

Catholic Anti-Semitic Study

By MORTON YARMON

NEW YORK--A new study by the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium indicates that there has been a lessening in recent years of anti-Semitic attitudes by Catholics exposed to church teachings although there has been an upsurge in secular anti-Semitism, especially among the young.

The study was made public by Canon Francois Houtart, Director of the Socio-Religious Research Center at Louvain, which conducted the two-year survey in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee.

In welcoming the study, Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President of the American Jewish Committee, termed it "another significant step in building understanding between Christians and Jews by getting to the roots of anti-Semitic attitudes. It is one of many important outcomes that have followed Vatican Council II. It reveals, however, new areas of concern in that hostility to Jews may have developed among those not closely identified with the church, especially the young. This is a field in which the AJC will pay special concern in its future programmatic emphases."

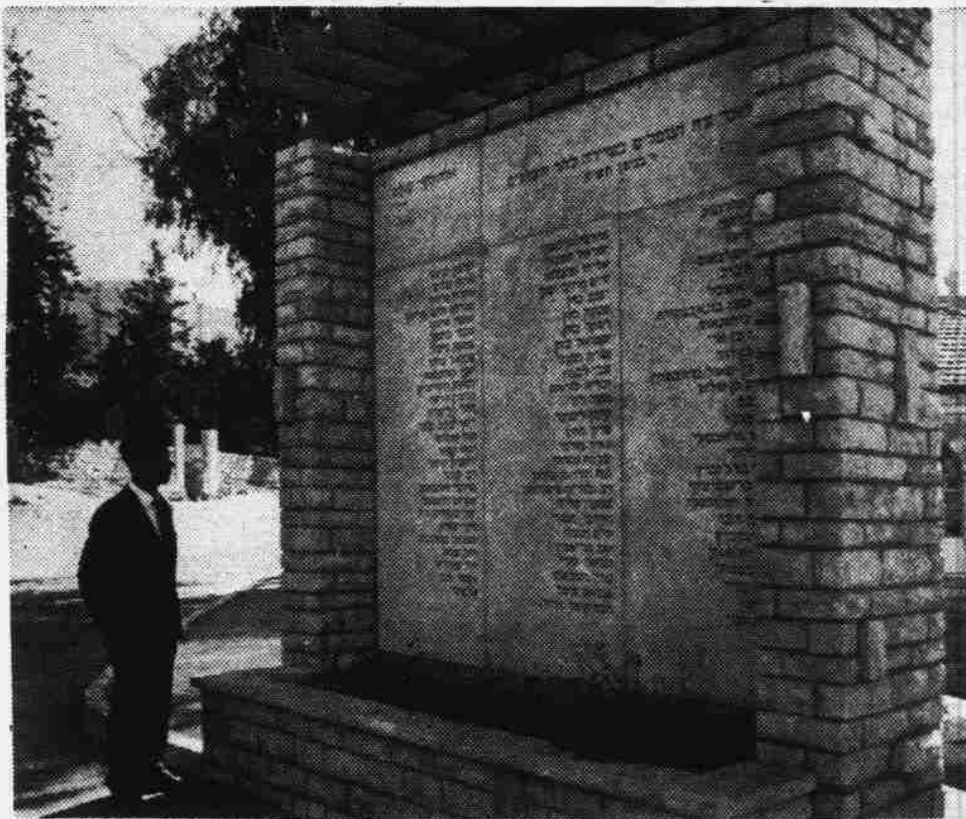
Canon Houtart, speaking at the Committee's headquarters at 165

East 56th Street, pointed out that the study was a follow-up to one completed in 1969, which showed that much Catholic French-language educational literature used in France, Belgium, Canada and Switzerland, gave a pejorative image of Jews and Judaism. The new study, he added, was designed to test the impact on youth of catechetical teaching and to measure these results in comparison with an adult group made up of alumni from the same institutions as the youth group.

The study showed there had been a "general trend toward the progressive elimination of all aggressive vocabulary and all expressly negative presentation of Jews or Judaism" in French-language church texts. However, the study concluded that three latent theological theories used in religious manuals were to be found at the base of traditional anti-Semitism. These were: A systematic disparaging of the Jews of Jesus' time; a dogmatic antithesis between the Jewish religion as ancient and the Christian religion as new; and the utilization of Jews and Judaism to prove Christ's divinity, by antithesis.

"The role of catechetical teaching," Canon Houtart commented,

HADASSAH HOSPITAL MEMORIAL RELOCATED



JERUSALEM--PROFESSOR ELI DAVIS, WHO TOOK OVER THE DIRECTORSHIP OF HADASSAH TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO WHEN DR. HAIM YASSKY WAS AMONG THE SEVENTY-SEVEN DOCTORS, NURSES AND OTHER HOSPITAL WORKERS KILLED IN ARAB AMBUSH, STANDS AT THE SITE OF THE NEW MONUMENT IN SHEIKH JARRAGH. THE MEMORIAL WAS ORIGINALLY ERECTED ON THE ISRAEL SIDE OF THE RAMPART WHICH SEPARATED THE TWO HALVES OF THE CITY IN THE EARLY MONTHS BEFORE THE SIX DAY WAR IN 1967. IT HAS NOW BEEN MOVED TO THE EXACT SITE OF THE AMBUSH IN EAST JERUSALEM.

"ought to be to dismantle these latent sources of anti-Jewish mentalities. These findings should be applied to other aspects of religious expression, such as preaching, spoken and non-written catechetical teaching, religious programs on radio and television, and toward other milieus, either of different social classes or in regions where the Jewish group is a more substantive reality in social terms."

Canon Houtart added

that the stereotype of the Jew that was held by the sampled groups, which consisted of youth and adult population who had undergone Catholic education in Brussels, was "not a fundamentally unfavorable one, and, practically, is tied up but little with religious factors." He cautioned, however, that "old-time images still exist in latent fashion among a substantial part of the public and that these risk surfacing in explicit manner in a conflict situation."

He pointed out that the study indicated that the groups studied "do not show cultural or even Greater submissiveness by an individual, often going along with a rightist political position, tends to bring about acceptance of traditional stereotypes of Jews, the report stated. On the other hand, it continued, a more critical attitude toward the church or society is accompanied by doubt about traditional stereotypes concerning Jews.

The report showed that adults are more likely to hold stereotypical views than youth, "that the latter are much more likely to define Jews in terms of religion and persecution of the Jewish group; and adults to define Jews as having faults and qualities, as a stranger and as a cohesive group." On the other hand, it continued, there is less stereotyping among those who know Jews best. In this area, it continued, "adults are quite better than youth in this regard." In a set of questions designed to indicate correlation of political views and stereotyped views, the study showed that "a respondent of the Right stereotypes more than one of the Center regarding the Jews as business man, and that of the Center more than that of the Left. The adult population is better than the youth in all three political groupings but most particularly among the Left."

The study was carried out among 500 young people in their last year in Brussels Catholic secondary schools, and among an adult sample of 380 persons chosen among former students of these schools.

Serving on the editorial board of the study were representatives of the Catechetical Research Center, headed by Canon Jean Gilet, and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Director of the Inter-religious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee, and Zachariah Shuster, its European Director. Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization.



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