

A. J. C. Reports World Catholics Removing Anti-Semitism from Text Books

NEW YORK. - A movement in many parts of the world to remove hostile references to Jews and other non-Catholics from Catholic textbooks was reported by the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE.

Philip E. Hoffman, Chairman of the human relations agency's Board of Governors, presented details of this movement at its 61st Annual Meeting. Mr. Hoffman reported on findings based on a recent visit to Europe, where he surveyed interreligious developments; and on data supplied by the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE's Foreign Affairs Department, much of it from the European Office, of which Zachariah Shuster is Director, and by its Department of Interreligious Affairs, directed by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum.

Highlights of Mr. Hoffman's report were the following:

* The most striking progress has been made in Spain, where more than half of all Catholic relig that previously had expressed marked hostility to that previously had expressed marked hostility to Jews and Judaism have been revised or eliminated. This has coincided with a three-year research study into Spanish and Italian texts at the Leonard M. Sperry Center for Inter-group Cooperation in Rome.

* While progress is less advanced in Italy, the conference of bishops has established a commission to deal with the revision of textbooks. Findings from the Sperry Center study have been transmitted to Vatican authorities, Catholic textbook writers and publishers, seminaries, universities, and adult education groups. Revision of elementary and secondary texts is in progress.

* Intensive studies of French-language Catholic textbooks, widely used in France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Canada, have been virtually completed at Louvain University, Belgium, under the sponsorship of Leo Cardinal Suenens.

* An investigation of Austrian books has been started by an interfaith commission headed by a Catholic scholar at the University of Vienna, under the patronage of Franz Cardinal Koenig.

* Other studies are under way in West Germany, Portugal, and England, and in at least one East European country: Poland.

* Catholic educational centers on the European Continent are distributing revised textbooks to predominantly Catholic authorities in several Latin American countries have conducted textbook studies leading to significant revision.

* In the United States, a number of new textbooks have been published for Catholic children in elementary and secondary parochial schools, and a similar effort is being made to remove distortions and polemical antagonisms in Protestant texts. There U. S. efforts have stemmed largely from self-studies, stimulated over a period of years by the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, at St. Louis University (Catholic) and Yale Divinity School (Protestant). A parallel Jewish study has been completed at Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia.

The Sperry Center, named after the Late Los Angeles industrialist, Leonard M. Sperry, an AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Vice President, was established in 1964 at the International University for Social Studies Pro Deo in Rome. Father Felix Morlion, O.P., is the University's President. The Sperry Center study has come to be regarded as a prime example of the dramatic advances taking place in interreligious relations throughout Europe, the United States, and Latin America.

Carried on by both Catholic and non-Catholic scholars, the Sperry Center study has analyzed 142 of the most popular texts of 350 published in Italy between 1950 and 1964, and 115 of 220 Spanish elementary and secondary school texts published between 1940 and 1964. From the beginning, a great many unfavorable references to Jews and Judaism were disclosed. Catholic authorities expressed shock at the material called to their attention, and recommended corrections in line with the recent Vatican Council II's declaration on relations between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions.

NEW YORK: Bertram H. Gold, Executive Director of the Jewish Centers Association of Los Angeles since 1954, was chosen as Executive Director of the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, succeeding Dr. John Slawson, who is retiring after 24 years as staff head of the pioneer human relations agency. Dr. Slawson has become Executive Vice-President Emeritus.

Mr. Gold's appointment was announced at the closing session of the COMMITTEE's 61st Annual Meeting, held here at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, by Irving M. Engel, former President and currently an Honorary President. Mr. Engel was chairman of a committee that made an intensive national search in seeking a successor to Dr. Slawson.

National officers of the agency were elected at the

"Such studies by Catholic priests, nuns, and scholars of the way in which Catholic texts portray Judaism -- and often other religions as well -- represent a major ongoing result of the Ecumenical Council," Mr. Hoffman added.

One of the preliminary findings of the textbook studies at the Sperry Center reads as follows: "Quantitatively and qualitatively one is struck by the large amount of hostility not only against Jews but against other groups as well. Equally substantial, however, are the number of positive items, likely to produce attitudes of friendliness toward other groups... Whatever may have been true of Christian teaching in the past, the material now in use does not constitute systematic, official, coherent presentation, but, on the contrary, evidently depends a very great deal on the idiosyncrasies and viewpoints of the individual writer."

At a recent meeting in Rome, where Catholic ecclesiastical and state education authorities met with Mr. Shuster and Rabbi Tanenbaum, it was announced that the Sperry study, conducted by Professor Otto Klineberg of the Sorbonne University, and Professors Tullio Tentori, Franco Crespi, and Vincenzo Filippone, may be published this year. Teaching nuns affiliated with the Order of Notre Dame de Sion's headquarters in Rome, Madrid, and Paris have cooperated in examining the texts.

The removal of negative material from Spanish textbooks, Mr. Hoffman commented, is linked with the recent relaxation of rules governing non-Catholic religions in Spain. For many generations, Spanish children have been reading passages such as these:

"With more foundation (than poisoning wells) they (the Jews) were accused of mocking the Christian religion and sacrilegiously profaning the consecrated Hosts, of substituting a Christian child for the paschal lamb on Holy

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BERTRAM GOLD

same time by delegates from the 100 chapters and units. Morris B. Abram, New York attorney who is U. S. Representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, was elected to serve as his fourth year as President.

Thursday and crucifying him on Good Friday to mock and humiliate the death of Christ."

Mr. Hoffman singled out a book for first graders entitled YO SOY ESPANAOL (I am a Spaniard), whose 23rd edition was published as recently as 1961, at the time of the opening of Vatican Council II. In a text written by Augustin Serrano de Haro, Inspector of Primary Education, the young readers learned about the Jews who "hated the Christians and were enraged because the little children loved the Virgin and the Lord." Whereupon, the story related, the Jews seized little (later Saint) Domingo del Val, and when he refused to stamp upon a crucifix "they put a crown of thorns on him and they nailed him to a cross and they ran a lance through his breast."

The book contained an illustration of Domingo crucified, surrounded by four Jews, two collecting his spurring blood in cups. A review question asked: "Are you in accord with other children who died in a similar way?"

In the revised edition of this textbook, undertaken after Sperry Center researchers had brought the findings to the attention of Spanish authorities, the Domingo del Val story and its inflammatory drawings were removed. In addition, all other anti-Jewish references were eliminated. Similarly, hostile references to Protestants and Eastern Orthodox ("schismatics and heretics") were also expurgated.

The Sperry Center study, in examining elementary school volumes, found that new textbooks are "being adapted to the norms and spirit of Vatican Council II," while volumes expressing prejudice are falling into disuse because they are old-fashioned in presentation and content.

In the Italian textbooks, numerous negative references were found, generally in this vein:

"The Jewish mob, driven by envy and hatred, blinded by passion, drew on their own heads the most terrible malediction."

"The God of many of them is money, while the worst aberrations, such as Masonry and Bolshevism, find many adherents among the Jews."

LOS ANGELES (WNS) A Jewish population study by the Jewish Federation-Council's Research Service Bureau shows that since 1959 intermarriage in the Jewish community of Los Angeles has been declining from 6.3% to 5.4%.

NEW YORK (WNS) Charles H. Jordan, executive vice-chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, disclosed that the agency had ordered more than 545,325 pounds of matzoh and other Passover supplies for use by Jewish needy in ten countries of Europe.

JERUSALEM (WNS) Israel currently has only educational TV, but it will not be long before the service is extended on a nationwide basis and broadened to include all areas of entertainment and information.

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