

favorable to the text, it insisted on the close connection between truth and true liberty and at one point identified liberty with tolerance, just what the declaration was trying not to say.⁴³

Cardinal John Heenan of Westminster spoke in support of the declaration in the name of most of the bishops of England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Belgium. Not everybody in the English-speaking world, however, liked the document. Cardinal Norman Gilroy of Sydney, in the name of a number of Australian bishops, submitted in writing a scathing denunciation: "Is it really possible for an ecumenical council to say that any heretic has the right to draw the faithful away from Christ, the Supreme Pastor, and to lead them to pasture in their poisoned fields?"⁴⁴

Gabriel Garrone, archbishop of Toulouse, much respected among his French conferees, made a short but strong speech in favor of the text. He responded to the objection that the church in the past had acted differently from what the declaration proposed. Keep in mind, he said, the historical context and the extent to which the world accepted the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*: "Moreover, the church, made up of human beings, even in its head, does not hesitate to admit it has erred and to express sorrow for it."⁴⁵ Ears were attentive when Carlo Colombo, newly appointed auxiliary bishop of Milan and close friend and colleague of Paul VI, took the floor. Colombo spoke favorably of the text, which was generally (and correctly) taken as a sign that the pope was similarly inclined.⁴⁶ In his diary Cardinal Siri noted, in vexation, that Colombo was "entirely on the side of the Transalpiners."⁴⁷ But Colombo insisted, as did many others, that the text was not ready for a vote.

On September 28 debate ended. It had stretched over four days, with forty-four speeches. The Secretariat for Christian Unity immediately set to work revising the text in light of the spoken and the many written observations that were made on it. Only at this point did Murray begin to participate officially in fashioning the text, in close collaboration with Pietro Pavan, the principal author of Pope John's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. Although evidence suggested that the text had solid support in the council, its opponents were many, organized, and not inclined to surrender their position. Could the document muster even a two-thirds approval? Such an outcome was far from certain.

Then the council turned its attention to the extremely brief but also highly controversial declaration *On the Jews and Non-Christians—De Ju-*

daeis de non Christianis.⁴⁸ Cardinal Bea had introduced it several days earlier—Bea, not only a German but a Scripture scholar as well. He received thunderous applause as he approached the microphone and similarly thunderous applause afterward when he took his seat. He had become a hero for most of the council fathers, who in this instance were, moreover, at least generally aware of the special difficulties he had had with this document.

Why was the council dealing with the issue at all? It had been absent from the topics submitted by bishops and others before the council opened. It originated with a specific mandate of John XXIII to Bea in September 1960 to facilitate during the preparations for the council a treatment of the relationship of the church to the Jews.⁴⁹ John's wartime experiences had made him sensitive to the atrocities of the Holocaust and to the complicity of many Catholics in them. But a specific and immediate stimulus for John's mandate to Bea in September was an audience that he had granted to the Jewish scholar Jules Isaac.⁵⁰

The president of France, Vincent Auriol, had instructed the French ambassador to the Holy See to arrange the audience. In 1947 Isaac had participated in the International Conference at Seelisberg, Switzerland, along with Christians, including Catholics, and other Jews. He had helped draw up a list of recommendations to the churches on how they might remedy their anti-Jewish teachings, the so-called ten points of Seelisberg. In 1959 Isaac himself had published *Jesus et Israël*, in which he showed how ill founded were the slogans that the dispersion of the Jews was a providential punishment for the Crucifixion, that Jewish religion at the time of Christ had degenerated into legalism without a soul, that the Jews had committed deicide, and, most important, that these "facts" justified anti-Semitism.⁵¹

At the audience Isaac presented the pope with a dossier that included the Seelisberg points and asked him to have the council address them. (Other factors, however, were also at work. Earlier in 1960, the rector of the Biblicum, Ernst Vogt, had sent a petition to the Central Preparatory Commission, signed by himself and eighteen members of the faculty, asking that the council address the problem of anti-Semitism. In fact, in addition to Maritain, a few other Catholics, mostly converts from Judaism, had been working for greater understanding between the two faiths.⁵² Among them John (Johannes) Marin Oesterreicher, an Austrian Jew converted to Catholicism and ordained a Catholic priest, was particularly important.

* He was the founder in 1953 of the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, out of which he edited the Journal The Bridge from 1954 until 1970. During the council he was a member of Bea's Secretariat.⁵³ ✓

* By August 1961, well before the council opened, the Secretariat had prepared a brief schema titled "On the Jews." Word leaked out about the document and raised concern in Arab states. But the World Jewish Congress committed a gaffe that caused those states to explode with fury. On June 12, 1962, the Congress, acting on its own initiative, appointed Chaim Wardi, who at the time was living in Israel, as its own "unofficial observer" at the council. Israel's Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Religious Affairs endorsed the appointment. This action tainted the issue with political overtones and suggested to the Arabs that, among other things, the Vatican might be moving toward recognition of Israel. The bishops from the Middle East joined in fierce opposition to the schema because they believed that it would lead to serious difficulties for Christian minorities in that region. ✓

The only observers/guests at the council were of course Christians, and they came by invitation of the Secretariat, not by any self-determination. Thus Wardi never became an observer. But in response to the situation, on June 19, 1962, within five days of Wardi's appointment, Cicognani as head of the Central Preparatory Commission removed the schema from the agenda. His position as secretary of state made him particularly sensitive to the political and diplomatic troubles it would cause in the Middle East. He did not see any good reason that it should be on the agenda in the first place, a sentiment shared by Cardinal Spellman. ✓

In December, after the close of the first period, Bea presented a memorandum to John XXIII stating why the issue had to be treated. Too often Catholic preachers had accused the Jews of deicide and presented them as accursed and rejected by God.⁵⁴ The Holocaust showed how important it was to put a stop to depictions that directly or indirectly had promoted such a massive tragedy. The World Council of Churches had recently called upon all the churches associated with it to condemn anti-Semitism. How could the Catholic Church stand aloof from the issue? The memorandum had the desired effect. John agreed to let Bea move ahead. ✓

Although much of the opposition stemmed from what were perceived to be the political ramifications the declaration might have and the difficulties it might raise for Christians in the Middle East, other reasons were

also at play. In early 1963, two months after the first period of the council ended, Rolf Hochhuth's play Der Stellvertreter, usually translated into English as The Deputy but more accurately as The Vicar of Christ, a rambling and long-winded dramatization of Pope Pius XII's supposed "silence" during the Holocaust, opened in Berlin. The play created a sensation and was soon translated into a number of languages. With equal passion it was denounced as a vilification of a saint and praised as a much-needed expose. The affair deeply disturbed the Vatican and troubled perhaps nobody more deeply than Paul VI, who had been one of Pius's closest assistants during the war years. The pope worried that the council's declaration might be taken as a validation of Hochhuth's position. ✓

Beyond that specific problem lay the deeper and all too widespread anti-Semitism that based itself on the New Testament, especially on John's Gospel with its consistent depiction of "the Jews" as enemies of Christ and, more specifically, on the verse from Matthew's account of Christ's trial, "His blood be upon us and upon our children" (27.25). Were not the Jews of Jesus' time responsible for Christ's death? Was not that responsibility in some sense rightly imputed to the Jews down through the subsequent ages to our own day? How could a document deal with such texts without either denying what the New Testament affirmed or offending the Jews while purportedly extending a hand in friendship? Moreover, were not Catholics to work for the conversion of the Jews, whose religion was incomplete without acknowledgment of the Messiah? Would the document say that the perseverance of the Jews in Judaism is without fault? If so, is that right?⁵⁵ ✓

After much discussion and debate, it became clear by the fall of 1963 that the council could not treat the Jews without treating other non-Christian religions, especially Islam, which like Christianity and Judaism descended from the patriarch Abraham.⁵⁶ Bishops from the "new churches" of Asia wanted Buddhism and Hinduism included. Thus the document, originally intended as a theological statement on the Jews and in some form a condemnation of anti-Semitism, was eventually expanded into the final version. In September 1964, however, when Bea made his presentation, this short text dealt almost exclusively with the Jews, with just a sentence about the Muslims and a general statement about loving all human beings. ✓

All through the spring and summer of 1964 questions and suggested changes in the draft schema had come pouring into the Secretariat, so that

the text was revised again and again in an effort to deal with them. Cicognani and especially Paul VI were deeply involved. It soon became clear that the pope and Bea did not see eye-to-eye on the text, particularly on what was to be said about the crucial issue of deicide, and the document was reworded several times in attempts to reach a compromise. Bea was intent on absolving of the crime not only contemporary Jews but also the Jewish people of Christ's time, as distinct from certain of their leaders. On that issue the pope prevailed in the text Bea presented to the council, which contained only one sentence on the subject: "Let everyone take care not to impute to the Jews of our times what happened during the Passion of Christ."⁵⁷

Bea opened his presentation on September 25, 1964, by recalling that "this Declaration is certainly among the materials that have aroused the greatest public interest." Moreover, many people will judge the council favorably or unfavorably depending on how it deals with the issue.⁵⁸ A number of venerable fathers of the council asked that the entire document be removed from the agenda. The Secretariat seriously considered their reasons and finally judged that it was imperative for the council to make a statement. Members of the Coordinating Committee know, Bea said, the effort put into this little document.

He then moved immediately to the question of deicide, which was an implicit plea to change the text the council had before it. While it is true that the leaders of the Sanhedrin headed the campaign leading to Jesus' death, he conceded, they were only a tiny percentage of the Jewish people. We cannot attribute to a whole people what a few leaders perpetrated. And how can we say that even those leaders knowingly committed deicide when Jesus himself asked the Father to "forgive them for they know not what they do"? Surely, even if we should grant—which we do not—that the people of Jesus' time were responsible, there is no way that responsibility can be attributed to later generations.

Toward the end Bea insisted that the declaration "has nothing to do with any political questions," specifically nothing to do with Zionism or with the state of Israel. Yes, it will be possible for people to misinterpret the text and manipulate it for political ends, but we must not for that reason forsake our duty. He ended: "What is at stake here is our responsibility to truth and justice, our duty of gratitude to God, our duty of faithfully and closely imitating Christ the Lord and his apostles Peter and Paul. In

setting forth these matters the church and this council absolutely cannot tolerate that any political authority or political considerations intrude."

The discussion opened on September 28 and continued until September 30. Opponents of the schema did not mince words. The most gentle of the negative interventions came from Cardinal Ignace Tappouni, patriarch of Antioch, Syrian rite, who in the name of the other Eastern rite patriarchs simply asserted that the document would cause them grave difficulties in their pastoral activities. The document was "inopportune," and he begged the fathers to remove it from the agenda.⁵⁹

Ruffini, as usual among the first speakers, had the courage to say what others were thinking. He began by stating that the declaration piles up praise of the Jews so high, that it sounds like a panegyric. Of course we cannot attribute deicide to the Jews because the word makes no sense—nobody can kill God. Nonetheless, we have a right to expect the Jews to acknowledge that they unjustly condemned Christ to death. We need to pray that God will "remove the veil" from their eyes that prevents them from seeing Christ as the Messiah. That is a sign of our love for them, as is the fact that during the last war we protected them from the Nazis and prevented their deportation. At the end of the war, remember, the chief rabbi of Rome publicly expressed his gratitude for the refuge the Holy See gave to Jews, saving them from certain death.

We do not need exhortations to love the Jews, Ruffini continued. They need exhortations to love us. Everybody is aware that the Jews support and promote the "pernicious sect" called the Masons, which is out to destroy the church and which has often been condemned by the Holy See. As for the Muslims, yes, we should love them, but what about the Buddhists and the Hindus, who do not seem any further from the Christian religion than the disciples of Mohammed? The schema should be revised so that in general terms it says something about the relationship of the church to all non-Christians, especially to those groups with larger membership, but it should do so without singling out any one of them for special mention.⁶⁰

Ruffini laid bare all the major issues. The others who intervened against the schema added little to what he and Tappouni had said. Most speakers, including a number of Americans, spoke in favor, though with different emphases and with many suggestions for improvement. Bea's presentation had its desired effect, however, in that a number of speakers expressed dissatisfaction with the changes that had been introduced into the text from

the earlier version, particularly the weaker statement on decide. By the time the speeches were over and the written comments examined, the Secretariat felt justified in preparing a stronger text, more in accordance with the one it had originally composed.

The bomb did not drop until nine days later.⁶¹ On October 9 the Secretariat held a plenary meeting to examine the work the subcommittees had done on the two declarations. At the meeting Bea read two letters he had just received, signed by Felici. In the first, Felici informed Bea that the pope wanted a new text drafted on religious liberty.⁶² The new draft was to be written by some members of the Secretariat along with some members of the Doctrinal Commission—in other words, by a “mixed” subcommittee. Thus not only would the original text be scrapped, but the declaration would be taken out of the exclusive domain of the Secretariat. Felici mentioned, moreover, four persons to be added to the subcommittee—Cardinal Browne, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Father Aniceto Fernandez (master general of the Dominican order), and Carlo Colombo. Except for Colombo, they were all publicly and vehemently opposed to the declaration.

In the second letter Felici informed Bea that a joint meeting of the Council of Presidents, the Coordinating Committee, and the moderators had decided, on the basis of a report from Cardinal Cicognani, that the subject of the Jews should not be a separate declaration but should be incorporated into the second chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, where it was already mentioned.⁶³ Another “mixed” subcommittee made up of members of the Secretariat, chosen by Bea, and members of the Doctrinal Commission, chosen by Ottaviani, would compose the new text. Thus this document, too, was removed from the exclusive domain of the Secretariat. In his report Cicognani indicated that the pope wanted a brief reference to the matter included in chapter two of *Lumen Gentium*, on “the people of God.”

Almost immediately, word of Felici's two letters reached the media, which exploded with conspiracy theories. Like no other document in the council, the declaration on the Jews became the focus of intense media attention and public scrutiny. Within the council itself, consternation. What had happened? How could actions unilaterally taken that disregarded the normal procedures of the council and that seemed geared to reversing or at least notably qualifying the will of the majority be justified?

At this point it is impossible to fully reconstruct the scenario, but a few

things are clear. For sure, the pope had intervened. He had been subjected to terrific pressure from within the council and, on the declaration on the Jews, from outside the council as well, with some of the Arab states threatening to close down their embassies to the Holy See. Felici was the medium through which the pope's message was conveyed. It is now certain that wittingly or unwittingly he did not in every instance accurately represent what the pope seems to have meant. Cicognani, secretary of state and president of the Coordinating Committee, was, as usual, also a key player. But just how to distribute praise or blame among these three and the others who in some way were involved is difficult to ascertain.⁶⁴

Bea moved into action. On October 10 he wrote in Italian directly to the pope.⁶⁵ He began by saying that the letter from Felici concerning religious liberty did not reflect Bea's understanding of the pope's mind on the matter as they had discussed it in a private audience on October 5. (Bea included a photocopy of Felici's letter so that the pope could see precisely what it said.) At that meeting Bea and the pope had agreed that after the text was revised by the Secretariat it should be submitted to the Doctrinal Commission to make sure it was orthodox. This procedure was acceptable to both himself and Cardinal Ottaviani and had been followed on other occasions. There had been no talk of a mixed commission. A doubt therefore arose in Bea's mind whether Felici's letter accurately reflected what the pope intended. He detailed for Paul the serious consequences for the council and “for the authority of Your Holiness” if the provisions of Felici's letter were carried out. He asked for a clarification of where the pope stood.

As is clear from the letter, Bea was not opposed in principle to inserting the statement on the Jews into *Lumen Gentium*, and he knew that many members of the council who favored the declaration thought that might be the better course. Yet he feared that such a move implicitly entailed shortening and weakening the text. In the letter, however, Bea dealt mainly with his reservations about relying on mixed commissions, especially if some of the new members were professedly committed to sabotaging the text. A mixed commission was a vote of no-confidence in the Secretariat.

Bea was not the only person to shift into high gear. The next day Paul received a letter signed by thirteen of the leading figures at the council, including Frings, Liénart, Alfrink, König, Döpfner, Meyer, and Ritter. It was short. It was blunt. “With great distress” they had learned that the declaration on religious liberty was to be sent to a new commission, some of whose members opposed the sentiments of the council majority. The

signers reminded the pope that in such a serious matter every appearance of violating the procedures and freedom of the council should be avoided. They repeated how distressed and concerned they were. They ended by reminding the pope that, if he really thought it necessary to form a mixed commission, he "in their humble opinion" could do so in the way laid down in the council's procedures, article 58, number 2.⁶⁶

Within a few days the matter was settled by a return to the situation before Bea received the two letters. No one apologized, and no one explicitly disowned anything that had been written, but Bea emerged with his texts firmly in hand. The incident suddenly seemed almost like a bad dream that now was past and had no power to harm. In fact, however, opponents of the two schemas had not laid down their arms.

What was the upshot of it all? The affair was typical of a situation where messages were conveyed by indirection or through third parties, so that for those on the scene it became almost impossible to know how to interpret what was really going on and to whom to address questions or grievances. To the problem of the blurred lines of responsibility that had dogged the council all along was added, therefore, a style of communication that left people wondering who really said what and to whom—and when they said it. The solution was to run to the pope.

Progress on the Agenda

The council, meanwhile, had not been idle. On September 30 it again took up the schema on revelation, first revised by the mixed commission set up by Pope John two years earlier and then further revised by a sub-commission of the Doctrinal Commission. This was the first of a series of schemas that the council discussed with relative dispatch in the first three weeks of October. The pope, Felici, and probably the majority of the fathers were pressing hard to have the council end with this period. The Döpfner Plan for the "minor texts" was still being followed and was generally regarded as an efficacious device for accomplishing that goal. In fact, these weeks would see the plan falter and fail, and by that time it had become clear that a fourth period would be needed.

The revised schema on revelation, still without its final title, *Dei Verbum*, followed for the most part the outline of the original document, though the orientations of the first two chapters were significantly different.⁶⁷ The original schema at least implicitly viewed revelation as consist-

ing of truths or doctrines, whereas this one, as set forth in the first chapter, emphasized that it was God's self-manifestation, which expressed itself in God's action in history (*gesta*) as well as in pronouncements (*verba*). Revelation took its ultimate form in the very person of Christ. God is the "source" of revelation—God himself, not Scripture or Tradition as such. Although to the uninitiated this might seem like a theological fine point, it was a significant shift away from ahistorical abstractions, as if God had revealed a collection of timeless propositions. It was thus a rejection of an approach that had held sway in Catholic thinking on the subject for centuries and that was enshrined in theological textbooks up to the time the council opened. Unlike the original *De Fontibus*, this text, like the final version, clearly stated that the church's Magisterium is "not above the word of God but acts as its servant."⁶⁸

Not so much this first chapter as the second, which treated the Scripture-Tradition relationship, roused the minority. Even with its rather subtle but new orientation the document could not sidestep the issue, which had been one of the hottest topics in the original discussion in 1962. In that earlier document Tradition had in effect been presented as containing truths that Scripture did not contain; moreover, it acted as the interpretative key for understanding Scripture: though Scripture is inspired, "nonetheless its sense cannot be certainly and fully understood and made clear except by apostolic Tradition."⁶⁹ While expressly treating Scripture and Tradition as equals, it implicitly gave Tradition the more privileged role in the church.

The new text took a different approach, which the minority found deeply distressing. The key question for those who opposed the schema was, are there truths in Tradition that are not contained in Scripture? The question thus framed betrays the mentality that chapter one tried to obviate by moving revelation away, in the first instance, from truths/doctrines/propositions. For fathers like Ruffini, Browne, Carli, and others of the minority, the answer to the question was a resounding yes, and for them it was essential that the text proclaim that affirmative loud and clear. They had in mind the Marian dogmas solemnly defined by Pope Pius IX and Pope Pius XII with little or no scriptural warrant. That meant that for the minority this rather abstruse issue of Scripture-Tradition implicated papal authority.

Although the schema sedulously avoided saying what the minority considered essential, neither did it in principle exclude it. For the majority the