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## AJC CLAIMS GERMAN PASSION PLAY OPENING MAY 18 IS STILL HOSTILE

NEW YORK: The 1970 production of the Oberammergau Passion Play, scheduled to open in Germany on May 18, will contain fewer overtly anti-Jewish references than did the 1960 version, but the pageant remains fundamentally hostile to Jews and Judaism.

This is the overall finding of a comparative content analysis of the 1960 and 1970 scripts, just completed by the American Jewish Committee and made public by its President, Philip E. Hoffman.

The results of these textual studies - believed to be the first systematic, line-by-line content analysis of the Oberammergau play to be undertaken in this country -- were communicated to West German ecclesiastical and governmental authorities by the American Jewish Committee, which plans to publish the analysis shortly in German, French, Spanish, and English.

While many grossly anti-Jewish words and passages have been removed in revising the pageant for this year's performances, other equally objectionable material has been left in, the study concludes. Moreover, the study finds that the entire story line and the underlying conceptions of the play, unchanged in the new version, clearly violate the policy adopted in 1965 by Vatican Council II in its Declaration on Non-Christian Religions.

"That Vatican action," Mr. Hoffman recalled today, "adopted as it was by the overwhelming majority of the Council Fathers, repudiated any form of Christian teaching that would perpetuate the myth of collective Jewish guilt for the death of Jesus, and any corollary teachings that would directly or indirectly nurture hatred or prejudice against the Jewish people or Judaism."

Both during and after Vat- 1970 text did not bear out for deciding on the cruci- lous Affairs Department of sultant on Religious Curriican Council II, American Jewish Committee representatives discussed the issue of anti-Jewish references in the Oberammergau Passion Play text with a number of church and government officials, among them Julius Cardinal Dopfner, Archbishop of Munich and Freising (the Archdiocese in which Oberammerments. gau is located) and President of the Roman Catholic

Episcopacy of Germany;

Cardinal Konig of Vienna

and Leo Jozef Cardinal Su-

enens of Malines and Brus-

architect of the Vatican

and Kurt George Klesinger,

cellor. All of them, Mr. Hoff-

man stated, have at various

Jewish references.

Archbishops

Franziskus Non-Christian Religions; former West German Chanpurge the play of its anti-Mr. Hoffman added that the and shifts the responsibility

the claim, made recently fixion from Pontius Pilate the American Jewish Comby Oberammergau officials responsible for the pageant, doing so, the play resists Marc H. Tanenbaum. The that the new text merely followed the obligatory Gospel reports of the Passion. On the contrary, the AJC study continues, the script search." still abounds with distortions of Scriptural passages and with non-Scriptural ele-

The American Jewish Committee's study concludes that the Oberammergau pageant remains "pervaded by an anti-Jewish bias which not only distorts the facts of Jesus' history but sels; the late Augustin Car- also obscures those passdinal Bea in Rome, the chief ages of the New Testament that offer a basis for ba-Council's Declaration on lanced and positive images of Jews and Judaism." Moreover, the study adds, the 1970 version of the pageant "retains a negative picture of first-century Judtimes indicated a desire to aism, presents an invidious portrayal of the Jewish people as Jesus' opponents.

to the Juwish people. In mittee, directed by Rabbi any serious accommodation Marc H. Tanenbaum. The

to the scholarly findings of 1960 script was analyzed contemporary authoritative by Mrs. Judith H. Banki, Biblical and historical re- Associate Director, the 1970 version by Dr. Gerald S. The content analysis was Strober, a Presbyterian edconducted by the Interrelig- ucator who serves as Con-

culum to the American Jewis Committee.

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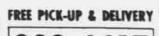
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