

Chapter 14 – The Church and Other Religions

The Jewish Problem at the Council and Arab Reactions

The reaction of Arab countries to the conciliar declaration on the Jews surpassed in violence the most pessimistic expectations. Like any popular reaction, it at times went too far, above all because of the public's ignorance of the exact tenor of the conciliar text, which, as we know, was still only a draft. But, even independent of all passionate exaggeration, the reaction of the Arabic peoples, Christian and Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant or Catholic, should be an eye-opener. It was not without cause that the Eastern patriarchs warned the Fathers of the council that such a declaration was inopportune. This was not because of pusillanimity or anti-Semitism. It was not enough for the Secretariat for Christian Unity, which prepared this text, to declare that it was in good faith, that it was not playing politics, to justify washing its hands. The secretariat and the world-wide episcopacy cannot ignore the fact that there is a state that calls itself Israel, that that state claims to embody Judaism, that what is said of Judaism as a religion is inevitably interpreted by Israel as being said of itself as a state and a world-wide Zionist movement, that any declaration in favor of Judaism as a religion is exploited by Israel as a support given indirectly to the imperialist and expansionist politics of worldwide Zionism against the Arab countries. Nobody doubts that the council does not wish this interpretation, but Israel wishes it, and the Fathers of the council, as responsible and realistic leaders, must not lend themselves to this maneuver, above all in the circumstances where the tension between the Arab states and Israel is at its maximum, without mentioning that the draft of the text leaves itself open even to criticisms of the theological order. What is said about Judaism is not false, but it does not represent all the revealed truth. Being incomplete, it can easily be also considered partisan, saying only, on the subject of Judaism, what is pleasing to Jews. In the face of what this painful position has done to the Church in Arab countries, where Orthodox and Protestants have broken the ties with Catholicism, causing a substantial lag in the ecumenical movement, which had begun under better auspices, we believe that it is useful, as much to fulfill our responsibilities as to clarify world opinion, to publish the notes, documents, and commentaries that His Beatitude the Patriarch, with the concurrence of the hierarchy of our Church, has made public until now on this subject.

(Note of the Bulletin de Presse of the Patriarchate, dated December 31, 1964).

Note to the Central Commission, dated at Damascus, June 5, 1962

We understand very well the reasons that motivated proposing this “decree.” The Church owes it to itself to acknowledge the glories, the promises, and the mission of the Jewish people. It also owes it to itself to eliminate from its liturgy, from the thoughts and actions of its faithful every trace of spite, vengeance, or racial discrimination against the Jewish people.

We would suggest only that, in order to avoid any confusion tending to be of a political character, the text make a clear distinction between the Jewish people as a religious community— the only aspect which interests the council — and the State of Israel, which

must be treated according to the same criteria that govern the relations between the Church and civil societies, without any privilege or special consideration on the part of the Church.

We would equally wish that a similar decree be prepared relative to Islam and other monotheist religions. Christians who have frequent relationships with the followers of these religions would be pleased to know some positive teaching of the Church concerning them, beyond purely and simply rejecting them as “errors.”

Already before the draft was presented to the council, the synod of our Church held at Ain-Traz, Lebanon, in the month of August, 1962, moved by the Zionist attempts to confuse the ideas of the Christians in connection with the responsibility for the crucifixion of our Lord and in connection with the realization of the prophecies, believed that it had to publish the following communiqué, dated August 31, 1962.

In the meeting held by His Beatitude Maximos IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All-the-East, of Alexandria, and of Jerusalem, and the bishops of the Greek Catholic community in the last week of August, 1962, at the patriarchal residence of Ain-Traz, Lebanon, to study questions concerning the general interest of the Church and that of their faithful, Archbishop Elias Zoghby, Patriarchal Vicar in Egypt and the Sudan, pointed out the attempts made by members of certain sects or by persons with political aims to stir up trouble among the Christians of Arab lands and induce them to doubt the right that their brothers the Palestinian refugees have to return to their country and to recover their land. In their attempts, the propagandists of error resort to texts of the Holy Scripture, which they modify or interpret in a sense that is different from that commonly used by Catholic commentators.

After deliberation, the Fathers of the Holy Synod, while carefully avoiding intervening in political affairs, judged it opportune to draw the attention of their faithful to the danger of these attempts and to publish the following communiqué:

“In recent years, some new and strange opinions have been propagated in the matter of the interpretation of the Holy Scripture in a sense contrary to that of the Fathers of the Church and of Christian tradition as it has been settled since the first centuries, in the East as well as in the West. We wish to point out this grave danger which threatens the belief and the conduct of our faithful, and which consists of the propaganda of those who call themselves “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” who have distorted the texts of the Old and the New Testaments, and have invented a new religion containing teachings openly contradicting those of Christianity, not only in the matter of belief and worship, but also in the matters of social and patriotic questions. This leads to the belief that they are rather a sect employed by a political organization that, by sabotage and by troubling minds, aims to dominate the world.

Likewise, we must put our faithful on guard against certain recent publications relative to the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. The promises made by God to the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of Palestine were realized

when the land of Canaan was invaded by Joshua, son of Nun and his successors as leaders of Israel until the time of David and Solomon, that is, from the 12th to the 10th centuries before Jesus Christ. Similarly, the prophecies relative to the return of the Jews to Palestine after the Babylonian exile were realized when they were brought back home by Cyrus, King of Persia, in the 7th century BC.

Consequently, these promises and these prophecies are today deprived of any reality, having been realized many centuries ago. It is not necessary to believe that they are valid forever and that they confer on the Jews an eternal right to possess the Promised Land.

Likewise, we put our faithful on guard against the doubts that have been stirred up by certain persons on the subject of the truth of what the Holy Gospels report concerning the responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ. These persons try by tricks to place the responsibility on the Romans and to acquit the Jews. However, the Holy Gospels are very clear when they affirm that it was the Jews who decreed and demanded Christ's crucifixion, and that the Roman officials authorized and executed it.

Whatever that may be, we believe through our Christian faith that Christ was crucified and died voluntarily for the redemption of the sins of the world. In fact, He said on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Christianity does not bear any hatred or spite against Jews or Romans for a crime committed by their ancestors nearly two thousand years ago. But there is no right to make the Word of God serve political ambitions and to deny the historical facts related in our revealed books.

In a few words, the Fathers of the synod ask their faithful to be attentive and very much on guard against fine words and sectarian innovations in questions of the Holy Scripture. They should hold fast to the authentic and traditional interpretation of the Holy Scripture that the Church has followed since its origin.

If charity makes it a duty for our Christian faithful to avoid any hatred or spite whatsoever, justice, humanity and patriotism make it a duty for them to place themselves at the sides of their brothers, the Arabs of Palestine, to demand their right to return to what is their land and the land of their ancestors, rejecting any attempt made by interested parties to exploit revelation and religion on behalf of political ambitions which right and conscience condemn."

Communiqué of the Greek Catholic patriarch, dated at Rome, November 11, 1963. This communiqué concerns the first draft, presented to the council on November 8, 1963.

On the subject of the agitation that was displayed in certain Arab countries when the news spread that the Second Vatican Council might examine certain texts relating to the Jewish religion, His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos IV made the following statement:

1. It is correct that the Secretariat for Christian Unity has prepared a short text of less than two pages, distributed to the Fathers of the council in the course of the meeting of November 8, 1963, treating the relationships of the Catholic Church with other religions

that are not Christian, in particular with the Jewish religion. But this text has not yet been studied, and nobody can foresee what the outcome will be, for it can be amended, rejected, or even erased from the agenda, exactly as happened to a similar text.

2. The Jewish question can be considered from two viewpoints: the spiritual-religious viewpoint and the civil-political one.

The Church, when it considers Judaism, does so only on the spiritual-religious level. The council has often declared that it does not intervene in civil and political questions.

The Jewish religion, as one knows, is the oldest of the revealed religions. In it were born the great prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, David, as well as others recognized by Christianity, as well as by Islam. Thus there is nothing wrong if the council treats of Judaism as an inspired religion and as one after which Christianity came to substitute for it and to complete it according to the plans of divine providence.

3. The text in question does not make any allusion to the present political situation between the Arab states and the State of Israel, which the Vatican has not yet recognized, in spite of all the attempts and all the efforts made in this direction. It is a religious text, in which no objective criticism can find anything other than an attempt, theoretical and practical, to condemn the racial campaigns and the confessional hatreds in certain regions of the Christian East.

4. Our Arab countries, while struggling against Israel from the political viewpoint as an unjust occupant of Palestine, have not ceased to respect the liberty of all the inspired religions, including Judaism. They protect, in all their territories, the rights of Jewish citizens, and clearly distinguish between Zionism, which is a political movement, and Judaism, which is an inspired religion. If some interested persons try to exploit for unjust political ends the purely religious position that the council takes, let them know that the Arab bishops wish to prevent any prejudice—God forbid—from affecting the interests of their countries.

5. But in return we ask the Arab states to help us accomplish our duty. Israel has been trying for a long time to obtain recognition from the Vatican. It employs, to arrive at that goal, all the effective means, and these means in that matter are considerable. Nevertheless, the Vatican has not recognized it, out of consideration for our Arab countries and to protect Christian interests, while our Arab states are standing with their arms crossed, without any propaganda other than the anger of the newspapers, the anger of speeches, and other ineffective means of that nature, if they do not take, here and there, positions constricting the Christian communities, as is the case in the question of the schools. It is easier today, in certain Arab countries for a Christian religious leader to “grasp the moon in one’s hand” (an Arabic expression) than to open a primary school in a small village for the faithful of his community. On this subject, one could say much.

Let us thus be just, let us look at things objectively, and let us work to render reciprocal help, since the sacrifice, if it is indefinitely required from the same side, cannot be continued.

An extract from the intervention of His Beatitude to the council on November 18, 1963, criticizing the first text on the Jews presented by the Secretariat for Christian Unity as a Chapter IV of the schema "On Ecumenism."

We must say very clearly—and this is very important—that Chapter IV of the schema, which has recently been distributed to us, is absolutely extraneous. Ecumenism is an effort for the gathering together of the whole Christian family, that is to say, the consolidation of all those who have been baptized in Christ. It is thus a strictly intimate family affair. Non-Christians are thus not involved. One cannot see what the Jews are going to do in Christian ecumenism, and why they have been introduced into it.

Besides, it is gravely offensive to our separated brethren that they seem to be treated on the same footing as the Jews.

It is thus urgent that this Chapter IV be removed from the schema "On Ecumenism."

If one nevertheless clings to retaining it for some reason, of which we are ignorant, it is necessary:

a) First, to insert it in another schema where it will be more at home, for example in the schema "On the Church," in speaking of the history of salvation, or in the schema in preparation "On the Church in the Modern World," as testimony of the Church against racism of whatever kind;

b) Then, if one speaks of the Jews, it is also necessary to speak of the other non-Christian religions, and above all of the Muslims, who number 400 million, and among whom we live as a minority.

Let us then be just and logical. If we wish to disavow anti-Semitism—and all of us disavow it—a short note condemning both anti-Semitism and racial segregation would be sufficient. It is useless to create harmful agitation in the world.

A note on the undesirability of making special mention of the Jews in the general declaration on non-Christians. This note, drawn up by the holy synod, concerns the second draft of the "Declaration on the Jews and non-Christians." Dated September 3, 1964, it was sent to all the authorities of the council.

1. In the various interventions at the beginning of the second session of the council, the Eastern patriarchs have particularly insisted on the undesirability of a special mention of the Jews in the general declaration on non-Christians, influenced by the highly excited sensibilities of the Arab states and the Muslims, who could not understand and interpret such a mention except as a political support that the Roman See and the whole council

wished to give to Zionist claims against the Arabs. The consequences of such an interpretation would be serious for the Christian minority in the said countries. It is not a matter of promulgating a declaration of a speculative type, but of seeing if it is proper for the Church, at the risk of arousing fifty million Arab Muslims against the Christian minority of five to seven million living scattered in their midst, to make declarations that cannot be understood by the interested parties—Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the East except as expressing pro-Israel political tendencies.

2. Given the great skill of the Israelis in exploiting politically in their favor the slightest word pronounced by Christian authorities, numerous groups of Christians—Catholics and others—are not able to understand why Cardinal Bea and some other bishops now wish to make this declaration. They are scandalized and begin to have doubts about the teaching of the Church. Besides there are “bad ones” who unjustly accuse the Holy See of having been bought by the money of the Jews and of Americans who are tools of the Jews. Is it necessary, then, to discontent Christians and to promote dissension among them, in order to satisfy the Jews?

3. As long as other Christians—Orthodox and Protestant—do not publish a similar declaration at the same time as the Catholics and with them, this will confirm in the minds of the non-Catholics that the Catholic Church always acts alone, without taking other Christians into account. Is this not one of the reproaches often addressed to it?

4. These same Christians, above all those in Islamic countries, address to us the following language: “If the pope and his council believe that they have the right to make Eastern Catholics run the risk of vexations resulting from a pro-Israeli declaration, they do not have the right to expose us, the Orthodox of these countries, to the same risk, for the Arab States and the Muslims do not distinguish between the different Christian confessions and will not fail to make us undergo the same vexatious measures.”

5. Such a declaration will be exploited not only politically by Israel against the Arabs but also religiously by the judaizing sects (Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses) who will cause the Church even more trouble.

6. The actual and collective responsibility of the Jews, who condemned and killed our Lord—even though the death was voluntary—is an undeniable historical fact. Jews of all times and all places recognize that fact. The Bible and the Liturgy also assert it in explicit and severe terms. Why is there today a desire to acquit them of this crime? The Church today is made to bear the responsibility for the errors committed at other times by some of its men (the abuses of the Inquisition, St. Bartholomew’s Day, the Albigensians...); people are made to bear the responsibility for errors committed at other times by their ancestors or by certain ones of their leaders. Why does one not wish to have the Jews bear the moral responsibility for a crime committed by their ancestors and the leaders of their nation? Is it to prevent their being persecuted? But it isn’t for this crime that certain peoples reject them nowadays; it is for reasons that are social, racial, economic, political, etc. Now that the pope himself feels the need and the appropriateness for not acquitting men of the Church of errors of other times, why is there an insistence on officially

acquitting the Jews of the blood of Jesus Christ, whom they crucified? Why is there an insistence on this official declaration of their innocence, when they themselves, through the mouths of their ancestors, said in the Gospel, “His blood be on us and on our children” (our posterity)? All that seems truly astonishing on the part of this great council.

It is not because of anti-Semitism that we ask the Holy Roman See and the holy council to omit mentioning the Jews and their innocence, since we ourselves are Semites, both by blood (we belong to the descendents of Shem) and by religion (the New Testament is the continuation of the Old). What makes us act is the desire to avoid having the Church of our times make a declaration susceptible to creating trouble for the Christians of Arab and Muslim countries, and of being exploited politically by Zionists.

Besides, it is evident that we have nothing against the Jewish religion as a revealed religion or against the Jews as human beings. Arab countries have Jewish citizens, who enjoy full religious liberty and the free exercise of their rights.

What we can admit is that there is an exploitation of these considerations of a strictly religious kind in order to serve the interests of Zionism, which is a political and imperialist movement, upon which weighs the responsibility for more than a million Palestinian refugees, driven from their country and deprived of their property: a human problem for which the state of Israel refuses to consider an equitable solution.

We clearly distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, and we do not wish that, under the pretext of speaking about the Jewish religion and the Jews, one in fact favors Zionism, the unjust invader with obvious expansionist aims.

Extracts from an intervention at the council by Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Patriarchal Vicar General at Damascus, on September 29, 1964.

We do not see the precise object of this schema, and where it is leading.

- Is it a matter of affirming that the Church arises from the synagogue and that Christ, His Mother, and the Apostles came forth from the Chosen People, the people of the Holy Scriptures and of the Prophets? There is no dispute.
- Is it a matter of cleansing the Jewish nation of this epoch of the murder of Christ? But Christ himself pardoned them, and every Christian worthy of the name must do likewise.
- Is there a desire to prevent having the crime of their ancestors placed on the Jews of our days? But they are as little responsible for this crime as the whole of humanity is for original sin and for so many national crimes, so many genocides.
- Finally, is there a desire to condemn, by a conciliar declaration, anti-Semitism in all its forms, and racial and religious discrimination? But in this case, why limit it to the Jews?

This Council has always considered with great diligence the repercussions of its acts and its declarations. Now, does not this declaration of sympathy with the Jews, in spite of all the precautions that have been taken, stir up a burning problem that has not yet been extinguished? Does it not risk the explosion of the powder keg that is unfortunate Palestine, where no less than a million Arabs have been unjustly and violently chased from their lands by those to whom the council makes advances? Doesn't it risk by the same action the alienation of all movement of sympathy by these same peoples to the Catholic Church? And from then on what value would there be in a declaration made by the council on the subject of the Muslims when it will have already lost their friendship? Now, is that what the council is seeking? And hasn't His Eminence Cardinal Bea declared from the beginning that it is necessary to choose the practice of the open door? And isn't action of this sort closing it?

Statement of the Greek Catholic Patriarchate on the affair of the exoneration of the Jews, November 30, 1964.

There is today in the Arab countries a great clamor on the subject of the reports that claim that the Second Vatican Council, held at Rome, has given to the Jews an act acquitting them of the blood of Christ.

It is painful for us to see the press and the radio become agitated, the pens and the tongues become inflamed, the crowds become enthusiastic to criticize, to menace, to accuse the Church and the greatest religious and moral authority on earth on the subject of a question that they do not understand, that they have not studied in its text and its context, but about which they have simply heard something said.

In this tumult, we have a word to say, a word of truth and of justice, to all those who desire to know the truth, and that not only from love of the truth, but also to protect the reputation of our countries, for fear that they may be accused of having an immature attitude.

A similar agitation took place last year, when His Holiness Pope Paul VI, impelled by sentiments of charity, piety, ecumenism, and reconciliation among peoples, decided to visit the holy places in Palestine. It was said at that time in our Arab countries that the pope, upon arriving at the entrance to occupied Jerusalem, would be solemnly received by the head of state, to whom he would deliver an act or a document acquitting the Jews of the death of Christ. This childish manner of thinking was not borne out by the actual events. Today all the talk is about the document "on the exoneration of the Jews of the blood of Christ." On this subject we must assert the following: 1. The declaration of this council has a purely religious character: it studies the relationship of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions. The Church has likewise stated precisely its relationships with the other Churches and ecclesial communities that are non-Catholic. It is enough to read the title of this declaration to be convinced: "Relationships of the Church with non-Christian religions."

The Catholic Church today is in a position of dialogue: dialogue with itself, dialogue with other Churches, dialogue with the world that has its multiple human and social problems, dialogue with whomever seeks God in his own manner. And this dialogue aims to strengthen human solidarity and the unity of God's family, on the road toward the object of its existence. Arab countries, since Zionism was established as a state in Palestine, have known how to distinguish Judaism as a religion and Zionist Judaism as a political movement. They have respected the first and fought the second.

2. Certainly there were some among the leaders of Israel and the Pharisees who, with their partisans, plotted Christ's doom, the death on the cross. The responsibility for this crime falls on those who committed it, not on those who did not commit it, who were the majority of the nation. Consequently, the Jews of that time who lived in Jerusalem or elsewhere in Palestine, among whom were also some Sanhedrin such as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, as also the Jews dispersed then in the four corners of the Roman Empire, and the millions of Jews who have lived since these events or live now, all of these cannot be held as personally responsible for the death of Christ, and consequently cannot be subjected to acts of vengeance or to destruction through hatred or spite, although a sign of a stigma remains graven on their foreheads insofar as they remain far from Christ the Savior promised and announced by the prophets of the Old Testament. But this mark does not constitute a personal crime for which innocent persons would be responsible and should pay the price through their blood. These are the evident truths that no reasonable man would know how to deny. Thus if this council has proclaimed these truths, moved by sentiments of humanity, justice, and evangelical pardon, following the greatest massacre that history has known, intended to wipe out an entire people, under the regime of the Nazis in Germany and in Europe, has it thus acquitted the Jews, murderers of Christ, of their abominable crime? Can one believe that the council has repealed the Holy Gospel? Can it destroy the foundations of Christian dogma based on redemption through Christ's blood? Is that not childish language?

3. If the Roman See had in mind recognizing the state of Israel, as is insinuated here and there through ignorance or bad faith, it would have done so after the establishment of that state sixteen years ago. But it has not done so, and it will not do so, out of regard for the Arab attitude and out of good will for the cause of the Arab refugees from Palestine, unjustly driven out of their country. We are absolutely sure of what we say.

Here one may object, saying, if the text of the declaration does not in any way contradict religious belief, why have we, Arab religious leaders, insisted on rejecting it entirely, so that there may be no mention at all made of Israel.

Here are the reasons for our attitude:

a. The Jewish question is a thorny one. It is a silk cover on a bunch of brambles. No matter how you grasp it, you cannot get loose from it without bloodying your fingers. Besides, it is not a question that the council cannot avoid treating. Why then take chances by studying it?

b. The Jews try by all means to identify Judaism, a divine religion from which the prophets came forth, with Zionism, an unjust aggressor, and that in order to gain world sympathy.

c. The Jews are very skillful in their propaganda, so much the more because they hold in their hands the reins of opinion. They modify the facts as they wish, and know how to exploit every word in favor of their political interests.

d. The Arab ecclesiastical leaders are faithful to their respective fatherlands in both good and bad circumstances, in everything that does not contradict their religious belief. They feel with their fellow citizens. Now, the Arab world experiences a profound repugnance, not in regard to Judaism, which is a divine religion, but in regard to Zionism—an aggressor, with unlimited imperialistic ambitions, an implacable enemy of Arab nationalism.

That is the pure truth. The rest is demagoguery, which our countries would do well to avoid, for that contributes to harm them politically, socially, and economically.

Let us then have some maturity and common sense!

To finish, may we be permitted to state again that Israel cannot be vanquished by talk, anger, or demonstrations. Rights will not be re-established and Israel vanquished except by the loyalty, the solidarity, and the unity of the Arab front and the effort to induce the international groups that support it to understand the position of the Arabs and their inalienable rights. Likewise, Israel cannot be vanquished by Arab estrangement from the Holy See of Rome. The whole world knows how great is the weight of the Vatican in the balance of international moral forces. Such an attitude would weaken the Arab position.

We stop here, and we declare again that, in spite of the lack of attention, in spite of suspicion and the bad reception, we shall not cease to defend firmly, courageously, and without ostentation our country, on whose welfare we spend ourselves without any limit. God and the fatherland appreciate our intentions and our acts.

Observations on the draft of the declaration "On the Jews and non-Christians." A note presented by the holy synod in August 1964.

We do not have any fundamental objection on the theological level in opposing this draft of the declaration. But from a practical viewpoint, we maintain that there should be added to No. 32 a last paragraph, with the following wording:

“This holy council insists on emphasizing that the present declaration—which is a purely religious act inspired only by theological considerations—has no political motive or any political aim. This holy council condemns in advance any tendentious interpretation that would try to give the present declaration any political meaning whatsoever in favor of anyone or against anyone.”

The reasons for which we hold that this paragraph should be added to the relevant declaration are the following:

1. Because of the exacerbation of the feelings of the Arab and Muslim states due to the Jewish invasion that has driven from occupied Palestine a million Arab refugees, and because of the skill of the Israelis in exploiting politically in their favor the least word pronounced by Christian authorities...
2. In this state of mind, the least word pronounced by the Fathers of the council can stir up a storm of protestations and risk exciting the fifty million Muslim Arabs against the Christian minority of five to seven million living among them. And among the non-Catholics, there are many who say, "The Church of Rome, through its declarations, can expose its followers to the troubles of insecurity, but it does not have the right to expose us also to such an eventuality."
3. We also deem it is necessary to affirm and reaffirm publicly the absence of any political intention or import in this conciliar act that is the "Declaration on the Jews."
4. It is true that the authors of the text submitted for our approval strove to expurgate from it any expression of a nature that would offend the sensitivities of the Arabs. In spite of everything, two short passages can still leave it open to criticism. These are
 - a) lines 20, 21, and 22 of No. 32, with respect to which the Arabs can say that it is also necessary to deplore the injustices committed by the Jews;
 - b) lines 31 and 32 of the same section, to which there will be no failure to give a pro-Israeli interpretation, for anti-Semitism does not have for its cause the responsibility of the Jews in Christ's passion, but rather it has causes that are political, social, racial, economic, etc. To avoid any possible criticism of the text of No. 32 as a whole, we propose to add the paragraph placed at the head of our present observations.
5. Let us not say that it is understood that in principle the council does not occupy itself with politics, and that consequently the paragraph in question is useless. No, it is very useful, it is even necessary, for the council cannot make decrees simply in a speculative manner, without considerations of time and place; on the contrary, it must take into account the historic circumstances in which we live. And let us not say that a declaration along this line made by an official of the Church in an interview or a press conference would be sufficient. No, it must be inserted into the text itself of the "Declaration on the Jews." From this point of view no precaution is too much.
6. We are not acting out of anti-Semitism; we are not, and we cannot be anti-Semites, since we are Semites by blood (we belong to the descendants of Shem) and by religion (the New Testament is a continuation of the Old). But we do not wish that the Church, mother and mistress of all nations, mistress of justice, charity, and peace, make a

declaration that can be considered, even if incorrectly, as taking sides in an international political conflict, in which considerable vital interests are involved.