become *Jésus et Israël*. These thoughts and reflections would also influence the course of Chouraqui’s own life trajectory.

Under the pseudonym of Junius, Isaac’s first impulse had been to write *Les Oligarques*, an account of Athens falling under the totalitarian domination of Sparta in the fifth century BC, but in truth, a disguised protest. As time passed, however, it was the

¹⁰ Ibid., as quoted at 143.

¹¹ Ibid., as quoted at 147.

¹² André Chouraqui was born in Ain-Temouchant, Algeria. He pursued Jewish studies at the Rabbinical School of France and philosophical studies at the Sorbonne. From 1941 to 1945, he directed the network of resistance in the Haute-Loire. From 1959 to 1963, he was personal adviser to David Ben-Gurion. In 1965, Chouraqui became deputy mayor of Jerusalem. He was a permanent member of the Universal Israelite Alliance.

inter-relationship between Jesus and Israel that came to attract his attention. "Quel était mon propos initial? Savoir si, comme le veut l'opinion courante en chrétienté, comme l'enseigne une tradition vivace, Jésus avait rejeté Israël, - le peuple juif dans son ensemble -, avait prononcé sa déchéance, l'avait réprouvé et même maudit; et réciproquement s'il était vrai qu'Israël avait méconnu Jésus, refusé de voir en lui le Messie et le Fils de Dieu, l'avait rejeté, bafoué, crucifié; s'il méritait depuis bientôt deux millénaires la flétrissure infamante de 'peuple déicide'..."¹³ Paradoxically, Isaac's inquiry began with the New Testament and not the Old, as he would recall in the twilight of his life.

...j'ai été amené à m'intéresser au sort des Israélites persécutés...J'approchais pour la première fois des rabbins et des grands rabbins, des hommes comme Edmond Fleg, Léon Algazi, et aussi le grand philosophe catholique Maurice Blondel. Alors, le débat sur la question religieuse a commencé en moi. J'ai reconnu la haute valeur spirituelle du judaïsme, et il est entré dans ma vie profonde. Toutefois, je reste non confessionnel.

En cette année 42 [June 1942 to be precise, according to Daniel Isaac, the elder of Isaac's two sons],¹⁴j'ai commencé à relire les Évangiles. Pourquoi pas l'Ancien Testament, me direz-vous? L'Ancien, j'y suis venu par le Nouveau. Je l'ai dit au pape Jean XXIII, et il a ri. Historien, je sais qu'il ne faut pas se fier aux traductions. Or, si je suis assez helléniste pour lire le Nouveau Testament dans le texte, je ne suis pas du tout hébraïsant. C'est donc aux Évangiles que je me suis reporté. Et après cette lecture, j'ai écrit une douzaine de pages que j'ai communiquées à Maurice Blondel [who paid scant attention] et au pasteur Trocmé [who encouraged Isaac to persist]; j'y notais ma découverte, base de tout mon travail postérieur: sur beaucoup de points, il y a un abîme entre la réalité évangélique et un certain enseignement chrétien traditionnel.¹⁵

¹³ Jules Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1956), 14.

¹⁴ Kaspi, 181. Synchronistically, Daniel Isaac was also reflecting at that time about the relationship between Jesus and Israel. His 61-page typewritten memoir was filed by Jules Isaac under "Judaïsme/Christianisme."

¹⁵ Jean Toulat, *Juifs, mes frères* (Paris: Fayard, 1968), 137. Isaac was wary of translations (from Greek to Latin and the vernacular) and when it came to Jesus' teachings, of translations of translations (from Aramaic to Greek, from Greek to Latin and from Latin to the vernacular).

Isaac's research led him to discover what he was to label a 'teaching of contempt' for Jews and Judaism embedded in Christian tradition, a teaching that had its origins in the fourth century of the common era, "...a custom more than a tradition, a custom made up of deep-seated prejudices and of the most odious habits of mind, heart, and tongue,"¹⁶ traditions that were no more than "...theological myths which overreach everywhere the bounds of historical and even of scriptural accuracy."¹⁷ The eight sermons against the Jews preached by John Chrysostom in 386/387 was an example par excellence of such a teaching of contempt. This teaching of contempt had as its corollary a system of restrictions, exclusions, humiliations and servitude which Isaac would label a 'system of degradation.' Bracketed by God for their final conversion, wretched witness "of their own iniquity and of our truth," in the words of St Augustine,¹⁸ the Jews as a witnessing people had to become so by a visible loss of rights. An example par excellence of this system of degradation consisted of the Fourth Lateran Council Constitutions 67 to 70 which decreed that: the faithful must be protected from the practice of usury by the Jews (67); Jews and Muslims must wear distinctive clothing so that they will be recognizable always as non-Christians (68); it was forbidden to Jews to hold public office (69); and converts were required to abandon all Jewish practices (70).¹⁹

Isaac would one day have occasion to adumbrate for no less a Roman Catholic authority than the Pope this teaching of contempt and its corollary system of degradation.

The medium would be a *mémoire* that Isaac would hand-deliver to John XXIII at an

¹⁶ Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁸ Jules Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, trans. Sally Gran (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), as quoted at 240.

¹⁹ George H. Tavard, "Nostra Aetate: Forty Years Later," in *Jews and Catholics Together: Celebrating the Legacy of Nostra Aetate: Proceedings of a symposium held in Toronto 10 November 2005*, ed. Michael Attridge (Ottawa: Novalis, Saint Paul University, 2007), 16.

audience in the Vatican on June 13, 1960. The mémoire would incorporate, sometimes verbatim, the text of a lecture that Isaac was destined to deliver six months earlier on December 15, 1959 at the Sorbonne and entitled *Du redressement nécessaire de l'enseignement Chrétien concernant Israël*.²⁰

Thème du judaïsme dégénéré, sclérosé à la venue du Christ; thème du 'peuple charnel', incapable de percevoir le sens vrai des Ecritures, d'en avoir une autre connaissance que 'grossièrement 'charnelle'; thème du peuple réprouvé, déchu, maudit par le Seigneur lui-même; thème du Christ méconnu et rejeté par un peuple réfractaire et aveugle; thème – nocif et meurtrier entre tous – du peuple 'déicide', globalement et à tout jamais responsable de la Crucifixion; thème de la Dispersion d'Israël en 70, châtiment divin de la Crucifixion; thème de la 'Synagogue de Satan', devenu par le rejet du Christ le principal inspirateur du judaïsme. Forgés dans l'entraînement d'une polémique implacable, ces thèmes débordaient les données scripturaires et historiques; il est aisé d'en faire la démonstration. Mais si l'on songe qu'un tel enseignement a été professé de siècle en siècle, de génération en génération, par des centaines et des milliers de voix, souvent des plus éloquentes, souvent aussi des plus grossièrement injurieuses, comment s'étonner qu'il ait fini par s'incruster dans la mentalité chrétienne, la modeler, la façonner jusque dans les profondeurs du subconscient? Ainsi, peu à peu, s'est formée en chrétienté une image caricaturale et légendaire du judaïsme, du peuple et de l'homme juif, image d'une malignité pernicieuse, génératrice de repulsion et de haine. Peuple indigne, mais peuple-témoin, le peuple juif devait d'être aussi par une déchéance visible. L'enseignement du mépris a eu pour corollaire un système de restrictions, d'exclusions, d'humiliations, de servitude qu'on peut à bon droit dénommer 'système d'avilissement'.²¹

²⁰ Jules Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, trans. Dorothy and James Parkes (New York: National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1961), This lecture would be published in French under the title *L'Antisémitisme a-t-il des racines chrétiennes* (Fasquelles). Subsequently, it would be translated into English by Dorothy and James Parkes and published (National Conference of Christians and Jews).

²¹ Jules Isaac, "Du redressement nécessaire de l'enseignement Chrétien concernant Israël," (1960), 6. The particular copy of this dossier in Harvard University's Widener Library is imprinted "Exemplaire spécialement imprimé pour Monsieur le Président et Madame Ben Gourion." (In fact, Ben Gurion was Prime Minister of the State of Israel).

Twenty-five years later, in 1986, Johannes Cardinal Willebrands as he then was,²² who would play a pivotal supporting role to that of Augustin Cardinal Bea²³ in the formulation of *Nostra aetate* no. 4, would elaborate the Teaching of Contempt this way:

Such a teaching [The Teaching of Contempt] was never perhaps so systematic as [Isaac's] title would seem to imply, but there is no doubt that both these points were the main support of it. These two problems can be formulated as follows: The Jews were guilty of killing Christ and have since remained so. Therefore they bear upon themselves a kind of original sin with its corresponding condemnation, be it to eternal pilgrimage across the world and outside the land of Israel, or else to God's equally eternal disgrace, malediction and reprobation. Or worse still, to all these put together.²⁴

Isaac was astonished by his discovery of what appeared to be a Christian strain of anti-semitism. Surely anti-semitism was by definition unchristian, even anti-Christian. Had not Pope Pius XI as recently as 1938 declared in an address to a group of Belgian pilgrims, "Anti-Semitism...is a movement in which we Christians can have no part...Anti-Semitism is inadmissible. Spiritually we are Semites...Through Christ and in Christ, we are spiritual offspring of Abraham."²⁵ Ten years earlier, on March 25, 1928, had not anti-semitism been formally condemned in a Decree of the Holy Office which pronounced, "The Apostolic See...even as it disapproves of all envy and jealousy among nations, so it condemns in an especial manner the hatred against the people once chosen

²² Johannes Willebrands was born in the Netherlands 1909 and completed his doctoral studies in Mussolini's Rome. In 1940, he returned to the Netherlands to carry on his pastoral work and became involved with Protestants in the underground movement which assisted Jews to escape. In 1952, he founded the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions.

²³ Augustin Bea was born in Germany in 1881, was educated as a Jesuit in the Netherlands, Austria and studied classical and oriental philology at Berlin University. In 1925, he began teaching Old Testament exegesis and theology at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, where he served as Rector from 1939 to 1949. During the Second World War, Bea would offer refuge to hunted Jews within the Pontifical Institute.

²⁴ Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, "Christians and Jews: A New Vision," in *Vatican II by Those Who Were There*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), 224.

²⁵ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 22.

by God, that hatred, namely, which nowadays is commonly called anti-Semitism.”²⁶ And yet Isaac’s research had led him to conclude that there was a Christian tradition of anti-semitism. By 1962, a year before his death, Isaac would be framing it in the following terms: “Whether conscious or subconscious, [Christian anti-semitism] is perennial and virulent, of great scope and intensity. It may be affirmed with complete confidence that the vast majority of Christians - or those recognized as such – are anti-Semites. For even in the best Christians, even in those who fought most courageously against Nazi anti-Semitism, it is easy to distinguish traces of a kind of subconscious anti-Semitism.”²⁷

The discovery of a Christian strain of anti-semitism led Isaac to hypothesize that this Christian anti-semitism had been and continued to be “...the powerful trunk, with deep and multiple roots, upon which have been grafted other varieties of anti-Semitism, even varieties as anti-Christian as Nazi racialism.”²⁸ Is it a coincidence that the metaphor chosen by Isaac to describe the inter-relationship between Christian anti-semitism and racial anti-semitism is the very same metaphor used by St Paul to describe the inter-relationship between old and new Israel? “But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you (Rom 11:17-18).” It is not racial anti-semitism that supports Christian anti-semitism, but the converse: Christian anti-semitism supports (or if you prefer, “sustains” or “nourishes”) other varieties of anti-semitism.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 24.

²⁸ Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, 56.

When *Jésus et Israël* was first published,²⁹ opinion on the roots of racial anti-semitism was divided. Authors such as F. Rosenzweig, L. Poliakov, E. Sterling, J. Parkes and M. Mueller-Claudius were also of the view that racial anti-semitism could be traced in part to anti-Jewish rhetoric in the Church's preaching and teaching. However, Catholic writers, such as C. Journet and H. Lubac, and Jewish writers, such as H. Arendt, regarded contemporary racial anti-semitism as part of an anti-Christian movement opposing indiscriminately all things Jewish. Even Gregory Baum, however, in his rebuttal of Isaac's contentions that the passion accounts of all four gospel narratives and the gospel of John in general are interlaced with anti-Jewish polemic and apologetic,³⁰ a rebuttal published in 1961 under the title *The Jews and the Gospel, a Re-examination of the New Testament*, would find himself compelled to concede that "...it is unfortunately true that the way in which the Christian gospel was preached has created a type of the Jew and that this image has entered the subconscious of the Christian people producing the psychological mechanism of which a pagan hate could take possession, a hate brought forth in part for economic and political reasons and in part of the grain of diabolical malice hidden in the heart of fallen man, a hate that has nothing to do with Christian preaching."³¹ In the aftermath of the Declaration *Nostra aetate*, the man who had been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the formulation of the first systematic, positive and comprehensive presentation of Jews and Judaism in the history of the Roman Catholic Church would not be persuaded by Isaac's thesis on the relationship

²⁹ It should be noted that "Israel" for Jules Isaac means the Jewish people and not the modern Jewish State.

³⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 3-4 where Baum in his Introduction proclaimed that the book he wrote in the late fifties and published in 1961 no longer represented his position on the relationship between Church and Synagogue.

³¹ Gregory Baum, *The Jews and the Gospel: A Re-Examination of the New Testament* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1961), 282, n. 42.

between Christian anti-semitism and racial anti-semitism. In a book published in 1966, Augustin Cardinal Bea who was to be appointed president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU) by John XXIII on June 5, 1960, would write, "As I have already had occasion to remark in the Council chamber itself, the painful phenomenon of anti-semitism draws its sustenance neither principally nor exclusively from religious sources. Many other factors, political, national, psychological, social and economic, enter into it."³² Fifty years after the publication of *Jésus et Israël*, the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews would express a not so dissimilar view on the question.³³

But it may be asked whether the Nazi persecution of the Jews was not made easier by the anti-Jewish prejudices imbedded in some Christian minds and hearts. Did anti-Jewish sentiment among Christians make them less sensitive, or even indifferent, to the persecutions launched against the Jews by National Socialism when it reached power?

Any response to this question must take into account that we are dealing with the history of people's attitudes and ways of thinking, subject to multiple influences. Moreover, many people were altogether unaware of the 'final solution' that was being put into effect against a whole people; others were afraid for themselves and those near to them; some took advantage of the situation, and still others were moved by envy. A response would need to be given case by case. To do this, however, it is necessary to know what precisely motivated people in a particular situation.³⁴

In any event, the personal catastrophe that befell Jules Isaac had occurred on October 7, 1943. On the 1st of that month, under the alias of M. et Mme Imbert, Isaac and his wife had checked into the Grand Hôtel de Riom. Riom was situated in the

³² Augustin Cardinal Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People: A Commentary on the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*, trans. Philip Loretz, S.J. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 8-9.

³³ The genesis of the Commission for religious relations with the Jews (CRRJ) was a person and an office in the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU). In 1974, the CRRJ was created, linked to, but distinct from, the SPCU.

³⁴ "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," in *Catholic-Jewish Relations: Documents from the Holy See* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1999), 16-17.

département of Puy-de-Dôme, one of the most dangerous départements by virtue of its proximity to Vichy. But Riom was also proximate to their daughter, Juliette, and son-in-law, Robert Boudeville, and to the library of Clermont-Ferrand. On the morning of the 7th of October, Isaac had left the Grand Hôtel for his shave at the barber shop which had been followed by his customary stroll through the town. He had returned to a deserted room in the hotel to discover that Laure had been apprehended by the Gestapo and their hotel room searched. Their daughter, Juliette, her husband, Robert Boudeville and the younger of their two sons, Jean-Claude, had been arrested separately.³⁵ A message was waiting for Isaac: if he did not give himself up, his wife and children would suffer the consequences.

Beside himself, Isaac had seized his manuscripts for *Les Oligarques* and the first chapters of what was to become *Jésus et Israël*. In a daze, he found himself walking on the road to Clermont, then turned back and headed to Riom. By the time he showed up at the offices of the Gestapo, they were closed for the day. Finally, Isaac had turned to a younger colleague of his who, "...sympathique, déferent, compatissant et désireux de [l]'aider dans la mesure de ses moyens et sans se compromettre trop ouvertement," had driven Isaac into the countryside. Until the Liberation of France, two gentile families, righteous gentiles, M. et Mme Léon and M. et Mme Bocquet, had risked life and limb to give refuge to Isaac. Upon the liberation of Paris and the restoration of the French Republic in August 1944, Isaac had returned to Paris and had been restored by de Gaulle to his pre-war function of Inspecteur général de l'Instruction publique for France. But Isaac did not last long in this office. Anxious about the fate of his wife, daughter and

³⁵ Daniel, the elder of Isaac's two younger sons, served in the 1^{re} Armée Française under General de Lattre de Tassigny.

younger son, Jean-Claude, Isaac would regularly scrutinize the lists of returnees posted at l'hôtel Lutetia. He was also preoccupied with completing the writing of *Jésus and Israël*. "Je m'y attelai désespérément, de toutes mes forces déclinantes, tendues à l'extrême: vraie course contre la montre, car la maladie avec le désespoir me talonnait."³⁶ Isaac had retired from public service on October 14, 1944, a retirement made retroactive to November 18, 1942, his 65th birthday.³⁷ But alas, Isaac was not destined for good news about the fate of his wife, daughter and son-in-law.

At 10 30 h on March 28, 1943, train 61 bound for Auschwitz and carrying 1,000 deportees had departed from Bobigny Station in Drancy. The 1,000 deportees had included 125 children under the age of eighteen years, as well as Laure Isaac, Juliette Isaac and Jean-Claude Isaac. Upon their arrival at Auschwitz, 613 – the number of mitzvot in the Torah - had been sent to the gas chambers.³⁸ Only 42 of the 1,000 had survived, including Jean-Claude Isaac, who had managed to escape a death march and return to France in early May 1945.³⁹ As for Robert Boudeville, he was deported to Buchenwald and then transferred to Bergen-Belsen, where he perished. But on the 27th of March, while in Drancy and awaiting deportation, Laure had been able to compose and smuggle a final communication to her husband.

Mon ami bien-aimé,
 Nous partons demain, c'est bien dur, et la plus grande souffrance est de rien savoir de toi depuis l'affreux jour de la séparation. Mon ami, garde-toi pour nous, aie confiance et finis ton oeuvre que le monde attend. Nous sommes réunis encore tous les trois, les enfants me soutiennent, que ne sont-ils près de toi. Mais bientôt, nous nous retrouveront, le cauchemar ne

³⁶ Kaspi, as quoted at 177.

³⁷ On October 1, 1945, his status formally changed from that of Inspecteur général de l'Instruction publique for France to that of Inspecteur général honoraire.

³⁸ Kaspi, 166.

³⁹ Marco Morselli, "Jules Isaac and the Origins of Nostra Aetate," in *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Jewish-Catholic Relations: Proceedings of the International Conference held in Jerusalem 30 October - 1 November 2005*, ed. Neville Lamdan and Alberto Melloni (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), 23.

durera pas, nous t'aimons tant, et c'est patient et prudent, je t'en prie, ne va pas voir où il y'a encore des risques de contagion. Nous donnerons des nouvelles dès que nous pourrons et ne savons pas où nous allons. Mais il faut espérer, il faut nous retrouver et il ne faut pas nous décourager. Mon ami, au revoir, je t'aime et je t'embrasse de toute mon âme. A bientôt. Nous allons bien.⁴⁰

The news had demolished Isaac. "Je n'ai su l'affreuse réalité qu'en 1945. J'en fus littéralement accablé. Comment ai-je surmonté cette crise? Avant d'être déportée en Allemagne, ma femme avait réussi à faire passer, de Drancy, un billet où elle me disait: 'Garde-toi pour ton oeuvre.' Cette pensée m'a dicté mon devoir. Dès lors, j'ai considéré mon travail comme une sorte de mission sacrée."⁴¹ He had retreated to "la Pergola," his villa in Aix-en-Provence, to devote himself to completing this sacred mission of fighting for a wounded Israel, for brotherhood against hatred, by immersing himself in writing Part IV (which addressed the Christian accusation of deicide) of what the world was awaiting.⁴²

It was February 1946. While browsing in a bookstore in Aix-en-Provence, Isaac happened to pick up a copy of the recently-published *Jésus en Son Temps*, a work carrying a *nihil obstat*, signed with the respected name of Joseph Huby and an imprimatur and assured of widespread distribution by the most skillful promotion. The author was Henri Daniel-Rops, the same Daniel-Rops who was destined to be elected to the Académie Française in 1955, the same Daniel-Rops who was destined to be invested with the order of the Grand Cross of Saint Gregory by Pope Pius XII, the very same Daniel-Rops whose acquaintance Isaac had made fifteen years earlier at a meeting of

⁴⁰ Kaspi, as quoted at 167. In relation to this message, Jules Isaac comments, in his papers, "Une sotte modestie m'a fait effacer: 'ton oeuvre que le monde attend.'"

⁴¹ Toulat, 138.

⁴² Part III (which addresses the problem of Jesus and Israel in their reciprocal relations) was written in the spring of 1944 while Isaac was in hiding in Levroux, a little town in the old province of Berry.

l'Union pour la Verité and who, upon learning of the murders of Isaac's wife, daughter and son-in-law, had sent not one but two notes of condolence, the first dated September 22, 1945 and the second, October 19, 1945, evoking "...votre deuil affreux avec une émotion dont ce billet voudrait vous porter l'expression affectueuse."⁴³

Isaac's eyes fell upon Daniel-Rops' commentary on Matthew 27:25, "Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'" and was stunned by what he read.

Ce dernier vœu du peuple qu'il avait élu, Dieu, dans sa justice, l'a exaucé. Au long des siècles, sur toutes les terres où s'est dispersée la race juive, le sang retombe et, éternellement, le cri de meurtre poussé au prétoire de Pilate couvre un cri de détresse mille fois répété. Le visage d'Israël persecute emplit l'Histoire, mais il ne peut faire oublier cet autre visage sali de sang et de crachats, et dont la foule juive, elle, n'a pas eu pitié. Il n'appartenait pas à Israël, sans doute, de ne pas tuer son Dieu après l'avoir méconnu, et, comme le sang appelle mystérieusement le sang, il n'appartient peut-être pas davantage à la charité chrétienne de faire que l'horreur du pogrom ne compense, dans l'équilibre secret des volontés divines, l'insoutenable horreur de la Crucifixion.⁴⁴

Isaac returned home and penned a first draft of a letter to Daniel-Rops which he did not send. The second draft he did send and it is dated April 21, 1946. It reads in part:

Vous en êtes là, vous Daniel-Rops. Vous ne voyez même pas que vous renouvez le geste de Ponce Pilate et que, selon la formule du psalmiste, vous vous lavez les mains dans l'innocence, dans l'innocence du sang des millions de martyrs juifs assassinés à Auschwitz et autres lieux d'horreur, fraternellement unis dans la mort à des millions de martyrs chrétiens ...Et les ennemis de Jésus ont été en Palestine les mêmes qu'il eût rencontrés en tout pays, en tout autre temps, les mêmes qu'il rencontre toujours, chez tous les peuples: les dirigeants, les notables, les bien-pensants. Le peuple juif n'est ici que figure, il est figure de l'humanité tout entière. Péguy, ce Péguy que vous devez avoir aussi mal lu que les Évangiles, Péguy disait: *Ce ne sont pas les Juifs qui ont crucifié Jésus-Christ, mais nos péchés à tous; et les Juifs, qui n'ont été que l'instrument, participent comme les autres à la fontaine du salut.* Voilà comment parle

⁴³ Kaspi, as quoted at 186.

⁴⁴ Henri Daniel-Rops, *Jésus en son temps* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1945), as quoted by Kaspi at 186.

un vrai chrétien. C'est sous le signe de Péguy que notre amitié jadis s'était conclue. C'est sous le signe de Péguy qu'aujourd'hui, je la brise.⁴⁵

Isaac's correspondence elicited a deafening silence. He decided to publish the text of his letter, which appeared in the July 1946 issue of *Europe* under the title, "Comment on écrit l'Histoire (sainte)." Within one year, Daniel-Rops proposed to replace the passage in question with the text that follows.⁴⁶

Ne pouvant en raison des interdictions portées par la puissance qui exerçait le protectorat exécuter Jésus, les dirigeants juifs ont manoeuvré pour que le Romain ne pût faire autrement que d'appliquer leur sentence...Mais sans même poser l'insoluble problème de la responsabilité d'un peuple par rapport aux actes de ses dirigeants, un chrétien peut-il ne pas se demander si, dans ce drame, assumant une fois de plus son rôle mystérieux de témoin et de figure de l'humanité entière, Israël n'a pas manifesté le refus de l'homme pécheur au message du Salut.⁴⁷

The 1951 printing of *Jésus en son Temps* was to bear this notation: "New Edition, Revised and Corrected in July, 1951." In the 1962 edition, Daniel-Rops was to write, "...the present text (1961) differs from that written in 1945-1946; this change translates the evolution of the author's thought during these fifteen years."⁴⁸ In a later book, *La Vie quotidienne au temps de Jésus*, Daniel-Rops would observe, "We must cite in a class by itself the moving plea by Jules Isaac, *Jésus et Israël*...to which our final stage [of

⁴⁵ Kaspi, as quoted at 187.

⁴⁶ In an interview with L'Arche in October 1963, one month after the death of Jules Isaac, Daniel-Rops paid tribute to "la mémoire du grand historien juif...Car Jules Isaac restera comme un des auteurs les plus émouvants, un des témoins les plus convaincants de l'amitié entre les Juifs et les Chrétiens. On pouvait, sur certains points, être en désaccord avec lui; on pouvait penser que certaines positions chrétiennes lui paraissaient fermées, ce qui l'amenait à les juger avec une sévérité qui n'était pas toujours équitable: on n'a jamais pu douter un instant de la sincérité ni de la générosité qu'il mit à mener ce qu'il tenait pour un apostolat: l'établissement entre Juifs et Chrétiens d'un climat de vérité et de charité." Kaspi, as quoted at 188.

⁴⁷ Kaspi, as quoted at 188. A chronicle authored by Isaac and titled "Revu et corrigé" appeared in the December 1947 issue of *Europe*.

⁴⁸ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, as quoted at 260, n. 70.

thinking] owes many elements.”⁴⁹ Jules Isaac’s confrontation with the Roman Catholic Church had begun.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ten years later, in *Antisémitisme et le mystère d'Israël*, Fadley Lovsky would note that he had found Matthew 27:25 cited for the first time in Tertullian's treatise, *Against the Jews*, written shortly after 200 CE and still, Tertullian had deduced nothing from it concerning a curse on the Jewish people. Nor had Origen. (See Fadley Lovsky, *Antisémitisme et le mystère d'Israël*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1955, 435).

-CHAPTER TWO-

LA VÉRITÉ DU COMBAT LIVRÉ

Not even a year had elapsed since his skirmish with Daniel-Rops. Isaac had been working at a feverish pace to complete *Jésus et Israël*, keeping both his sons apprised by letter of his progress in the completion of the manuscript. Finally, they were to read this: “...je pus remettre ma copie à l’éditeur, mon corps au chirurgien [surgery scheduled for March 29, 1947].”⁵¹ On March 1, 1947, Isaac met with the director of French publisher Albin Michel and reported, “Il est toujours très désireux de me publier et se défend de chercher une échappatoire, mais se dit débordé par les difficultés de toutes sortes, la lourdeur de son programme de publications et par la suite inquiet de ne pouvoir répondre à mon impatience.”⁵² On March 15, 1947, Isaac received from Dr. Pierre Visseur, who would serve as one of two executive secretaries,⁵³ an invitation to participate in an International Emergency Congress on anti-Semitism which was to take place in the Swiss village of Seelisberg from July 30 to August 5 1947. Participants at this congress would include eminent members of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities who by virtue of their experience, credentials and authority, would be capable of contributing in a substantive manner to the themes of the conference. On April 15, 1947, while convalescing in Paris after surgery, Isaac received a visit from Dr. Visseur who inquired whether Isaac would attend the upcoming conference. Isaac replied in the affirmative,

⁵¹ Kaspi, as quoted at 185.

⁵² Ibid., as quoted at 189.

⁵³ William W. Simpson, OBE, MA was to serve as the other executive secretary. In 1938, Rev. Simpson became the first secretary of the newly-established Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe. In 1942, he was appointed as the first secretary of the British Council of Christians and Jews, a post which he held for more than 30 years.

undertaking to follow up in June with “...un rapport qu’ils feront traduire en anglais et distribuer à leurs principaux adhérents (anglo-saxon pour la plupart).”⁵⁴ Visseur, for his part, undertook to do what he could to persuade the director of Albin Michel to fast-track the publication of *Jésus et Israël*. The manuscript of this work would be made available to Seelisberg Conference participants.⁵⁵

On May 16, 1947, Isaac returned to la Pergola and drew up his Eighteen-point programme of correction of Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism to be tabled at the conference under the title “un enseignement chrétien digne de ce nom.” From each of the Eighteen Points one could infer a specific instance of deviation between Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism and historical or scriptural accuracy. These Eighteen points were set out in paragraph IV of a mémoire entitled “De l’antisémitisme chrétien et des moyens d’y remédier par le redressement de l’enseignement chrétien” (*Christian anti-Semitism and the means of remedying it by the reform of Christian education*) that was submitted by Isaac at the close of private discussions with prominent Christians (Jean Daniélou, Henri Marrou) and Jews (Edmond Fleg, Samy Lattès) which took place in Paris in the spring of 1947, discussions which had taken place at the initiative of the Centre israélite d’information. These Eighteen points are set out in Appendix I hereto.

Let us listen to Isaac’s recollections.

Après l’opération qui m’avait ressuscité, en 1947, on m’a invité à prendre part à des entretiens avec des catholiques. Du côté juif, y participaient Edmond Fleg, Samy Lattès et moi; de l’autre, Henri Marrou, le père Daniélou, dont j’avais jadis connu le père, ministre de la Marine, et l’abbé Vieillard, du secrétariat de l’Episcopat. C’est en conclusion de nos échanges de vues que j’ai rédigé un mémoire sur le redressement de l’enseignement chrétien concernant Israël, en dix-huits points.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Kaspi, as quoted at 190.

⁵⁵ Rutishauser, 43.

⁵⁶ Toulat, 138-39.

Samy Lattès would recall the object and spirit of these discussions as follows.

...l'objet des ces rencontres était d'étudier en commun les rapports judéo-chrétiens à l'époque évangélique et les déviations que la vérité historique avait pu subir au cours des siècles sous l'effet de la tradition et de l'enseignement. Ces entretiens permirent la mise au point de propositions que M. Isaac avait préalablement rédigées et aboutirent à un accord sur certaines conclusions fondamentales.⁵⁷

Most of those present at this meeting would serve as members of the third commission at Seelisberg, the commission from which would issue forth the Ten Points. At the end of July, Isaac departed for Seelisberg.

The Eighteen Points had their genesis in the Twenty-One Propositions of *Jésus and Israël*, propositions of which the world was not yet aware and with which the Eighteen Points should not be confused. It was on April 14, 1948, by a curious synchronicity, one month before Britain ended its mandate of Palestine, that Isaac would receive in hand from his publisher the first copy off the press of *Jésus et Israël* to which would be appended the Eighteen Points as an "Annexe ou Conclusion Pratique." Eight of the Eighteen points were cast in positive terms to recall that: Jesus was Jewish (Point 7); the first apostles were Jewish (Point 9); Jesus was "born under the [Jewish] law" (Gal. 4:4), lived "under the law" and did not stop practising Judaism's basic precepts to the last day (Point 8); to the last day, Jesus received the enthusiastic sympathies of the Jewish people (Point 10); Christianity was born of a living and not a degenerate Judaism (Point 4); a large part of the Christian liturgy is borrowed from the Old Testament (Point 2); it was to the Jewish people that God first revealed himself (Point 3); and the Old Testament was the scripture of the Jews before becoming the scripture of the Christians (Point 1).

⁵⁷ Yves Chevalier, "Des dix-huit propositions de Jules Isaac aux dix points de Seelisberg," *Foi & Vie* XCVII, no. 1 (January 1998): as quoted at 19.

The remaining 10 Points were cast in negative or near-negative terms. Jesus had not been personally rejected by the Jewish people (Point 11); had not been rejected by the spiritual elite of Judaism but rather by members of a narrow oligarchic caste, subjugated to Rome and detested by the people (Point 12). The Jewish people had not committed the inexpiable crime of deicide, knowingly and willingly (Point 14). The non-correspondence with history of the myth that the Dispersion was providential punishment for the Crucifixion was to be kept in mind (Point 5); the faithful were to be warned against certain stylistic tendencies in the gospels, notably the frequent use in the fourth gospel of the collective term “the Jews” in a restricted and pejorative sense (Point 6); the scriptural texts were not to be strained to find in them a universal reprobation of Israel or a curse which is nowhere to be found in the gospels (Point 13); the Jewish people were not involved in the trial of Jesus, played no role in it and probably were completely unaware of it (Point 16); and the chief priests and their accomplices acted against Jesus unbeknownst to, and even in fear of, the people (Point 15). Jesus was condemned for messianic pretensions, a crime in the eyes of the Romans and not the Jews, his punishment was a Roman, not a Jewish, punishment, his crowning with thorns was a cruel jest of Roman soldiery and not of the Jewish people, and the mob whipped up by the chief priests was not to be equated with the whole of the Jewish people or even the Jewish people of Palestine (Point 17). Finally, one should be mindful not to forget that the cry, “His blood be upon us and on our children!” (Mt 27:25) could not prevail over the Word “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34) (Point 18).

The seventy congress participants⁵⁸ were inundated with no fewer than fifty-five documents, thirty-two of which were country-by-country reports detailing the situation of European Jewry and of the status of anti-semitism in the aftermath of the Second World War. An alert congress participant might have noted that there were but five dealing with the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, among which three addressed religious teaching *per se*. An alert participant might have noted that one of these three documents dealing with religious teaching was a paper signed by a French Jewish historian and titled, “De l’antisémitisme chrétien et des moyens d’y remédier par le redressement de l’enseignement chrétien.”⁵⁹ As was the case with the Oxford Conference one year earlier, the conference participants attended in their personal rather than their officially representative capacities. They were prominent members of the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches and of the European and American Jewish communities. The specific agenda of Seelisberg included “...the development of practical measures to combat anti-Semitism at all levels of society, through short-term strategies or by long-term measures which would obstruct its re-emergence.”⁶⁰ English and French were the two official languages of the conference, German having too bitter an aftertaste for the Jewish participants in the wake of the Shoah. At the opening of the conference, a message from Jacques Maritain, the French ambassador to the Vatican, was read by Abbé Charles Journet, expressing the hope that what Maritain called a “racial and anti-Semitic leprosy,”⁶¹ one that threatened to eradicate Judaism, would be confronted and overcome.

⁵⁸ Isaac, “Du redressement nécessaire de l’enseignement Chrétien concernant Israël,” Annexe II. See also Toulat, at 139.

⁵⁹ The other two documents were “La tâche éducative” by Rev Dr. E. L. Allen (Durham University, U.K.) and “Considerations sur l’enseignement religieux chrétien” by Rabbi Alexandre Safran.

⁶⁰ Rutishauser, 38.

⁶¹ Ibid., 35, quoting from the Conference Report by Hans Ornstein in: *Israelitisches wochenblatt*, y. 47 No. 33/1947, 11.

On the evening of the second day, the conference participants were divided into five commissions whose work was to be reported back to the plenum for comment from time to time. At the close of the conference, the reports of each of the commissions were presented to the conference for approval.

Jules Isaac was assigned to the Third Commission (The Task of the Churches), whose Chair was Rev. Fr. Calliste Lopinot, OFM (Rome, Italy), Vice-Chair, Bishop Miroslav Novak (Prague, Czechoslovakia) and Secretary, the Rev. Dr. E.L. Allen (Northumberland, Great Britain). The other members of the Third Commission were Prof. Dr. E. Bickel (Zurich, Switzerland), Mlle. Madeleine Davy (Paris, France), Rev. Dr. Paul Démann (Louvain, Belgium), Pastor A. Freudenberg (Geneva, Switzerland), Abbé Charles Journet (Fribourg, Switzerland), Rabbi J. Kaplan (Paris, France), Rev. Fr. De Menasce (Fribourg, Switzerland), Dr. A. Newlin (Geneva, Switzerland), Rabbi W. Rosenblum (New York, USA), Rev. Robert Smith (Prague, Czechoslovakia) and Rabbi Dr. Zwi Chaim Taubes (Zurich, Switzerland). Isaac's Eighteen-point programme of correction of Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism was jointly submitted as a basis for discussion to the commission by Jules Isaac and Rabbi Kaplan. Annexe II (Les dix points de Seelisberg) of the dossier to the mémoire that Isaac would present to Pope John XXIII on June 13, 1960, recounted the process this way: "M. Isaac et le Grand Rabbín Kaplan soumirent à la [troisième] commission les dix-huits points dont le texte a été publié dans le bulletin n 2 de l'A.J.C.A. Les juifs se retirèrent et à partir des dix-huits points, longuement discutés, les chrétiens élaborèrent ensemble un projet que protestants

et catholiques examinèrent ensuite séparément.”⁶² Isaac would describe the scene this way in correspondence to Samy Lattès.

En hate, car le temps manquait, on a abordé le problème essentiel du redressement de l’enseignement chrétien et, *malgré tous les heurts* (c’est moi qui souligne), abouti à un résultat. Non pas certes les Dix-huit points que j’avais soumis au Congrès, mais 9 points notables.⁶³

One year later, Alexandre Safran would recall the discussions amongst members of Commission 3 as “...toujours très franches...souvent très vives, mais en raison du sincère esprit de compréhension réciproque qui animait les membres de la Commission, on finit par aboutir.”⁶⁴

The Christian members of Commission 3 were not inclined to accept verbatim the Eighteen Points that had been tabled by Isaac and defended by Rabbi Kaplan. The sensitivity of the matter necessitated a withdrawal of the Jewish members of the commission while the non-Jewish members worked up a draft which was presented to the entire commission. This version was reviewed and commented on separately by Catholic and Protestant members of the commission and then brought back to the full commission again. The Jewish commission members would declare in writing “...afin d’éviter tout malentendu...ils ne prenaient aucune position quant au point de vue théologique et historique du texte.”⁶⁵ This text was reported back to the conference plenum for adoption, but with the understanding that an abbreviated version would be published immediately following the conference. Prior to its release, the full version was to be circulated among

⁶² Isaac, "Du redressement nécessaire de l'enseignement Chrétien concernant Israël," Annexe II.

⁶³ Chevalier, as quoted at 20.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., as quoted at 22.

ecclesial authorities of the various churches for approval.⁶⁶ The full version of the document was presented to the plenum and affirmed without discussion. Three months after the close of the congress, on November 10, 1947, P. Lopinot would advise Pierre Visseur that there was no theological impediment to the publication of the Ten Points. Whomever Lopinot consulted in this regard, it was not the Pope. Two years later, on October 16, 1949, Pope Pius XII would profess ignorance of the Ten Points during a short audience with Isaac at Castel Gandolfo.

The first part of the Commission 3 document, which has received short shrift given its eclipse by the second part (which includes the Ten Points), and the second part are reproduced in Appendix II. The Ten Points were not created *ex nihilo*; they were derived from Jules Isaac's Eighteen Points, of which the world was not yet aware. The first three Seelisberg Points bore a clear correspondence with Isaac's eight Points of a positive character. The Jewish provenance of Jesus and his first apostles in Seelisberg Points 2 and 3 corresponded with Isaac's Points 7, 8, 9 and 10. The continuity in the scriptures highlighted in Seelisberg Point 1 corresponded to Isaac's Points 1, 2, 3 and 4. Seelisberg Points 4 and 5 were new. The principal commands of Christianity, love of God and of neighbour, announced in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, set out in Seelisberg Point 4, and the admonition to avoid belittling biblical and post-biblical Judaism as a means of exalting Christianity in Seelisberg Point 5, had no counterparts among Isaac's Eighteen Points. Seelisberg Points 6 to 10 could also be traced to one or more of Isaac's Eighteen Points. The admonition in Seelisberg Point 6 to avoid using the term "Jews" to refer exclusively to Jesus' enemies and the words, "the enemies of Jesus"

⁶⁶ Isaac, "Du redressement nécessaire de l'enseignement Chrétien concernant Israël," Annexe II. See also Rutishauer, "The 1947 Seelisberg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," at 41.

to designate the Jewish people as a whole had its counterpart in Isaac's Point 6. Seelisberg Point 8 was derived from Isaac's Point 18, Seelisberg Point 9 from Isaac's Point 13. Point 8 admonishes to avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: *His blood be upon us and upon our children*, without remembering that this cry should not prevail against the infinitely more weighty prayer of Jesus: *Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they do*. One might add, as did Mgr John Oesterreicher in his account of *Nostra Aetate* in Vorgrimler's *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, "As if God could ratify the outcry of a group of demonstrators, worked up by their ringleaders, and have it descend as a curse upon millions of innocent people!"⁶⁷

But let us pause here to consider a most significant pronouncement of a theological nature embedded in Point 7 of the Seelisberg program: "...for the Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died." This assertion is nowhere expressly stated in either of Isaac's Eighteen Points or Twenty-One Propositions. This should not be surprising. The statement is theological and not historical in nature and therefore, strictly speaking, outside the bounds of Isaac's expertise. But it is also a fact that this perfectly sound Christian doctrine had been buried under two millennia of contemptuous traditions and teachings about Jews and Judaism. Did Isaac play a role in its resurrection? It is very possible that he could have.

In Isaac's efforts to perpetuate the life and thought of his dearest friend, Roman Catholic Charles Péguy (about whom more will be said later), Isaac had managed to quote Péguy no fewer than thirteen times in the completed manuscript of his then yet-to-be-published *Jésus et Israël*. In one of these instances, Isaac had written, "Péguy disait:

⁶⁷ John M. Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York and London: Herder and Herder, Burns & Oates Limited, 1969), 15.

‘Ce ne sont pas les Juifs qui ont crucifié Jésus-Christ, mais nos péchés à tous; et les Juifs, qui n’ont été que l’instrument, participent comme les autres à la fontaine de salut.’ Voilà ce qui me paraît être langage chrétien, pensée chrétienne. Voilà ce que pense, je le sais, une élite chrétienne, catholique et protestante. Mais une élite infiniment peu nombreuse, et peu écoutée.”⁶⁸ This “élite chrétienne...infiniment peu nombreuse,” representative of one of two “contrary tendencies” in Catholic opinion, had been drowned out by a majority opinion that viewed the Jews as deicides. Isaac would one day have occasion to discuss these contrary tendencies in an audience with John XXIII in the following terms: “...un contre-courant purificateur se renforce de jour en jour. Entre ces deux tendances contraires, l’opinion catholique reste divisée, flottante.”⁶⁹ The first tendency, the anti-Jewish tendency (in juxtaposition to the purifying biblical and Christian tendency), could be summarized thus:

God continues to punish the Jewish people for its rejection and killing of Jesus, the Son of God, Messiah and Savior of all. By this ‘deicide,’ Jews have forsaken all rights to God’s promises in the Old Covenant, which has been completely replaced by the New Covenant identified as the Catholic Church (supercessionism). Like sinful Cain, Jews should continue to wander the earth as vagabonds without a homeland. God sustains their dispersed existence to remind both Catholics of the divine blessings of the New Covenant and Jews of their true calling. The synagogue kneels before the Church, whatever numbers and power Jews may have, whether in Israel or Rome, Bombay or Brooklyn, or elsewhere.⁷⁰

These attitudes were often depicted by two statues: one of the triumphant Church and one of the blinded Synagogue. André Chouraqui would one day draw attention to this in a dialogue with Jean Daniélou. “...very often,” Chouraqui would point out, “as in the

⁶⁸ Jules Isaac, *Jésus et Israël* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1948), 515.

⁶⁹ Toulat, 144.

⁷⁰ Thomas F. Stransky, “The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*: An Insider’s Story,” in *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Jewish-Catholic Relations: Proceedings of the International Conference held in Jerusalem 30 October - 1 November 2005*, ed. Neville Lamdan and Alberto Melloni (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), 36.

cathedral of Strasbourg, the sculptors had the kindness to represent the Synagogue with traits much more elegant than those of the Church.” But,” he would inquire of Daniélou, “have you noticed the veil on the face of the Synagogue that is intended to signify its blindness? That veil also hides the Synagogue’s face that one surmises is subtle and beautiful. Has the Church uncovered this face?”⁷¹

There could be no mistaking the Christian doctrine to which Péguy was alluding, “sound and orthodox Christian doctrine, too often forgotten,”⁷² and of which Isaac would have been aware.⁷³ The *Catechismus Romanus* or Tridentine Catechism, which had been drawn up at an express resolution of the Council of Trent,⁷⁴ a council which had “...affirmed the true doctrine, rooted alike in Scripture and in tradition, which touches the whole field of belief, especially in reference to the questions raised by Luther and Calvin concerning the plan of salvation, grace, the Church’s hierarchical structure, and the nature of the sacraments,”⁷⁵ was intended to assist preachers and catechists and to set out guidelines for orthodox instruction. Included in the dossier that Isaac would hand-deliver, together with his *mémoire*, to John XXIII at their fateful meeting in 1960 would be passages from chapter V of the Tridentine Catechism, which chapter deals with the fourth article of the Creed, and which passages emphasize the guilt of all sinners as the fundamental cause of Christ’s death upon the cross.

Many other reasons which the Fathers have discussed in detail might be adduced to show that it was fit that our Redeemer should suffer death on the cross rather than in any other way. But, as the pastor will show, it is

⁷¹ Jean Daniélou and André Chouraqui, *The Jews: Views and Counterviews* (New York: Newman Press, 1967), 38.

⁷² Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 364.

⁷³ In the English translation of *Jésus et Israël*, published in 1971, the editor added a reference to the Catechism of the Council of Trent after the passages just quoted from the French edition.

⁷⁴ Oesterreicher, 2, n.2.

⁷⁵ Henri Daniel-Rops, *The Second Vatican Council: The Story Behind the Ecumenical Council of Pope John XXIII*, trans. Alastair Guinan (New York: Hawthorn Books Inc., 1962), 47-8.

enough for the faithful to believe that this kind of death was chosen by the Saviour because it appeared better adapted and more appropriate to the redemption of the human race; for there certainly could be none more ignominious and humiliating...

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

Should anyone inquire why the Son of God underwent his most bitter Passion, he will find that besides the guilt inherited from our first parents the principal causes were the vices and crimes which have been perpetrated from the beginning of the world to the present day and those which will be committed to the end of time. In His Passion the Son of God our Saviour intended to atone and blot out the sins of all ages, to offer for them to his Father a full and abundant satisfaction.

In this guilt are involved all those who fall frequently into sin; for, as our sins consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the cross, most certainly those who wallow in sin and iniquity crucify to themselves again the Son of God, as far as in them lies, and make a mockery of Him.⁷⁶

This perfectly sound Christian doctrine had been buried under two millennia of contemptuous teaching respecting Jews and Judaism. Present in embryo in the epistles of St Paul, it was first explicitly articulated by Pope Gregory the Great (590-604), albeit contemporaneously with the traditional assertions of Christian anti-Judaism. Medieval Christianity took little notice of the doctrine until the historic Council of Trent had occasion to elaborate the doctrine and incorporate it into the catechism drawn up at the request of the Council. Thenceforth, it represented official church doctrine. Isaac would have been aware of its implications for Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism when he participated at the Seelisberg Conference, implications he would later in life express as follows: "From the point of view of theology, then, Jewish responsibility is subordinated to the collective responsibility of sinful humanity. Or if you prefer a symbolic interpretation, the Jewish people are but an image of humanity as a whole. In either event, who is the real culprit, the real 'deicide'? The human race, the whole of sinful

⁷⁶ Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, Appendix II.

mankind.”⁷⁷ We can assume, we must assume, that Isaac would have raised this sound Christian doctrine with Seelisberg Third Commission participants, a doctrine that the Christian members of the Third Commission decided was too important not to entrench in Point 7.

On November 18, 1947, Jules Isaac turned seventy years of age. Little did he know that his creative output and activism had given birth to something that would eclipse and transcend him in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations. Little did he also know that the Ten Points of Seelisberg were destined to be superseded by something larger, much larger, something which, as history will record, but for the intervention of Jules Isaac, would never have come to pass. Why would Isaac, in his audience with Pope Pius XII in 1949, have brought with him not his own Eighteen Points, but the Ten Points of Seelisberg, but for their gravitas? Why would Reverend Father Paul Démann, member of Seelisberg Commission 3 who was to take over the direction of the missionary priests of Notre-Dame de Sion in 1948, choose to restate these Ten Points in slightly different form in a monograph entitled *Les Juifs dans la catéchèse chrétienne*, published in 1952 (with the approval of Msgr. de Provençères, Archbishop of Aix and then president of the Episcopal Committee for the Catechism), but for their gravitas? Why would Gregory Baum, in the first edition of his rebuttal to *Jésus et Israël* which rebuttal would be titled *The Jews and the Gospel: A Re-examination of the New Testament*, written in 1957-58 and published in 1961,⁷⁸ have chosen to reproduce as an Appendix the Ten Points of Seelisberg but for their gravitas? The memorandum that would be put drawn up in August 1960 by Paul Démann in the name of the Apeldoorn working group of priests and

⁷⁷ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 122.

⁷⁸ Baum.

laypersons addressed to "...those who in any way, direct or indirect, have a part in the teaching office of the Church or in the forming of opinion among the faithful, whether their field of work be the training of priests, catechesis, preaching, journalism or other writings"⁷⁹ would manifest the imprint of the Ten Points. Why did Thomas Stransky CSP, one of two first staff members of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, when asked by President Augustin Cardinal Bea to put together a dossier for the first members of the sub-commission regarding "Problems concerning the Jews" (a rendering of the expression used for the item on the agenda and for the title of the preparatory text, *Quaestiones de Iudaeis*),⁸⁰ have thought first of the Ten Points of Seelisberg, but for their gravitas? In Stransky's own words, "I still find the best and clearest summary of the corrective [to the anti-Jewish tendency] in the Seelisberg list, and in hindsight Vatican II's *De Iudaeis* can be traced back to the ten points."⁸¹ And why would A.-M. Henry in his edited *locus classicus* on *Nostra aetate*, *Les Relations de l'Eglise avec les Religions non Chrétiennes: Déclaration "Nostra aetate"* published in 1966, have chosen to reproduce as an annex (along with successive drafts of the Declaration) the Ten Points of Seelisberg, but for their gravitas? It must have been a most profound disappointment to Isaac when on October 16, 1949 Pope Pius XII would profess ignorance when Isaac would raise the subject of the Ten Points of Seelisberg (a copy of which Isaac would be directed by the Pope to place on a table in the corner of the salon in which Isaac was received) during a very short papal audience at Castel Gandolfo.

Upon his return from Seelisberg, Isaac must have watched with consternation the birth pains of the embryonic Jewish State as played out among the General Assembly

⁷⁹ Oesterreicher, 12.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 17-18.

⁸¹ Stransky, 36.

members of the United Nations. Isaac would have been aware that in January 1904, Theodore Herzl, founder of Zionism, had met with Pope Pius X in Rome to seek his support for the Zionist movement. "The soil of Jerusalem," the Pope had replied, "is sacred in the life of Jesus Christ. As head of the Church, I cannot say otherwise. The Jews did not acknowledge Our Lord and thus we cannot recognize the Jewish people. Hence, if you go to Palestine, and if the Jewish people settle there, our Churches and our priests will be ready to baptize you all."⁸² It has been suggested that the Pope's response was rooted in the Christian theological view that the loss of Jewish sovereignty over the land was a sure sign of transgression in the eyes of God and deserving of punishment. It has even been speculated that the failure of the Vatican to give open and public aid to the Jews during the Second World War had been driven by a concern that the migration of Jewish refugees to Palestine might undermine the status of the Church in the Holy Land. Among the arguments made in an internal Vatican document authored by the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, in May 1943 in support of the Pope's refusal to help rescue 2,000 Jewish children from Slovakia were (i) the Vatican's non-recognition of the Balfour Declaration and the British plan for establishment of a National Home for the Jews; (ii) concern that the sanctity of the Holy Places would be at risk by an influx of Jews into Palestine; and (iii) the theological view that Palestine was holier to Christians than to Jews. It is therefore not surprising that Pius XII expressed strong opposition to Britain's plan to withdraw from Palestine and leave the decision about its fate to the United Nations. The struggle in the United Nations which culminated

⁸² Uri Bialer, "Israel and Nostra Aetate: The View from Jerusalem," in *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Catholic-Jewish Relations: Proceedings of the International Conference held in Jerusalem 30 October - 1 November 2005*, ed. Neville Lamdan and Alberto Melloni (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), reproduced at 63-4.

with the vote on November 29, 1947 was marked by a flat refusal on the part of the papal representatives to support the Zionist cause and efforts on their part to lobby Latin American states to adopt the same position. One day before statehood would be proclaimed, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the semi-official daily newspaper of the Holy See, would assert that "...modern Zionism is not the true heir of biblical Israel.[...] Therefore the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, which is the true Israel."⁸³

Before he knew it, the year 1948 was upon Isaac. And an eventful one it was. The Seelisberg Conference sponsors had left an impression upon him, and he on them. On February 6, 1948, at his initiative, le groupe d'Amitié judéo-chrétienne was founded.

Ce congrès [Seelisberg] avait été mis sur pied par une organisation américaine, National Council of Christians and Jews, sorte d'Amitié judéo-chrétienne, qui avait tenu plusieurs assemblées sans résultat vraiment positif. Les dix points de Seelisberg enchantèrent les Américains, qui voulait courir les présenter au Vatican. Je leur dis: créons d'abord un mouvement de base. Et je suis rentré en France, décidé à y fonder une organisation semblable à la leur. Avec le grand rabbin de France Schwartz et son adjoint Jacob Kaplan, des personnalités comme Edmond Fleg et Léon Algazi, des amis catholiques, Henri Marrou, Jacques Madaule, Jacques Nantet, des amis protestants, le professeur Lovsky, Jacques Martin, a été fondée la première Amitié judéo-chrétienne, dont les statuts excluent tout prosélytisme. La présidence fut confiée à Henri Marrou, avec un protestant comme vice-président et un israélite à la rédaction du bulletin. Plein de zèle, je suis allé fonder d'autres Amitiés un peu partout: à Aix, Marseille, Nîmes, Montpellier, Lyon, Lille.⁸⁴

But the pivotal event of 1948 was the publication of *Jésus et Israël*. "Begun in 1943, in the course of a life already threatened and uprooted, soon to be ravaged and hunted, finished in 1946, in solitude and seclusion,"⁸⁵ the work for which the world was waiting

⁸³ Ibid., as quoted at 65.

⁸⁴ Toulat, 139-40.

⁸⁵ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, xxiii.

was not "...un livre de type normal."⁸⁶ Although written by a scholar, it was not a scholarly work. It was *sui generis*, in a class by itself.

...de retour à la vie normale (ou presque), toutes bibliothèques redevenues accessibles, je fus tenté, terriblement tenté, de défaire mon ouvrage et de le refaire. Mais non, je ne le devais pas. L'essentiel n'était pas d'étendre une enquête bibliographique, exégétique, théologique, qui, au point où j'en étais, eût aisément rempli ce qu'il me restait d'années à vivre. L'essentiel n'était pas l'érudition, n'était pas la science, pas davantage la courtoisie, les bonnes manières, la 'mesure' académique. L'essentiel était l'Essentielle, le Texte, l'Écriture, la Parole. Et envers le Texte, la fraîcheur et la droiture du regard humain, une certaine ouverture d'âme, un certain dépouillement une absolue sincérité, et la vérité du combat livré...

Ainsi s'explique qu'il ait touché les coeurs, bouleversé, irrité parfois: dans son corps massif demeure une âme ardente, une flamme.

Cela même ne suffit pas à le définir: sous la contrainte des circonstances, contrainte de plus en plus contraignante, il est devenu chemin faisant autre chose et plus qu'un livre: la vie d'un être, de chair et de sang, saisi dans la tourmente et rivé à sa tâche, à sa rame, à son banc de galérien. Et finalement autre chose encore: un acte, une action commencée et que bon gré mal gré je me dois de poursuivre, une déclaration de guerre à la haine, à cette haine sans nom qui, après avoir bouillonné, cheminée, pendant des siècles, a fini par culminer en un lieu maudit: Auschwitz.⁸⁷

The first edition was 585 pages long and included as an annex the Eighteen Points that Isaac had submitted the preceding year to the Seelisberg Conference. The book is divided into four parts titled: (i) "Jesus, the Christ, a Jew 'According to the Flesh,'" (ii) "The Gospel in the Synagogue," (iii) "Jesus and His People" and (iv) "The Crime of Deicide." The table of contents consists not of chapters, but of "propositions," twenty-one propositions in total, each of which is set out at the beginning of a "chapter," and which would serve to point the reader at that to which Isaac was aiming. This was original architecture. Each proposition addresses an aspect of Christian teaching which corresponds neither to the New Testament nor to the data of history.

⁸⁶ Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme*, 14.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

The first edition bore a dedication giving witness to what Isaac was later to recall in the following terms in correspondence to the younger of his two sons, Jean-Claude, dated August 25, 1954: “Les dernières paroles de ta mère ont donné à cette mission un caractère sacré. Je ne lâcherai pas prise tant que j’aurai force et vie.”⁸⁸

A MA FEMME, A MA FILLE

MARTYRES

TUÉES PAR LES ALLEMANDS
TUÉES

SIMPLEMENT PARCE QU’ELLES S’APPELAIENT
ISAAC

In the dedication of the second French edition, which would be published in 1959 by a different house, the same year which would begin with the surprise convocation by Pope John XXIII of an ecumenical council with the purpose of serving as “...an invitation to all separated brethren to join in seeking that unity of belief for which so many souls in every part of the world long today,”⁸⁹ the words “les Allemands” would be replaced with “Les Nazis d’Hitler.” Between the publication of the two editions, did it occur to Isaac that to tar the entire German people with the crime of genocide could be a double-edged sword in efforts to rectify Christian teaching about the death of Jesus? It did occur to Augustin Cardinal Bea, a German, who in 1960 would be appointed by John XXIII to preside over the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. In an interview granted to the Jewish Chronicle on August 16, 1962 during a visit to England, Bea would reject the imputation to himself and Germans at large of guilt for Nazi war crimes.

Ce sera une des tâches du futur Concile que de rejeter cette erreur lourde de conséquences selon laquelle les juifs sont collectivement responsables du crucifiement de Jésus-Christ. Même la population d’alors de la ville de Jérusalem n’était pas responsable dans sa totalité de la condamnation de Jésus de Nazareth. Des milliers de Juifs ont construit la jeune Église avec

⁸⁸ Kaspi, as quoted at 250.

⁸⁹ Daniel-Rops, *The Second Vatican Council*, 13.

saint Pierre; seule, une minorité a soutenu le mouvement politique qui, pour des raisons d'État, demandait la mort du Messie. En rendre responsable tout le peuple juif est aussi injuste que de condamner tous les Allemands à cause d'Hitler. Moi-même, je suis de sang allemand, mais personne ne peut me dire responsable des crimes nazis.⁹⁰

But there was evidence of another memorial, another sacred mission, in the form of thirteen citations scattered about the book. Among the 190 authors, scholars and exegetes listed in an index of authors cited, which included such august names as le Père Joseph Bonsirven, Louis-Claude Fillion, le Père-Marie-Josèphe Lagrange, Maurice Goguel, Alfred Loisy, dom Guéranger and Edmond Stapfer, was one Charles Péguy, the same Péguy whom Isaac had first encountered in 1891-92 as a boarder five years his senior at Lycée Lakanal and about whom Isaac would later recall, "...sa forte personnalité m'en imposait. Je ne sais s'il se rendit compte à quel point j'étais encore un enfant désarmé – devant la vie, devant les hommes, devant lui – ou s'il m'aima pour cela."⁹¹ This was the same Péguy whose Quarter Latin bookstore, la librairie Bellais, would serve in 1898-99 as "le poste avancé des troupes dreyfusistes,"⁹² including Isaac, the same Péguy who was said to have "...defended the Jews because he loved them,"⁹³ who Isaac would recall in the first and only published volume of his memoirs, exercised "...une affectueuse pression, à la fois insistante et discrète."⁹⁴ In May 1897, a nineteen year old Isaac, who had paid scant attention to social issues, was personally invited by Péguy to

⁹⁰ G. M.-M. Cottier, O.P., "L'historique de la Déclaration," in *Les relations de l'église avec les religions non Chrétiennes. Déclaration Nostra Aetate. Texte Latin et traduction Française*, ed. A.-M. Henry, Unam Sanctam 61 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1966), 41. The question of collective German guilt for the genocide of the Jews has been the subject of study by not a few philosophers and historians (see p. 267 n. 4 of Jesus and Israel).

⁹¹ Jules Isaac, *Expériences de ma vie: I Péguy* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1960), 99.

⁹² Ibid., 123.

⁹³ Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992), 127.

⁹⁴ Isaac, *Expériences de ma vie: I Péguy*, 98.

contribute monthly to the founding of a socialist journal. For Isaac, the encounter proved to be "...un entretien par quoi ma vie fut changée."

L'accord fut scellé, l'engagement pris (par moi). Je revois comme si c'était hier l'endroit précis où, avant de nous séparer, je dis à Péguy, avec la conviction totale qui m'animait: 'Tu peux compter sur moi.' ...De ce jour, de cette heure, *j'avais reçu un sacrement* [emphasis added]... L'impératif de probité spirituelle et de justice sociale qu'à mes yeux Péguy incarnait, et qui devaient exprimer si noblement les premiers *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*..., cet impératif devint mien, il s'incrusta en moi avec une telle force, à une telle profondeur qu'aujourd'hui encore, à la veille de mes quatre-vingts ans, il y demeure vivant, vivace autant qu'au premier jour, en dépit des illusions dissipées, des expériences vécues, des espoirs évanouis.⁹⁵

At the age of thirty-five, in 1908, Péguy would rediscover his Catholicism. "J'ai un office, j'ai des responsabilités énormes. Au fond, c'est une *renaissance catholique* [emphasis added] qui se fait par moi".⁹⁶ Cut down by a German bullet in the prime of his life on August 5, 1914, Péguy's name even figures as part of the title of the first and only published volume of Isaac's memoirs. But there was a precedent. Péguy himself had done the same thing to memorialize a close friend of his, Marcel Baudouin, who had died on July 25, 1896 during his year of military service and whose sister, Charlotte-Françoise Baudouin, Péguy had married on October 28, 1897. Péguy's first work, *Jeanne d'Arc*, a play in three acts, had been signed *Marcel et Pierre Baudouin*; his second work, *Marcel, premier dialogue de la Cité harmonieuse*, had been signed *Pierre Baudouin* (alias Péguy) and the name, Marcel, had figured in the very title to the work. In his memoirs, Isaac would speculate about such decisions in the following terms: "Il semble que Péguy, par ces deux oeuvres publiées en 1897-98, par la signature et par le titre, ait tenu à porter témoignage d'une amitié plus forte que la mort; qu'il ait 'fait...le voeu secret de

⁹⁵ Ibid., 101-2.

⁹⁶ Georges Cattai, *Péguy: témoin du temporel chrétien* (Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1964), as quoted at 23.

prolonger en lui la vie du mort et sa pensée.”⁹⁷ Daniel-Rops would describe the phenomenon in somewhat different terms. “Marcel mort demeurera présent dans sa vie [de Péguy]. Entre les deux êtres un perpétuel dialogue se poursuivra, dont l’oeuvre de Péguy porte de nombreuses traces.”⁹⁸ On the evidence, the same observation could be made of Isaac vis-à-vis Péguy, following the death of the latter.

Was not Isaac giving witness to a dialogue that was stronger than death, was he not giving witness to a wish to perpetuate the life and thought of his friend most dear when Isaac wrote in the Introduction (Preliminary Observations on the Old Testament) to *Jesus and Israel* that from the Christian point of view, the Old Testament is “...the prelude (albeit grandiose), the prologue, the first and necessary stage in humanity’s journey toward God; that it is a preview, a prediction, an annunciation, an advance toward the light?” If there is any doubt, let us consider the passage from Péguy’s *Mystery of the Holy Innocents* that Isaac chose to reproduce in closing the Introduction.

...the old testament is that arch which rises in a rib,
 In a single ridge and the new testament
 Is the same arch which falls,
 Which descends in a single sweep.
 And the rising rib begins from the earth and it is a carnal
 rib.
 But that sweep which falls comes from the spirit
 And it is a spiritual sweep.
 And the rib and the ridge that rises issues from time
 it is a temporal rib.
 But the sweep that falls comes from eternity and it is
 An eternal sweep.
 And the key of that mystical arch.
 The key itself
 Carnal, spiritual,
 Temporal, eternal,
 Is Jesus,
 Man,
 God.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Isaac, *Expériences de ma vie: I Péguy*, 84.

⁹⁸ Henri Daniel-Rops, *Péguy* (n.p.: Ernest Flammarion, 1933), 54.

⁹⁹ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 8.

In Isaac's *Les Expériences de ma Vie – Péguy*, who was expressing Christianity in the following terms, Isaac, or Péguy through Isaac?

En son essence, le christianisme est religion de la grâce, est religion de l'amour, est religion de la pauvreté, est religion de l'espérance (en Dieu), de la foi en la justice de Dieu, en la vérité de l'Incarnation, de la Résurrection; notre justice humaine, nos vérités humaines, ne le concernent pas, n'ont pas leurs racines dans son sol: toute l'Histoire le prouve, et d'abord les Écritures.¹⁰⁰

In the English version of *Jesus and Israel*, published in 1971 by Holt, Rinehart & Winston, the English rendition of Isaac's preface closes as follows: "The reader may wonder to what religion the author belongs. This is easy for him to answer: none. But his whole book witnesses to the fervor that inspires and guides him, fervor for Israel, fervor for Jesus, son of Israel."¹⁰¹ The work itself ends with the following lines:

I urge true Christians, and also true Israelites, to undertake this effort of renewal, of purification, this strenuous examination of conscience. Such is the aim I have envisaged. Such is the major lesson that emerges from the meditation on Auschwitz, which I cannot release myself from, which no man of heart could abstain from. The glow of the Auschwitz crematorium is the beacon that lights, that guides all my thoughts. Oh, my Jewish brothers, and you as well, my Christian brothers, do you not think that it mingles with another glow, that of the Cross?¹⁰²

Do we hear echoes of Isaac's finale and its architecture in the last lines of Oesterreicher's account of *Nostra Aetate* which is to be found in Vorgrimler's *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*? "As once the sins of Israel were sent out into the desert, so now, through this Declaration, 'the sins of Christendom are expelled into the desert, whether they have been committed horizontally, among the peoples, or vertically, throughout the centuries of history. Not for nothing is the figure resulting from this a Cross.'"¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Isaac, *Expériences de ma vie: I Péguy*, 164.

¹⁰¹ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, xxiv.

¹⁰² Ibid., 400.

¹⁰³ Oesterreicher, as quoted from an unpublished letter at 137.

To this day, spiritually, Jules Isaac remains an enigma. He was married to Laure Ettinghausen, also Jewish, on September 25, 1902, by the rabbi of Saint-Étienne. Yet in a declaration made to the sous-préfet of Aix-en-Provence in the wake of the Vichy-passed Statut des Juifs in October 1940, Isaac would declare, “ Je soussigné déclare: qu’il n’appartient pas à la confession juive; qu’il n’a jamais pratiqué d’autre religion que celle du travail, de la famille et de la patrie.”¹⁰⁴ In correspondence addressed to the elder of his two sons, Daniel, and dated February 1, 1942, Isaac would write, “Même dans les circonstances actuelles, je répugne à judaïser. Si j’étais juif, je serais chrétien. Mais on a beau me décréter juif: je ne le suis pas, d’aucune façon. Je vais même plus loin: je rends grâce à Dieu qu’il y ait eu un peuple grec, non pas qu’il y ait eu une peuple juif pour propager les passions et l’exclusivisme religieux...Je préfère Socrate, homme de Dieu.”¹⁰⁵ But there was more to Isaac than mere humanism. Consider the following observations made by Isaac: “Nous l’avons dit, nous le savons, il y a des vérités supérieures à la pauvre petite vérité historique que nous cependant nous appliquons à rechercher, honnêtement, librement.”¹⁰⁶

In a short note to close friends scribbled by Isaac on January 2, 1946, Isaac would write, “Sachez ceci, et réjouissez-vous avec notre merveilleuse amie en Dieu, Marie-Françoise Payré: cette nuit, je me suis levé, par Commandement, je me suis agenouillé, j’ai prié – j’ai pu prier! J’ai pleuré, je suis né à nouveau. Mais je sais que je suis encore loin du compte.”¹⁰⁷ In the English rendition of *Jésus et Israël*, he would write, “That the one year, Jesus’ single year, was enough to kindle a flame in the world which would

¹⁰⁴ Cohen, as quoted at 467.

¹⁰⁵ Kaspi, as quoted at 150.

¹⁰⁶ Isaac, *Expériences de ma vie: I Péguy*, 103.

¹⁰⁷ Kaspi, as quoted at 248.

never be extinguished thereafter is a miracle; there are none more convincing.”¹⁰⁸ In 1949, he would confide in Pastor Fadley Lovsky, “Chaque jour l’injustice chrétienne me rapproche davantage d’Israël.”¹⁰⁹ In a letter to the elder of his two sons, Daniel, dated August 22, 1954, Isaac would write, “Je n’ai pas renoué mes liens religieux avec Israël (liens qui d’ailleurs n’existaient pas) mais j’ai renoué, par la force des circonstances et de l’action entreprise, mes liens spirituels. Le Nouveau Testament m’a révélé la grandeur de l’Ancien. Et la spiritualité juive est à travers les siècles une des plus nobles qui soient. Cela ne m’empêche nullement de rester ce que j’étais jadis exclusivement: un humaniste.”¹¹⁰ In a 1962 interview with *L’Arche*, Isaac would remark, “La foi ne se commande pas. Je suis un vieux péguyste anticonformiste...J’ai ma vie religieuse à moi.”¹¹¹ The category into which Father Jean Daniélou would one day place Edmond Fleg, confrère of Isaac and fellow founding member of le groupe d’Amitié judéo-chrétienne, might be equally applicable to Isaac. In the words of Daniélou:

There were in the time of Christ some Jews who saw in Jesus the greatest of the prophets of Israel, and who thus were separated from their coreligionists, but who did not recognize him as the Son of God, and who for this reason were separated from the Christians. They are called Judeo-Christians. Hans Joachim Schoeps has devoted a book to them. Fleg is one of their spiritual descendants.¹¹²

One thing is certain: Isaac considered Judaism to be more than merely a religious system. “Qu’on la veuille ou non, il ‘n’est pas possible de renier ainsi sa lignée. Le judaïsme n’est pas seulement une religion, n’a pas été seulement un peuple et un Etat,

¹⁰⁸ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 97.

¹⁰⁹ Kaspi, as quoted at 249-50. The full text of the letter is reproduced in *Sens*, 7/8/9-1999, 326.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 249-50.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹¹² Jean Daniélou, *Dialogue with Israel* (np: Helicon Press, Inc., 1968), 61.

c'est un fait historique de grande envergure."¹¹³ And in his last Will and Testament, drawn up in September 1957, Isaac chose to identify himself with this fait historique de grande envergure. "Je n'ai donné mon adhésion à aucune confession religieuse, aucune Eglise, mais non plus à aucune négation. Le combat contre l'antisémitisme m'a rapproché d'Israël, dont j'estime le sévère monothéisme. A l'heure de la séparation finale, le recueillement et la prière conviennent. La prière vous la demanderez pour moi au rabbin Zaoui: je souhaiterais qu'elle fût dite en français. Sinon, traduite de l'hébreu."¹¹⁴

Jesus and Israel presupposes a bright line between the historical and the theological, the human and the divine, the natural and the supernatural, the temporal and the spiritual. In the confrontation of Jewish monotheism with the Christian dogma of the Trinity "...lies the abyss that separates the Christian conscience from the Israelite conscience," would write Isaac, quoting Nikolai Berdyaev, in *Jesus and Israel*. "I think so too," Isaac would add, "But an abyss to regard with respect. It will not be filled by pouring cartloads of insult and calumny into it."¹¹⁵ And respect it Isaac did. And elaborate it he would in the last book to be published before his death.

The Christian faith, born of the Jewish faith, is based on the mystery of the Incarnation, a mystery which is the object of infinite respect to all religious people, even if they do not embrace it themselves. The Christian Incarnation means that God was incarnate in the human person of the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth... To proceed still further: Christian doctrine teaches both that Jesus was wholly man during his human lifetime and is wholly God. This dual nature, human and divine, has a momentous implication... Jesus emerges from history during his human lifetime as man and fully man. Assuming that the relevant texts exist, history alone can illuminate for us the respect roles of the Jews and the Romans in Jesus' conviction and his crucifixion on Calvary. In his purely historical inquiry we must work without any preconceptions. On the Christian level – Jesus as Son of God and possessing the fullness of the divine nature – it

¹¹³ Kaspi, 249.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 36.

is theology that illuminates Jesus and gives full meaning to the Crucifixion. The simplest and clearest statement of that meaning is to be found in Point Seven of the Seelisberg program.¹¹⁶

The implication of the humanity of Jesus, a complete humanity, a Jewish humanity as Isaac would remind Christians, was that he is “fair game” to historians, to the fullness of history, and that he is a legitimate subject of historical inquiry. Isaac considered this Jesus of history to be *sui generis*. “If I am convinced of one thing, it is that Jesus does not lend himself to any Scholastic category, any. Exactly for this reason, when someone tries to persuade me that Jesus’ universalism was not only not Jewish but anti-Jewish, that it carried an exception and that this exception was addressed to his own people, the Jewish people, the only one he knew, the only one he wanted to know, then I have doubts, I ask to examine the texts.”¹¹⁷

However separate and distinct were the categories of the metaphysical and the historical, there was nonetheless a relationship between the two. History, according to Isaac, is silent on what theology teaches since it is beyond its depth and has nothing to add. It need not come to terms with theology and cannot be disowned by theology. But the converse is not true. Theology must take into account historical realities, must come to terms with “objective history,” failing which it must be disowned by history. The challenge was to extricate the deposit of historic reality embedded in the texts of the gospels, a historic reality that is sometimes hidden or veiled. And where a particular theological tradition is disowned by history, “...it becomes no more than a theological myth without the slightest foundation. Therefore respect for the truth demands that

¹¹⁶ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 118-21.

¹¹⁷ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 188.

myth's condemnation and disappearance."¹¹⁸ Theological traditions which depart from "historical truth," which do not correspond to the "data of history," are at best appropriate to legend. This presupposition is nowhere better expressed than in Isaac's last book, *The Teaching of Contempt*.

As an historian, and one little given to theological speculation, I am well aware that theology by its very nature goes beyond history in a unique way. But it is also true that in all the great religions, theology has an intimate connection with history. So it is with those three religions which may be said to be members of the same family – the Jewish, the Christian and the Moslem – since the divine revelation, the mystery of faith which is fundamental to these three religions, becomes part of their history... Therefore, history has a right to hold theology accountable for the use the latter has made of the historical data at her disposal. History has a right to ask theology not to distort or misconstrue these data and to remain conscientiously faithful to historical truth, insofar as the latter can be fairly ascertained and determined. It is true that theology goes beyond history, but only provided that theology respects history as its point of departure; this is not only its duty but, I venture to say, its sacred duty...¹¹⁹

For Isaac, schooled in scientific historiography, it was axiomatic that there was an objective history, a "what really happened." Scientific history had its monument in an influential handbook of methodology, *An Introduction to the Study of History*, by Charles V. Langlois and Charles Seignobos,¹²⁰ both of whom were on the faculty at the Sorbonne when Isaac attended this institution. This *Introduction*, published in France in 1898, was translated immediately into English and published in London in the same year. Scientific history presupposes the existence of objective history, of historical truth. "The historian works with documents. Documents are the traces which have been left by the thoughts and actions of men of former times."¹²¹ The process of joining document to document

¹¹⁸ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 71.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹²⁰ Charles V. Langlois and Charles Seignobos, *An Introduction to the Study of History*, trans. G. G. Berry (London: Duckworth & Co., 1898).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

with a view to joining fact to fact is exact and painstaking, that is 'scientific', and permits a reconstruction of how things really were. "The document is [the historian's] starting-point, the fact his goal."¹²² No documents, no history. Isaac would recall his personal impressions of Seignobos and Langlois this way: "Seignobos me faisait l'effet d'un rongeur; à ses dents aiguës, sa critique acérée, rien ne résistait; tout se réduisait en poussière, une poussière de faits dont aucun ne semblait avoir de substance ou d'importance... Tout au contraire, l'autre, Charles-V. Langlois, nous en imposait par son calme et sa froideur. Une froideur qui tenait à distance, décuplait notre timidité, donnait l'impression de receler une immense capacité de mépris. Ce maître semblait nous dominer du haut d'une science inaccessible à tout autre que lui."¹²³ Seignobos and Langlois had their chosen disciples; however, Isaac was not one of them. "Seignobos and Langlois avaient leur disciples choisis, convaincus et fidèles; ils eurent tôt fait de s'apercevoir que je n'en serais pas; mon dévouement bien connu à Péguy et aux *Cahiers* dut contribuer à me rendre suspect à leurs yeux, suspect de non-conformisme – suspicion plus que justifiée."¹²⁴ But while at the Sorbonne, Isaac was to discover in lectures another historian, by then dead ten years, to whom he was to attach himself as a disciple: Fustel de Coulanges.

Mais pourquoi celui-ci [Fustel de Coulanges], plutôt que Seignobos and Langlois? N'avait-il pas été le premier zélateur de 'l'Histoire scientifique,' de l'Histoire strictement objective? 'L'Histoire n'est pas un art, elle est une science pure. Elle ne consiste pas à raconter avec agrément ou à dissenter avec profondeur. Elle consiste, comme toute science, à constater des faits, à les analyser, à les rapprocher, à en marquer le lien... Le meilleur des historiens est celui qui se tient le plus près des textes, qui les

¹²² Ibid., 64.

¹²³ Isaac, *Expériences de ma vie: I Péguy*, 259-60.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 263.

interprète avec le plus de justesse, qui n'écrit et même ne pense que d'après eux.'¹²⁵

Isaac would practise what he preached in his study of the Jesus of history. An example of Christian teaching which is addressed by Isaac in Proposition 11 of Part III of *Jesus and Israel* - Christian teaching "...repeated and propagated...tirelessly, with methodical thoroughness, through all the powerful means that were – and still are – at [Christianity's] disposal, for hundreds upon hundreds of years, its thousands and thousands of voices indoctrinating each successive generation..." - is that the entire Jewish people, the people as a whole, spurned Jesus, refused to believe in his messiahship, his divinity and finally crucified him. Proposition 11 asserts otherwise. "Christian Writers deliberately omit the fact that at the time of Christ the dispersion of the Jews had been a *fait accompli* for several centuries. The majority of the Jewish people no longer lived in Palestine." Writes Isaac, "...the great Dispersion of the Jewish people, that dispersion perennially offered to Christian thinking – often from the height of the pulpit – as punishment for the crime, took place several centuries before Jesus' time, before the crime."¹²⁶ And thus was such a tradition demoted to the status of legend. But some traditions don't go quietly into the night. In later life, Isaac would be compelled to defend this thesis.

How deeply rooted such convictions can be [the dispersion of Israel as a divine punishment] is further illustrated by a barb recently aimed at me by one of the Catholic critics of *Jésus et Israël*: 'To confuse the Diaspora with the final dispersion foretold in Luke 21:24 is frankly laying it on a bit thick... [Abbé Tissier, mimeographed lessons (No. 220, p. 5).] This good Father is so shocked by my bad faith that he stoops to vulgarity.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 263-64.

¹²⁶ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 90.

So we must teach him another lesson in exegesis and history. For is it not 'laying it on even thicker' to force Scripture and history to say things they do not say, and to continue to force the Christian public to believe them?

First, the exegesis. What does Jesus foretell in Luke 21:24? (He is referring specifically to Jerusalem: 'But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies...') 'For...they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led away captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.' Not a word of this passage implies total or final dispersion. Jerusalem and Judea devastated, Jews killed and taken prisoner, the seizure of Jerusalem by the Gentiles: such are Jesus' prophecies and nothing more.

And such also is the evidence of history [as Isaac elaborates].¹²⁷

Isaac considered it to be an indisputable and undisputed fact that the drafters of the Gospels intended to serve religion and not history.

The Gospels are not "pure historiographical works but teaching works," says Aimé Puech. "The evangelists wanted not to compose a rigorous history, as we understand the term today, but to mount a demonstration," observes Joseph Bonsirven. "The Gospels are not history books... The evangelists were primarily concerned with throwing light on the religious value of Jesus' life through a selection of scenes which brought their teaching with them," writes Daniel-Rops. That is indeed their purpose: teaching, 'catechesis,' not history. It certainly does not follow that the Gospels are denuded of historic value. But it necessarily follows that religious concerns, concerns of 'demonstration,' prevailed over strictly historic concerns in the minds of the evangelists.¹²⁸

Isaac considered it equally indisputable that the canonical Gospels, once reduced to writing, were not secure from alterations, additions or suppressions.

We might recall in this connection, as painful as the words are, the accusation made by the pagan polemicist Celsus in the second century in *The True Account*, which we know through Origen's refutation of it in *Against Celsus*, 2:27: '...certain of the Christian believers, like persons who in a fit of drunkenness lay violent hands upon themselves, have corrupted the Gospel from its original integrity, to a threefold, and fourfold, and many-fold degree, and have remodelled it, so that they might be able to answer objections.' And Celsus was not alone in saying this: among the Christian writers contemporary with him, Irenaeus, Tertullian,

¹²⁷ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 65-6.

¹²⁸ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 292.

and Dionysius of Corinth recognized that “the writings of the Lord’ had been unscrupulously falsified.”¹²⁹

Another indisputable fact for Isaac was that while the Gospel tradition was being reduced to writing, a gulf was opening up between synagogue and church.

Then took place the divorce between Judaism and Christianity – a wholly deplorable divorce. Church and Synagogue became moral enemies, each anathematising the other, each claiming to be the true Israel of God. Learned Jews and Christians engaged in furious polemics. From both sides, such polemics have exceeded all measure, all charity, all respect for God or men. There was bitter competition between the two missionary activities. But it is just here that we discover a fact of great importance for our subject: in pagan eyes the Jewish rejection was the greatest argument against Christian claims, and therefore the principal obstacle to the success of the Christian apostolate. Said the pagans: ‘you tell us that Jesus is the Messiah, the Saviour announced by the Jewish prophets; how is it, then, that Jews are not the first to recognize him?’ Here was an obstacle that had to be removed. And so began the efforts of the Christian apologist to discredit his Jewish adversary, to spread distrust of him, to make him appear contemptible, hateful, odious. In short, here is the reason for the growth, the persistence, the violence of Christian anti-Semitism.¹³⁰

The conflict led to the creation of stereotypes which were projected back into the century of Jesus. André Chouraqui, disciple of Isaac, would elaborate in this regard in his dialogue with Fr Jean Daniélou almost 20 years later.

For example, beginning with the 4th and 5th centuries when the separation between the Church and the Synagogue was completed, there triumphed a Christianity which itself had a tendency to become monolithic. It then forcibly opposed Judaism which was tending to lose its extraordinary diversity after the triumph of the Pharisees, a triumph that resulted from the change in the historic situation due to the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the people. But this situation that the Doctors of the Church and those of the Synagogue then projected into the past did not yet exist in the century of Jesus. This is very evident.

In the century of Jesus there were not Jews on one side and Christians on the other. There were not even Jews in the present-day meaning of the term. There was a Hebrew phenomenon, a nation tragically divided against herself, suffering the weight of a Roman invader that she never

¹²⁹ Ibid., 293-94.

¹³⁰ Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, 54-55.

succeeded in escaping in spite of decades of struggle and bloody fights. On the ideological plane, Judaism did not yet exist.¹³¹

Synchronistically, at the time of publication of *Jésus et Israël*, a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Sorbonne under the title *Verus Israël, Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'Empire romain (135-425)*, authored by Marcel Simon, student of Charles Guignebert, was about to be published. The following English rendition of a passage in *Verus Israël* would be reproduced in the English version of *Jesus and Israel*.

The tactic [of reducing the responsibility of the Romans to a minimum in order to increase the responsibility of the Jews proportionately] appears clearly in the Gospels. Their authors, eager to court Rome, patently applied themselves to presenting a version of the Passion such that Roman authority, represented by Pilate, would emerge from the affair with almost clean hands, while a freely accepted responsibility would crush the Jews: 'His blood be on us and on our children!' The exigencies of theology, which shows the Jewish people rebellious against the divine message, thus joined with the interests of political opportunism.¹³²

Albin Michel had proposed to recapitulate the book in a bande-annonce this way:

NON, le peuple d'Israël n'a pas crucifié le Christ. Isaac counter-proposed with *Non, Israël n'a pas rejeté Jésus. Non, il ne l'a pas crucifié.* Isaac would have occasion to give an elegant précis of his theses in a radio broadcasted debate with Father Jean Daniélou on June 10, 1948. Let us listen to Isaac.

En premier lieu et avant tout, l'enseignement chrétien a le devoir de rappeler – et notamment au peuple catholique dont une grande partie l'ignore – ces constatations, simples constatations de fait: que Jésus était Juif, Juif circoncis, né d'une mère juive; qu'il exerça son ministère dans le cadre du judaïsme, dans les synagogues et, à Jérusalem, dans le Temple; que ses disciples, les apôtres, étaient tous des Juifs; et que lui-même, né sous la Loi – la Loi juive – a vécu sous la Loi – la Loi juive – jusqu'à la dernière heure.

En second lieu, il doit rappeler aux chrétiens – ou leur apprendre s'ils ne le savent pas – que l'Évangile de Jésus a de profondes racines

¹³¹ Daniélou and Chouraqui, *The Jews: Views and Counterviews*, 27.

¹³² Marcel Simon, *Verus Israël* (Paris: Boccard, 1948), 147.

juives...L'Ancien Testament juif est la base solide du Nouveau Testament, lequel, à une exception près – le troisième Évangile selon saint Luc – est l'oeuvre de Juifs.

Troisièmement: il doit rappeler aux chrétiens – ou leur apprendre – que si Jésus a eu contre lui les dirigeants du judaïsme, le haut sacerdoce, les bien-pensants, les notables, certains docteurs pharisiens, il a eu pour lui jusqu'au bout les masses populaires, du moins dans le cadre limité où il a exercé son ministère (Galilée et Judée), car la majeure partie du peuple juif, déjà dispersé à cette époque, ne l'a même pas connu. C'est un défi à la vérité que de présenter la dispersion juive comme un 'châtiment providentiel de la Crucifixion.'

Quatrièmement: il doit se garder – selon la formule chrétienne de Seelisberg – 'd'accréditer l'opinion impie que le peuple juif est réprouvé, maudit, réserve pour une destinée de souffrances'. La déchéance ou la malédiction d'Israël, une certaine théologie la voit partout dans l'Évangile parce qu'elle est décidée à l'y voir: elle n'est nulle part.

Et cinquièmement: c'est une injustice, une calomnie, et même un non-sens qui me paraissent monstrueux que de traiter le peuple juif comme on l'a fait couramment depuis dix-huit siècles, comme on le fait aujourd'hui encore dans les publications récentes, de 'peuple déicide.' D'abord, ainsi qu'on vient de le dire, la majeure partie du peuple juif n'a pas connu Jésus. Ensuite, au témoignage même des Évangiles, cette partie du peuple qui l'a connu, les foules juives, ne l'ont pas connu comme Dieu, Fils de Dieu (au sens propre), pas même comme Messie, mais l'ont révééré comme un prophète, un grand prophète. Enfin, Jésus crucifié a été victime, non pas du peuple juif, mais de l'autorité romaine et de l'oligarchie sacerdotale juive, l'une et l'autre également détestées du peuple juif. On n'a pas le droit d'attacher à la manifestation devant le prétoire ('Crucifie! Crucifie!') une signification contraire: 'Dieu' a dit un écrivain catholique [l'abbé Louis Richard in *Israël et la foi chrétienne*],¹³³ 'Dieu prend-il pour représentants de son peuple ces chefs acharnés contre son Christ et ces éléments troubles qu'ils ont entraînés devant le palais du gouverneur?'¹³⁴

Jésus et Israël touched a chord in a France that was still reeling from the German occupation. Its publication happened to be synchronous with the rebirth of the Jewish State. Its success was by all measures extraordinary, far exceeding the anticipation of author or publisher. By the beginning of August 1948, no more than four months after its

¹³³ Isaac, *Jésus et Israël*, quoted at 508.

¹³⁴ Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme*, 338-40.

appearance in bookstores, the first printing of 5,800 copies had sold out. Albin Michel printed another 4,600 copies which by February 1949, had sold out again. Would there be a third printing? For reasons which remain obscure, Albin Michel withdrew as publisher, much to the consternation of Isaac, who would have to wait a decade before the republication of *Jésus et Israël* by Fasquelles in 1959. The decade-long interval is one to which Isaac himself, with the benefit of hindsight, would refer as "...a long and curious disappearance."¹³⁵

Jésus et Israël would elicit strong responses on the part of Roman Catholic theologians and scholars. Radio and television interviews of Isaac followed hard upon its publication. In the work, Isaac had taken aim at the tradition of the Church Fathers, the Catholic Talmud in Jewish terms,¹³⁶ and engaged in a systematic, comprehensive and daring demolition of those teachings regarding the relationship between Jesus and Israel that were without historical or theological foundation. But construction is not possible without ground clearing. As Isaac would note in the Foreword to his last book, "I am told that I would do better to devote myself to some constructive task: rather than denounce the teaching of contempt, why not initiate the teaching of respect. But the two ends are inseparable. It is impossible to combat the teaching of contempt and its modern survivals, without laying the foundations for the teaching of respect; and, conversely, it is impossible to establish the teaching of respect, without first destroying the remnants of the teaching of contempt. Truth cannot be built upon error."¹³⁷ But Isaac had also taken aim at the New Testament itself, the Catholic Torah in Jewish terms, arguing that anti-

¹³⁵ Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, 44.

¹³⁶ Louis Massignon reacted to the publication of *Jésus et Israël* by regretting that Isaac had not brought the same analysis to the Jewish Talmud.

¹³⁷ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 17-18.

Jewish polemics and above all, apologetics, among the major preoccupations of the four evangelists, were embedded in the passion accounts of all four gospels, and generally in the Johannine gospel.

As far as the passion accounts are concerned, Isaac argued in a compelling fashion that the authors of the gospels said this, in effect: "I know that the Roman authorities crucified Jesus but I will blame the Jewish authorities; I will play the Roman card; I will write propaganda that I know is inaccurate."¹³⁸ As far as the stylistic peculiarities of the Johannine gospel are concerned, Isaac was not the first to note that in the fourth gospel, the term "Jews" serves to designate sometimes the Jewish people as a whole, sometimes the inhabitants of Judea, and sometimes the clique of Jesus' enemies, those the synoptics designate as "the chief priests, the scribes and the Pharisees," and thus takes on a pejorative connotation. To make his point, Isaac cites numerous passages from the gospel of John. Here is one of them.

The Jews were looking for him [Jesus] at the feast, and saying, 'Where is he?' And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, 'He is a good man,' others said, 'No, he is leading the people astray.' Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him [Jn 7:11-13]

Isaac asks his reader to re-read the passage rapidly. What is the dominant note? The relentless enmity of 'the Jews' against Jesus. What unalerted reader would think of distinguishing among them? Isaac then reproduces the passage inserting the implied 'the Jews' in the phrasing – 'the [Jewish] people,' and farther on, 'some [of the Jews]' and 'no one [among the Jews].'

The Jews were looking for him [Jesus] at the feast and saying, 'Where is he?' And there was much muttering about him among the [Jewish] people. While some [of the Jews] said, 'He is a good man,' others [of the Jews]

¹³⁸ John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 524.

said, 'No, he is leading the [Jewish] people astray.' Yet for fear of the Jews no one [among the Jews] spoke openly of him.¹³⁹

Continues Isaac,

Father de Grandmaison and Father Lagrange consider that the use of the words 'Jews' in this special sense is 'quite natural,' according to one, and 'rather natural,' according to the other; perfectly explainable, they both assure us. I readily agree: explainable, but in a completely different way; explainable, but on one condition and one only: explainable, if it was *intentional* [emphasis added]. But what a polemical find, and how far-reaching! Given that it is nearly impossible for the reader of the fourth Gospel to distinguish between 'Jews' and 'Jews,' between the 'Jews' who were Jesus' relentless enemies and the rest, it is likewise nearly impossible for him to read this Gospel, unless he is forewarned against such a stylistic procedure...

And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus... [5:16].

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life...' The Jews then murmured at him... [6:35, 41].

Jesus then [spoke] to the Jews who had believed in him... They answered him, 'Abraham is our father.' '...we have one Father, even God.' Jesus said to them, '...You are of your father the devil...' [8:31, 39, 41-42, 44]. The Jews said to him, 'Now we know that you have a demon...' So they took up stones to throw at him... [8:52, 59]

The Jews took up stones to stone him [10:31]

...the Jews sought all the more to kill him... [5:18; see also 7:1; 8:40; etc].

What Christian heart would not be revolted by this infernal hatred?¹⁴⁰

The book elicited strong reaction in both directions, reflecting the "two contrary tendencies"¹⁴¹ within the Christian community. Protestant Pastor Lovsky held fast to views he had first expressed in the June-July 1946 issue of *Foi et Vie*. "Avec une franchise impitoyable, tournée vers les chrétiens, M. Isaac en appelle à leur coeur, à leur foi: comment ne pas répondre à son appel, ne pas tenter de pourchasser la lèpre antisémite dans l'enseignement chrétien? ...Est-ce à dire que nous acceptons chaque proposition de cet ouvrage, chaque interprétations des textes et parfois même la méthode

¹³⁹ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 115.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 115-16.

¹⁴¹ Stransky, 31.

de l'auteur? Non pas."¹⁴² Also representative of the purifying minority tendency was

Julien Green. In a review of *Jésus et Israël* in the June 1949 issue of *Revue de Paris*,

Green wrote,

Le livre de Jules Isaac sur Jésus et Israël est placé sous mes yeux comme par hasard, alors que je cherchais à mettre en ordre quelques idées sur ce problème qui, entre tous, me tient à coeur. Une première lecture des vingt et une propositions qui résument cet ouvrage a quelque chose de si bouleversant qu'on n'ose garder le silence alors qu'Israël pousse un tel cri d'angoisse. L'auteur a souvent raison; il est même scandaleux qu'il puisse avoir raison à ce point et il serait tout aussi scandaleux de ne pas essayer de lui répondre, parce que beaucoup des accusations qu'il dirige contre nous sont, je le crains, celles-là même dont un juge infiniment plus puissant qui lui nous accablera un jour. Car il est inutile de nous dérober; nous autres chrétiens, nous sommes presque tous responsables à des degrés qui varient mystérieusement d'une âme à l'autre selon la mesure de leur lumière et le supplice de Jésus se poursuit jour et nuit dans le monde. Après avoir été cloué sur la croix romaine il est persécuté dans sa race avec une cruauté inexorable. On ne peut frapper un Juif qu'on atteigne du même coup celui qui est l'homme par excellence et en même temps, la fleur d'Israël; et c'est Jésus qu'on frappait dans les camps de concentration, c'est toujours lui; il n'en finit pas de souffrir. Ah, mettre un terme à tout cela et tout recommencer! Que ne pouvons-nous tous nous retrouver au matin de la Résurrection et embrasser Israël, sans un mot, en pleurant! Il n'y a que les larmes qui puissent avoir un sens après Auschwitz. Chrétien, essuie les larmes et le sang sur le visage de ton frère juif, et la face de votre Christ à tous deux resplendira.¹⁴³

By the time of the radio-broadcast debate of June 10, 1948 between Isaac and Jean Daniélou, however, proponents of the contrary tendency had already made their voices heard. Some protested that Isaac had shrunk Jesus from the Son of God to a mere prophet and called into question Jesus' divinity and divine sonship with his demonstration that according to the gospels, the Jews were ignorant of Jesus' status as Messiah and Son of God. Jean-Rémy termed the book a "pamphlet" in the *Revue*

¹⁴² Kaspi, as quoted at 211, n. 1.

¹⁴³ Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme*, as quoted at 333. Twelve years later, a young Augustinian Priest and theologian who was destined to have a great influence on the reorientation of Roman Catholic attitudes on Jews and Judaism would describe his response to *Jésus et Israël* in similar terms.

historique, to which Isaac replied in rebuttal, “*Jésus et Israël* n’est pas un pamphlet, malgré toute la passion qui l’anime. Mais c’est vrai que je suis un pamphlétaire – ou que j’en ai le tempérament.”¹⁴⁴ Anti-Judaism is not synonymous with anti-Semitism, suggested others. The anti-Semite seeks the destruction of the Jews; the anti-Judaist, his conversion. Not so, contended Isaac. “le terme d’antisémitisme,’ terme équivoque s’il en fût – comme il convient aux réalités équivoques qu’il recouvre -, doit être entendu ici dans sons sens courant, son sens vulgaire, d’ ‘anti-judaïsme,’ de sentiment ou de préjugé antijuif.”¹⁴⁵ In the July 14, 1948 issue of *Le Monde*, Protestant Pastor Charles Westphal referred to the book as an “ouvrage accusateur” which exposed “une théologie implicite” which would effectively reject the Gospel of John, the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul.

The reactions of Father Daniélou, Jesuit priest, scholar, theologian and future cardinal, to *Jésus et Israël* appeared in the August 1948 issue of *Études* and in the October 1948 issue of *La Nef*. In his article appearing in *La Nef*, Daniélou wrote, “...le livre ne vaut rien sur le plan de la vérité historique; la cause qu’il défend mérite de meilleurs arguments et doit être défendue malgré les graves reproches qu’il faut adresser à l’auteur.” What were these “grave reproches?” One can make inferences from a book that was published by Daniélou fifteen years later, in 1963, and titled *Dialogue avec Israël*. An English translation, *Dialogue with Israel*, was to follow in 1968. In this book, Daniélou contends that Isaac did his best to minimize that Christ announced the end of the Jewish cult, instituting in its place a new and better cult. Writes Daniélou:

Here we touch on the basic shortcoming of Isaac’s book...Isaac can ask us to respect the Law of Israel. He was right to remind us of it, if we have not

¹⁴⁴ Kaspi, as quoted at 209.

¹⁴⁵ Isaac, *Genèse de l’antisémitisme*, 26.

appreciated it sufficiently. But he cannot ask us to think that Christ did not consider it completed. If Isaac appeals to the authority of the Gospel, and if we want to respect its teaching faithfully, we must effect a double conversion. Christians must give the Jewish Law, which Jesus loved, the esteem that is its due, and respect the people to whom God gave that Law. But the Jews, on their part, must recognize what Jesus brought forth as both completing and surpassing that same Law. It is from this double movement that an effective reconciliation can come. Isaac does not take the whole of the Gospel into account, and thus makes it impossible for a Christian to agree with his book. He will tell me that this book is addressed to Christians. I await, then, a new book from him, or an article, wherein he will bring forth the counterpart of this one and teach his Jewish brothers to recognize in Jesus the fulfillment of the Law.¹⁴⁶

Concerning the responsibility of the Jews for the death of Jesus, Daniélou contended that Isaac "...goes too far when, in his desire to declare the Jewish people innocent, he wants to put the responsibility for it on the Romans and thus to reduce it to an episode in the political history of Judaism. The texts of the Gospel make this argument difficult. Isaac then becomes suspicious of its authenticity. Let us simply say that this is a bad method, dependent on outdated exegesis."¹⁴⁷

Jules Isaac wrote a rebuttal that appeared in the following issue of *La Nef*, suggesting that Daniélou's naïveté had allowed him to be seduced by "...un certain enseignement chrétien, une certaine tradition, une certain apologétique," and that he sided at his peril with these propagators of anti-semitism.¹⁴⁸ Some eighteen years later, in 1966, the young rabbinical student who had directed the network of resistance in the Haute-Loire, who had been charged with procuring false papers for the Isaacs, who had become a disciple of Isaac, would confront Father Daniélou in a dialogue. Jean Daniélou was by that time dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic Institute of Paris. André Chouraqui was by that time a doctor of law and laureate of the Faculty of Law in Paris

¹⁴⁶ Daniélou, *Dialogue with Israel*, 68-9.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁴⁸ Kaspi, 212-13.

and former personal adviser to Ben-Gurion. And Chouraqui would acquit himself well. Like a modern-day Joshua, he would be privileged to hear from the lips of Daniélou utterances that his mentor had not been so privileged to hear, utterances such as the following:

I come now to what is more important. Has not Christianity itself – Christian teaching and the presentation of the events in the life of Christ as given by Christians – been one of the sources of anti-Semitism? We are absolutely obliged to say that it has been, particularly because of the way the events of the life of Christ were presented, less by the great theologians and the great saints than by all the popular literature.¹⁴⁹

But Jules Isaac was destined to plead the cause of Judaism to a higher authority. He happened to be visiting Rome as a tourist in the month of October 1949 and had a meeting with certain Roman Catholic clergy. Le Père Marie-Benoît, who had been involved in the rescue of Jews during the German occupation of France, suggested that Isaac request an audience with Pius XII. Isaac's first response was to resist; as a Jew, he had nothing to do with the Pope. When his Catholic interlocutor persisted, Isaac relented. Might the Pope's decision a year earlier, as publicized on August 16, 1948 in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (vol. IX, no. 8, p. 342), to authorize the translation of *perfidis* as "unbelieving" or "without faith" in the Good Friday prayer for the Jews have been a factor in Isaac's decision? "Il faut prier pour les Juifs, dit saint Justin au 2ieme siècle comme saint Augustin au 4ieme siècle; 'il nous faut avoir pitié d'eux (les Juifs), jeûner et prier pour eux,' lit-on dans la Didascalie – qui est du 3ieme siècle ou du début du 4ieme."¹⁵⁰ But with the passage of time only one prayer for the Jews would remain in the Roman Catholic liturgy, the *Oremus* of Good Friday, a prayer that Isaac's research had

¹⁴⁹ Daniélou and Chouraqui, *The Jews: Views and Counterviews*, 60.

¹⁵⁰ Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme*, 296.

led him to conclude was already in the form it would take in missals until the mid-twentieth century.

Oremus et pro perfidis Judaeis, ut Deus et Dominus noster auferat velamen de cordibus eorum, ut et ipsi cognoscant (agnoscant) Christum Jesus Dominum nostrum.

...Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui etiam Judaicam perfidiam a tua misericordia non repellis, exaudipreces nostras, quas tibi pro illius populi obcaecatione deferimus, ut cognita (agnita) veritatis tuae luce, quae Christus est, a suis tenebris eruantur.

There is in the foregoing text a double attack: *perfidis* and *perfidiam*. Moreover, the prayer for the Jews was only one among many prayers for all persons, including prayers for the faithful and unfaithful, for members of the Church, for catechumens, for the evildoers, for heretics, schismatics and for pagans. Each time, the petitioner recited a prayer for a particular category of persons, the petitioner knelt down. There was no exception to the genuflexion – until the ninth century. From the ninth century forward, there was one exception to the general rule of genuflexion, and that exception pertained to the prayer for the Jews. In Catholic missals, the instructions were clear: the prayer was not to be followed by *amen* and not to be recited on one's knees. In *Jésus et Israël*, Isaac had observed, “Mieux vaut nulle prière qu’une prière telle?”¹⁵¹ For century after century, the Latin *perfidis* and *perfidiam* would be translated into the French and English as “perfides” and “perfidious,” “perfidie” and “perfidy.” What did the church have to say in rebuttal? “Although to modern ears, these adjectives have a pejorative ring, in the medieval Latin of the time of the prayer’s composition it simply meant ‘unbelieving.’”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Isaac, *Jésus et Israël*, 365.

¹⁵² Bea, 22.

A billet de l'audience publique with Pius XII was requested by Isaac and secured.

The audience was one of a sequence of audiences and it would last no more than six or seven minutes. Let us listen to Isaac's own account of it.

Une voiture de l'ambassade m'y emmena. Introduit dans une salle d'audience, j'ai vu une foule bigarrée, un va-et-vient de cardinaux et de camériers. Spectacle intéressant, mais, pensais-je, que pourrai-je bien dire dans ces conditions?

Une surprise m'était réservée. Un camérier appelle quelqu'un. Personne ne se lève. Comme j'étais déjà sourd, je me suis dit: c'est peut-être moi? C'était moi en effet. On me fait asseoir dans une petite pièce. Au bout d'un moment, un camérier se présente, un rideau s'écarter, le pape blanc apparaît. Nous sommes debout, l'un en face de l'autre, à peu près même taille et même âge. Je me présente pour ce qui je suis, un non-chrétien.

'Soyez le bienvenu,' me dit le Saint-Père, 'je vous écoute.' En quelques minutes, je plaide la cause du judaïsme. Déjà, une décision de Rome permet de traduire le *perfidis Judaeis* du Vendredi saint par *Juifs infidèles ou incrédules*. Mais une chose me paraît plus importante, la gèneflexion: la seule raison pour laquelle elle est supprimée, et cela depuis plus d'un millénaire, concerne les Juifs. Si cette gèneflexion était rétablie, la mesure aurait parmi eux un grand retentissement. Je parle également des dix points de Seelisberg [of which the pope was unaware]; je supplie le pape de les faire examiner.

'Laissez-moi votre dossier,' me dit-il. J'ai déposé mes documents sur la table. Pie XII m'a donné une médaille et m'a quitté d'une façon assez émouvante; avant de disparaître pour donner l'audience publique, il s'est retourné trois fois, répétant: 'Je vous bénis...' Je l'ai senti assez ému. Il n'était peut-être pas habitué à ce ton à la fois respectueux et direct. Je ne prétends pas que ma requête fut la cause déterminante de la décision prise en 1955, le rétablissement de la gèneflexion. Toutefois, le pape avait dû en garder le souvenir, car peu après mon audience, dans une allocution, il a parlé d'Israël en termes inhabituels.¹⁵³

The papal allocution to which Isaac referred was given on Christmas Eve 1949. The gèneflexion while reciting the prayer for the Jews was re-established in 1955. Isaac would not be alone in taking note of a new spirit at work. Almost twenty years later, a Catholic would also take note, a Catholic destined to become one of the architects of the

¹⁵³ Toulat, 140-41.

conciliar statement on the Jews, *Nostra aetate* no. 4. In his account of the fourth paragraph of *Nostra aetate* in the third volume of Vorgrimler's *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, first published in German in 1968, this Catholic would write:

On the occasion of the Holy Year, 1950, more precisely at its opening on Christmas Eve 1949, Pius XII invited all men to Rome. In particular he gave a welcome to Christians separated from Rome and together with them, to the Jews. 'We open the sacred gates to all who worship Christ – which is not to exclude those who await his coming in good faith, though in vain, and honour him as the one who is proclaimed by the Prophets though not yet come – and offer them a fatherly greeting and welcome.' There is a new spirit at work here, even though the 'old' language is still being used. Today we give a more positive value than this to the Jewish expectation; we no longer venture to speak of a vain, and therefore senseless and fruitless waiting. We prefer to see the Jewish hope in its inner relation to that of the Christians. But the Pope's invitation, despite its defective wording, is a great advance. It is the first ecclesiastical text that places the 'Jewish question' in an ecumenical framework. The Jews are mentioned here in the same breath as non-Christians – the sub-title of the printed text speaks of 'dissident Christians.'¹⁵⁴

On December 9, 1949, two weeks before the Christmas Eve address of Pius XII, the United Nations had ratified the November 29, 1947 recommendation to internationalize Jerusalem. The vote in the United Nations had stunned the Israeli foreign ministry, which had anticipated that the Assembly's 1949 deliberations would end in stalemate, and confirmed that the UN had not reconciled itself to Israel's gains during the 1948 war. The very same Pope who would be moved apparently by his encounter with Jules Isaac, who would speak about the Jewish people in uncharacteristic terms in his Christmas Eve address in 1949, was to prove the most dangerous challenge to Israeli control over West Jerusalem and its gains generally in the 1948 war. In the words of Prime Minister Ben Gurion, "the Catholic Church has [...] a 2,000-year-old reckoning with the Jews [...] the Vatican does not want Israeli rule here. There is a dogma which

¹⁵⁴ Oesterreicher, 10.

has existed for 1,800 years and we gave it the *coup de grâce* by establishing the State of Israel.”¹⁵⁵ Israeli foreign minister Sharett was less diplomatic in his reminiscence:

...what occurred on 9 December 1949 was a matter of retribution, the squaring of an account concerning something that happened here in Jerusalem, if I am not mistaken, 1,916 years ago, when Jesus was crucified. In the final minutes [of the UN debate] I had this totally subjective feeling. I sensed that there was blood in the auditorium. I felt as if it had been stated that these Jews need to know once and for all what they did to us, and now there is an opportunity to let them feel it.¹⁵⁶

In defiance of the UN Resolution and of the Catholic Church, Israel decided to transfer the seat of its government to Jerusalem. The 1949 armistice agreement, which had been signed earlier in 1949 and which regulated the *de facto* partition of Jerusalem between the two States, lent support on the ground to Israel’s rejection of the internationalization of Jerusalem. Cardinal Tardini, head of the Vatican Secretariat of State and speaking for the then majority tendency within the Catholic Church, would sum it up this way:

...there was no real need to establish [the Jewish] State... its creation was a grave mistake on the part of the Western states and ... its existence is a constant source of danger of war in the Middle East. Now that Israel exists, there is of course no possibility of destroying it, but every day we pay the price of this mistake.¹⁵⁷

Despite the decade-long hiatus between the publication of the first and the second editions of *Jésus et Israël*, the book continued to reverberate throughout the 1950s, along with the Ten Points. In 1952, Rev. Fr. Paul Démann published *La Catéchèse chrétienne et le Peuple de la Bible*, a work that was prefaced by Cardinal Saliège, Archbishop of Toulouse, and that was the product of an inquiry into two thousand Roman Catholic school manuals in the French language. In a lecture which he would be invited to deliver at the Sorbonne at the close of the 1950s, Jules Isaac would have occasion to give

¹⁵⁵ Bialer, as quoted at 66.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., as quoted at 69.

examples of the contemptuous teaching about Jews and Judaism that Fr. Démann would discover in school manuals.

On the themes of a degenerate Judaism and a sensual people:

The religious life of the Jews was reduced in the time of Jesus to pure exterior formalism.

The Jews had neither the fear nor the love of God.

Imagine the mentality of the people to whom Jesus was speaking; they look for happiness in gold and silver, in filthy lust, in quarrelling and revenge.

On the themes of an accursed people, a deicide people, on the Dispersion as divine punishment:

That his blood be upon us and upon our children! And God, my children, has granted this terrible prayer of the Jews. For more than nineteen centuries, the Jewish people have been dispersed throughout the world, and have kept the stain of their deicide – that is to say, of the abominable crime of which they were guilty in putting to death their God...

Until the end of time, children of Israel in dispersion will carry the curses which their fathers have called down upon them.¹⁵⁸

In early 1954, Isaac was invited to address the North African branch of the World Jewish Congress. His address was entitled *La Dispersion d'Israël. Fait historique et mythe théologique*, "...un exemple typique du mal que peut faire un enseignement traditionnel en contradiction avec la vérité historique...[une] tradition si vivace qu'elle a fini par refouler, obscurcir la vérité historique et s'imposer à tous comme si elle était la vérité."¹⁵⁹ Everywhere Isaac spoke, in Algiers, in Morocco, in Casablanca, in Marrakesh, there were very large crowds and he made deep impressions. In character, Isaac would return to France and publish as a monograph *La Dispersion d'Israël. Fait historique et mythe théologique* to which were appended his Twenty-One Propositions (Paris, 1954).

¹⁵⁸ Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, as quoted at 67-8.

¹⁵⁹ Kaspi, as quoted at 220.

This monograph was destined to be part of the dossier that Isaac would hand-deliver, with his mémoire, to John XXIII at their fateful encounter on June 13, 1960. The Foreword to this monograph adumbrates Isaac's thinking as the decade of the 1950s was drawing past its half-way mark.

1943-54. Déjà plus de dix ans.

Plus de dix ans que je me suis voué à une tâche: mettre à nu et si possible extirper ce qui apparaît, au regard de l'Histoire, la racine la plus profonde de l'antisémitisme,

sa racine chrétienne,

un certain enseignement traditionnel chrétien.

Mais qu'il n'y ait aucun doute, aucun malentendu à cet égard: dans l'accomplissement de ma tâche je suis et je reste l'homme de 'l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne'.

Le christianisme a tout à gagner – c'est ma conviction – à se libérer d'une tradition pernicieuse, qui ne touche nullement à la foi et au dogme.

Qu'est-ce qu'une vie religieuse, quelle qu'elle soit, sans un incessant effort de purification? Qu'est-ce qu'une vie religieuse qui n'est par amour, fraternité, charité?

Substituer un climat d'amitié à l'ancien climat de méfiance, d'hostilité et de haine, fonder la paix spirituelle sur la compréhension et le respect mutuel des croyances, tel est mon but.

Mais l'amitié n'exclut pas la franchise. La paix spirituelle ne s'obtient qu'au prix d'une lutte opiniâtre contre les préjugés et l'erreur, et pour le respect de la vérité historique.

Voilà pourquoi j'ai cru nécessaire de dire et d'écrire ce qui suit.

Isaac considered that Christianity could only benefit from casting off Christian contemptuous traditions about Jews and Judaism, traditions that in his view had nothing to do with authentic Christian faith and dogma.

In 1956, Isaac's *Genèse de l'antisémitisme* was published by Calmann-Lévy. This self-styled "essai historique" was 330 pages in length. Appended was an annex entitled "Brève Défense de *Jesus et Israël*," which was comprised of Julien Green's review of *Jesus et Israël*, published in the June 1949 issue of *Revue de Paris* and reproduced elsewhere in this study, Isaac's Twenty-One Propositions and a partial transcription of a

radio debate between Isaac and Jean Daniélou broadcast on June 10, 1948. *Genèse de l'antisémitisme* took up the fundamental difference between pagan and Christian anti-semitism and was essentially a rebuttal to popular notions within Christian circles that anti-semitism had existed at all times and in all places long before the Christian era. According to this notion, it is Jewish intransigence, Jewish separatism and Jewish non-assimilation that are the perennial causes of anti-semitism. "Not only today, but from the beginning of their existence, the Jews have been looked upon as an alien group, a thorn in the flesh of humanity," contended the Theological Committee of the Swiss Evangelical Society.¹⁶⁰ "Anti-Semitism is as old as Judaism itself, the very essence of which is to refuse to accommodate itself to the mind and manners of other peoples and to provoke universal antipathy," wrote Hermann Gunkel, quoted by W. Vischer, in *Esther*.¹⁶¹

In the mid-1950s, a young Augustinian priest and newly-minted Doctor of Theology (Fribourg) came across *Jésus et Israël* while preparing himself for a short series of talks on the relationship of the Catholic Church and the Jews. In preparation for these talks, this priest and scholar, then in his mid-thirties, had studied the Bible and had read works on topic from both a theological and a historical point of view.

But whatever I read, I understood in the light I had acquired from the traditional Christian attitude and my own theological upbringing. Thus I repeated, without the slightest hesitation, the ancient stories that the Jews have been rejected and the Gentiles chosen, that the younger brother has been preferred to the older, Isaac to Ishmael, Jacob to Esau, yes, and even Abel to Cain. The Jews, I then thought – and said, in the talks which I gave – are in the likeness of Cain, a people condemned for murder. There exists a whole procession of authors who defend such a statement. Without realising the implications of remarks of this kind, and the impact they make on human relations, I repeated the long litany of theological

¹⁶⁰ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, as quoted at 27.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

legends with which the mystery of Israel has been surrounded in the literature of the centuries.¹⁶²

But then he came upon a book that “shattered” him,¹⁶³ a book that would provoke him to prepare himself unwittingly for the most important role he was destined play in the first-ever (by Pope or Council) formulation of a “...systematic, positive, comprehensive, careful and daring presentation of Jews and Judaism.”¹⁶⁴ Gregory Baum and Jules Isaac would never have occasion to meet each other. But Baum was to devote the first three years following the receipt of his doctoral degree to a rebuttal of *Jésus et Israël*, particularly a rebuttal of the claim that anti-Jewish rhetoric intended to discredit the Jews and Judaism had been intentionally embedded in the New Testament itself. “*Jesus and Israel* raised the frightful question whether the Christian Church could ever separate itself from its anti-Semitic heritage.”¹⁶⁵

Gregory Baum had been born in Germany in 1923 of Jewish parents, “at least according to the laws of Nuremberg,”¹⁶⁶ had lost his father when no more than an infant, and had spent his early childhood in Berlin.¹⁶⁷ “I came from a German Jewish family (from Berlin, to be exact) that, following the nineteenth-century trend of assimilation, had abandoned Jewish practices and lost all interest in religion. The values to which I was initiated as a child were the secular ideals of culture, meaning, and beauty, typical of the

¹⁶² Baum, 1.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Willebrands, *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations*, 40.

¹⁶⁵ Ruether, 2.

¹⁶⁶ Baum, 1.

¹⁶⁷ Coincidentally, three Vatican II figures had attended the same Kaiser-Friedrich Gymnasium in Berlin: Gregory Baum, Carl Riegner, general secretary of the Geneva-based World Jewish Congress and a WJC representative at the Council and Ernst Ludwig Erlich, a colleague of Jules Isaac and a founder of the German Christian-Jewish Understanding Association, who attended the Council as a representative of the International B'nai Brith for Western Europe.

German bourgeoisie.”¹⁶⁸ In 1939, he had been transported out of Germany to England by a British refugee organization concerned with the welfare of Jewish children. In his first year in England, the sixteen year old Baum had been put to work on a farm, and then had been arrested as a German citizen and sent to an internment camp in Canada. In 1942, “...when life was a senseless suffering for vast numbers of people in Europe,”¹⁶⁹ Baum had been allowed to leave the camp to pursue undergraduate studies in physics and mathematics at McMaster University, Hamilton, thanks to the efforts and sponsorship of Emma Kaufman, a leader in the YWCA movement and distinguished missionary. While an undergraduate, Baum had found himself drawn to Christian texts, and to be moved above all by the Pauline, Augustinian and Thomistic emphasis on the unsolicited divine initiative. A reading of Augustine’s *Confessions* was apparently the catalyst that induced him to convert to Catholicism and he was baptized in 1946 at the age of twenty-three. Shortly thereafter, he had entered the formation program of the order of St. Augustine and had been ordained a priest in April 1954. In 1950, Baum had commenced his formal training in theology at Fribourg from which he graduated in 1956 with a Doctorate in Theology. His doctoral dissertation, which addressed ecumenism and was published in 1958 by Newman Press under the title *That They May be One*, was to come to the attention of the future Paul VI, then Bishop of Milan, who made it a point to read it carefully.¹⁷⁰ In 1960, Gregory Baum would begin teaching at the University of St. Michael’s College and St. Basil’s Seminary, Toronto, Canada.

¹⁶⁸ Rebecca McKenna, “The Mission of the Church in the Writings of Gregory Baum from 1957-1987” (University of St. Michael’s College, 1996), as quoted at 22.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., as quoted at 23.

¹⁷⁰ As recollected by Fr Thomas Stransky.

Baum's rebuttal was first published in 1961 under the title, *The Jews and the Gospel: a Re-examination of the New Testament*.¹⁷¹ Appended to the first edition was an English translation of the German version of the Ten Points of Seelisberg. *The Jews and the Gospel* was written to refute Isaac's contention that anti-Jewish trends were grounded in the New Testament itself. Baum set out to demonstrate that the problem lay not within the New Testament, but rather with later anti-Jewish trends which had been projected onto the New Testament.

Jules Isaac's book moved me very deeply. When in the late fifties I tried to give a partial response to Jules Isaac in a book entitled *The Jews and the Gospel*, I readily acknowledged the anti-Jewish trends present in Christian preaching, but I then thought that it was my religious duty as a Christian theologian to defend the New Testament itself from the accusation of prejudice and falsification.¹⁷²

In his defense, Baum argued that reflective of a later anti-Jewish trend which had been projected onto the gospel accounts were (i) the imputation to the entire Jewish people of the passages in the gospels addressed to the generation of Jerusalem to which Jesus himself belonged; (ii) the derogatory interpretation of exhortatory sermons in the prophetic tradition of passages in the gospels accusing the Jews of blindness and hardheartedness; and (iii) the historical interpretation of the scribes and pharisees and other opponents of Jesus. Post-Vatican II, in 1974, Baum would declare a retreat from this position in his Introduction to Rosemary Ruether's *Faith and Patriocide*.

...my apology for the New Testament led me to a contradiction: for I had to admit in the course of my study that many biblical passages reflected the conflict between Church and Synagogue in the first century. While I was bound to acknowledge that already the New Testament proclaimed the Christian message with a polemical edge against the religion of Israel, I refused to draw the consequences from this. I was still convinced that the anti-Jewish trends in Christianity were peripheral and accidental, not

¹⁷¹ Baum.

¹⁷² Ruether, 2.

grounded in the New Testament itself but due to later developments, and that it would consequently be fairly easy to purify the preaching of the Church from anti-Jewish bias. Since then, especially under the influence of Rosemary Ruether's writings, I have had to change my mind. Writing this introduction gives me the opportunity to declare that the book I wrote in the late fifties and published in 1961 no longer represents my position on the relationship between Church and Synagogue.¹⁷³

On October 9, 1958, Pius XII passed away. The man who would succeed him was then the Patriarch of Venice. This man had been apostolic nuncio to Turkey and Bulgaria from 1925 to 1937, and to Greece from 1938 to December 1944, when he became apostolic nuncio in Paris. During World War II, this man had quietly collaborated with the Jewish Agency to provide thousands of Jews in Bulgaria and Hungary with false baptismal certificates and false travelling visas to enable them to flee Europe for Palestine. It was this man, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, who would be elected Bishop of Rome on October 28, 1958, taking the name of John XXIII. Within the first three months of his papacy, John XXIII would summon an ecumenical council, in an almost confidential fashion, with his announcement on January 25, 1959 in the Roman monastery of Saint Paul's-Without-the-Walls.¹⁷⁴ At this announcement, he would make it clear that one of chief ends of the ecumenical council would be to work for a reconciliation of separated brethren. In his Encyclical of July 3, 1959, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, Pope John XXIII would declare, "The chief end of the council is to advance the development of the Catholic Faith, the renewal of Christian life among the people, the adaption of ecclesiastical discipline to contemporary conditions. Assuredly, this will afford a wonderful spectacle of truth, of unity, of charity, and we are confident that in

¹⁷³ Ibid., 3-4.

¹⁷⁴ The previous council had been summoned by Pius IX in June 1867 in solemn and grand fashion in the presence of 500 bishops who had assembled in Rome from all over the world to assist in the celebrations in commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Peter.

seeing it those who are separated from this Apostolic See will see in it a warm invitation to seek and find unity.”¹⁷⁵ On March 21, 1959, this man would with one stroke of his pen delete from the Prayer for the Jews the words *perfidis* and the expression *perfidia Iudaica*. At first, this suppression seemed to extend only to the churches of Rome itself. But on July 5, 1959, the Sacred Congregation of Rites formally extended the papal decision (as had been its intention) to the liturgy of the whole Church. This man would also do away with two other prejudicial sentences, one in the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart, recited every First Friday, the other in the ritual of baptism of converts.¹⁷⁶

The appearance of the second edition of *Jésus et Israël*, published by Fasquelles, happened to coincide with the solicitation in mid-June 1959 of the wishes and desires (*consilia et vota*) for the Council agenda. The solicitation was carried out by the Vatican II pre-preparatory commission, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Dominico Tardini (the very same Tardini who had declared earlier that year in conversation with Cardinal Tisserant, “...there is no possibility of contact or negotiations with the killers of God”).¹⁷⁷ Over 2,400 bishops, 156 superiors-general of male religious communities, sixty-nine pontifical faculties of theology and canon law, and the Roman curial departments were canvassed. The responses were printed by the Vatican Press *sub secreto* in fifteen volumes totaling 9, 520 pages. Recalls Thomas Stransky, one of the first two staff members of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, who perused these responses in preparation for the first plenary meeting of the SPCU,

To my surprise I discovered no mention of a theological clarification of Catholic-Jewish relations, no pastoral concern of anti-Semitism within the

¹⁷⁵ Daniel-Rops, *The Second Vatican Council*, as quoted at 119.

¹⁷⁶ Paul VI removed mention of conversion and the assertion that the Jews require deliverance "from their darkness" and introduced a reference to the Jews as "the people of Abraham beloved by God."

¹⁷⁷ Bialer, as quoted at 69.

Church – apart from a few exceptions, such as an Italian prelate who complained about “the insidious coalition of Communists, Jews and Freemasons”; and nineteen Jesuits on the faculty of Rome’s Pontifical Biblical Institute who submitted a carefully worded contribution on the avoidance of anti-Semitism...Many wanted a discussion on Christian unity and Catholic-Orthodox-Anglican-Protestant relations, and even relations with neighbours who are ‘unbelievers’ or atheists. Nothing on Catholic-Jewish relations. Many bishops pressed for confrontation with a long list of corrosive-isms: secularism and indifferentism, neo-Gnosticism and spiritualism, illuminism and relativism, above all, communism...But anti-Semitism within the Church and in society? Not on anyone’s list. I asked myself: Was such indifference an unintentional collective oversight? Was the genocide experience of the Jews in *Christian Europe* [emphasis added], the ‘final solution’ for the world’s Jewish people, already forgotten or so marginalized? Were the heavily publicized Nuremberg War Trials in 1947 a quickly extinguished blimp? Did no bishop read Anne Frank’s Diary or see the film?¹⁷⁸

The brief of the Pontifical Biblical Institute to which Stransky refers, emblematic of the purifying tendency within the Catholic Church, was dated April 24, 1960 and signed by then Rector Ernst Vogt, S.J., on behalf of eighteen other teachers at the Institute, all Jesuits from various countries. A petition of the Council fathers titled, “On the Avoidance of Anti-Semitism” (*De antisemitismo vitando*), set out in the last paragraph of the dogmatics section, requested that the Council include the problem of the people of Israel in its considerations of questions concerning ecumenism. It is thought to have been authored by Fr. Stanislaus Lyonnet, S.J.¹⁷⁹ The petition reverberates with Isaac’s thinking. The urgency of the petition arose from sermons and instructions which, on account of defective exegesis, taught the ‘accursedness’, ‘rejection’ and also the ‘collective guilt’ of the Jewish people. For the true proclamation of the mystery of the Passion, the Biblical Institute also rightly pointed to the catechism of the Council of Trent with its emphasis that all sinners – all men – are to be reckoned as Jesus’ crucifiers. A

¹⁷⁸ Stransky, 34-5.

¹⁷⁹ Oesterreicher, 8.

special reason brought forward for the petition was the “error of the ultimate rejection of the ‘chosen people’” which rested on a false interpretation of such passages of the New Testament as Mt 27:25; 24:2; 1 Thess 2:16; Rom 9:22. Finally, the signatories of the petition saw in the Pauline teaching that a time would come when ‘the full number of the Gentiles come in’ and ‘all Israel will be saved’ (Rom 11:25, 26), a prediction thought to be the best weapon with which to put a stop to any theologically embellished anti-Semitism, or to make its revival impossible.¹⁸⁰ Another instance of the purifying tendency is reflected in a letter, dated April 26, 1960, received by the pre-preparatory commission from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. In this letter, the university declared three propositions to be unacceptable: (i) “the Jews rejected and crucified Jesus,” (ii) “the believers from the Gentiles have been elected instead of the people of Israel,” and (iii) “the People of Israel have been rejected by God forever.” The university also recommended that Christians should pray “...that the prophecy in Rom 11:25-26 be fulfilled and the People of Israel be placed in the elect locus reserved for it in the Church of Christ.”¹⁸¹

But the Vatican II Pre-Preparatory Commission was unaware of a meeting which took place in October 1959 in the Hôtel Terminus in Paris, a meeting which would set the wheels in motion for an unprecedented addition to the agenda of Vatican II. At this meeting, Jules Isaac was importuned by Daniel and Cletta Mayer to solicit an audience with Pope John XXIII.¹⁸² At this meeting, they informed him, “Notre ami Vincent Auriol

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸¹ Tavard, as quoted (as an English translation from *Acta et documenta concilio aecumenico vaticano II apparando*. Series I, Vol. IV, Pars II) at 22.

¹⁸² In 1955, the Mayers had with others of like ilk established the Centre d'Étude des Problèmes Actuels (CEPA) whose purpose was to combat anti-semitism.

accepte volontiers l'idée de servir d'intermédiaire auprès des Autorités romaines.”¹⁸³ Let us listen to Isaac.

Quand les circonstances favorables se présentent, il faut les saisir. Ces circonstances, l'avènement de Jean XXIII les a créées. Ses premières décisions ont été très favorables à Israël, en particulier la suppression radicale du mot *perfidia* dans la liturgie. Il s'est révélé à la catholicité comme un homme de décision et d'avenir; oui, orienté vers l'avenir, et c'est remarquable pour un homme de cet âge – il est vrai qu'il est plus jeune que moi! J'ai jugé que c'était l'occasion de poser la question dans toute son ampleur; on ne trouve pas tous les jours un pape Jean.¹⁸⁴

Two months later, on December 15, 1959, Jules Isaac would give a lecture at the Sorbonne entitled “Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?” Hundreds of eminent ecclesiastics, theologians, scholars, and writers were informed of the lecture in advance by an advertising campaign conducted by Fasquelles. This lecture would compress Isaac's thinking into a form suitable for a one-hour delivery, would be translated by James and Dorothy Parkes of Oxford University, would be published as a monograph by the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1961, but most importantly would be compressed further into a mémoire to be hand-delivered by Isaac to John XXIII at their historic meeting.

On June 8, 1960, shortly after Bea's appointment as president of the SPCU, John Oesterreicher, then Director of the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies attached to Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, on behalf of himself and thirteen priestly colleagues scattered throughout the United States, submitted in English to Bea “...an appeal...the first advance into an area that had lain neglected for so long, and indeed seemed to be unknown territory for most people.”¹⁸⁵ A Latin version was to follow on June 24, 1960. The signatories of the petition asked that “the Council proclaim that the

¹⁸³ Kaspi, as quoted at 232.

¹⁸⁴ Toulat, 141.

¹⁸⁵ Oesterreicher, 9-10.

call of Abraham and the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt were part of the genesis of the Church, so that she can fittingly and rightly be called 'the Israel of God' (Gal 6:16), the Israel renewed and exalted by Christ's word and blood... the Council give further liturgical expression to the unity of salvation history...[and] finally...that misleading phrases, above all in the lessons of the Office, which distort the true teaching of the Church and her real attitude towards the Jews, should be changed."¹⁸⁶

On June 5, 1960, John XXIII brought to a close the pre-preparatory phase of Vatican II with his signature on a document issued under the title of *Superno Dei nutu*. This document set in motion "laboratories of theological research" in the form of twelve organisms, ten commissions and two secretariats each of which was assigned a particular group of matters.¹⁸⁷ Both commissions and secretariats had the same structural formation: a chair, a secretary, and some thirty members and consultants. With one exception, all the chairs were to be cardinals. All the secretaries were selected apart from the curia. One of the two secretariats was the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), created with the vague ecumenical mandate to help other Christians "follow the work of the Council" during its preparations.¹⁸⁸ Augustin Cardinal Bea was appointed president and Mgr Johannes Willebrands, as he then was, secretary, of the SPCU, which had been constituted a "secretariat" rather than a "commission." The reason given by John XXIII was that the low-key title offered "...more freedom of movement in a rather new and unique field."¹⁸⁹ But most significantly, we know from a confidential memorandum dated March 22, 1966, from Mgr Loris Capovilla, personal secretary to John XIII, to Jesuit

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸⁷ Daniel-Rops, *The Second Vatican Council*, 111.

¹⁸⁸ Stransky, 30.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 30, n. 2.

Stjepan Schmidt, personal secretary to Cardinal Bea, that until a week after *Superno Dei nutu* "...it never entered Pope John XXIII's mind that the Council ought to be occupied also with the Jewish question (*questione ebraica*) and with anti-semitism."¹⁹⁰ A catalyst was required to surface the Jewish theme in the Pope's consciousness. This catalyst would be the person of Jules Isaac. The venue would be a private papal audience on June 13, 1960.

In preparation for his audience with John XXIII, Isaac prepared a mémoire, which compressed even further his Sorbonne lecture, and a dossier of attachments, which included his Eighteen Points, the Ten Points of Seelisberg and subsequent variations, Isaac's published monograph entitled *La Dispersion d'Israël, fait historique et mythe théologique* (Paris, 1954) and relevant extracts from the Catechism of the Council of Trent published by l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne (Paris, 1950). The mémoire and attached dossier were prepared in both French and Italian. The mémoire listed the capacities in which Jules Isaac would present himself at the papal audience:

Président d'honneur de l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne de France
Inspecteur général honoraire de l'Instruction publique
Historien
(famille décimée à Auschwitz et Bergen-Belsen)

In anticipation of the encounter, Isaac solicited advice with eminent Catholics, such as François Mauriac, Rev. Father Paul Démann, Mgr de Provençères, Archbishop of Aix-en-Provence and others. At last, the time had come for Isaac to board a train that would take him to Nice and thence, to Rome, where he arrived on June 9, 1960. He was in his 83rd year. And we know the thoughts that were going through his mind. "J'ai conscience de parler au nom des martyrs de tous les temps. Mes épreuves, mes deuils, les

¹⁹⁰ Thomas F. Stransky, "The Foundation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity," in *Vatican II by Those Who Were There*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), 72.

recommandations suprêmes que j'ai reçues m'ont confirmé que c'était vraiment une mission sacrée. J'ai survécu pour l'accomplir."¹⁹¹

Upon his arrival in Rome on June 9, 1960, Isaac was briefed by the French ambassador to the Vatican, M. de la Tournelle, on the personalities with whom he might be meeting preliminary to his audience with John XXIII. The next day, Isaac met with the Israeli ambassador to Italy and was briefed on senior curial cardinals who might be favourably disposed to Isaac's message. These included Amleto Ottaviani, head of the theologically conservative Holy Office, arch-enemy of Russia, and Eugène Tisserant, doyen of the College of Cardinals. On June 11, Isaac met with Jean Bayet, directeur of l'Ecole française de Rome, and Gaston Palewsky, French ambassador to Italy. A lengthy lunch followed with M. de la Tournelle, French ambassador to the Holy See. They both agreed that Isaac should target Augustin Cardinal Bea, newly appointed chair of the SPCU, German Jesuit, confessor to Pius XII and biblical scholar. But unbeknownst to Isaac, Secretary of State Cardinal Tardini was doing his utmost to prevent what was to be a private, unpublicized encounter between Isaac and John XXIII. But in this sphere, Tardini was destined to fail.

At last, it was the day of the scheduled audience, Monday, June 13, 1960. Let us listen to Isaac.

Vers onze heures, un secrétaire d'ambassade, M. de Warren, vient me prendre à l'hôtel avec une voiture à cocarde tricolore. Au Vatican, les hallebardiers suisses présentent les armes; l'officier salue. Dans la dernière salle qui précède le bureau-bibliothèque où Jean XXIII reçoit, longue attente. On nous prévient que Sa Sainteté est fatiguée, qu'Elle est réveillée depuis minuit, que les audiences sont nombreuses. Cela signifie, hélas! Que le temps nous sera mesuré... Enfin, vers treize heures quinze, mon tour arrive. Le pape nous reçoit debout, devant la porte qui s'ouvre. M. de Warren fléchit le genou. Je

¹⁹¹ Kaspi, as quoted at 233.

m'incline, et Jean XXIII me donne tout bonnement la main.¹⁹² Je me présente comme non chrétien, promoteur des Amitiés judéo-chrétiennes en France, comme un vieil homme très sourd. Le pape me fait asseoir près de lui; il est la simplicité même, et cette simplicité contraste singulièrement avec le faste du décor et du cérémonial qui précède. Il ne paraît pas si fatigué, il est tout souriant, le regard clair, un peu malicieux, avec une évidente bonté qui inspire confiance.

Comme prévu, c'est lui qui engage la conversation, vivement, parlant de son culte pour l'Ancien Testament, les Psaumes, les Prophètes, le livre de la Sagesse. Il parle de son nom, qu'il a choisi en pensant à la France (Jean XXII était on le sait, fils d'un savetier de Cahors), me demande où je suis né, tandis que je cherche la transition pour l'amener sur le terrain voulu. Je lui dis le grand espoir que les mesures prises par lui ont éveillé dans le coeur du peuple de l'Ancien Testament. Si nous espérons davantage encore, n'est-ce pas lui-même qui en est responsable par sa grande bonté? Ce qui le fait rire.

Alors j'expose ma requête. Mais comment, en quelques minutes, faire comprendre ce qu'a été ce ghetto spirituel dans lequel l'Eglise a fini par renfermer le vieil Israël – en même temps que dans un ghetto matériel? J'expose l'essentiel de ma conférence en Sorbonne, montrant comment s'est formé 'l'enseignement du mépris,' qui subsiste toujours.

Heureusement, ajoutai-je, un contre-courant purificateur se renforce de jour en jour. Entre ces deux tendances contraires, l'opinion catholique reste divisée, flottante. Voilà pourquoi il est indispensable qu'une voix s'élève d'en-haut, du 'sommet,' la voix du chef de l'Eglise, pour condamner solennellement cet 'enseignement du mépris,' en son essence anti-chrétien.

Je présente alors une note conclusive, rédigée la veille, et la suggestion de créer une sous-commission chargée d'étudier le problème. Le pape réagit aussitôt en disant: 'J'y ai pensé dès le début de l'entretien.' A plusieurs reprises, au cours de mon exposé, il avait manifesté sa compréhension et sa sympathie. J'avais rappelé au début dans quelles circonstances, quelles épreuves, je m'étais voué à cette tâche depuis dix-sept ans.

Plus de vingt minutes se sont écoulées; c'est la fin. Heureusement il y a le mémoire, le dossier, la note conclusive, que je remets, et que le pape promet de lire. En disant toute ma gratitude pour l'accueil reçu, je demande si je puis emporter quelque parcelle d'espoir. Il se récrie: 'Je suis le chef, mais il me faut aussi consulter les autorités compétentes, faire étudier par les bureaux les questions soulevées: ce n'est pas ici la

¹⁹² The informality reflected in the Pope's extending his hand to shake that of Isaac, not only at the beginning but also at the end of their meeting, was in character. Several months later, in October 1960, this informality would manifest itself again, this time in an encounter with well over a hundred American Jews who would end a study-trip in Europe and Israel with a visit to the Vatican with the express purpose of thanking the Pope for his many efforts to save Jews during the time of Hitler's persecution. He greeted his visitors with the words, 'Son io, Giuseppe, il fratello vostro!' ('I am Joseph, your brother!')

monarchie absolue.' Et nous nous quittons sur une nouvelle et bonne poignée de main.'¹⁹³

Before day's end, Isaac would brief the French Ambassador to the Vatican and schedule meetings with curial members for later that week. Before day's end, the Holy Father would make a five-word entry in his diary: *Interessante l'ebreo prof. Jules Isaac*.¹⁹⁴ From that fateful encounter on, we know that "... he [the Pope] was firmly behind the idea... [trusting] Cardinal Bea and on this subject [having] confidence in his wisdom."¹⁹⁵

The following day, June 14, 1960, Isaac met again with the Israeli ambassador. But Wednesday, June 15, 1960, was to prove the most fruitful.

Le cardinal Tisserant, dépourvu de toute influence, réserve un accueil glacial à son visiteur. Le cardinal Ottaviani, qui dirige le Saint-Office, le fait attendre, écoutée avec courtoisie, suggère le rattachement de la sous-commission à telle ou telle commission, mais dispose de très peu de temps. A 17 heures, Jules Isaac pénètre dans le bureau du cardinal Bea, loin sur la Via Aurelia, au collège brésilien. Bea sait déjà l'essentiel, car il a beaucoup travaillé sur le sujet avec les catholiques allemands. Il souhaite agir dans le même sens que Jules Isaac. Il pense que la sous-commission doit être rattachée à la commission qu'il préside. Après une heure d'entretien, le cardinal remet sa carte à Jules Isaac, l'invite à lui écrire en cas de nécessité.¹⁹⁶

If Cardinal Bea had been surprised by the fact that the Pope had sent an octogenarian Jewish messenger to confide [the Pope's] wishes to him, his hour with Jules Isaac would dispel such surprise. Here is how Isaac himself would recall his encounter with Bea. "J'ai passé près d'une heure avec le cardinal Bea, réputé comme 'la sommité en Ecriture sainte.' Ce jésuite allemand, qui parle fort bien le français, au visage intelligent et ouvert, s'est montré parfaitement au courant des questions abordées. Il est en relations avec les

¹⁹³ Toulat, 142-44.

¹⁹⁴ Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, ed., *Edizione nazionale dei diari di Angelo Guiseppe Roncalli - Giovanni XXIII: Agende del pontefice 1958-1963* (Roma: 2001).

¹⁹⁵ Stransky, "The Genesis of Nostra Aetate: An Insider's Story," 32.

¹⁹⁶ Kaspi, 235.

catholiques allemands qui font le même travail que nos groupes d'Amitié judéo-chrétienne. J'ai trouvé en lui un puissant réconfort."¹⁹⁷

The record is silent until three months later. Augustin Bea took his annual summer retreat to reflect upon the concerns that had been raised by Isaac; the same Augustin Bea who almost 40 years earlier, well before Hitler's rise to power, had unselfconsciously summed up his understanding of the Jews and Judaism in an article published in 1921 in *Stimmen der Zeit*. What follows is an English translation of the relevant German excerpt.

May the Jews of today be how they always want to be; it is and remains true: God has chosen Old Israel in order to make it the bearer of His revelation; and he wanted that from among this nation His only-begotten Son took flesh. That this nation has rejected its Messiah became its curse and deprived it of the grace of the special divine guidance. That [Israel] has preserved itself as a nation and religious community until today despite all troubles and persecutions of almost two millennia, it does not owe in the first place to a racially hygienic selection, even though this certainly may have contributed to the preservation or enhancement of some specifically "Jewish" characteristics. In reality, the reason lies deeper; [it lies] in God's salvific providence which, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets and the teachings of the apostle to the Gentiles, also comprises this nation as a people [viz. Israel] despite all its disloyalty. The gate to salvation is open to this nation as well. As St Paul says in a highly significant passage of his Letter to the Romans: 'Only partially has the hardening come over Israel until, namely, the full number of Gentiles will have come in; thus, then, will the whole of Israel be saved' (Rom 11:25f). This is the Christian understanding of the Jews and Judaism. It [viz. the Christian understanding] is, as the very same St Paul says, a 'mystery,' one of the great secrets of divine world sovereignty and the disposition of salvation, in front of which Paul falls down in worship and confesses: 'O depth of richness, the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are Your judgments and how unfathomable Your resolutions!' (Rom 11:33)¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Toulat, 142.

¹⁹⁸ Augustin Bea, "Antisemitismus, rassentheorie und altes testament," *Stimmen der Zeit* 100 (1921): 182-83.

On this great secret of divine world sovereignty, Augustin Bea would ruminate. In an address to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion which Bea would give on January 15, 1964 in the course of the 17th Chapitre général in Rome, he would offer this speculation on the mission of the Jewish people: "Puis il y a *la mission* [emphasis added] du peuple [Juif]: préparer la venue du Messie; conserver et transmettre à l'humanité la Révélation, donnée surtout dans les Prophètes, dans les Psaumes, le Livre des Proverbes et les autres Livres didactiques."¹⁹⁹ We can surmise that during that summer, Bea read *Jésus et Israël*. There is, however, but one allusion to Isaac's concerns in a note to himself during Bea's summer retreat. Would he decide to take on the Jewish Question?

On September 14, 1960, Bea requested an audience with John XXIII, writing "I would particularly like to bring up the question of responsibility concerning relations between Jews and Catholics, on which I am frequently consulted."²⁰⁰ Four days later, on September 18, 1960, the Pope received the advice of Cardinal Bea respecting Jules Isaac's concerns and proposition. "Upon *Bea's initiative and recommendation* [emphasis added], John XXIII mandated that the SPCU facilitate 'the Jewish Question' during the Council preparations."²⁰¹ Secretary of State Tardini, anti-Zionist and main champion of the internationalization of Jerusalem, was not consulted. Writing twenty-five years after the fact, SPCU Secretary Johannes Willebrands would observe: "To the Pope and the Cardinal we therefore owe the conception (so to speak) of [Nostra Aetate, para 4]; as we owe to Pope John's successor in St Peter's office, Pope Paul VI, and always to the same Cardinal, the nurturing and the growing process – a painful growing process indeed – of

¹⁹⁹ Augustin Cardinal Bea, in *17ieme Chapitre général de la congrégation des religieuses de N.D. de Sion* (Rome: 1964).

²⁰⁰ Stransky, "The Genesis of Nostra Aetate: An Insider's Story," as quoted at 32.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

that small embryo.”²⁰² But is this not a distortion of the truth? If the fourth paragraph of *Nostra Aetate* had a conception, was it not that fateful handshake between a Jew and a Catholic, both over eighty years of age, at the close of their meeting on June 13, 1960? Sister Louise-Marie Nietz, Notre Dame de Sion, thought so when she observed:

Tout a commencé là, en 1960, et nous devons nous rappeler que c’est à la démarche d’un Juif, Jules Isaac, que nous le devons et à un homme de bonne volonté, ouvert, Jean XXIII, que nous le devons également. C’était déjà une rencontre judéo-chrétienne.²⁰³

Augustin Cardinal Bea would have the privilege of seeing the conception through the gestation period to birth.

The first plenary session of the SPCU was held on November 14-15, 1960. Thomas Stransky, one of two staff members, recalls that George Tavard and Gregory Baum were the first two consultants tapped for the *De Questione Hebraica* sub-commission. Baum had been invited to advise the SPCU by virtue of his perceived expertise in ecumenical matters, since his doctoral dissertation on point had already been published. The Church was unaware of Baum’s expertise in Jewish-Christian relations since the first edition of his, *The Jews and the Gospel: a Re-Examination of the New Testament*, had yet to be published.

We thirty-nine clerics held our first plenary in an assigned, stuffy, ill-lit room in the Vatican, adjacent to a junk room of sculptured fragments called the Hall of Broken Heads. President Bea encouraged the utmost of freedom but gently kept us to the point; avoiding aimless repetitions, spinning of theological wheels, and long pious orations. This would remain the pattern of our future work sessions. We designated nine ecumenical themes and assigned members of a sub-commission to each, but for the tenth theme, *De Questione Hebraica*, nominated only two consultants who were not yet noted for expertise in Catholic-Jewish relations – George Tavard and Gregory Baum. Afterwards, Bea had to recruit others for the specific inter-religious task. To add to this

²⁰² Willebrands, "Christians and Jews: A New Vision," 222.

²⁰³ Louise-Marie Nietz, N.D.S., "Histoire de la déclaration 'Nostra Aetate'," *Sens* 5 (May 1996): 190.

exceptional situation, Bea told the plenary that unlike the other topics, even the fact of the special papal mandate had to be *sub secreto*, at Pope John's explicit request. Only a few saw the reason: not to stir up further the already turbulent political waters in the Middle East. Even though four weeks earlier Bea and Willebrands had given me, as a staff-member, the "Jewish Portfolio" (among others) for the collection of materials, I was still quite naïve on this political dimension, until mid-December.²⁰⁴

George Tavard, then chair of the theology department at Mount Mercy College, Pittsburgh, recalls that Mgr John Oesterreicher, founder and president of the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, was the first consultor entrusted with *De Questione Hebraica*. Oesterreicher had been born of Jewish parents in 1904 in a village in Moravia, but unlike Baum, he had been raised with some modicum of Jewish tradition in proximity to nine other Jewish families.²⁰⁵ Oesterreicher was to attend the University of Vienna and in 1924, was to convert to Catholicism. The recollections of Stransky and Tavard converge, however, on the eventual composition of the *De Questione Hebraica* sub-commission: Gregory Baum, John Oesterreicher, George Tavard and Abbott Leo Rudloff, of the Dormition Abby in Jerusalem and Weston Priory in Vermont.

²⁰⁴ Stransky, "The Genesis of Nostra Aetate: An Insider's Story," 32-3.

²⁰⁵ As related by Fr Thomas Stransky.

-CHAPTER THREE-

EPILOGUE

Jules Isaac spent Thursday, June 16, 1960, in bed receiving visitors. On Friday night, the 17th, at 22:00 hours, he boarded the train for his return trip after having led, in his own words, "...une vie très fatigante et inhabituelle."²⁰⁶ Four months later, he would receive the news that a stand-alone sub-commission to pursue the rectification of Roman Catholic teaching about Jews and Judaism would not be created, further to his recommendation. Instead, there would be a working group struck to address the question. This working group would take the form of a sub-commission for Jewish questions underneath the umbrella of the SPCU, a sub-commission which Bea would chair.

At a plenary session of the SPCU held in Ariccia, in the Alban hills, from November 27 to December 2, 1961, a first draft of the *Decretum de Iudaeis* was worked out during the general assembly. For this special task only, Mgr Johannes Willebrands, Secretary of the SPCU, and Mgr Francis Davis, Birmingham, England, were added to the sub-commission on Jewish questions. Before the end of the session, the sub-commission had tabled the following text:

The Church, the Bride of Christ, acknowledges with a heart full of gratitude that, according to God's mysterious saving decree, the beginnings of her faith and election are already to be found in the Israel of the patriarchs and prophets. Thus she acknowledges that all Christian believers – Sons of Abraham by faith (cf. Gal 3:7) – are included in his call and, likewise, that her salvation is prefigured in the deliverance of the chosen people out of Egypt, as in a sacramental sign (Liturgy of the Easter Vigil.) And the Church, new creation in Christ as she is (cf. Eph 2:15), can never forget that she is the spiritual continuation of that people with whom, in his mercy and gracious condescension, God made the Old Covenant.

²⁰⁶ Kaspi, as quoted at 235.

The Church in fact believes that Christ, who 'is our peace', embraces Jews and Gentiles with one and the same love and that he made the two one (cf. Eph 2:14). She rejoices that the union of these two 'in one body' (Eph 2:16) proclaims the whole world's reconciliation in Christ. Even though the greater part of the Jewish people remained separated from Christ, it would nevertheless be an injustice to call this people accursed, since they are beloved for the sake of their fathers and the promises made to them (cf. Rom 11:28). The Church loves this people. From them sprang Christ the Lord, who reigns in glory in heaven; from them sprang the Virgin Mary, mother of all Christians; from them came the apostles, the pillars and bulwark of the Church (1 Tim 3:15).

Furthermore, the Church believes in the union of the Jewish people with herself as an integral part of Christian hope. The Church awaits the return of this people with unshaken faith and deep longing. At the time of Christ's coming only 'a remnant chosen by grace' (Rom 11:5), the first-born of the Church, accepted the (eternal) word. The Church believes, however, with the Apostle that at the time chosen by God, the fullness of the sons of Abraham according to the flesh will finally attain salvation (cf. Rom 11:12, 26). Their reception will be life from the dead (cf. Rom 11:15).

As the Church, like a mother, condemns most severely injustices committed against innocent people everywhere, so she raises her voice in loud protest against everything done to the Jews, whether in the past or in our time. Whoever despises or persecutes this people does injury to the Catholic Church.²⁰⁷

The foregoing *schema* was grounded on a short survey that had been prepared by Fr Gregory Baum (the same Gregory Baum who had been so "shattered" by Isaac's *Jésus et Israël*) and had been tabled at the second meeting of the SPCU the prior February 6 to February 9, 1961 in Ariccia. In his survey, Fr Baum had submitted the thesis that the teaching of recent Popes had made it clear that the Christian approach to the Jewish question was theological and that anti-Jewish patristic and medieval perceptions were no longer to be defended. He had recommended that the Council issue authoritative declarations on the following three points:

1. In the treatment of the origin and nature of Christ's Church, her close connection with the Old Israel should be made unmistakably clear.

²⁰⁷ Oesterreicher, as quoted at 40.

- Thus it should be shown how the New Covenant confirmed, renewed and transcended the Old, and how the New Testament fulfilled and superseded the Old, but nevertheless did not render it invalid.
2. In order to correct the widespread notion that *the* Jews had rejected Jesus as the Christ, it should be made clear that the holy remnant of the Jewish people acclaimed and accepted the Saviour of mankind. It would therefore be unjust to regard the Jews as an accursed race or a people who had been rejected.
 3. The Church's unceasing hope of Israel's final reconciliation with herself should be solemnly proclaimed and, no less important, until that day came the Christian's attitude to his Jewish neighbour should be one of love and respect. Anti-Semitism should be condemned.²⁰⁸

On February 2, 1962, John XXIII declared closed the preparatory phase and that the Council would convene on October 11, 1962. The Central Preparatory Commission (CPC), whose 110 members included Bea, scheduled its seventh and last meeting for mid-June that year. Recalls Thomas Stransky, "The nervous CPC kept whittling down the original hundred and seventeen submitted schemata to a manageable number, eventually reaching twenty. For Belgian Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens, the original group was 'too many, too trivial, and too detailed' – 'an encyclopaedia of sacred things,' pronounced the CPC general secretary, Archbishop Pericle Felici. Since *De Judaeis* had only forty two lines, perhaps it was too short and too limited in scope. As such it could too disappear."²⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the creative output of Jules Isaac continued and resulted in the publication in 1962 of his last work, *L'Enseignement du Mépris*, published by Fasquelles Éditeurs. An English translation, published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in 1964, would follow under the title, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*. Pope John XXIII and Charles Péguy are quoted by Isaac at the beginning of the book.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., as quoted at 18.

²⁰⁹ Stransky, "The Genesis of Nostra Aetate: An Insider's Story," 41.

“There is something worse than having an evil mind, and
that is having a closed one.”

-Charles Péguy

“It is a fundamental rule of life never to distort the
truth.”

-Pope John XXIII

One week before the CPC was to convene, the World Jewish Congress announced, and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir endorsed, the appointment of Dr. Chaim Vardi, counselor on Christian Affairs within Israel's Ministry of Religions, as an “unofficial observer” to the first Council session. The announcement and endorsement provoked vigorous protests from Arab governments. On June 20, 1962, without presentation or discussion, Secretary of State Cardinal Amleto Cicognani (with Bea's concurrence) withdrew *De Judaeis* from the CPC agenda. The text of *De Judaeis* is not even included in the *Acta* of the preparatory coordinating commission minutes. Isaac, watching from a distance and in ill health, feared the worst. On October 6, 1962, he wrote to John XXIII.

Très Saint Père,

Malade, et retenu au lit depuis six mois, qu'il soit permis de rassembler tout ce qui me reste de force pour venir plaider une dernière fois, devant Votre Sainteté, la cause du Judaïsme, de la justice et du respect qui lui sont dus (...) Si le problème de l'enseignement concernant le vieil Israël, considéré dans toutes ses données, est très complexe, il est un principe général qui le domine et sur lequel devrait se faire un accord unanime. Ce principe peut se formuler ainsi:

Qu'en aucun cas, sous aucune forme, un enseignement authentiquement chrétien ne puisse engendrer des sentiments de mépris, de répulsion et de haine, à l'égard du peuple de l'Ancien Testament. En conséquence, doivent être définitivement prosrites les imputations calomnieuses de peuple ou de race déicide, de peuple maudit, de peuple satanique et charnel, de peuple dispersé en châiment de la crucifixion.

Parlant ainsi, plaidant ainsi, je répété que j'ai la conviction profonde d'être, au regard de Dieu, dans la voie droite, et je m'incline, avec tout le respect qui lui est dû, devant votre Sainteté.²¹⁰

The Council fathers managed to avoid the topic of the Jews during the first Council session from October 11, 1962 to December 8, 1962 except on November 27 when Bishop Méndez Arceo (Cuernavaca, Mexico) is recorded to have asked, "...where are the Jews on the agenda?"²¹¹ Following the close of the first Council session, Bea petitioned John XXIII to keep *De Judaeis* on the Council agenda, assuring the Pope that the text would remain "...purely religious, nothing to do with the question of recognizing the State of Israel."²¹² On December 13, 1962, Bea received the Pope's response: the mandate was to remain in effect.²¹³

Alas, neither Jules Isaac nor John XXIII would live to see the fruits of their collaboration. On June 3, 1963, John XXIII passed away to the notice of the entire world. Jules Isaac would pass away three months later, on September 5, 1963 in Aix at his home, La Pergola, to the notice of very few. Isaac lived just long enough to learn of Paul VI's decision in August 1963 to renew the *De Judaeis* mandate. In his last Will, Isaac had requested of his executors, "La prière, vous la demanderez pour moi au rabbin Zaoui: je souhaiterais qu'elle fût dite en français. Sinon, traduite de l'hébreu."²¹⁴ The churches of Aix-en-Provence did not consider themselves similarly constrained. Masses were celebrated in churches across Aix in tribute and gratitude to this layperson, a layperson who wasn't even a Christian. Reported *France-Soir* on September 11, 1963, "...le rabbin Zaoui de l'Union libérale évoqua le compagnonnage de Jules Isaac avec Péguy, avant de

²¹⁰ Cohen, as quoted at 460.

²¹¹ Stransky, "The Genesis of Nostra Aetate: An Insider's Story," as quoted at 42.

²¹² Ibid., 43.

²¹³ For Bea's memorandum and John XXIII's response, see *Acta Synod.*, II, pars V, 485.

²¹⁴ Kaspi, as quoted at 249, n. 1.

rappeler la tragédie familiale qui marqua l'auteur des célèbres manuels d'histoire."²¹⁵

Reported *Témoignage chrétien*, "...c'est alors [aux obsèques] qu'on comprit que celui qu'on venait de conduire à sa dernière demeure était un vrai prophète d'Israël."²¹⁶

It would be the responsibility, indeed the privilege, of Augustin Cardinal Bea, a quietly stubborn German Jesuit, to see this sacred task to its end. He would introduce to the Council fathers the four successive stages of the *schema* on the Jews. One has to dig deeply to find traces of the influence of Isaac's thought in these four addresses to the Council fathers. Isaac had argued eloquently that Christian anti-Semitism was the powerful trunk, with deep roots, upon which have been grafted other varieties of anti-Semitism, even varieties as anti-Christian as Nazi racialism. Bea had not been persuaded. After the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, Bea would write in *The Church and the Jewish People*, "As I have already had occasion to remark in the Council chamber itself, the painful phenomenon of anti-semitism draws its sustenance neither principally nor exclusively from religious sources. Many other factors, political, national, psychological, social and economic, enter into it."²¹⁷ Bea could have been referring to his introduction on November 18, 1963 when the *schema* on the Jews was first considered by the Council as chapter IV within the *schema* "On Ecumenism."

But why is it so necessary today to recall these things? The reason is this. Some decades ago, anti-Semitism, as it is called, was prevalent in various regions and in a particularly violent and criminal form, especially in Germany under the rule of National Socialism, which through hatred for the Jews committed frightful crimes, extirpating several million of Jewish people – we need not at the moment seek the exact number. Moreover, accompanying and assisting this whole activity was a most powerful and effective 'propaganda' as it is called, against the Jews. Now, it would have been almost impossible that some of the claims of that propaganda did not

²¹⁵ Ibid., as quoted at 249.

²¹⁶ Cohen, 461.

²¹⁷ Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People*, 8-9.

have an unfortunate effect even on faithful Catholics, the more so since the arguments advanced by that propaganda often enough bore an appearance of truth, especially when they were drawn from the New Testament and from the history of the Church. Thus, since the Church in this Council is striving to renew itself by 'seeking again the features of its most fervent youth' as John XXIII of venerable memory said (cf. Discourse of 14 November 1960, AAS, 52 (1960), p. 960), it seems imperative to take up this question.

Not that anti-semitism, especially that of National Socialism, drew its inspiration from Christian doctrine, a quite false allegation. Rather it is a question of rooting out from the minds of Catholics any ideas which perhaps remain fixed there through the influence of that propaganda.²¹⁸

Further to a recommendation made on April 16/17, 1964 by Cardinal Carlo Confalonieri, member of the Conciliar Coordinating Commission, the text on Jews and Judaism became a separate document, but was downgraded to the status of "declaration." On September 25, 1964, Cardinal Bea introduced in the Council Chamber a revised *Declaration on the Jews and Non-Christians*. Most significantly, in the revised declaration, the word "deicidal" was omitted from the summons directed to all Christians not to call the Jewish people accursed or "deicidal," a "shameful and tragic omission," wrote Claire Huchet Bishop in her Foreword to the English language version of *Jesus and Israel*, and one which was "...bound to have future repercussions."²¹⁹ But Isaac himself seems to have been fully aware of the implications of classical Christology, and in particular, that in accordance with *communicatio idiomatum*, the properties of the Divine Word can be predicated of the man Christ and that the properties of the man, Christ, can be predicated of the Divine Word. So too was Augustin Cardinal Bea who would allude to the *communicatio idiomatum* implications of orthodox Christology in an article entitled "Are the Jews a Deicide People and 'Cursed by God'?" that he would write in

²¹⁸ Ibid., 157.

²¹⁹ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, xv.

1962 during the council phase of Vatican II for simultaneous publication in the German *Stimmen der Zeit*, the French *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* and the Italian *La Civiltà Cattolica*. The article would reach the second proof stage before it was suppressed out of a concern its publication would further inflame certain Arab countries, but not without protest from the editors of *Stimmen der Zeit*. As a result of this protest, the substance of Bea's article was published in *Stimmen der Zeit* under the name of Ludwig von Hertling, SJ, a member of the German journal who had in his time taught church history at the Gregorian.²²⁰ Bea would write,

According to Catholic doctrine, Jesus Christ is in one person true God and true human being. Both natures, the divine and the human, are united hypostatically in Christ, according to the technical term. Between the divine and the human nature in Christ is what theology describes as *communicatio idiomatum*, which means that the same things can be predicated of Christ, Son of God, as of Christ, human being. We call Mary mother not merely of Jesus the man, but we call her Mother of God. We do not merely say that Jesus, the man, died on the Cross, but that God dies on the Cross for us. Conversely, we say that the infant Jesus in the crib, or the blood of Christ, or the Heart of Jesus is to be adored. It is therefore dogmatically correct, even when it might sound somewhat uncouth, to assert: God has been killed and since it is an unjust and violent death, God has been assassinated.²²¹

Having regard to the *communicatio idiomatum* implications of the man-God nature of Jesus, it is not surprising that Bea would conclude that *objectively* speaking, the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ constituted the crime of deicide. What is astonishing and a testament to intellectual integrity is that Isaac would reach the same conclusion. According to Rumanian Chief Rabbi Emeritus Alexandre Safran, who attended the Seelisberg Conference in 1947, Isaac had been willing to accept the positive

²²⁰ Willebrands, *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations*, 57-61.

²²¹ Ludwig von Hertling, S.J., "Die schuld des jüdischen volks am tod Christi," *Stimmen der Zeit* 171 (1962/63): 17.

formulation in the Ten Points that some Jews (presumably the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead) had “killed God.”²²²

However, as Bea would note in *The Church and the Jewish People*, “We cannot speak of the guilt of deicide objectively in the external forum and simultaneously leave the question of possible ignorance to the judgement of God. Here we are asking whether certain *persons* [emphasis added] can be accused of culpability for deicide or not, and the problem of their subjective knowledge or lack of it is as vital as the objective qualification of the crime itself.”²²³ In other words, the guilt of deicide can only be properly imputed to those who have committed the crime with full knowledge of the dual nature of Christ. In his *relatio* on the revised schema, Bea would echo Isaac’s arguments and the New Testament passages upon which Isaac had relied: ²²⁴

Here lies the gravity and the tragedy of their [the Jewish authorities] action – the exercise of their authority in the condemnation and death of Christ. Yet how grievous was their [the Jewish people’s] guilt? Did those ‘rulers’ of the people in Jerusalem fully understand the divinity of Christ and so become formally guilty of deicide? Our Lord on the cross said in his prayer to the Father: ‘Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34). If this reason for forgiveness is no mere empty formula – God forbid – it surely shows that the Jews were far from full understanding of the crime they were committing. St Peter also, addressing the Jewish people on the crucifixion of Christ, repeated: ‘And now brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers’ (Acts 3:17). So St Peter finds an excuse even for the very rulers! So likewise does St Paul (Acts 13:27).²²⁵

“As for Peter, who denied Jesus at the time of his Passion,” Isaac had written in his last book, “it would be more accurate if he had said, ‘This Jesus...we crucified and killed...’ For Jesus’ disciples, being the best-informed of his authority, are more to be

²²² Rutishauser, 46.

²²³ Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People*, 69 at n.1.

²²⁴ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 361-62.

²²⁵ Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People*, 161.

blamed for having deserted him.”²²⁶ But Bea in *The Church and the Jewish People* would use the fact that neither St Peter, nor St Stephen²²⁷ or St Paul,²²⁸ for that matter, had included themselves among those responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus in support of the theological assertion that the crucifixion of Jesus is not founded on membership of the people of Israel, but on concurrence with the attitude of mind of their leaders in Jerusalem. Writes Bea,

One fundamental fact must first be noted. In none of the texts cited above does the speaker (St Peter, St Paul or St Stephen) include *himself* [emphasis added] among those responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Their rebukes are always addressed to someone else, whether it be the Sanhedrin, the crowd involved in the trial, the inhabitants of Jerusalem or Jews in general. Now if these texts referred to a collective responsibility and guilt of the entire Jewish people as such, that is of all members of the people of Israel, then in all honesty the speakers would have been obliged to use the pronoun ‘we’ and to include themselves. It follows that they neither envisaged nor implied a collective responsibility or guilt based solely on membership of the chosen people.²²⁹

In his arguments rebutting the accusation of collective guilt, Isaac had argued that the Jewish authorities had not been representative of the Jewish people. “It is possible to believe,” he had written, “as we shall see, that this oligarchic caste – four powerful families in all, brutal, cynical and ill-famed- bore the heaviest part of the responsibility for Jesus’ arrest and delivery to the Romans. And it is this caste which our authoritative theologians and exegetes, for lack of better, baptize as ‘perfectly qualified’ representatives of the Jewish nation. ‘Perfectly disqualified’ would be more accurate. Vichy in Jerusalem. And worse yet, if we recall that Vichy could at least claim some

²²⁶ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 138.

²²⁷ Acts 7:52

²²⁸ Acts 13:27-28; 1 Thessalonians 2:15

²²⁹ Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People*, 77.

democratic basis and exhibited only a secular (or military) dishonor.”²³⁰ Bea was not persuaded. In his introduction to the Council fathers, when addressing the question whether a declaration that Christ’s death can in no way be laid to the charge of the Jewish people *as such*, he stated:

I need scarcely say that there is not and cannot be any question of denying or attenuating anything affirmed in the Gospels. The issue must be carefully defined and it is this: The Leaders of the Jerusalem Sanhedrim, although not democratically elected, yet, according to the ordinary understanding of those days, accepted by the scriptures, were regarded and must be regarded as the embodiment of legitimate authority among the people. Here lie the gravity and the tragedy of their action – the exercise of their authority in the condemnation and death of Christ.²³¹

But Bea was not averse to using the results of Isaac’s historical research in making his arguments, although he was careful not to cite Isaac as his authority. In *Jesus and Israel*, Isaac had written that historical research had led him to conclude that at the time of Jesus, the “...probability, if not the certainty, is that the Jews in Palestine were at that point only a minority, the estimates – and they are very rough – ranging from a half million to one or two million. The Jews of the Diaspora constituted the majority, numbering four or five million or perhaps more [representing 7 to 8 percent of the total population of the Roman Empire].”²³² Bea would echo this fact in his second address to the Council fathers this way: “Statistics show that in the apostolic age the Jews dispersed throughout the Roman Empire numbered about 4,500,000: are all of them to be accused of the deeds done by the Sanhedrists on that first sad Good Friday?”²³³

²³⁰ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 276.

²³¹ Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People*, 161.

²³² Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 93.

²³³ Bea, *The Church and the Jewish People*, 161-62.

Let us listen first to Thomas Stransky, staff member to the SPCU and the Jewish sub-commission, and then to George Tavard, consultant to the SPCU and member of the Jewish sub-commission.

Thomas Stransky

Ten days after the 'Great Debate', when the SPCU was just beginning to evaluate the spoken and written interventions, the three Presidents and the Coordinating Commission strongly urged an alternative – insert the main points of *De Judaeis* into *On Divine Revelation*; Judaism and other religions into *On the Church*'s second chapter, the people of God; and the condemnation of racism and anti-Semitism into the *Church in the Modern World*. This dispersal of contents in new settings would help avoid those political interpretations which Middle East bishops feared and Jews wanted. A very reasonable and authoritative suggestion. It would be no surprise if *Nostra Aetate* as such were to join a few other schemata in a quiet burial.²³⁴

George Tavard

The turning point in the composition of *Nostra aetate* came when, in view of the oriental Patriarchs' continued objections, several bishops suggested that the Council should speak not only of Judaism but also of Islam. Muslims too, they argued, believe in the God of Abraham, and the Quran identifies Jesus and Mary as authentic prophets of God. This discussion ended on 29 September 1964; the Secretariat for Christian Unity then started to work to expand the proposed draft. Experts were brought in to help write new paragraphs. Nearly two months later, on 20 November, Cardinal Bea presented the resulting version, which now spoke also of three great religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. This text was accepted in substance on 21 November 1964, with 1,651 votes in favour, 242 in favour with modifications, 99 against and 4 votes that were invalid.

During the fourth session of the Council, on 14 October 1965, Cardinal Bea gave his last presentation of the schema in its final form. A vote on 15 October showed 1,763 in favour, 1 in favour with modifications, 250 against and 9 invalid. The final vote on 28 October carried a much higher majority: 2,221 in favour, 2 in favour with modifications, 88 against and 1 invalid...*Nostra aetate* was promulgated on the same day.²³⁵

²³⁴ Stransky, "The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*: An Insider's Story," 49.

²³⁵ Tavard, 32-3.

Nostra Aetate, paragraph 4, eclipsed, transcended and superseded the Ten Points of Seelisberg. The Ten Points had served their purpose. John Oesterreicher in his account of how *Nostra Aetate* came to be in Vorgrimler's *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, writes, "It is the first time also that the Church has publicly made her own the Pauline view of the mystery of Israel."²³⁶ This observation overreaches. Pauline-inspired may be closer to the mark. How Paul understood himself bore little relation to how the Church was to interpret him 2,000 years later. As Gregory Baum would note in his Introduction to Rosemary Ruether's *Faith and Patricide*,

In particular, Paul himself, from whom Vatican II has taken its language about Israel's ongoing election, had no intention whatever of recognizing Jewish religion as a way of grace. Israel had become blind, according to Paul; it was a way of death, of spiritual slavery. Despite this blindness, the apostle taught, God did not permit Israel to disappear; the election remained with it, not however as a source of present grace, but as a divine promise guaranteeing the conversion of the Jews at the end of time and their integration into the Christian Church, the one true Israel. All attempts of Christian theologians to derive a more positive conclusion from Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11 (and I have done this as much as others) are grounded in wishful thinking. What Paul and the entire Christian tradition taught is unmistakably negative: the religion of Israel is now superseded, the Torah abrogated, the promises fulfilled in the Christian Church, the Jews struck with blindness, and whatever remains of the election to Israel rests as a burden upon them in the present age.²³⁷

But much had happened in these two millennia. Judaism was no longer what it was in the first century. It had developed in the form of rabbinic Judaism. And Christianity was no longer what it was in the first century. It had developed through the patristic tradition. Christians could therefore no longer say the Christian religion was the fulfillment of Judaism. The Second Vatican Council took seriously - as no ecclesiastical authority had done previously - the Pauline teaching that the Jews remain God's chosen people, but the

²³⁶ Oesterreicher, 1.

²³⁷ Ruether, 6.

Council expanded the meaning Paul gave to this ongoing election, taking into account the reality of post-biblical Judaism and the relationship between the teaching of contempt and modern anti-semitism and nazi racialism. In the words of Gregory Baum, "...the rereading of Scripture in the light of new historical events is the appropriate theological method followed in the doctrinal renewal of the Church. John XXIII and John Paul II referred to this as listening to 'the signs of the times.' This method allows the Church to hear God's Word in a new way, revise previous interpretations, and discover relevance of divine revelation for the conditions of the present."²³⁸

Do we not hear echoes of Jules Isaac, and perhaps of his spiritual soulmate, Charles Péguy, in the following passages of *Nostra aetate*, paragraph 4?

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant [*Isaac's Point 1*]. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles...

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: 'theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenant and the law and the worship and the promises [*Isaac's Point 3*]; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh' (Rom 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary [*Isaac's Point 7*]. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people [*Isaac's Point 9*]...

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today [*Isaac's Point 14*]. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures [*Isaac's Point 13*]. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

²³⁸ Gregory Baum, "Afterword," in *Jews and Catholics Together: Celebrating the Legacy of Nostra Aetate: Proceedings of a symposium held in Toronto 10 November 2005*, ed. Michael Attridge (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 2007), 151.

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

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent his passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation [*Seelisberg Point 7*].

Gregory Baum, a principal architect of the conciliar statement on Judaism, sums up the fourth paragraph of *Nostra aetate* this way. "The Council recognized the ongoing validity of God's Covenant with the first-chosen people, honoured the faith of contemporary Jews, and repudiated the discourse of contempt that had infiltrated the Christian tradition almost from the beginning. I understood *Nostra aetate* to say that since God's saving Word continues to sustain the synagogue, the Church has no mission to convert Jews to Christianity."²³⁹ It is noteworthy that in his republished work titled *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic?* Baum chose not to carry forward the Ten Points as an appendix.²⁴⁰ Although not recalling his motive, he concedes the possibility even today that he must have assumed that the Ten Points had served their purpose and been transcended by the conciliar statement on the Jews and Judaism. No doubt it would have been a source of great pleasure for Isaac to have heard the following comments of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, secretary to the SPCU and first president of the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, comments made with the benefit of 20 years of hindsight from the promulgation of *Nostra aetate*:

...at least this is true: those [Catholics] who chose to ignore *Nostra aetate* and subsequent actions and documents, including the example of the Pope, are put in the situation of having to explain their attitudes, theological or pastoral. In other words, an attitude which represents ancient stereotypes

²³⁹ Ibid., 150.

²⁴⁰ Gregory Baum, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? A Re-Examination of the New Testament*, revised ed. (Glen Rock, NJ: Deus Books, Paulist Press, 1965).

or prejudices, not to say one that is aggressive against Jews and Judaism, does not anymore have a right to legitimate existence in the Church. It may be there, and it may still be frequent in some places, but it has been put onto the defensive. It is not taken for granted, as it was - I fear - twenty years ago.²⁴¹

Do we not hear echoes of Isaac, and perhaps of his soulmate, Péguy, in the *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate* (n. 4), published in 1974? For example, the Guidelines call attention to the links between the Christian liturgy and the Jewish liturgy [*Isaac's Point 2*] and recall that:

- It is the same God, 'inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments' (*Dei Verbum*, 16), who speaks both in the Old and new Covenants [*Isaac's Points 1 and 3*];
- Judaism in the time of Christ and the Apostles was a complex reality, embracing many different trends, many spiritual, religious, social and cultural values [*Isaac's Point 4*];
- The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded upon it must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism, with no appeal to the love of God and neighbour (cf. Dt. 6:5; Lv 19:18; Mt 22:34-40);
- Jesus was born of the Jewish people, as were his Apostles and a large number of his first disciples [*Isaac's Points 7 and 9*]...
- The history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather went on to develop a religious tradition... [a tradition that] is still nonetheless rich in religious values.

The correspondences between the *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church*, published in 1985 and Isaac's *Jesus and Israel* are so numerous that they speak for themselves. Reference is made in this regard to the Table of Correspondences set out in Appendix III.

How to explain the resonances between *Nostra aetate*, no. 4, the Guidelines and the Notes, on the one hand, and Isaac's *Jesus and Israel*, on the other? Ovey N. Mohammed, Professor Emeritus, Regis College, has observed that the Catholic Church

²⁴¹ Willebrands, "Christians and Jews: A New Vision," 229.

“...stepped over centuries of contemptuous teaching back to the New Testament itself.”²⁴² But someone was waiting for it. Someone had already blazed a trail back to the New Testament itself. Someone had already discovered the mis-alignment between gospel and tradition. And that someone was Jules Isaac. Few are those who know of the pivotal role that Isaac played in the change and renewal of the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward Jews and Judaism. Thomas Stransky is one of them. He writes,

By only these 17 Latin sentences, though a few had been weakened by immediate compromises, Vatican II began to shift with integrity 1,900 years of relationships between Catholics and Jews, and to open locks that had been jammed for centuries. The conciliar act continues in the life of the Catholic Church, an irrevocable *hesbon nefesh*, a reconsideration of soul.

In recalling my personal experience of *Nostra Aetate*'s six-year journey, I favour the biblical image which Cardinal Bea once used: the tiny seed of Jules Isaac's half-hour conversation with Good Pope John grows into that large mustard tree which warmly hosts in its branches so many men and women of 'non-Christian religions'. The all-embracing positive character of the entire *Nostra Aetate* makes it of commanding import in Catholic history. For *Nostra Aetate* helped open the Catholic Church to living dialogue with each community of faith – respecting its own identity, ritual and conduct. This dialogue begins with 'what human beings have in common and what promotes fellowship' (N.1). Not merely human effort but God's mysterious initiatives, through us, in a shared history.²⁴³

In his address to the Council fathers on November 20, 1964, Bea would make reference to the mustard seed metaphor without elaborating, opening his remarks with “This Declaration might well be compared to the biblical grain of mustard seed.”

Pope John Paul II was another who was keenly aware of the catalytic role that had been played by Isaac in the reorientation of the Catholic Church's attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. In his address in Paris to members of the French Jewish community on May

²⁴² Ovey N. Mohammed, "Jewish-Catholic Relations: From *Nostra Aetate* to the Present," in *Jews and Catholics Together: Celebrating the Legacy of Nostra Aetate: A symposium held in Toronto 10 November 2005*, ed. Michael Attridge (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 2007), 54.

²⁴³ Stransky, "The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*: An Insider's Story," 52-3.

31, 1980, he paid tribute to Isaac in the following manner: "I pay homage to these victims [of the Holocaust] whose sacrifice, we know, has not been fruitless. It was from there that there really began, thanks to the courage and decision of some pioneers, including Jules Isaac, the movement that has led us to the present dialogue and collaboration, inspired and promoted by the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council."²⁴⁴ And in the spirit of the Catholic-Jewish dialogue to which he made reference, John Paul II would become the first Bishop of Rome of record to enter and pray in the Great Synagogue of Rome. It would happen on Sunday, April 13, 1986. Much ado has been paid to what transpired upon the Holy Father's entrance; scant attention has been paid to what happened at the close of his remarks. We know that Professor Giacomo Saban, president of the Jewish community of Rome, delivered a welcoming address. We know that Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff, the same Elio Toaff who had taken himself to Saint Peter's Square to join the crowd of Catholics and other Christians who were praying and silently bearing witness to the greatness of soul of John XXIII on the eve of the Pontiff's death, thought it fitting to recall the memory of Jules Isaac in his address. "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."²⁴⁵

We have a text of the address delivered by John Paul II to the Jews and Catholics in attendance. We know that at the close of the Holy Father's address, a chorus was

²⁴⁴ Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, eds., *Pope John Paul II, Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995), 10.

²⁴⁵ Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, eds., *Pope John Paul II on Jews and Judaism* (Washington, D.C.: NCCB Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1987), 85.

struck up. The lyrics were drawn from the twelfth of Maimonides' thirteen articles of faith.²⁴⁶ The *niggun* was drawn from the Modzits Hasidim, who had chanted this confession of faith as they were herded into the gas chambers.²⁴⁷

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח
ואף על פי שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום שיבא

We know that John Paul II smiled and waved his hands in acknowledgement.²⁴⁸ Here was a confession to which he too could subscribe.

²⁴⁶ In his commentary on the Mishnah (Sanhedrin, ch 10), Maimonides refers to these 13 principles of faith as the fundamental truths of Judaism and its very foundations.

²⁴⁷ Elio Toaff, *Perfidi guidei, fratelli maggiori* (Milan: Mondadori, 1990), 240.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

-APPENDICES-

- I. EIGHTEEN POINTS submitted by Jules Isaac in 1947 at the conclusion of the Paris Judeo-Christian discussions to serve as a basis for the Christian committees' reappraisal programs of Christian education concerning Israel
- II. SEELISBERG COMMISSION 3 DOCUMENT, INCLUDING THE TEN POINTS, affirmed without discussion by the conference plenum
- III. TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES between Jules Isaac's *Jésus et Israël* (1948) and the Vatican's *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (June 24, 1985)

I. EIGHTEEN POINTS

For purposes of greater clarity, may I be allowed to submit for the examination of Christians of good will - who are agreed in principle on the need for rectification – the following Eighteen Points, meant to serve at least as a basis for discussion.

Christian teaching worthy of the name should

1. give all Christians at least an elementary knowledge of the Old Testament; stress the fact that the Old Testament, essentially Semitic – in form and substance – was the Holy Scripture of Jews before becoming the Holy Scripture of Christians;
2. recall that a large part of Christian liturgy is borrowed from it, and that the Old Testament, the work of Jewish genius (enlightened by God), has been to our own day a perennial source of inspiration to Christian thought, literature and art;
3. take care not to pass over the singularly important fact that it was to the Jewish people, chosen by Him, that God first revealed Himself in His omnipotence; that it was the Jewish people who safeguarded the fundamental belief in God, then transmitted it to the Christian world;
4. acknowledge and state openly, taking inspiration from the most reliable historical research, that Christianity was born of a living, not a degenerate Judaism, as is proved by the richness of Jewish literature, Judaism's indomitable resistance to paganism, the spiritualization of worship in the synagogues, the spread of proselytism, the multiplicity of religious sects and trends, the broadening of beliefs; take care not to draw a simple caricature of historic Phariseism;
5. take into account the fact that history flatly contradicts the theological myth of the Dispersion as providential punishment for the Crucifixion, since the dispersion of the Jewish people was an accomplished fact in Jesus' time and since in that era, according to all the evidence, the majority of the Jewish people were no longer living in Palestine; even after the two great Judean wars (first and second centuries), there was no dispersion of the Jews of Palestine;
6. warn the faithful against certain stylistic tendencies in the Gospels, notably the frequent use in the fourth Gospel of the collective term "the Jews" in a restricted and pejorative sense – to mean Jesus' enemies: chief priests, scribes and Pharisees – a procedure that results not only in distorting historic perspectives but in inspiring horror and contempt of the Jewish people as a whole, whereas in reality this people is in no way involved;
7. state very explicitly, so that no Christian is ignorant of it, that Jesus was Jewish, of an old Jewish family, that he was circumcised (according to Jewish Law) eight days after his birth; that the name *Jesus* is a Jewish name, *Yeshua*, Hellenized, and *Christ* the Greek equivalent of the Jewish term *Messiah*; that Jesus spoke a

Semitic language, Aramaic, like all the Jews of Palestine; and that unless one reads the Gospels in their earliest text, which is in the Greek language, one knows the Word only through a translation of a translation;

8. acknowledge – with Scripture – that Jesus, “born under the [Jewish] law” (Gal. 4:4), lived “under the law”: that he did not stop practicing Judaism’s basic rites to the last day; that he did not stop preaching his Gospel in the synagogues and the Temple to the last day;
9. not fail to observe that during his human life, Jesus was uniquely “a servant to the circumcised” (Rom. 15:8); it was in Israel alone that he reunited his disciples; all the Apostles were Jews like their master;
10. show clearly from the Gospel texts that to the last day, except on rare occasions, Jesus did not stop obtaining the enthusiastic sympathies of the Jewish masses, in Jerusalem as well as in Galilee;
11. take care not to assert that Jesus was personally rejected by the Jewish people, that they refused to recognize him as Messiah and God, for the two reasons that the majority of the Jewish people did not even know him and that Jesus never presented himself as such explicitly and publicly to the segment of the people who did know him; acknowledge that in all likelihood the messianic character of the entry into Jerusalem on the eve of the Passion could have been perceived by only a small number;
12. to take care not assert that Jesus was at the very least rejected by the qualified leaders and representatives of the Jewish people; those who had him arrested and sentenced, the chief priests, were representatives of a narrow oligarchic caste, subjugated to Rome and detested by the people; as for the doctors and Pharisees, it emerges from the evangelical texts themselves that they were not unanimously against Jesus; nothing proves that the spiritual elite of Jerusalem was involved in the plot;
13. take care not to strain the texts to find in them a universal reprobation of Israel or a curse which is nowhere explicitly expressed in the Gospels; take into account the fact that Jesus always showed feelings of compassion and love for the masses;
14. take care above all not to make the current and traditional assertion that the Jewish people committed the inextinguishable crime of deicide, and that they took total responsibility on themselves as a whole; take care to avoid such an assertion not only because it is poisonous, generating hatred and crime, but also because it is radically false;
15. highlight the fact, emphasized in the four Gospels, that the chief priests and their accomplices acted against Jesus unbeknownst to the people and even in fear of the people;

16. concerning the Jewish trial of Jesus, acknowledge that the Jewish people were in no way involved in it, played no role in it, probably knew nothing about it; that the insults and brutalities attributed to them were the acts of the police or of some members of the oligarchy; that there is no mention of a Jewish trial, of a meeting of the Sanhedrin in the fourth Gospel;
17. concerning the Roman trial, acknowledge that the procurator Pontius Pilate had entire command over Jesus' life and death; that Jesus was condemned for messianic pretensions, which was a crime in the eyes of the Romans, not the Jews; that hanging on the cross was a specifically Roman punishment; take care not to impute to the Jewish people the crowning with thorns, which in the Gospel accounts was a cruel jest of the Roman soldiery; take care not to identify the mob whipped up by the chief priests with the whole of the Jewish people or even the Jewish people of Palestine, whose anti-Roman sentiments are beyond doubt; note that the fourth Gospel implicates exclusively the chief priests and their men;
18. last, not forget that the monstrous cry, "His blood be upon us and on our children!" (Mt. 27:25), could not prevail over the Word, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34).

II. SEELISBERG COMMISSION 3 DOCUMENT

Moved by the sufferings of the Jewish people, the Third Commission, in the course of a frank and cordial collaboration between Jewish and Christian members, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, were faced with the tragic fact that certain theologically inexact conceptions and certain misleading presentations of the Gospel of Love, while essentially opposed to the spirit of Christianity, contribute to the rise of anti-Semitism.

Having recognized this, the Christian members put forward certain proposals with regard to the content and form of Christian teaching, which should serve not only to combat anti-Semitism, but also to promote good relations between Jews and Christians.

These deal, among other points, with the need to emphasize the close bonds which exist between Judaism and Christianity, the need to present the Passion story in such a way as not to arouse animosity against the Jews, and to eliminate from Christian teaching and preaching the idea that the Jewish people are under a curse.

On their part, the Jewish members of the commission declare that they will seek to avoid in Jewish teaching anything which would prejudice good relations between Christians and Jews. Jews and Christians alike

pledge themselves to promote mutual respect for that which is sacred to each religion.²⁴⁹

TEN POINTS

We have recently witnessed an outburst of anti-Semitism which has led to the persecution and extermination of millions of Jews living in a Christian environment. In spite of the catastrophe which has overtaken both the persecuted and the persecutors, and which has revealed the extent of the Jewish problem in all its alarming gravity and urgency, anti-Semitism has lost none of its force, but threatens to extend to other regions, to poison the minds of Christians and to involve humanity more and more in a grave guilt with disastrous consequences.

The Christian Churches have indeed always affirmed the anti-Christian character of anti-Semitism, but it is shocking to discover that two thousand years of preaching of the Gospel of Love have not sufficed to prevent the manifestation among Christians, in various forms, of hatred and distrust towards the Jews.

This would have been impossible if all Christians had been true to the teaching of Jesus Christ on the mercy of God and love of one's neighbor. But this faithfulness should also involve clear-sighted willingness to avoid any presentation and conception of the Christian message which would support anti-Semitism under whatever form. We must recognize, unfortunately, that this vigilant willingness has often been lacking.

We therefore address ourselves to the churches to draw their attention to this alarming situation. We have the firm hope that they will be concerned to show to their members how to prevent any animosity towards the Jews which might arise from false, inadequate or mistaken presentations or conceptions of the teaching and preaching of Christian doctrine, and how on the other hand to promote brotherly love towards the sorely-tried people of the old covenant. Nothing would seem more calculated to contribute to this happy result than the emphasizing of the following points:

- 1 Remember that it is the same living God Who speaks to us through the Old and the New Testaments.
- 2 Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His everlasting love and forgiveness embrace His own people and the whole world.
- 3 Remember that the first disciples, the apostles, and the first martyrs were Jews.

²⁴⁹ Rutishauser, reproduced at 41.

- 4 Remember that the fundamental commandment of Christianity, to love God and one's neighbor, proclaimed already in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is binding upon both Christians and Jews in all human relationships, without any exception.
- 5 Avoid disparaging biblical or post-biblical Judaism with the object of extolling Christianity.
- 6 Avoid using the word *Jews* in the exclusive sense of the enemies of Jesus, and the words *the enemies of Jesus* to designate the whole Jewish people.
- 7 Avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring odium of the killing of Jesus upon Jews alone. In fact, it was not all the Jews who demanded the death of Jesus. It is not the Jews alone who are responsible, for the Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died.
Remind all Christian parents and teachers of the grave responsibility which they assume, particularly when they present the Gospels, and particularly the Passion story in a simplistic manner. By so doing they run the risk of implanting an aversion in the conscious or subconscious minds of their children or hearers, intentionally or unintentionally. Psychologically speaking, in the case of simple minds, moved by a passionate love and compassion for the crucified Savior, the horror which they feel quite naturally towards the persecutors of Jesus will easily be turned into an indiscriminating hatred of the Jews of all times, including those of our own day.
- 8 Avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: *His blood be upon us and upon our children*, without remembering that this cry should not prevail against the infinitely more weighty prayer of Jesus: *Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they do*.
- 9 Avoid promoting the superstitious notion that the Jewish people is reprobate, accursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering.
- 10 Avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not been Jews.²⁵⁰

Our common endeavors are inspired by the spirit of the words of St. Paul in Romans xi, 28-29: *They are beloved for their fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.*

²⁵⁰ Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, reproduced at 404.

III. TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES

Jules Isaac's *Jésus et Israël*
(1948)

Vatican's *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*
(June 24, 1985)

<i>Vatican Notes</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Jesus and Israel</i>	<i>Citation</i>
"...Christians should never forget that the faith is a free gift of God (cf. Rm 9:12) and that we should never judge the consciences of others. St. Paul's exhortation 'do not boast' in your attitude to 'the root' (Rm 11:18) has its full point here."	IV, 21(E)	"If you do boast, remember, it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you." Rom 11:18	Int, p 1
<i>Relations between Old and New Testaments</i>			
"The Church, in the spontaneity of the Spirit which animates her, has vigorously condemned the attitude of Marcion and always opposed his dualism."	II, 4	"to deny this [that the Jewish Old Testament is the foundation, the unshakable bedrock on which the New Testament and consequently the Christian faith are grounded] is a type of monstrous heresy which the Church has always fought and victoriously rejected."	Pr 1, p 5
"Hence, in using typology... we should be careful to avoid any transition from the Old to the New Testament which might seem merely a rupture."	II, 4	"Far from there being a discontinuity in the Scriptures, there is such a bond, wrought by such a hand, that no human hand could dissolve it, no sword could sunder it."	Pr 1, p 7
"It should also be emphasized that typological interpretation consists in reading the Old Testament as preparation and, in certain aspects, outline and foreshadowing of the New (cf., e.g., Heb 5:5-10, etc.)."	II, 5	"There is more to say than that, from the Christian point of view, the Old Testament is the prelude (albeit grandiose), the prologue, the first and necessary stage in humanity's journey toward God; that it is a preview, a prediction, an annunciation, an advance toward the light."	Pr 1, p 7
"From the unity of the divine plan derives the problem of the relation between the Old and New Testaments. The Church already from apostolic times (cf. I Co 10:11; Heb 10:1) and then constantly in tradition resolved this problem by means of typology, which emphasises the primordial value that the Old Testament must have in the Christian view."	II, 3	"Also to be seen in it, and Christian theology does want to see in it, is a mysterious prefiguring of the New Testament, as a harmony pre-established by the grace of God: a choice theme for doctoral virtuosity, a marvelous exercise with infinite (and sometimes abusive) variations; but equally, and far better, an exalting them with ample harmonics..."	Pr 1, p 7

<i>Vatican Notes</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Jesus and Israel</i>	<i>Citation</i>
"Moreover, the New Testament itself demands to be read in the light of the Old. Primitive Christian catechesis constantly had recourse to this (cf., e.g., 1 Co 5:6-8; 10:1-11)."	II, 7	"Reference to the Old Testament, reference for the purpose of example or justification, reference and deference: such is the position of the New Testament relative to the Elder; such is thus the only fair Christian position."	Pr. 1, p 6
<i>The Jewish Roots of Christianity</i>			
"...his [Jesus'] ministry was deliberately limited "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24)."	III, 12	"...it was to Israel alone that Jesus preached the "good news" of the Gospel; to Israel alone that Jesus dispatched his disciples during his life on earth; in Israel alone that he recruited them, the Twelve, the Apostles, all of whom were Jewish"	Pr 15, p 180
Jesus "was and always remained a Jew"	III, 12	Jesus Jewish "by belief" "by religion" "by birth"	Pr 2, p 11
"Thus the Son of God is incarnate in a people and a human family (cf. Ga 4:4; Rm 9:5)."	III, 15	"...Jesus' humanity - his Jewish humanity..."	Pr 5, p 25
"Jesus is fully a man of his time, and of his environment – the Jewish Palestinian one of the first century, the anxieties and hopes of which he shared"	III, 12	"A Jew in the most modest of conditions, a Jew of the people, knowing well the people among whom he lived and loving them, this people, his people, with a marvelous heart that never withdrew from him"	Pr 2, p 13
"But there is no doubt that he wished to submit himself to the law (cf. Ga 4:4)	III, 13	"My only purpose has been to demonstrate that Jesus, "born under the law" (Gal. 4:4), "lived under the law," that in this respect he remained a faithful Jew until his human death, and that no one can maintain a contrary opinion without perverting the texts."	Pr 9, p 73
"But there is no doubt...that he was circumcised and presented in the Temple like any Jew of his time (cf. Lk 2:21, 22-24)"	III, 13	"In keeping with the Law (Lev. 12:3) he was circumcised... (Lk. 2:21)"	Pr 4, p 19

<i>Vatican Notes</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Jesus and Israel</i>	<i>Citation</i>
"This fact [that the majority of the Jewish people and its authorities did not believe in Jesus] ... led inevitably to a rupture between Judaism and the young Church... there is no question of playing down or glossing over this rupture; that could only prejudice the identity of either side."	IV, 21(D)	"And from this [strict monotheism] would come [Judaism's] unyielding refusal to accept the dogma of the Trinity. "There," writes Nikolai Berdyaev "lies the abyss that separates the Christian conscience from the Israelite conscience." I think so too. But an abyss to regard with respect. It will not be filled by pouring cartloads of insult and calumny into it."	Pr 7, p 36
"An exclusively negative picture of the Pharisees is likely to be inaccurate and unjust (cf. <i>Guidelines</i> , Note 1; cf. AAS, p. 76). 'Phariseeism' in the pejorative sense can be rife in any religion."	III, 19	"Phariseeism does not admit of a definition synonymous with either hypocrisy or formalism, as so many Christian writers still maintain – and as if the true faith required such a masking of historic truth. 'A greater misreading of history,' writes R. Travers Herford, the best historian of Phariseeism, 'it is scarcely possible to imagine.'"	Pr 7, pp 39-40
"Gamaliel (Ac 5:34-39) defends the apostles in a meeting of the Sanhedrin."	III, 19	"...but not the others [did Jesus set against himself and fight], not the respected and respectable masters of the Pharisee school, successors to Hillel, the Gamaliels, of whom perhaps Jesus and certainly Saint Paul were disciples, that Gamaliel who would say in the midst of the Sanhedrin, according to the Acts of the Apostles: 'Men of Israel, take care...for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!'"	Pr 17, pp 271-72
"Jesus shares, with the majority of Palestinian Jews of that time, some pharisaic doctrines: the resurrection of the body; forms of piety, like alms-giving, prayer, fasting (cf. Mt 6:1-18)..."	III, 17	"Phariseeism had its faults, but it also had its merits (from which Christianity would profit largely): it enriched the Jewish religion, continuing in its evolution, in its spiritual progress, with new beliefs – in the resurrection of the dead, in a judgment beyond the grave; trust in God, hope in His justice, messianic expectation were thereby strengthened; without eliminating the sacrificial Temple rites, prayer and the reading of the Law in the Synagogues moved to the forefront of religious life and in a certain way spiritualized it..."	Pr 7, p 40

<i>Vatican Notes</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Jesus and Israel</i>	<i>Citation</i>
"The Church and Christianity, for all their novelty, find their origin in the Jewish milieu of the first century of our era..."	III, 20	"When Christianity applies itself to casting aspersions on Pharisee Judaism, it is forgetting everything it owes it; and it is being not only unjust but ungrateful."	Pr 7, p 40
"...his attitude to rigorous observance of the Sabbath."	III, 13	"Like all devout Jews, Jesus went to the synagogue regularly on the Sabbath (Lk. 4:16)"	Pr 8, p 45
"It should be noted also that Jesus often taught in the Synagogues (cf. Mt 4:23; 9:35; Lk 4:15-18; Jn 18:20, etc.)"	III, 14	"And the four Gospels tell us also that having begun to teach in the synagogue, Jesus continued: (Mk. 1:39; 2:2; Mt. 9:35; 13:54; Lk 4:44; 13:10, 22; Jn 18:20)"	Pr 8, p 45-6
"It should be noted also that Jesus often taught ...in the Temple (cf. Jn 18:20, etc.)"	III, 14	"In Jerusalem, Jesus taught in the Temple." (Mk 11:11; 11:27; 12:35; 12:41; 14:49; Mt. 21:23; 26:55; Lk. 19:47; 20:1; 21:1; 37; 22:53; Jn. 7:14; 7:28; 8:2; 8:20; 10:22-3; 18:20)"	Pr 8, p 47
"Jesus' relations with biblical law and its more or less traditional interpretations are undoubtedly complex...But there is no doubt that he wished to submit himself to the law...that he was trained in the law's observance. He extolled respect for it (Mt 5:17-20) and invited obedience to it (cf. Mt 8:4)"	III, 13	"That Jesus stressed above all the worship of "the Father in spirit and truth," that he ranked the ritual commandments of the Law well below the commandments of love, of charity, of morality, of justice, that he dismissed with a sovereign gesture the minute requirements of an exaggerated legalism, agreed: who could challenge the evidence? But there is other evidence that respect for the texts – and for Jesus' teachings – requires us to recognize: in his eyes, <i>one attitude does not exclude the other</i> . As we have seen, Jesus refrained from condemning sacrificial rites themselves. He did not condemn one of the ritual commandments. And not only did he not speak against the rites, but on occasion he recommended their practice and himself set the example for it."	Pr 9, p 54
"He [Jesus] showed great liberty towards it [biblical law] (cf. the "antitheses" of the Sermon on the Mount: Mt 5:21-48, bearing in mind the exegetical difficulties...)"	III, 13	"But the Beatitudes are related to Jewish tradition not only in letter but in spirit."	Pr 10, pp 76-80

*Vatican Notes**Citation Jesus and Israel**Citation*

"The Liturgy of the word in its own structure originates in Judaism. The prayer of Hours and other liturgical texts have their parallels in Judaism as do the very formulas of our most venerable prayers, among them the Our Father."

V, 23

"On the teaching of prayer, the most explicit text is Matthew 6:5-15, contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Again, to show its Jewish roots, reverberations and parallelisms does not in any way indicate that its intrinsic merits and the efficacy of its perfect simplicity are in dispute."

Pr 10, pp 80-2

"There is no putting the Jews who knew Jesus and did not believe in him, or those who opposed the preaching of the apostles, on the same plane with Jews who came after or those of today. If the responsibility of the former remains a mystery hidden with God (cf. Rm 11:25), the latter are in an entirely different situation. Vatican II in the declaration on *Religious Liberty* teaches that 'all men are to be immune from coercion...in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor...restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs (no. 2). This is one of the bases – proclaimed by the Council – on which Judaeo-Christian dialogue rests."

IV, 21(F)

"Since in all historic probability the Jewish people 'as a whole' did not know Jesus; since the Jewish people of Palestine, insofar as they knew him, did so only as a prophet; since they listened to him, followed him, and admired him as such; it cannot be legitimately maintained that the Jewish people rejected Jesus, or with all the more reason that they rejected the Messiah, the true Son of God, in Jesus."

Pr 15, p 177

"His relations with the Pharisees were not always or wholly polemical. Of this there are many proofs:

- it is Pharisees who warn Jesus of the risks he is running (Lk 13:31);
- Some Pharisees are praised, e.g. 'the scribe' of Mk 12:34;

Jesus eats with Pharisees (Lk 7:36; 14:1)."

III, 16

"...as is apparent from certain texts (for example, Jn. 9:16), a number of the Pharisees who approached Jesus found favor with him; and that, as other Gospel texts allow us to see, relations between the Pharisees and Jesus were not uniformly hostile..."

Pr 17, p 270

Jesus recommends observance of the Pharisees teachings: Mt. 23:1-3
Jesus is invited to eat with Pharisees: Lk. 7:36; 11:37; 14:1
Pharisees warn Jesus against Herod: Lk. 13:31
A Pharisee opposes Jesus' arrest: Jn. 7:50-51."

"...the Pharisees were not all committed enemies of Jesus. Some maintained a wait-and-see attitude, hesitant and questioning, not intentionally hostile; some, more or less openly but quite genuinely, approved of him, admired him, believed in him."

*Vatican Notes**Citation Jesus and Israel**Citation**The Crime of Deicide*

"The *Guidelines* already say (note 1) that "the formula 'the Jews' sometimes, according to the context, means 'the leaders of the Jews' or 'the adversaries of Jesus,' terms which express better the thought of the evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such."

IV, 21

"Where Jesus had said, 'the chief priests, the scribes and the Pharisees' – which was already a substitution of the whole for the part – people exaggerated, people said: 'the Jews,' 'the Jewish people.' Where Saint Paul had said, 'those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers' – which was once more a substitution of the whole for the part – people said, people said again: 'the Jews,' 'the Jewish people.' Where only Temple flunkies, inflamed followers of the powerful, brutish pagan soldiery figured, people repeated obligingly: 'the Jews,' 'the Jewish people,' 'all the people,' 'all Israel.'

Pr 16, p 239

"The delicate question of responsibility for the death of Christ must be looked at from the standpoint of the conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 4 and of *Guidelines and Suggestions* (III): 'What happened in (Christ's) passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living without distinction nor upon the Jews of today,' especially since 'authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ.'

IV, 22

"Whether Jesus appeared before only the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, as it is said in the fourth Gospel, or before Caiaphas assisted by the Sanhedrin, as it is said in the Synoptics, whether the Sanhedrin session was partial or plenary, and finally whether the Roman authority took the initiative in pursuing Jesus in league with the Jewish authorities – which obviously is not in the Gospels and remains purely conjectural; in every case, we can reiterate and generalize our previous statement: the Jewish people are in no wise involved. They are in no wise involved in a matter conducted without them, apart from them, despite them, and against them. For this reason, we adjudge it useless to dwell on the question any longer, and hasten to pass on to the second phase of the Passion, the Roman trial; for it is here, according to received tradition, that the responsibility of the people was indissolubly linked with that of the leaders."

Pr 18, p 310

Vatican Notes

"The Gospels are the outcome of long and complicated editorial work. The dogmatic constitution, *Dei Verbum*, following the Pontifical Biblical Commission's Instruction *Sancta Mater Ecclesia*, distinguished three stages: 'The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their Churches, and preserving the form of proclamation, but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus' (no. 19). Hence it cannot be ruled out that some references hostile or less than favorable to the Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish community. Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus. To establish this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain Gospel texts for the Christians of today."

Citation Jesus and Israel

IV,
21(A)

"It is an indisputable and undisputed fact that the drafters of the Gospels intended to serve religion, not history... That is indeed the purpose: teaching, 'catechesis,' not history. It certainly does not follow that the Gospels are denuded of historic value. But it necessarily follows that religious concerns, concerns of 'demonstration,' prevailed over strictly historic concerns in the minds of the evangelists... It is another and likewise indisputable fact that a certain lapse of time – very difficult to estimate precisely – occurred between the event and the Gospel narration, a lapse long enough for one or another memory to blur, and for true historic tradition to find itself pitted against a legendary tradition which did not take long to spring up and cover the field of Christian piety with dense brushwood... In normal times and in the first case, that of the Synoptics, thirty or forty years is relatively little: such memories, so moving, could persist. But... the times when the religion of Christ, the dogma of the Incarnation evolved in the exaltation of a burning faith were not normal... It is again an indisputable fact... a fact of capital importance for religion and for history that in this same period when the Gospel tradition was put down in writing, a gulf was opening up between the Synagogue and its emancipated daughter, the Church.... In the measure that the new religion took form, its doctrine, its credo bore it daily farther away from traditional Judaism, and it hence came up against increasing incredulity and hostility on the part of the Jews. And daily oriented more toward the Gentile world, the Church became aware of how greatly it was to its advantage to detach itself from the Jews... This is why the historian has the right and the duty, the absolute duty, to consider the Gospel accounts as prosecution evidence (against the Jews), with the aggravating circumstance that they are the only evidence available and that all four lie on the same side: we have neither (valid) Jewish testimony nor pagan testimony to present in opposition or in balance."

Citation

Pr 18,
pp 291-
94

<i>Vatican Notes</i>	<i>Citation</i>	<i>Jesus and Israel</i>	<i>Citation</i>
"It is noteworthy too that the Pharisees are not mentioned in accounts of the Passion."	III, 19	"We can in fact observe that in his explicit prophecies of his Passion and death, Jesus mentions the scribes, never the Pharisees (Mk. 8:31 and 10:32-34, and parallels)."	Pr 17, p 269
"The delicate question of responsibility for the death of Christ must be looked at from the standpoint of the conciliar declaration <i>Nostra Aetate</i> , 4 and of <i>Guidelines and Suggestions</i> (III): 'What happened in (Christ's) passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living without distinction nor upon the Jews of today,' especially since 'authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ.'"	IV, 22	"According to historical evidence, the dominant influence in Jerusalem and in the Sanhedrin lay with a priestly and secular oligarchy composed of a few great families, the most powerful of which was that of Annas, father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. This oligarchy, Sadducee in outlook, cruel and tyrannical in conduct, was itself subjugated to Rome and detested by the people. It was this oligarchy, in all likelihood, which played the determining role [in the trial of Christ]... The Jewish nation could not have been identified with this caste in any way. Not only did the people have no part in the intrigue woven against Jesus, but the four evangelists testify that the leaders acted unbeknownst to the people, despite them, and in fear of them."	Pr 17, p 283
		"When Jesus announced to the Twelve that he would be 'rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes,' he was alluding to the Sanhedrin, and it is the Sanhedrin to which the Gospels – the Synoptics, at least – assign the primary role in Jesus' arrest, judgment, and sentencing to death."	Pr 17, p 277
		"The universal responsibility of the Jewish people, of the Jewish nation, of Israel in Jesus' condemnation to death is thus a fact of legend-based belief, without solid historic foundation. In truth, it is an anachronism, and only that: the transposition, considered opportune, of a quite different and later fact – that after a first burst of conversions, and for reasons we will not examine at present, the mass of the Jewish people became resistant to Christian preaching."	Pr 19, p. 363

Vatican Notes

"The *Catechism* of the Council of Trent teaches that Christian sinners are more to blame for the death of Christ than those few Jews who brought it about – they indeed 'knew not what they did' (cf. Lk 23:34) and we know it only too well (Pars I, caput V, Quaest. XI)."

Citation Jesus and Israel

IV, 22

"The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches: 'In this guilt [for Jesus' death] are involved all those who fall frequently into sin; for ... our sin consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the cross...' [Quotation taken from Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests tr. Fathers John A McHugh, O.P., and Charles J. Callan, O.P., New York, Wagner, 1923, Pt. I, Chap. 5, para. 11.] We can relate this to the Seventh of the Ten Points of Seelisberg, drawn up by the International Emergency Conference of Christians and Jews: '...the Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died.'"

Citation

Pr 19, p 364

"Such is the major orientation of the innumerable more or less legendary accounts of the Crucifixion: anti-Jewish, basically, profoundly anti-Jewish. And such is their major omission, their major injustice, their major misreading: everything happens as if there were the Jews, evil, cruel, Satanic, on one side, and on the other some charitable souls, these being unidentified. Everything happens as if Jesus himself were not a Jew who lived among the Jews, never wanted to leave the framework of Jewish Palestine, as if – putting the Roman occupation forces aside – Jesus' friends and foes, adherents and adversaries could not be Jews too, naturally, necessarily. To include all the Jews, 'all the [Jewish] people,' in the camp of Jesus' enemies at the hour of the Crucifixion is a simplistic position that glares simultaneously with prejudice, ignorance, disdain for reality, and the purest pharisaism, in the pejorative sense of the word.

Pr 20, p 366

For we must reiterate an observation made earlier, which is the key to all this: the Jewish people are here but representatives; they are representatives of the whole of humanity."

"In the time of Jesus, in that beginning of the first century of the Christian era, which corresponds with the beginnings of the Roman imperial regime, at the apogee of Roman power and civilization, in that time, understand that the Dispersion of the Jewish people had been an accomplished fact for centuries. Although history cannot reach any numerical certainty on this point, it is overwhelmingly probable that, of the whole of the Jewish nation, the Jews of Palestine were the minority, the Jews of the Dispersion, or Diaspora, the majority.

Pr 21, p 389

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