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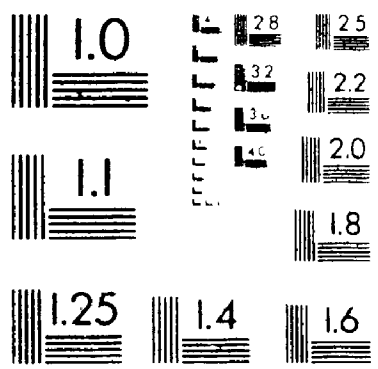

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JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN CANADA:

THE UNITED CHURCH OBSERVER CONTROVERSY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

BY

© CHAYA ELIEFJA

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
OTTAWA, ONTARIO
MARCH 1987

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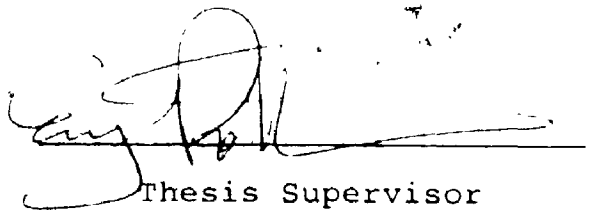
The United Church Observer Controversy"

submitted by Chaya Eliefjia, Hons. B.A.,

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Religion



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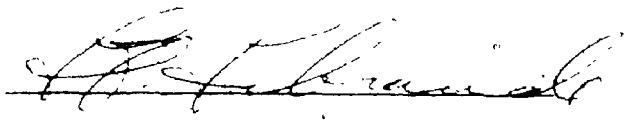

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ABSTRACT

The controversy erupting over the condemnations of Israel in the United Church of Canada magazine, the Observer, in the decade following the 1967 Six-Day War, brought Jewish-Christian relations in Canada to a critical juncture. It raised to the surface many issues Jews and Christians in Canada had never fully discussed, and which have become part of the regular agenda for Jewish-Christian dialogue the world over.

This thesis chronicles the events of the controversy as they unfolded, and includes a history of Jewish-Christian relations in Canada as background to those events. The issues are categorized as questions of (1) politics, (2) Church organization, (3) Jewish community organization, (4) history, (5) theology, (6) humanism, and (7) semantics. This methodology is offered as a model for examining other confrontations between Christians and Jews, and is applied to Jewish-Catholic relations in the United States. The thesis concludes that although the association between the Jewish community and the United Church of Canada has greatly improved, many of the original disputants still fail to grasp the issues dividing them.

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The Forces of Modernity

Prior to the eighteenth century, relations between Christians and Jews were generally frowned upon or restricted to the marketplace. Although Christendom had become fragmented, Protestant Churches maintained as tight-fisted a monopoly on their separate territories as the Roman Catholic or English Churches had on theirs. In such societies, rival world views such as those of the Jews, were persecuted and/or isolated from the general milieu. In actuality, neither side desired to be "contaminated" by the views of the other.

The modern era of Jewish-Christian relations began with the secularization of the eighteenth century. Church monopoly was broken down and replaced by democratic or later socialist governments. With increasing mobility and interdependence of political and economic conditions throughout the world, a greater plurality of world views--both religious and secular--have come into contact with one another. In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel:

> The religions of the world are no more self-sufficient, no more independent, no more isolated than individuals or nations. Energies, experiences and ideas that

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INTRODUCTION

Overview of Jewish-Christian Relations in Canada

Back in the 1920s, Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of the Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto and Rev. Ernest Hunter of the Carlton Street United Church made history when, for the first time in Canada, a rabbi and a minister exchanged pulpits. This early effort at interfaith relations in Canada was carried on by Isserman's successor, Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath and another United Church of Canada clergyman, Claris Edwin Silcox who, in the 1930s, together founded the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews.

At a time when it was even difficult for Protestant and Catholic clergymen to meet with one another for understanding and cooperation, leading rabbis and United Churchmen in Toronto and elsewhere established a bond of mutual respect and friendship. It is significant, therefore, that some forty years later one of the most testing periods in Jewish relations with Christians in Canada would involve the United Church.

The dispute largely centered on the expressed views of one man with regard to the plight of the Palestinians. Rev. A.C. Forrest's backing of the legitimate rights of the refugees was fair from his point of view and that of many of his fellow clergymen; but his position as editor of the

United Church Observer, the house organ of Canada's largest Protestant denomination, and the tenor of his arguments made him a major concern of many in the Jewish community. Christians, not only of the United Church, rallied on both sides of the conflict and the situation was heatedly debated in the general press.

The controversy, however, had larger ramifications than just an isolated debate centered around one man. It raised a whole variety of issues that have become integral to understanding contemporary Jewish-Christian relations. On the surface, the quarrel revolved around the political issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But it also involved the issues of ethnic solidarity and dissent, freedom of expression and the propagation of prejudice, revolution theology and antisemitism, the memory of persecution and the predicament of guilt, the Holocaust, nationalism and peoplehood.

These issues are part of the whole context of Jewish-Christian relations in the modern era. They reflect the challenges of modernity: (1) secularization and pluralism, which introduced new ideas of rights and equality, and countered both Christian religious monopoly and Jewish isolation; (2) the reemergence of latent prejudices and Jew-hatred in the first half of the 20th century; (3) the Holocaust, which brought to the fore Christian guilt and

strengthened Jewish cohesiveness; and (4) the State of Israel, which became part of Jewish sacred theology and a symbol of the oppressor to the Christian New Left.

The Forces of Modernity

Prior to the eighteenth century, relations between Christians and Jews were generally frowned upon or restricted to the marketplace. Although Christendom had become fragmented, Protestant Churches maintained as tight-fisted a monopoly on their separate territories as the Roman Catholic or English Churches had on theirs. In such societies, rival world views such as those of the Jews, were persecuted and/or isolated from the general milieu. In actuality, neither side desired to be "contaminated" by the views of the other.

The modern era of Jewish-Christian relations began with the secularization of the eighteenth century. Church monopoly was broken down and replaced by democratic or later socialist governments. With increasing mobility and interdependence of political and economic conditions throughout the world, a greater plurality of world views--both religious and secular--have come into contact with one another. In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel:

> The religions of the world are no more self-sufficient, no more independent, no more isolated than individuals or nations. Energies, experiences and ideas that

> come to life outside the boundaries of a particular religion or all religions continue to challenge and to affect every religion.[1]

According to a position shared by Max Weber, Peter Berger and other sociologists, religion has become a competing commodity in the marketplace of world views. The result has been that there is no longer any church which can simply look to the state for its members and support. Like any commodity, religious tradition has to be marketed. "It must be 'sold' to a clientele that is no longer constrained to 'buy'."[2]

Part of the marketing economics has been accommodation to secular ideas. Religious traditions have had to grapple with such issues as the changing roles of women, human rights and politics. While some religious groups have attempted to hold on to their traditional views and practices, for example, by resisting the ordination of women priests and rabbis, or objecting to the involvement of religious organizations in election campaigns, all groups have had to respond to the plurality and secularism of modern society.

Due to the historic conditions which brought together

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[1]Heschel, "No Religion is an Island," in Disputation and Dialogue, ed. Frank Talmage (NY: Ktav Publ. House, 1975), p. 345.

[2]Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy (NY: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 138.

a multitude of immigrants from all over the world, the effects of pluralism are nowhere greater than in North America, the New World.[3] Whether in the "cultural mosaic" of Canada or in the "melting pot" of the United States, diverse religious groups have often come together, despite their theological differences, for the common good. Luther Harshbarger and John Mourant cite the civil rights movement in the United States as a dramatic illustration of "when priests and nuns, rabbis and Protestant clergymen found themselves walking arm in arm to Selma and to Washington, in Harlem and in Watts, and lobbying for civil rights legislation in the halls of Congress."[4]

The earliest beginnings of interfaith activities are also found in this pluralistic milieu. As early as 1923, religious groups in the United States bonded together in the face of growing bigotry and the spreading influence of the Ku Klux Klan. The Federal Council of Churches set up a Commission on Good Will Between Jews and Christians, and in 1928 the commission was reestablished as the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The stated purpose was "to promote justice, amity, understanding, and co-operation

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[3]Harshbarger and Mourant, Judaism and Christianity: Perspectives and Traditions (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), p. 438.

[4]Ibid., p. 441.

among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews."[5]

Canada's early efforts at interfaith relations reflected the same concerns as those south of the border. Holy Blossom rabbis and United Church clergymen were particularly active in bettering relations for the common good. At a time when economic and social discrimination against foreign looking and sounding Jews was common, especially in the 1930s, liberal Jews and Christians found themselves on the same side fighting for social justice and an end to discrimination. Interfaith dialogue at this stage was characterized as discussions among the participants as "human beings" who left their faith outside the door of the meeting room.

Prejudice and Propaganda

Secularism brought an end to religious monopoly and introduced a plurality of world views, but it did not bring an end to anti-Jewish sentiments. Despite attempts at co-operation, relations between Christians and Jews were at their worst during the interwar years: "This worsening of Christian-Jewish relations," writes historian Lita-Rose Betcherman, "must be charged to the contagion of Nazi

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[5]"Lighting Lamps: The Program of the National Conference of Christians and Jews"; quoted in Will Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew (NY: Doubleday, 1955), p. 258.

propaganda. Hitler had done his work only too well, and by his example had released the inhibitions of latent anti-Semites everywhere."[6]

Economic and political instability combined with fascist propaganda to bring out many people's hidden prejudices. Throughout North America, swastika clubs gained the support of large sections of the population and Jews encountered blatantly posted signs of "No Jews Allowed." The situation in Canada, observes Dennis Wrong, was perhaps worse than in the United States:

> Signs barring Jews from beaches and amusement parks were openly displayed; newspaper advertisements for jobs and housing accommodation often read "Christians Only Need Apply." I remember seeing such signs myself on the Toronto Island and at Lake Ontario resorts east of Toronto in the late 1930's and early 1940's, some of them far more direct--simply asserting "No Jews Wanted"--than similar notices displayed in the eastern United States during the same period. . . . The publicly flaunted prejudice of the signboards and the impetus given by Hitler to the more violent forms of anti-Semitism throughout the Western world made Jews appear as permissible targets of physical attack to hoodlums and bored, unemployed working-class youths.[7]

In Canada, writes Stuart Rosenberg, "The source of nearly all the anti-Semitic literature and agitation was a

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[6]Betcherman, The Swastika and the Maple Leaf (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1975), pp. 100-101.

[7]Wrong, "Ontario's Jews in the Larger Community," in A People and its Faith, ed. Albert Rose (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 53.

young French Canadian, Adrien Arcand, who publicly avowed loyalty to Hitler and the Nazis."[8] By 1932, he had connections with fascist and ultranationalist organizations all over the world. The hate-sheets he published gained wide support and were even financially supported, in part, by both leading political parties.[9]

Canada's worst blemish with regard to antisemitism, however, was in its position towards Jewish refugees. The prejudice encouraged by economic and social discrimination, Nazi propaganda and the likes of Adrien Arcand was translated into an official immigration policy to keep out Jews.

Canada was not alone in this attitude. Chaim Weizman wrote in 1936: "The world seems to be divided in two parts--those places where the Jew cannot live, and those where they cannot enter."[10] But Canada's record for receiving Jewish refugees was among the worst in the world. A.A. Heaps, one of the Members of Parliament who fought the losing battle for Jewish immigration, wrote in a letter to the Prime Minister:

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[8]Rosenberg, The Jewish Community in Canada, vol. 1 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 194.

[9]The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v., "Anti-Semitism" (NY: Ktav Publ. House, 1969), p. 390.

[10]Cited by Irbing Abella and Harold Troper, "'The Line Must Be Drawn Somewhere' Canada and Jewish Refugees, 1933-39," in The Canadian Jewish Mosaic, eds. Morton Weinfeld, William Shaffir and Irwin Cotler (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), p. 51. For further details see the groundbreaking work, Irving Abella and Harold Troper, None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948 (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982).

> The existing regulations are probably the most stringent to be found anywhere in the whole world. If the refugees have no money they are barred because they are poor, if they have fairly substantial sums, they are often refused admittance on the most flimsy pretext. All I say of existing regulations is that they are inhuman and anti-Christian. . . . Practically every nation in the world is allowing a limited number to enter their countries. . . . The lack of action by the Canadian government is leaving an unfortunate impression. . . . I regret to state that the sentiment is gaining ground that anti-Semitic influences are responsible for the government's refusal to allow refugees to come to Canada.[11]

According to Irving Abella and Harold Troper, the one person most responsible for Canada's immigration policy towards the Jews was Frederick Charles Blair, the director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources. For him, the term "refugee" was equivalent to "Jews," and he was quite proud of his success in barring them from Canadian soil. In a note to F.N. Scandlers, commissioner of Saint John Board of Trade, he wrote, "Pressure on the part of Jewish people to get into Canada has never been greater than it is now and I am glad to be able to add, after 35 years experience here, that it was never so well controlled."[12]

Few non-Jewish Canadians made any efforts to improve

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[11] Heaps, to MacKenzie King, 9 September 1930, King Papers, 214197; cited by Abella and Troper, p. 65.

[12] Blair, letter to F.N. Scandlers, 13 September 1938, Immigration Records, 54782/5; cited by Abella and Troper, p. 53.

the country's immigration policy. Betcherman notes:

> As usual in the thirties, the Jews most sincere friends were sections of organized labour and of the United Church, whose spokesmen urged the government to open its doors to the victims of Nazism. They were the exception; most of English Canada was ready to extend its sympathy to the refugees but not much else.[13]

Years later, Jews still point to the discrimination and the prejudice in Canada during the 1930s and 40s as evidence that latent antisemitism continues to exist.

Aftershock of the Holocaust

With the end of WWII, the full-blown reality of the Holocaust came to the fore. The public voice of antisemitism was shocked into silence the world over. "Even Adrien Arcand," writes Erna Paris, "was unsuccessful in his attempts to re-create anti-Semitism. He died, a despised man, in 1967."[14]

A fact of the Holocaust, says Fr. Gregory Baum, is that it took anti-Christian Nazis to stir the conscience of some Christian theologians into reflecting on their Christian past and to condemn antisemitism.[15] It seemed that

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[13] Betcherman, p. 132.

[14] Paris, Jews: An Account of Their Experience in Canada (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980), p. 97.

[15] Baum, "Salvation is From the Jews: A Story of Prejudice," in Disputation and Dialogue, ed. Frank Talmage (NY: Ktav Publ. House, 1975), p. 314.

society in general had become more liberal, rejecting notions of fascism and fighting for civil rights. It was no longer acceptable to be blatantly antisemitic.

Part of the agenda of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), as envisioned by Pope John XXIII, was to acknowledge Christian crimes against the Jewish people, to abrogate the ancient charge of "deicide," to unequivocally condemn antisemitism, and to repent of these crimes.[16] It was aimed, in part, at absolving the Christian conscience.

That Christian consciences were largely unprepared to take such a step is evidenced by the degree to which the final resolution concerning Jews fell short of Pope John XXIII's objectives. The wording which abrogated the ancient charge of "deicide" was deleted in the final draft due to the objections of a conservative minority within the council and pressure from bishops in Arab countries. According to Roy Eckardt:

> It was a case of pressure, of compromise, and ultimately of appeasement before hostile forces within and without the Church. A double irony was called forth: Defeat was administered to a dead pope and to an overwhelming majority of living bishops by a handful of cardinals who obtained the assent of a living pope in the furtherance of the dying cause of anti-Judaism.[17]

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[16]See A. Roy Eckardt, Your People, My People (NY: Quadrangle Books, pp. 43, 48.

[17]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

Many Christians have had difficulty not in condemning antisemitism, but in attesting to Christianity's role in promoting it. Eckardt calls this "our Christian predicament."[18]

Despite its weaknesses, the Vatican II statement on the Jews (Nostra Aetate, no. 4) has lead to a more extensive examination of Christian theology and the Christian predicament. It has shifted interfaith activities, particularly those involving Catholics, beyond cooperation in civil matters to an appreciation of one another's beliefs and aspirations.

Protestants, who dominated interfaith activities prior to Vatican II, have by and large been less successful in making this transition from simple cooperation to interreligious understanding. This is largely due to a Protestant universalistic orientation to religion which maintains that God speaks similarly to all people. The United Church, for example, explains church historian, Rev. John Webster Grant, inherited the notion of social gospel, that "having good people . . . depends on having a good environment, and the right laws, and the right, just economic system."[19]

United Churchmen and Jews had originally gotten together because they both were working for a society that

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[18]See Chapter X.

[19]Grant, personal interview, Toronto, 28 February 1984 (this applies to all further citations of John Webster Grant).

would be just to all people. Relations became strained, however, when such Protestants were asked to understand and appreciate Jewish particularist interests, especially Jewish interests in Israel.

The State of Israel

Possibly the greatest issue in Jewish-Christian relations in the modern era is the State of Israel. No other single subject, except perhaps the Holocaust, elicits the same intensity of emotions and loyalties, and touches on so many interrelated problems. The subject of Israel raises questions of war and peace, oppression and defence, liberation and survival, ancient prejudices and modern politics, and competing national aspirations.

It is difficult to appreciate all of the different perspectives Jews and Christians have with regard to Israel without taking into account their various religious, political, and economic interests in the Middle East. One must consider the differences in Jewish and Christian theology, the influence of such modern secular notions as humanism and liberalism, the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish and Christian sentiments, and divergent understanding of such key terms as nationalism, Zionism, Christian Zionists, Jewish peoplehood, criticism of Israel, and antisemitism.

All of these were problems in the controversy between the Canadian Jewish community and the United Church Observer.

Clarifications, Outline and Aims

It is, perhaps, somewhat misleading to describe the controversy as being between the Canadian Jewish community and the United Church of Canada, or as being the "United Church Observer controversy." In certain respects the dispute was more restricted, in other respects it was much broader.

On the one hand, as indicated above, the quarrel revolved around the expressed views of one man--Al Forrest. It was centered in Toronto, but even there not every member of the Jewish community or of the United Church was involved or paid attention to the altercation.

On the other hand, the debate elicited a wide range of opinions and responses from the Canadian Jewish and United Church leadership, from the rank and file of both communities, from other religious leaders, and from the general press. Both communities had their loyal supporters as well as their mavericks, and both picked up outside support. Moreover, the wide distribution of the Observer and communications between various Canadian and American Jewish community agencies made it a matter of concern not only for Jews and Christians from Vancouver to Halifax, but even south of the

border. Several clergymen and academics in the United States became involved.

A. Roy Eckardt, an American scholar in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, includes a discussion of the dispute in his book, Your People, My People. He notes that several of the Observer articles were reproduced "in a number of the largest denominational publications in the United States, including Church and Home, The Episcopalian, The Lutheran, Presbyterian Life, Presbyterian Survey, and the United Church Herald."[20]

Therefore, it is only for the sake of simplicity and convenience, not for accuracy, that the quarrel is described as being between the Jewish community of Canada and the United Church, or as the United Church Observer controversy. The aim of this thesis is, first of all, to present the events of that controversy as they unfolded. The events are chronicled in Part I.

The second aim of this thesis is to analyze the issues raised by the controversy. The issues, however, are not unique to that particular situation. The same kinds of questions continue to cause tension between Christians and Jews, not only in Canada, but in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. And they have become part of the regular agenda for Jewish-Christian dialogue. Therefore, this

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[20]Eckardt, p. 127.

thesis also seeks to provide a model for examining other confrontations between Christians and Jews.

Part II deals methodically with the issues raised by the controversy. In theory, they can be categorized as questions of politics, Church organization, Jewish community organization, history, theology, humanism, and semantics. In practice, these categories are greatly interrelated and the controversy presented them as a complex web. In addition, Chapter XIV is added at the end of Part II to provide an example of applying this model to Jewish-Catholic relations in the United States.

In conclusion, the thesis brings the situation up to date in looking at the present state of relations. The association between the Jewish community and the United Church of Canada has greatly improved in the last couple of decades. Nevertheless, many important issues have not been resolved; they have merely passed into the shadows with the death of A.C. Forrest. It is said that hindsight is 20/20; yet many of the main disputants still vaguely see the complexity of the problems that divided them.

> About one third of them are still in refugee camps living in tents . . . They can look across the border and see the homes they left to which they may not return and for which no compensation was given. . . . The Israeli say they were traitors and cannot be permitted to return. The Arabs say they fled for their lives. (There are many Arabs of course still in Israel--they have members of Parliament. There are no Jews in Jordan.)[27]

Although the committee was critical of Israel for not giving reparations to the Palestinian refugees for their lost land and homes, it did not blame Israel outright for the refugee problem. The report also pointed out, "The Israeli insist that no solution of the refugee problem may be reached until it is part of the larger settlement, including recognition of the State of Israel by the Arab nations."[28]

The third relevant section of the report is 28, "The Refugees--A World Survey," which placed the Palestinians in the context of the wider problem. Alongside them, the report also dealt with the plight of refugees from Hungary and other European nations, Korea, China, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and also the "more than 400,000 Jews who felt forced to leave their homes in Iraq, the Yemen, North Africa and more recently Egypt."[29]

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[27]Ibid., p. 148.

[28]Ibid., p. 149.

[29]Ibid., p. 150.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND YEARS, (1942-1967)

The controversy began in 1967. For most Canadians and others taking note of the affairs in the Middle East, the Israelis had been the underdogs and the darlings of the region. They were regarded as a tiny bastion of democracy in the midst of hostile and undemocratic neighbors, as a people who made orange groves and shade trees grow in the desert. In the view of many Christians, the children of Zion had come from the ashes of hell to reclaim their land, and surely this was a sign of prophecy if not of recompense.

Then came the Six-Day War of June 1967, and the Israelis were victorious. The image of the brow-beaten ghetto Jew was replaced in the minds of many people with the young, tough Israeli who stood upright in defense of himself and his land. Among Jews and Israel's loyal supporters there was a surge of nationalistic pride. But many of its former supporters did not understand this new Israel. Suddenly they saw it as militaristic and oppressive, subjugating Arabs by force. In Canada, Rev. A.C. Forrest was a leading voice of protest. As editor of the United Church of Canada magazine, the Observer, published once or twice a month, he made Israel a regular target for criticism.

The signs and shadows of this change in attitude could be seen in the Observer and in the ranks of the United Church years earlier. In 1942, leading United Church clergymen could conceive of Zionism as a just solution for refugees of the unfathomable horrors of the Holocaust. Rev. Ernest Hunter and Rev. Ernest Marshall Howse and other United Churchmen pleaded in the December 1942 issue of Fellowship, the journal of the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews, to allow Jews into Palestine to which they "have an ancient moral claim, never relinquished in all their history."[21]

The first note of dissent came in April 1948, a month before Israel's independence. A.J. Wilson, then editor of the Observer, wrote in an editorial, "for the sake of the peace of the world, the Jews should renounce their claims for an immediate sovereign state."[22] Not surprisingly, the Observer did not hail the establishment of the State of Israel. In fact, it was not even noted. Outside of this one reference, it seems Israel, the Arabs, and the whole Middle East situation was of little concern to the Observer editorial staff.

Israel's independence did not go unnoticed, however, by the General Council, the governing body of the United

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[21] Fellowship, December 1942, p. 2.

[22] Observer, April 1948, p. 4.

Church which meets about every two years. In the Record of Proceedings for the General Council of 1948, the Committee on the Church and International Affairs reported the following:

> In view of the rapid changes in Palestine, including armed strife between forces of the Arab States and the newly erected State of Israel, the committee decided it would be unwise to prepare a statement on the Palestine question for General Council. It was realized, however, that due to Canada's membership on the Security Council, our nation has a serious and responsible part in aiding the United Nations to establish peace between the Arab and the Jew.[23]

Rather than make its own statement, the committee decided to present the official views of the Arab States, Israel, and the United Kingdom as reported in the 15 May 1948 issue of the United Nations Bulletin. The Israeli position was given in Moshe Shertak's statement of 27 April 1948. Jamal el-Husseini's statement of 26 April 1948 represented the Arab stance. And the United Kingdom's point of view was provided by Arthur Creech-Jones's statement of 23 April 1948. The committee's report was a prudent response to a complex situation; and it reflects the beginning of a growing ambivalence within the ranks of the United Church towards the Jewish state.

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[23] Record of Proceedings, 13th General Council (1948), p. 138; for the full report see Appendix 1.

During the next seven years, there were no significant articles or editorials in the Observer regarding the Middle East. The only indication in the magazine of growing concern in the Church for the problems of the Palestinians was an article in the 1 February 1954 issue commending the aid sent by the United Church to the Arab refugees. The problems of the Arabs, however, were not singled out in the pages of the Observer as distinct from the suffering of countless other refugees the world over.

The Record of Proceedings for the General Council of that year is much more revealing. The Committee on the Church and International Affairs decided this time to present a three page statement on the "Arab-Israel Situation." From the outset, the statement established as the context "the present situation in Palestine," rather than regarding the Arab-Israeli situation within the total context of the Middle East.[24]

The report placed the blame for "increasing bitterness, tension, frontier fighting and far-reaching political insecurity" squarely on the shoulders of the Israelis. There was no recognition of any Arab responsibility in creating tension or the refugee situation. In fact, any such notion was completely dismissed as Israeli propaganda.

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[24] Record of Proceedings, 16th General Council (1954), pp. 141-3; for the full report see Appendix 2.

Arabs were regarded as justified in their actions against a peace settlement with the Jewish state "because they have suffered a great wrong which is unacknowledged by Israel and is condoned or ignored by the world."

While the report is condemnatory of Israel's "more truculent spokesmen," it does not acknowledge any such Arab spokesmen. There was no condemnation of Jordan's desecration of Jewish holy sites and cemetaries, nor of Jordan's barring of Jews from visiting them. Nor was there any recognition of Jewish displacement from Arab lands, the shelter they found in Israel, or the continuing persecution of Jews who have remained behind.

The statement, it should be noted, was accepted by the General Council only as the report of the International Affairs Committee. Since the report did not contain any recommendations to be voted on and adopted, it did not officially represent the position of the General Council of the United Church, but only the views of that particular committee. Many of the arguments Forrest would later make against Israel, however, were already spelled out in this report.

The Jewish community, including its leaders, were mostly unaware of what was reported or adopted at General Council sessions. The Jewish press, even at the height of the controversy, only devoted a paragraph or so to the more

sensationalist events, and few Jews took a closer look.

The Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), officially representing the Jewish community of Canada, has always maintained a keen watch on Christian views of Jews and Jewish interests, but its information has come mainly from Christian publications like the Observer. The Joint Community Relations Committee (JCRC) of the CJC, as described by its past national director, Ben Kayfetz, "acts on behalf of the Jewish community of Canada on all matters pertaining to the relationship between the Jewish community and the rest of Canada, either on an ethnic, racial, or religious basis."[25] According to Kayfetz:

> We were subscribers to the United Church Observer all along, even before the controversy broke out. We likewise subscribe to the Roman Catholic Register and the Anglican Canadian Churchman because we make it our business to keep in touch with what is being thought and what is being said in the major Canadian Churches.

In the first few years after A.C. Forrest was appointed editor, in July 1955, there was very little written in the Observer with regard to Israel or the Arabs. Forrest's magazine was concerned with a host of issues, and especially with the dealings of the United Church. He was highly regarded as an editor and as a person. His flair for writing,

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[25]Kayfetz, personal interview, Toronto, 5 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Ben Kayfetz).

editing, layout, and photography made the Observer a household word among members and many non-members of the United Church. Under his direction, the magazine more than doubled its circulation to 312,000.

In the two years prior to Forrest's first trip to the Middle East, in the summer of 1957, there were only three times the troubled region was the topic of discussion. The three articles represented very different viewpoints: from the pessimism of Claris Silcox's "Crisis in the Middle East" (February 1956), to the optimism of Rabbi Abraham Feinberg's "Christians and Arab-Israeli Peace" (July 1956). Forrest's own editorial, "Two Sides to It" (December 1955), indicated his own cool neutrality or ambivalence towards the region at that time.

Forrest's trip to Israel and Jordan, en route to Africa in 1957, did not seem to make too much of an initial impact, at least in his writings. His name, however, appeared for the first time on the Committee on the Church and International Affairs. The committee's report delivered to the 1958 General Council differed markedly from the one presented four years earlier. Five sections of the report were related to the Arab-Israeli situation. While the Arab refugees were a continuing concern, their problem was treated within the wider context of complexities of the Middle East, and Israeli views were not ignored.

A decade after the establishment of the State of Israel, the committee realized, "the problems of the Middle East are complex and many" and the Arab refugee situation is only one of them. Section 25, "Arab-Israel Relations," indicated the root of the committee's concern was the volatile nature of Arab-Israeli confrontations. The section also contained praise for Israel:

> It is about the tragic impasse of this border we write; for it is well-known that it could be the tinder-box of the world. . . . On the Israeli side we find a game little nation which has opened its doors to a million Jewish refugees from every part of the world to come and build a home. . . . out of the labours of people who until their return have been the shopkeepers of the world. . . . No Jew and few Christians can help but thrill at what is being accomplished in Israel.[26]

Section 25 continued with praise for Israel's buildings, university, industry, agriculture, fish pools and the place of religion in Israeli life. Section 26, "Refugees in the Near East," was concerned with the state of the Palestinian refugees; but it also attempted a fair presentation of Arab and Israeli positions:

> If one could forget the presence of 900,000 Palestinian refugees who lost their homes in 1948 and are now scattered through the Arab world, Israel would seem to be one of the most glorious achievements of our time. But one can never forget . . .

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[26] Record of Proceedings, 18th General Council (1958), pp. 147-8; for the full report see Appendix 3.

> About one third of them are still in refugee camps living in tents . . . They can look across the border and see the homes they left to which they may not return and for which no compensation was given. . . . The Israeli say they were traitors and cannot be permitted to return. The Arabs say they fled for their lives. (There are many Arabs of course still in Israel--they have members of Parliament. There are no Jews in Jordan.)[27]

Although the committee was critical of Israel for not giving reparations to the Palestinian refugees for their lost land and homes, it did not blame Israel outright for the refugee problem. The report also pointed out, "The Israeli insist that no solution of the refugee problem may be reached until it is part of the larger settlement, including recognition of the State of Israel by the Arab nations."[28]

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[27]Ibid., p. 148.

[28]Ibid., p. 149.

[29]Ibid., p. 150.

Sections 29, "Social Consequences," and 30, "What Must Be Done?" looked at efforts to deal with the Palestinian problem. The report noted, "There is only irony in the fact that, political considerations aside, this is the one refugee problem in the world that could be easily and constructively solved." The report explained:

> The Arab states in the Middle East occupy an area of some 1,200,000 square miles. Much of this land is unoccupied and underdeveloped, but it is potentially one of the richest areas in the world. This land area compares with some 8,100 square miles in Israel.[30]

This is the last time the Palestinians received any major consideration in reports to the General Council by the International Affairs Committee until after the Six Day War. Likewise, during the late fifties and early sixties, the subject only surfaced in the Observer in three or four issues a year. The interests of the magazine were directed mainly at Christian education, testaments to United Church ministers, poverty, foreign missions, other political crises (in India, Hungary, Vietnam, and South Africa, etc.), Canadian politics, ecumenism and the workings of the Church. Forrest did not hesitate in his editorials to criticize his own Church's policies, and he often referred to himself as "my institution's loyal opposition."

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[30] Record of Proceedings, 18th General Council (1958), p. 152.

During the same period, the Observer ran a number of articles on Jews and Jewish interests not having to do with Israel, including "Jews in the Soviet Union" (July 1961), and a cover story, by Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg of the eminent Beth Tzedec Synagogue, on "What Christians Don't Know About Judaism" (15 February 1964). The relatively few articles having to do with Israel and the Palestinians during this period were varied in tone and topic. There were nostalgic descriptions of Christian holy places and Bethlehem (then under Jordanian control), particularly around Christmas time. Most of these stories were under the byline of Ernest Homewood who was the managing editor for several years. In an article on "The New Israel" (1 November 1959), Homewood related Israel's progress in urban development and agriculture--for which he was branded by some readers "a brain-washed editor" on the side of the Israelis.

The Arab refugees also received some consideration, but it was generally in the wider context of the world refugee problem. The first time Forrest himself devoted exclusive attention to the Palestinians was in the 1 November 1964 issue, after his second visit to Israel and Jordan. It was in a piece called "The Holy Land Today." Arnold Ages, who studied the Observer from the early 1940s until 1969, describes the article as, "a straightforward account of the suffering and bitterness which the author encountered during

his visits to the camps. In this piece Mr. Forrest restricted himself to reportage--there was no effort on his part to assign responsibility for the refugee problem.[31]

By this time, there had already been a number of exchanges of correspondence between Forrest and the Canadian Jewish Congress. Sydney Harris, the then president of CJC, had objected in a number of instances to something the Observer had published. Forrest once voiced his resentment of these objections to a Jewish friend without realizing his own friend's involvement in the CJC.

There were some tensions, but they were mild. In the spring of 1964 an incident occurred which not only indicated what direction relations were going, but would surface again four years later in the midst of the controversy. Speaking of the incident, Prof. Emil Fackenheim told the Chronicle Review, 19 April 1968:

> Several years ago I participated in a Christian-Jewish dialogue at the Beth Tzedec with Prof. Marcus Long. It proceeded quite pleasantly until [United Church] Moderator J.S. Thomson introduced the charge that the Jews killed Christ. Long stated that this was a form of unconscious anti-Semitism.[32]

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[31] Ages, "The United Church Observer and the State of Israel," ADL Basic Documents (1969), p. 3.

[32] Chronicle Review, 19 April 1968, p. 10.

Forrest, who was not at the meeting, wrote an editorial with the heading, "We're tired of being tight-lipped WASPs." He expressed his dismay at (what he interpreted as) Fackenheim's charge that Dr. Thomson and his book, God and His Purpose, were antisemitic. Forrest went on to say, "we've been very grateful for the forthright dialogue which we have with Roman Catholics. . . . But it's difficult to have dialogue with our Jewish friends without being charged with prejudice."[33]

Fackenheim remembers saying to Forrest soon after the editorial appeared, "you misrepresented something I said." It was not Fackenheim who made the remark about antisemitism. It was actually Thomson's fellow United Churchman, Marcus Long, who made that observation. Says Fackenheim, "I was flabbergasted when [Forrest] said, 'look, you're not going to pull the rug from under me.'" Forrest did not attempt to correct his mistake until years later.[34]

Forrest noted his own subtle shift in attitude toward Israel and the Arabs that had occurred over the years. He described how his impressions had changed with each visit to the region, in the cover story of 1 April 1967 issue. In

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[33] Observer, 1 June 1964, p. 11.

[34] Fackenheim, personal letter (taped), Jerusalem, 27 June 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Emil Fackenheim unless otherwise indicated).

"The Other Side of Jordan," he wrote:

> My bitterest and most lasting memory from 1957 was of the refugee camp above Jericho. . . . They had been fed and clothed for nine years then, by United Nations dole . . . Worst of all, I found in the UN schools that little children were being taught to hate the Jews, and inspired day after day to go back and drive the Israelis into the sea. . . .
>
> On the other side in Israel, then, an up-and-coming nation was making the desert bloom. Young Israelis in military uniform thronged the highways glorying in the memories of victory. I could not escape the infectious spirit of a people on the move. In Jordan, they seemed to sit around and hate.
>
> Seven years later--in 1964--I went back. The contrast between Israel and Jordan was still marked. To cross the Mandelbaum Gate from old Jerusalem to Israel was like passing from one world to another. But progress in Jordan was apparent. . . .
>
> But right now, Jordan doesn't look bad. The new buildings, the irrigation developments, the good roads are as photogenic as the traditional Bibleland scenery. . . .
>
> Although poverty is still apparent . . . Little underdeveloped Jordan with all its problems is making progress just as Israel has, but with less publicity. And the paradox of all this is (and some will be quick to remind me that the UN has poured funds into Jordan all these years while Zionists and wealthy Jews have given to Israel) both countries, despite the hatred, are better off than before the partition.[35]

Parts of the article echoed the report to the 1958 General Council by the Committee on the Church and International Affairs. Like the committee report, Forrest tried to be evenhanded. In response to a Jordanian official's comment that "the Israelis flout the UN," he replied:

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[35] Observer, 1 April 1967, pp. 12-13.

> It's not that simple. In Israel they quickly point out that they have provided a home for refugees expelled from many countries, and the Arabs who did not leave their lands to fight against the Jews are still in Israel, some as members of Parliament.[36]

Forrest observed there were wrongs on both sides, and condemned bombings in the Holy Land that, "are more likely to be caused by Arab factions than by Jewish intrusions."[37] He was equally dismayed that Jews were prevented from visiting the Western Wall in Jordan as he was that Arabs were prevented from seeing their relatives and mosques and churches on the Israeli side. There was, however, a new note of cynicism in his "Observations" section as he set "Muslim children, especially in Jordan, are taught respect for the Christian religion," against the complaints he heard from Christians in Israel about poor treatment.[38] One is led to believe Jordanians have a higher regard for Christians than do Israelis.

Published just months before the Six-Day War, the article was the most optimistic outlook Forrest ever expressed on the subject. "Hate still haunts the Holy Land," he wrote, "and tensions erupt in violence. But the Observer

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[36] Observer, 1 April 1967, p. 15.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., p. 9.

editor--once gloomy over its future--discovers hope has arrived, prosperity is growing and peace may yet come."[39] Then, June 5th, war broke out. According to many observers, it was a turning point in contemporary Jewish-Christian relations.

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[39]Ibid., p. 12.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTROVERSY IGNITED

(1967)

Within the first few days of the Six-Day War, Jews in cities all over the world were panicked by what they perceived as an imminent threat to Israel's existence. Rev. Roland de Corneille, who was then the national director for Jewish-Christian dialogue for the Anglican Church in Canada, remembers sitting in his living room in Toronto when two leaders of the Jewish community came by and called upon him to make a public statement. They were greatly distressed that no Christian spokesman had publicly voiced his support for Israel in this time of uncertainty.

De Corneille said he was shocked by what they regarded as a threat to Israel:

> When the Six-Day War began, the way the media was reporting it, it was a preemptive strike by Israel taken in self-defence. It seemed that from the beginning Israel had the upper hand, and therefore, it seemed the war was rolling against the Arabs rather than Israel. . . . I said, "I can't see through your eyes. And until this fourth (or fifth) day, nobody told me of this imminent danger." And I was greatly involved in Jewish-Christian relations. What's more, I said, "after fifty or so dialogue meetings that we had, never once was Israel or Zionism the subject of the dialogue." . . . Therefore, there were two sides seeing each other in a very different way.[40]

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[40] De Corneille, personal interview, Ottawa, 7 June 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Roland de Corneille unless otherwise indicated).

De Corneille, while a strong supporter of Zionism and the State of Israel, thinks "it was extremely unwise that some of the top Jews in Canada, and also some Christians, made a vicious attack on Christians for not voicing their support of Israel during the war." Many of those who received the brunt of this attack resented it. In their view, there was not enough time to react, and they did not really see any danger to Israel anyway. "So they struck back in anger," says de Corneille.

Forrest aired his own views on the subject in an editorial, "Christians must be free to criticize Jews" (1 August 1967). He "forgave" Jews, like the eminent Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg, for their "emotional outburst during that June week of anguish," but expressed his dismay at the Christians who ran to give Israel their solid support. "For informed and objective Christians cannot be 100% for Israel in the Middle East struggle," he said.[41]

This editorial was one of the first of many to bring letters of response from Jews and Christians at odds with Forrest on the Middle East situation. One of the Christian respondents was David Demson, a professor at Emmanuel College, a United Church seminary in Toronto. Demson was part of the "Committee of Christian Concern" formed after Rabbi Rosenberg

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[41] Observer, 1 August 1967, p. 8.

publicly criticized Christians for their lack of support of Israel during the Six-Day War. In his letter to the editor (15 September 1967), Demson differed with Forrest's interpretation of the intention of such "survival of Israel" groups.

The committee was not "choosing political sides between Israel and the Arab states," Demson said. But they did protest the Arab refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist, and deplored the Arab threat of genocide which, "particularly disturbed us because 'Christians' in the past have often supported and implemented similar threats" to Jews.[42]

Ironically, in the same issue of the Observer in which Demson's letter appeared, Forrest introduced a new religious magazine aimed at interreligious communication, called Ferment-67. He described the magazine, on which he, Rabbi Gunther Plaut of Holy Blossom Synagogue, and and another United Church minister, John Burbridge, collaborated as, "an ambitious publication to which Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and all those interested in the religious factor of our lives may contribute."[43]

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[42] Observer, 15 September 1967, pp. 2-3.

[43] Ibid., p. 10.

The magazine was subsidized by the United Church, and editorial meetings were held in Forrest's office. The publication, however, only put out ten issues before it had to be discontinued. For whatever reason, the United Church withdrew its financial support. In retrospect, says Plaut, "I think the magazine became a victim of the controversy."[44]

Plaut's association with Forrest also suffered. "Forrest was a man of charm and social vision," writes Plaut in his autobiography.[45] "The fact is that I liked Forrest, that's the joke of it."[46] But as Forrest's position toward Israel became more critical, he lost most of whatever friends he had in the Jewish community.

Forrest's change in attitude is not easy to explain. He had been somewhat sympathetic to Israel and Jewish sentiments in the past. His more hostile position towards Israel and Zionists seems to have crystallized during his fourth trip to the region following the Six-Day War. In July 1967, the Ambassador of Israel to Canada, Gershon Avner, provided Forrest with a letter of introduction for his upcoming trip to Israel. The ambassador referred to Rev. Dr.

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[44]Plaut, personal interview, Toronto, 29 February 1984.

[45]Plaut, Unfinished Business: An Autobiography (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1981), p. 281.

[46]Plaut, interview.

A.C. Forrest in the most glowing terms, and indicated:

> he has been assured that the Government of Israel welcomes his visit and will assist him in every possible manner. I should be grateful, therefore, if every possible assistance is extended to him by anyone to whom he cares to show this Letter of Introduction.[47]

Avner later regretted having written the letter.

On his return to Toronto, Forrest thanked the ambassador for his letter and for the help he received from Israeli officials. "But I do find myself," he confided, "critical of some Israeli policies [with regard to the refugees] and will have to say so."[48] And say so he did.

One of the first places he publicly expressed his concern about Israeli treatment of Arabs was in the general press. In response to his editorial in the 23 September 1967 issue of the Toronto Globe and Mail, Forrest received a scathing letter from a prominent member of Toronto's Jewish community charging him with antisemitism.[49] Forrest responded personally, saying in his letter:

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[47] Avner, Letter of Introduction for A.C. Forrest, Ottawa, 20 July 1967, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

[48] Forrest, letter to Ambassador Gershon Avner, Toronto, 25 August 1967, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

[49] H. Silverman, letter to the United Church of Canada, Toronto, 24 September 1967, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

> . . . I do not know any liberal leadership in the Jewish community in Canada, or any rabbi or influential Jew who is not much influenced by Zionism. In my humble judgment you would be wise to listen to some of the courageous Jewish rabbis and leaders in the United States who are protesting what Israel is doing to innocent people, and defending their action on the basis that Hitler did this and worse to them.
> . . . I have visited the Middle East several times and each time I went to both sides of the line, and I come back this time deeply depressed by what is happening to hundreds of thousands of innocent people at Israeli hands.[50]

Following his 1967 trip to both sides of the line, Forrest began to use the term "Zionism" as synonymous with "racist Israeli ideology," and he began to distinguish between "Zionists" and (other) "Jews." Such misuse of the terms Zionism and Zionist, whether knowingly or unknowingly, served as a propaganda tool against Israel and its supporters. It furthered a general lack of appreciation for the historical significance of the term and the impact it has had, in one form or another, on Jews and Judaism.[51]

Forrest's editorial in the Globe and Mail was only a preview of what was to appear in his own magazine a month

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[50] Forrest, letter to H. Silverman, Toronto, 27 September 1967, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

[51] When Forrest pointed to the Jews in the United States who criticize Israeli policies, he confused several issues: (1) the Jewish critics may still consider themselves Zionists, (2) one can criticize the policies of the Israeli government without meaning to denigrate the nation or Jewish nationalism, and (3) Jews who refrain from criticizing Israeli policies do so for many reasons, including ethnic solidarity. For a discussion of these points see Chapters IX and XIII.

later. In October, Forrest put out a special issue of the Observer entitled "Aftermath in the Middle East," with the subheading, "INJUSTICE: In Her Present Policies Israel Stands Condemned Before the World." Vexed that Israel would not comply with the wishes of the World Council of Churches or of the United Nations in allowing the refugees to return home, Forrest charged, "She will continue to flout the UN and world opinion on anything that she feels is not in her national interest."[52]

Forrest responded to that same Arab charge six months earlier by saying, "It's not that simple."[53] But times had changed. The Six-Day War created thousands more refugees. And with each of his trips to their camps, Forrest was more moved by the desperate state of the Palestinians and by their stories of atrocity. Despite his stated efforts to substantiate his facts and figures, he took many of the atrocity stories at their word. He related, for example, "'The Israelis are very good at frightening people they want to leave,' a nurse said. Israel didn't push them out officially, but they assisted in the exodus."[54] He did not say how.

Forrest did not mention the Jewish refugees from Arab countries who fled to Israel, as reported to the 1958 General

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[52] Observer, 1 October 1967, p. 9.

[53] Observer, 1 April 1967, p. 15.

[54] Observer, 1 October 1967, p. 11.

Council by his committee. And there were more following the 1967 war. But Forrest did not see their refugee camps or hear their atrocity stories, and they had been quickly integrated into Israeli society. In fact, he condemned the welcome of Jews into Israel as part of its "intolerable racist policies."[55]

Like the report to the 1954 General Council, the plight of the homeless was blamed entirely on Israeli policies, and its "19-year-old record of inhumanity to Palestinian refugees."[56] Nowhere in the issue, despite it's professed objectivity, did it acknowledge the intention of the Arabs to destroy the Jewish state militarily and economically, or their refusal to negotiate a settlement with Israel.[57] Forrest made note of the 19-year-old situation, but failed to acknowledge that there may not have been a single Arab refugee from Israel if the Arabs had accepted the 1947 UN resolution.

Certainly times had changed, but they had become more complex. For Forrest, the situation had become simpler:

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[55]Ibid., p. 9.

[56]Ibid.

[57]At the August 1967 meeting of Arab leaders in Khartoum, the following position was adopted: "Kings and presidents have agreed to eliminate the consequences of aggression and to assure the withdrawal of the aggressor forces of Israel from Arab lands, but within the limits to which Arab states are committed: no peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel and maintenance of the rights of Palestinian people in their nation."

"Israel, who refuses to be generous should be pressured to be just."[58]

The response from Jews and Israel's supporters could be expected. The Observer received letters of protest from readers all across Canada. But Forrest was also commended for his "factual and unbiased analysis" by readers from British Columbia to Richmond, Virginia.

The issue was circulated to Jewish community leaders in Toronto and Montreal, and in other major cities. Their initial response was to have the Israeli position represented by a respected and able spokesman. Rabbi Plaut arranged to have a two and a half page rebuttal in the November issue of the Observer. The issue also contained a lengthy letter by Ambassador Avner who, after taking back his kind words of introduction, referred to Forrest as "an inveterate opponent of the State of Israel since before its establishment."[59] While the ambassador had some legitimate arguments, this accusation was not correct (Forrest was not really a critic of Israel until 1967), and it discredited his whole letter.

Forrest started receiving hate mail and irate phone calls. Undaunted, in the next several months he used every section of the Observer to publicize the plight of the

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[58] Observer, 1 October 1967, p. 9.

[59] Observer, 1 November 1967, p. 2; Plaut's article appeared on pp. 21-23, 40.

Palestinians, and to make his case against Israel and "the Zionists." There were news items, "Editor's Observations," editorials, and articles. The general press, particularly in Ontario, picked up the story of the growing controversy.

The Toronto Telegram of 10 November 1967, for example, carried an article with the headline, "United Church Observer editor called pro-Arab." In its lead it referred to remarks by Prof. David Demson:

> An Emmanuel College professor last night accused Rev. A.C. Forrest, editor of the United Church Observer, of carelessly using Arab propaganda and anti-Semitic sources to bolster his magazine's pro-Arab stand on Middle East problems.

Forrest referred to the article in a personal letter to William Gottlieb of the American Council for Judaism, an anti-Zionist organization representing the views of a minority of American Jews. He confides, "You are right about the organized slander, but the worst of it has come from inside my own church where the local press has been assured by one of our professors that I really am not anti-Semitic, I've just been using anti-Semitic materials."[60] Two months later, Forrest asked Gottlieb to write an article and "If you can take a crack at the Zionists in the piece, so much the

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[60] Forrest, letter to William Gottlieb, Toronto, 13 November 1967, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

better."[61] The article appeared in the 15 May 1968 issue as "An Anti-Zion Jew Tells: The Other Side of the Zionist Story."

The wife of a United Church minister, Dolores Nicholls, also became involved in the controversy. After her letter to Forrest went unpublished, she circulated it to local newspapers and Jewish friends, to let them know "that there are some Christians who support them."[62] Forrest later sarcastically wrote:

> It was soon all over the place, being quoted to me over the phone, in public meetings, at broadcasts. You'd think she was the moderator's mother. . . . After this I will think twice before I fail to print a letter from a minister's wife setting me straight on the Middle East in four single-spaced pages.[63]

The quip was part of an article entitled "What Happened When I Criticized Israel," which lashed out at some of Forrest's prominent opponents. Along with Mrs. Nicholls, who was not named in the piece, he chided Demson for the Telegram article which was "as dirty . . . a smear as any Christian minister ever plastered on another."[64]

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[61] Forrest, letter to William Gottlieb, Toronto, 17 January 1968, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

[62] Nicholls, letter to Forrest, Norwood, Ontario, 27 October 1967, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

[63] Observer, 1 April 1968, p. 28.

[64] For the record, while Demson is a professor at the United Church seminary, Emmanuel College, he is not a minister.

He did not call Demson intentionally malicious, just "naive; and he got taken," presumably by "one of his chief sources . . . his next-door neighbor, Rabbi Fackenheim."[65]

Dr. Emil Fackenheim, a friend of Demson although not a next-door neighbor, was also singled out by Forrest. Referring to the original source of their rift, he said, "I haven't taken him seriously since he suggested that the New Curriculum and former moderator J.S. Thomson were anti-Semitic."[66] He chided Fackenheim for his "irrational" behavior, which was a request that Forrest be removed from the chairmanship of a Teach-In panel on the Middle East because he was biased. Forrest did not indicate that Fackenheim had also suggested that the editor "should by all means be invited to speak as a partisan."[67]

Forrest's bitterness was especially directed at Ambassador Avner and local "Zionist officials." He did not understand how raising the matter of the refugees (as he did) subjected him "to slander and innuendo and the anti-Semitic label from extremists."[68] He confides this in a letter of

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[65] Observer, 1 April 1968, pp. 28 and 30.

[66] Ibid., p. 27.

[67] Kingsley Joblin and Mac Freedman, letter to Forrest (presenting Fackenheim's position), Toronto, 19 June 1968, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

[68] Forrest, letter to Emil Fackenheim, Toronto, 8 July 1968, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

apology to Professor Fackenheim in July 1968. He goes on to say:

> In my basic position I reflect what the most competent observers in the UN, Red Cross and World Council of Churches say and think. Yet I am repeatedly called an enemy of Israel in the Jewish press. No wonder I get swastikas in the mail and my family is subjected to anonymous phone calls.

Forrest could not conceive of these hallowed institutions having biased members or workers. He said he trusted neither Arab nor Zionist sources, but the people who worked with refugees from the other institutions he believed were beyond reproach.[69]

There is a further note regarding Forrest's April 1st article. The one opponent he deemed honorable was Rabbi Plaut. Forrest wrote, "Although he is a Zionist and I disagree with him strongly on some issues, this was a reasonable treatment of a controversial issue in THE OBSERVER tradition."[70]

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[69] See, for example, the Observer, 1 October 1967, p. 9, and 1 April 1968, p. 30.

[70] Observer, 1 April 1968, p. 27.

CHAPTER III

FORREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(1968)

Not much changed in the controversy until Forrest returned to the Middle East in September 1968 to stay for ten months. Stationed in Beirut, he regularly sent stories on the refugee plight (and other subjects) back to Patricia Clarke, the acting editor of the Observer (and to a number of Protestant publications in the United States). Then she and Jim Taylor, the managing editor, had to deal with the phone calls and hate mail.

Taylor was particularly affected by the calls, because he had just barely arrived at the Observer a couple of months earlier and "got plunged into the controversy much more rapidly than I had wanted to."[71] In a personal interview he said he was nervous talking about that first year:

> There were a lot of very difficult things for me. I guess I had come out of a pretty sheltered environment. I'd been broadcasting at the CBC and if I got one nasty letter or phone call a month I was devastated for weeks. And suddenly I was getting three and four a day. . . .
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> The letters were impassioned, inflamed, angry, hurt. But it was much easier to deal with the letters than with the phone calls. With the letters you

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[71] Taylor, personal interview, Toronto, 1 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Jim Taylor).

> could at least either choose to ignore them or choose to respond to them. Phone calls were more difficult. I think what they wanted was somebody on whom they could dump their anger, but not to whom they wanted to listen. The secretaries would get so they recognized them. Somebody would say, "I want to speak to Al Forrest." When they said he wasn't there, they would say, "Okay, who can I speak to?" And by something, almost a quiver in the voice, suppressed anger, they knew it was somebody who was really going to blow up. But they didn't want to do it just to a secretary. So they'd give the phone to me because I was the only person there for those first few months.

What Taylor really had not expected was the intensity of feeling that people had, and the sense in which he was guilty by association. He spoke of the time he was selling his house in Vancouver and went to a Toronto lawyer near his new home (who happened to be a Jew):

> I just happened to pick a lawyer that was near us. He was very nice. When we got half way through the business he said, "Before we can notarize this I have to know a little about who you are and so on." And so I said, "Well, I'm a managing editor of a magazine." And he said, "Which magazine?" I said, "I work for the United Church Observer." And he just reared back in his chair. Now he only charged me for fifteen minutes but I didn't get out of there for and hour. It started out rather acrimonious, but it ended up being a relatively friendly discussion.

During that period, members of the hierarchy of the United Church started to receive the calls and letters. Leaders of the Jewish community approached the new moderator, Dr. Robert McClure, and Rev. Ernest Long, the secretary of the General Council, expressing their concern that Forrest was using the Church's official publication to express his

partisan views.

McClure and Long tried to explain that although the Observer was the official publication of the United Church, the magazine was financially independent and the editor had complete editorial freedom.[72] The Jewish community leadership was not satisfied with this explanation. "We didn't want them to denounce him," says Kayfetz, "we just wanted them to indicate that it was his view and not theirs. And on the contrary, they supported him."

The official position of the United Church with regard to the Arab-Israeli situation is presented in the Record of Proceedings of the 1968 General Council. The position was first issued as a statement to the press by the executive of the General Council on February 8th. When the press did not carry it, the statement was printed in the 15 March 1968 issue of the Observer. The eight-point statement was then reedited by a committee composed of Rev. A.C. Forrest, the former moderator Ernest M. Howse, and Rev. George Johnston, and adopted by the General Council at the fall session.[73]

It is interesting to note, a motion was subsequently made and seconded that the following section (6) be deleted:

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[72]This matter became central to the controversy and is examined in greater depth in Chapter VIII.

[73]See Appendix 4 for both versions of the statement as presented in the Record of Proceedings for the 1968 General Council.

> We deplore suggestions that those who criticize Israeli policies are necessarily anti-Semitic and that critics of Arab policies must be unsympathetic to the plight of the Arab people. The policies of Arab and Israeli governments are always open to the judgment of public opinion.[74]

Perhaps there was concern the section itself would draw criticism. The General Council also expressed confidence in the fairness and objectivity of Forrest's reporting. The stated position of the United Church has changed little since then.

While Forrest was in the Middle East his criticisms of Israel became more virulent, and his portrayal of the Arabs became more passionate. Forrest had been charged with antisemitism in the past, but he had nonetheless tried to restrict his attacks to Israel, not Jews.[75]

For many observers, he crossed the line in a December article entitled, "Bethlehem 1968: 'You Don't Seem to Care About Us.'" The article was intended to be one of "sweetness, light and nostalgia from my heart," as he told Patricia Clarke in a letter from Beirut.[76]

The story began with a cryptic remark about the parable of Dives and Lazarus (the callous rich man and the

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[74] Record of Proceedings, 23rd General Council (1968), p. 444.

[75] See, however, note 51.

[76] Forrest, letter to Patricia Clarke, Beirut, 13 November 1968, personal papers of A.C. Forrest, Emmanuel College archives, Toronto.

destitute, in Luke 16:19 f.). Forrest went on to declare, "For the Arab people of Bethlehem typify the sadness that has fallen once again on the people of the Holy Land."[77] David Demson points out, this is "as if to say they alone are the people of the land."[78]

Forrest then described his visit with a Christian Arab family living, as one might expect in a Christmas story, near the site of Jesus' birth. The family was devout and the grandfather spent much of his time at church. The children were well-dressed and tidy, and "the parents speak like the cultured Christian people they are."[79]

The story was filled with references to Protestant virtues, including an English writing book where neatly penned were such epitaphs as, "A stitch in time saves nine"; "A friend in need is a friend indeed"; and "God helps those who help themselves." Even the domestic habits of the family reflected those with which Forrest, himself, grew up in the small farming town of Lindsay, Ontario. He wrote, "I watched important looking papers being filed behind the oil lamp on a shelf, much as my father used to file his

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[77] Observer, 15 December 1968, p. 27.

[78] Demson, personal interview, Toronto, 2 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of David Demson).

[79] Observer, loc. cit.

documents behind the kitchen clock."[80] Forrest, however, made sure to remind us that this puritan family was Arab and had a large house in Jerusalem until, said the mother, "The Israeli stole it."[81]

The allusion to the Christmas story was completed by a remark that the mother, who was expecting a child sometime before Christmas eve, had no place to go for the delivery. "There won't be any room for me," she said, evidently meaning at the hospital, not "at the inn."[82] Before Forrest left the mother added, "One thing I don't understand. You people in North America are all for Israel. You just don't seem to care about us Arabs. And we're Christians too."[83]

By that point in his story, Forrest made it abundantly clear that there were Christian Arabs too. Roland de Corneille found in the portrayal a likeness to the shepherds and the faithful in the days of Jesus. Nevertheless, there was really nothing tangible to which Jews and supporters of Israel could take exception to this sentimental

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[80] Ibid., p. 28.

[81] Ibid., p. 29.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

and skillfully written narrative until its ending:

> I made my way from that crowded Bethlehem home up to Jerusalem where I met a man in the King David Hotel. We had dinner and ate, I suppose, about half a kilo of steak between us.
>
> And he told me . . . . he intended to interest some people back in L.A. in building a string of hotels along the Israeli coast so he can get those "fat friends of our who go down to Florida and sit on their fannies for six months every year to come here and spend some money and build up the country."
>
> Then he remembered his wife who was up in the hotel room resting after an afternoon's shopping. "We were out buying jewelry for three hours," he said. . . .
>
> I keep thinking as I walk about these streets of Bethlehem and Jerusalem not so much about the Christmas and Easter stories, as about the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and I wonder about the rich man who fared sumptuously every day while the begger went hungry.
>
> And being human, I apply it to my rich friend, his jewelry-hoarding wife, and their fat Florida friends.
>
> And being guilty, I apply it to myself.[84]

Forrest never actually said the wealthy man was a Jew. He used a stereotype, however, that anyone could recognize as being Jewish. The Arabs were "like the shepherds in the days of Jesus," says de Corneille, "and the wealthy man like Herod. He didn't spell it out but the similarity was clear. He portrayed the Jews as the oppressors of then and now."

Many people who had stopped short of calling Forrest

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[84] Ibid.

an antisemite before, no longer had any reservations. Sometime after Forrest returned to Toronto, he was confronted by Demson and a number of other United Churchmen, including Alan Davies, Archibald McCurdy and Mac Freedman. In the conversation, reports Demson, "Forrest at first said the man was an actual figure he met. Later he admitted it was a stereotype. 'But I was thinking of an American stereotype' he said, 'not a Jewish one.'" It made Demson, Davies and others wonder just how much of the story was fabrication.

CHAPTER IV

UNITED CHURCH LEADERSHIP INVOLVED

(1969-1971)

The December article was widely quoted in the Jewish press. Both the Observer and the offices of the United Church were inundated with irate calls and letters. In January of 1969, Dr. Robert McClure, who was then moderator of the United Church, was invited by Manny Rotman of the Toronto Zionist Council to discuss the matter at a public forum. By almost all accounts, the meeting, attended by four or five hundred people and the press, only made matters worse.

Recalling the incident, de Corneille thought, "this is dreadful." McClure had really been put on the spot. Without telling him, the Zionist Council publicized the topic of his talk as a condemnation of Forrest. "Well, of course, by the time McClure got there," says de Corneille, "he was already outraged and they got a very antagonistic speaker."

According to Kayfetz, "That was a real error on the part of the Zionist Council." There had been an agreement of organizations associated with the Canada-Israel Committee, including CJC and the Zionist Council, that "we were going to leave this issue alone. We were not going to make it a

public issue any more." But, he says, "Then all of a sudden we get the news that there was going to be a public forum with Dr. McClure as the guest speaker, and they were going to discuss the whole question of Forrest."

McClure was the first layman elected moderator of the United Church of Canada. He had lived and traveled widely in the Middle East and Asia, and during the late 40s and early 50s was a doctor in Gaza. McClure attempted "to get across an understanding of our ideas that we did not completely agree with the political path the Israeli government was taking. . . . But it was a very hostile meeting."[85] He told the audience that he believed in the objectivity of Forrest's writings, and remembers being afraid for his life afterward.

Rabbi Plaut, who was asked to chair the event to prevent it from getting out of hand, wrote a couple of weeks afterward, "We may not have convinced him nor did he manage to convince his audience, but the meeting was fruitful, good, courteous and altogether worthwhile. We thank him for coming."[86] Plaut's view of McClure was as a "fine humanitarian," but "politically very naive."[87]

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[85]McClure, personal interview, Toronto, 6 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Robert McClure).

[86]Plaut, Holy Blossom Temple Bulletin, Toronto, 27 January 1969.

[87]Plaut, Unfinished Business, p. 284 ff.

In February, Reverend de Corneille went to Israel at the request of the Israeli government to check out Forrest's facts. "I went to places that were supposedly destroyed and they weren't," he said. De Corneille likened Forrest's reporting of bombed out Palestinian towns to similar reporting by the media following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. He added:

> I saw the Archbishop of Jerusalem, Rev. George Appleton, and he said that Forrest had interviewed him and tried to make him seem to say things against Israel. For example, Forrest reported that when the Archbishop was driving one day, the Israelis forced him to get out of the car and walk. So here was the poor old Archbishop of Jerusalem forced to walk by Israeli soldiers. As it turns out, there was a traffic jam . . . and the archbishop himself decided to walk. I also talked with Fr. Jean Roger . . . and he said that Al Forrest was mischievous for his falsifications. . . . His facts were a pack of lies and I spent ten days going to Israel to find out.

De Corneille remembers a great deal of pressure from his superiors to keep quiet. Some of the people in the Anglican Church sympathized with Forrest.

The executives of the United Church were also feeling pressure. Frank Brisban was the chairman of the Division of Communication which had just incorporated the Observer in its realm of responsibility. According to Jim Taylor, the Division "was extremely nervous about offending the Jewish community. . . . They were no more used to dealing with the phone calls than I was. The difference was that there was

nothing that I could do about them, but there was something they could."

In March, the Division of Communication specified that no more articles about the Middle East were to be published until Forrest's return. For the next couple of months this was in effect. With Forrest's arrival back in Toronto, however, the vilification of Israel continued. According to Patricia Clarke, Forrest resented the interference of the Division of Communication and the secretary of the General Council. He felt that Brisban and Long had "done him dirt," and it made him even more steadfast in his position, says Clarke.[88]

In December, Forrest was a guest speaker at a meeting of the Canadian Arab Friendship League at Edwards Gardens in the Don Mills suburb of Toronto. The Jewish Standard took note of the event saying:

> Al Forrest . . . has recanted a former concession he had once made to Israel. He used to say that the Arab peoples should recognize the State of Israel. He now says, "I no longer think I have the right to say any nation must recognize another state diplomatically." . . . Forrest said that with but one exception all the churchmen he spoke to in the Middle East supported commando (read: terrorist) efforts. Presumably Forrest did not except himself from these views.[89]

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[88] Clarke, personal interview, Toronto, 2 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Patricia Clarke).

[89] The Jewish Standard, 15 December 1969, p. 6.

Little changed in the controversy over the next year. Forrest continued to level attack after attack at Israeli policies, and to dismiss any presentation of Israeli views from Jews & Christians as "Zionist propaganda." In "The Editor's Observations" for 1 March 1970, for example, Forrest published what in his estimation were "good books on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East."[90]

His list included several books by Arabs, avowedly anti-Zionist Jews, and the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut. While he admitted many Arab publications were "off-balanced"--presumably not the ones in his list--he completely dismissed all reports supporting the Israeli position. "From the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, the Israeli government and Zionist organizations," he said, "one gets undisguised Zionist propaganda and we don't respect the arguments being made by the so-called Christian-Jewish dialogue people."[91]

About the same time, Forrest was confronted by some of those "Christian-Jewish dialogue people." There were two meetings, remembers Alan Davies, which included himself, David Demson, Archibald McCurdy, Mac Freedman, Vic Runshite, Ernest Long, Dr. McClure, and Forrest. "The first lasted four

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[90] Observer, 1 March 1970, p. 9.

[91] Ibid.

hours," recalls Davies. "Nothing was accomplished, just a lot of tempers raised."[92] He adds:

> About a week or two later we had a second meeting which lasted about two hours. They were not very satisfactory. They were rather acrimonious and unpleasant. They were distasteful for Forrest because he disliked being called on the carpet. The only tangible result was the publication of our articles, although Forrest refused to publish Runshite's article.

But the articles were only published, says Davies, "because of arm-twisting behind the scenes."

They appeared in the August 1970 issue of the Observer. In "The Editor's Observations" Forrest noted, "Some of our critics have complained that THE OBSERVER has been one-sided in its presentation of the Middle East problem, suggesting that the Israeli and Zionist viewpoints have not been given space."[93] In reference to the article submitted by Davies in consultation with some of his colleagues, Forrest wrote, "We were asked to print it."[94]

Aba Gefen, the Israeli Consul General in Toronto, was asked to prepare a statement on the Israeli position also for the issue. Gefen agreed, but pointed out the comments about "Zionist propaganda" in the March 1st "Observations"

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[92] Davies, personal interview, Toronto, 2 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Alan Davies unless otherwise indicated).

[93] Observer, August 1970, p. 9.

[94] Ibid.

put him in a precarious position. Forrest attempted to ameliorate his statement by saying:

> We were referring to the volumes of materials which come to our desk, and there is no suggestion that Mr. Gefen's statement starting on page 14 is anything other than his honest expression of a viewpoint of the government of which he is an honored representative.[95]

In addition, the issue contained a page-long article by Simha Flapan, an Israeli who "is a Zionist but a dove." She represented the view of the Deputy Gideon Hausner of the Independent Liberal Party who said:

> There is no single path leading to the highway (of negotiations): there are many paths. . . . Couldn't we, the victors, who are nevertheless interested in true peace, try to save the political negotiations, even by helping the Arab rulers get out of the impasse into which they drove themselves?[96]

In a little over two pages, Gefen challenged many of Forrest's assertions. Among his more fundamental points, Gefen rejected the Observer's unsubstantiated reports of Israeli maltreatment of Palestinians provided by anonymous witnesses. "There is no truth in stories about deliberate ill-treatment of Arabs in the Israel administered territories," he said.[97] Moreover, Israel has suggested working out

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[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., p. 18.

[97] Ibid., p. 17.

a solution to the refugee problem at an international conference of Arabs, Israelis, United Nations agencies and donor nations to refugee funds. By contrast, "The Arabs have unequivocally rejected these proposals."[98]

Gefen also cited Arafat as telling the Italian weekly L'Europeo on 12 March 1970, "Our goal is the destruction of Israel. . . . We don't want peace, we want war and victory " And the head of the Palestine Popular Liberation Front was quoted as saying they were engaged in "a total war of annihilation against Israel and Israelis and Judaism and Jews wherever they were."[99]

Gefen likewise dealt a blow at misrepresentation of Zionism. Implicating Forrest in his charge he said, "The enemies of the Jews are attempting to present the word Zionism in such a way as to turn this most pure form of a national liberation movement into something filled with sinister meaning and motives."[100]

Davies and his colleagues' views were presented in about a page and a half of space. They indicated the rising bitterness of Palestinian Arabs can be seen in such books as Sami Hadawi's Bitter Harvest, "with its concluding cry to drive the 'Zionist intruders' into the sea."[101] (This was

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., p. 15.

[100] Ibid., p. 16.

[101] Ibid., p. 38.

one of the "good books" on the Middle East recommended by Forrest.) Israel was regarded in the article, on the other hand, as a "defiant spirit."[102]

Forrest devoted the most space to his own perspective. In a four-page preface to the other articles, his headline warned, "Distortion: Words Don't Mean What They Say in the Middle East Struggle." He was referring to Zionist propaganda: "On the propaganda front the Israeli are clever, the Arabs inept."[103] But he himself was not above distortion as he again quoted unnamed sources such as "a neighbor," "a weary official," "a neutral observer," "a Christian woman," and "a distinguished Lebanese publisher." He mentioned one Palestinian's arrest, and went as far as to say, "It was presumed he had been made to talk."[104]

Without any substantiation, he repeated his charge that "the '48 refugees were cruelly driven out according to a coolly conceived and calculated plan [by Israelis]."[105] By contrast, Forrest believed the "resistance movement" (Israel's supporters call it "terrorism") of the Palestinians was aimed at "turning Palestine, including Israel into a non-Zionist, secular democratic state."[106]

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[102]Ibid., p. 36.

[103]Ibid., p. 11.

[104]Ibid., p. 12.

[105]Ibid., p. 15.

[106]Ibid., p. 14.

In August of 1970, the same time these articles appeared in the Observer, representatives of the United Church went to the Middle East for a three week "fact-finding mission." They were Bruce McLeod, minister of Bloor Street United, Donald Stirling, chairman of the Toronto Conference International Affairs Committee, and Robert McClure "who had previous experience in the Middle East, and as moderator carried both some obligation to impartiality and some credibility."[107]

Their report was published in the November issue of the Observer. The greatest impression on Bruce McLeod was the "old fears that grip both sides." He explained:

> The Arabs fear Jewish expansion. The Jews fear Arab destruction. Travelling on both sides, it was possible to be convinced that each fear is basically groundless. What Israel wants is a secure--but limited--piece of land, where her right to exist and pursue the ideals of a Jewish state will be absolutely assured and free from threat. And on the other side, we found nowhere any desire to "drive the Israelis into the sea." [Although] it is true that people seemed to have short memories for the threats of 1948-1967.[108]

They approached young Israelis "who had never met Egyptians, Syrians, Jordanians, or Palestinians off the battlefield" with the idea of informal meetings on Cyprus.

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[107] Taylor, interview.

[108] Observer, November 1970, pp. 30-31.

The Israelis responded with enthusiasm. They got the same response from young Palestinians. "Then we suggested the idea to the laughter of the press," says McLeod, "but nothing ever came of it."[109]

The observations by United Church representatives, however, did little to cool the flame of controversy. The officials were still pressured by members of the Jewish community and their own church to do something about the "more and more raucous fulminations of its editor."[110] The controversy had become a national concern. It was centered in Toronto because the head offices of the United Church, the Observer, and many Canadian Jewish community agencies were there. But as Ben Kayfetz points out:

> By no means was it only a Toronto concern. It was all over Canada because it [the Observer] is a nationally circulated publication, and the United Church is a national Canadian church. Wherever I went in any travelling I did, the first thing they would ask me is, "How is that no good clergyman getting along?" They had a different image of him. They had the image of him as the traditional antisemite, which he wasn't. I had to explain to people that he was not . . . a Ku Klux Klanner, not a radical rightist. On the contrary, he was a liberal, a leftist. He was a new kind of antisemite that they were not used to. There was a concern right down among the rank and file.

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[109]McLeod, personal interview, Toronto, 2 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Bruce McLeod unless otherwise indicated).

[110]Plaut, interview.

Some of the more fanatical opponents to Forrest expressed their concern in the form of a cross burnt on his lawn. Forrest had already dropped his name from the phone book and had it listed under his wife Esther's initial instead. The family had been getting hate calls and there was one that had been particularly vicious. Jim Taylor recalls Forrest telling him about the incident:

> Al was out one night at a presbytery meeting in Orillia and was expecting to drive back after it was over. That meant he'd get back at about 12:30 or later. Al was terrible about time. He might not get in until 3:00 A.M. Esther got a phone call at about 11:00, and the voice said, "Mrs. Forrest, was your husband at a meeting in Orillia tonight? . . . I'm very sorry to inform you there's been a terrible accident on highway 400." And then she spent the next hour and a half or two hours just torn up and not knowing what had happened.

The effect on Forrest is difficult to know. "It was only occasionally when we were talking that Al would share with the staff the kinds of things he felt were happening to him," says Taylor. "There were times when he felt there was almost an organized conspiracy to try to push him either into something rash or into some kind of nervous breakdown."

What made it especially difficult, according to Patricia Clarke, was that "Al felt he was (a) not in violation of church policy, (b) not antisemitic, and (c) right." Being called an antisemite greatly pained him, say his friends. But he was even more distressed by the condition of the

refugees and their stories of atrocity. Over and over he said it was easier to speak out about these matters in Israel than in Toronto. Over and over he condemned the Western press as biased towards Israel, and he felt it was his duty to "balance" the presentation.

"He didn't go looking for a fight," Taylor points out, "but if there was one he felt some obligation to keep his end up." In the end, it may have made him bitter towards his opponents. "If I were to go back over his writings during that period," says Taylor, "there were a lot of places where he was simply angry." Much of that anger came out in his book, The Unholy Land, which appeared towards the end of 1970. The book was largely a composite of his articles. There was little material that was new.

Towards the end of the next year, however, Forrest did touch on new ground. He had previously said little on Jewish interests other than Israel. Then in August, he wrote an editorial on "Russian Jews and Palestine Arabs," treating both in the same context. Both Russia and Israel, he said, violate the basic human right of being able to leave from one's country and return to it.

Critics of the article pointed to fundamental differences in the two situations: the former was the result of (anti-Jewish) prejudice and forcibly imposed (communist) ideology, the latter the result of war and rival nationalisms.

Forrest, who was so full of concern for the Palestinian down-trodden, was also criticized for showing no sympathy for the plight of Soviet Jews.

Instead of showing compassion, he depicted their condition as part of an "ugly and successful [Zionist] plot." He said, "The issue is so clouded with propaganda and distortions it is difficult to determine the facts." Only one thing was clear to Forrest: "Israel seems to want to keep this vast immigration operation secret."[111] Kayfetz contends this was an example of Forrest's anti-Israel bias being carried into other issues.

For many in the Jewish community and its sympathizers, the final straw came in November 1971 when Forrest wrote an editorial entitled, "For the War Record." He was responding to a couple of speakers at a meeting of Church editors in Philadelphia who said, "No one did anything," during Hitler's regime in Germany.[112] Forrest went on to write:

> We hear this slander repeatedly, especially from Christian Zionists who emphasize that the church did so badly by the Jewish people in times past it must now throw all its support behind Israel. . . . Just for the record it should be remembered that in order to stop Hitler, a good many hundreds of thousands of western soldiers, sailors and airmen died.[113]

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[111] Observer, August 1971, p. 11.

[112] Observer, November 1971, p. 10.

[113] Ibid.

In support of his position, Forrest quoted Albert Einstein as saying, "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth,"[114] Forrest did not actually say the hundreds of thousands of soldiers gave their lives to save the Jews (he said they did it to "stop Hitler"). Given his first assertion about "Christian Zionists" and the church's record, however, that is what he seemed to say. And in letter after letter to the Globe and Mail, Toronto Sun, Canadian Jewish News, and the Observer, that is how his remarks were taken.

In analyzing the article, Prof. Alan Davies notes a hint of "Christian triumphalism." He says:

> Forrest is on weak ground when he tries to make the church look good. . . . [In Forrest] there was not much Christian self-criticism. He was much too wedded to the church to permit much criticism, especially outside criticism. So he had to rise to the defense of the church with whatever evidence he could find in what was really a rather bad chapter. There was much more for Christians to be ashamed of in Nazi Germany than to be proud of. And all of this is linked to an attack on Zionism, particularly Christian Zionists who aren't quite, in his mind, loyal Christians. They were Christians who had bought into the Jewish (Zionist) position. . . . And then the way he works Einstein into supporting his position without realizing Einstein was a Zionist.

Rev. Donald Keating resigned in protest from the United Church asking, "What does it say of the United Church when a man can write such editorials and still be employed by

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[114] Ibid., p. 11.

the Observer?"[115] His resignation was widely publicized by the Jewish community. Alan Davies points out it did not have much of an effect on members of the United Church, however, because "they thought he had gone off the deep end; and this, in fact, strengthened Forrest's position."

A feature article on the controversy appeared in the 12 January 1972 issue of the Toronto Star. The article was written by former moderator, Rev. Ernest Howse who thirty years earlier spoke out for the Jews and their "ancient moral claim" to Palestine.[116] He was now defending Forrest's position and denouncing "the most obnoxious forms of hostility" coming from "a queer variety of crusading Christians."

The article was aimed at Christians like Dolores Nicholls, Donald Keating, Alan Davies, and David Demson. Both Davies and Demson recall Howse having reproved them in the past for their public statements against Forrest. In this article, however, Howse was speaking out for freedom of speech, that is to say Forrest's freedom to criticize Israel.

To the Jewish community, the article by a former United Church moderator was further proof of the Church's support of Forrest's position.

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[115]Keating, open letter to the United Church moderator, the Anglican primate and members of the United Church of Canada, Toronto, 25 November 1971.

[116]See note 21.

CHAPTER V

LAWSUITS

(1972)

Members of the Joint Community Relations Committee, meeting in Toronto in January of 1972, voiced their frustration with Forrest's continuing tirades against Israel and his constant support from United Church leadership. One member suggested their stand on avoiding confrontation with Forrest should be re-evaluated.[117]

Alfred Green, president of the Toronto Lodge B'nai B'rith, voiced this same frustation. He felt at the time, "We've taken hits and never retaliated. It's about time to strike back."[118] His original idea was to invite Forrest to the Toronto Lodge to have him address their questions. Other community leaders, however, advised that Forrest was only looking for publicity and it was therefore a mistake. The invitation was withdrawn. Instead, Green gave vent to his opinions in the president's column of the lodge's Digest. He wrote:

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[117]Minutes of JCRC (Central Region) meeting, 19 January 1972.

[118]Green, interview by Rabbi Reuben Slonim, Toronto, 10 July 1974, Slonim Collection, National Archives, Ottawa.

> We Jews have controlled our emotions for centuries. A hush-hush policy . . . stifled our inner feelings, forcing us to carry the yoke of brutal persecutions . . . From biblical times there had always appeared a Pharoah, or in plain language, an anti-Semite, who attempts, for ulterior motives and by nefarious means, to besmirch and throttle the Jews. Such a character is Dr. A.C. Forrest, the editor of the United Church Observer . . . Dr. Forrest is constantly taking advantage of his position as editor to attack Jews and Israel. The Church, by its silence, condones these attacks.[119]

Green was expressing the sentiments of many of his co-religionists. In private, Forrest was referred to as "ha-galakh," a Hebrew term meaning, "the priest." "And it had historically unfriendly connotations," says Kayfetz. The position of many in the Jewish community was reinforced by Donald Keating and David Demson who appeared February 14th for a general meeting at the Toronto Lodge. They both condemned Forrest and the United Church in general for keeping silent during Forrest's attacks.

Troubled by this incident and by deteriorating relations between the Church and the Jewish community, United Church leaders suggested a meeting with representatives of B'nai B'rith. Nothing was accomplished at the meeting; and 6 March 1972 Forrest's lawyers served Alfred Green and Samuel Bernstein, the editor of the Digest, notice of libel.

On the very heels of this legal action, Forrest pub-

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[119]Toronto Lodge B'nai B'rith Digest, January 1972.

lished in the March issue of the Observer an article which struck out at Zionists in general, and the B'nai B'rith in particular. It was authored by John Nicholls Booth, a Unitarian clergyman, and entitled "How Zionists Manipulate Your News."

In a Canada-Israel Committee newsletter, Gunther Plaut stated:

> The article in itself would be bad enough, but it was made worse by its obvious connection with the most vicious anti-semitic publication in existence, Gerald K. Smith's The Cross and the Flag. There, under the dateline of February the same author publishes a lengthy article entitled, "Zionism--A White Paper" [similar to the article in the Observer]. . . . the conclusion is obvious: Dr. Forrest now publishes pieces deemed fit for The Cross and the Flag.[120]

In the article, Booth repeated the old "Jewish conspiracy" charge in the new guise of "the Zionist network." He alleged, "Israeli intelligence, through B'nai B'rith's ADL, Zionist organizations, temples and rabbis, penetrates every part of our nation."[121] In addition, Booth made a number of false assertions including calling the renowned French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre a Jew (evidently because he had made a statement against antisemitism). According to

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[120]Canada-Israel Committee (Central Region) Newsletter, edited by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, chairman, 27 March 1972.

[121]Observer, March 1972, p. 25.

Davies, this was the clearest example of Forrest crossing the barrier into antisemitism. He says:

> Well, that article is naked, blatant antisemitism. And Forrest should have known that. It was very stupid of him to publish that article. And it shows his emotional state, the anger that he may have felt. He felt that he was the recipient of a great deal of unfair vilification, and that he had been treated very badly, that he had been criticized extremely unfairly. . . . His judgment wasn't functioning properly. But there is no way you can defend this, it is antisemitism, and Forrest doesn't know it and won't admit that it is.

Jim Taylor points out, "That was one of those articles that we all argued a certain amount about. I recall saying that it was unnecessarily inflammatory." The B'nai B'rith leadership thought the same thing, and served notice of libel against Forrest, the Observer, and the United Church General Council.

The libel suits made the leadership of both the Jewish community and the United Church realize just how much the situation had gotten out of hand. Plaut and Rev. A.B.B. Moore, who had been the moderator of the United Church since January 1971, discussed the matter at length. Moore informed Plaut that a special commission had been appointed to deal with the Observer with the highly respected Prof. Mac Freedman as chairman.

In the March 27th Canada-Israel Committee newsletter, Plaut suggested:

> Evidently the leadership of the Church has finally come to the conclusion that the vaunted "editorial freedom" of Dr. Forrest has been badly abused by him. If the commission becomes effective, we will probably hear anguished cries from the editor that the Jews have extended their tentacles into the sacred precincts of the United Church Observer. . . . It becomes therefore doubly important to stay out of the controversy at this point, however great the provocation may appear to be. Do not under any circumstances engage in public debate with Dr. Forrest.[122]

A lot of discussions were going on behind the scenes in the offices of Jewish agencies and the United Church at that time to try and put an end to the controversy. The specially appointed commission of the United Church recommended that "controversial articles" were not to be published without their approval, effectively removing some of the editor's autonomy. "Controversial" meant articles dealing with the Middle East, but as Taylor indicates, "no one specified this." It caused quite a stir:

> About the same time [as the commission's decision came out], two ministers from Newfoundland threatened to resign or go to court if I published a particular article about what was going on out there. To them it was very controversial. . . . But nothing ever happened with the decision. Al fought them on the legal grounds that he was appointed by General Council and he was not responsible to any lesser bodies in the Church.

The recommendation was eventually watered down to a mild reprimand to Forrest, as reported to a later meeting of

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[122]Loc. cit.

the Jewish Community Relations Committee.[123] It was reported at the same JCRC meeting that the lawyers for the United Church and B'nai B'rith had met, meanwhile, to draft a statement to be printed in the Observer as an apology for the Booth article. An "Apology" was printed in the June issue of the Observer but it had neither been worked out by the lawyers or submitted to the B'nai B'rith. The Jewish community leaders considered it a "non-apology."

Forrest, in fact, did not apologize for the Booth article at all, but only for whatever offense it may have caused to the B'nai B'rith of Canada:

> The March 1972 issue of THE OBSERVER included an article by John Nicholls Booth, "How Zionists Manipulate Your News". The author was critical of the activities of B'nai B'rith, the U.S. organization.
>
> B'nai B'rith Foundation of Canada has complained to us about that article. We are advised that B'nai B'rith Foundation of Canada was incorporated in 1968 for religious and educational purposes.
>
> We are sorry if the article in question has caused offense to B'nai B'rith Foundation of Canada, and extend this apology.[124]

At the same time all of this was taking place in Toronto, Prof. Emil Fackenheim was invited to the United Church's St. Andrews College in Saskatoon to receive an honorary doctorate and make an address. The invitation was taken by members of the Jewish community as a sign that the

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[123] Minutes of JCRC (Central Region) meeting, 7 June 1972.

[124] Observer, June 1972, p. 17.

United Church was really not monolithic. It was a "message of defiance," says Kayfetz. Falkenheim's speech, on the long history of anti-Jewish theologizing and practice by Christianity, was reprinted in large part by the Toronto Globe and Mail.

Two months later, Saskatoon also hosted the twenty-fifth session of the General Council. The response of Jewish community leaders to what took place at the session was not positive. The resolutions introduced by the Committee on the Church and International Affairs and passed by the General Council were considered by the JCRC to be negative with respect to Israel.

Even more disheartening were reports that Forrest received a standing ovation from the delegates. According to Rev. Roland de Corneille, a member of the JCRC and national director for the B'nai B'rith League for Human Rights since 1971, "the support was unequivocal. . . . . we must conclude that Forrest has been successful. . . . The stand of the Jewish community to the United Church should be that it is truculently antisemitic without qualification."[125] Another person suggested, "Our job is to break off all formal relationship [with the United Church] since they clearly

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[125]Minutes of JCRC (Central Region) meeting, 20 September 1972.

don't give a damn about us."[126]

The General Council had elected Rev. N. Bruce McLeod as moderator but there was little hope it would help matters. The controversy had clearly sunk to its lowest depth. There was a great lack of understanding recalls McLeod:

> Al Forrest was a much-loved person in the Church. And the attacks [from his opponents] were hard on him and his family. When someone in the family is being criticized, everybody comes and stands beside him, like when Al gave a report on the Observer to the General Council and everybody stood up and applauded, even if they didn't necessarily agree with him. That showed love for a member of the family going through rough times. But the Jewish community didn't understand that. They felt that they were giving official support to Al's position. . . . Now when I was elected I said I hoped to be able to build bridges. It became a priority of the Church. And the time was right for reconciliation.

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[126] Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS RECONCILIATION

(1972-1978)

Bruce McLeod publically backed Forrest as an editor with integrity, which earned him suspicion from Jews right from the start. But as Plaut remarks in his autobiography, "he soon stated--repeatedly--that he wanted reconciliation with the Jewish community."[127]

The healing process was aided by George Morrison, the new secretary of the General Council. Plaut and Morrison became good friends and discussed ways that might bring hostilities to an end. Morrison also developed a good rapport with Alan Rose of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and introduced Rose to Bruce McLeod. Rev. Angus McQueen, a former moderator and then the chairman of the Editorial Advisory Committee of the Observer, was also a key person in the rapprochement.

McLeod and Morrison put pressure on Forrest to tone down his criticisms of Israel. According to Patricia Clarke, Forrest resented the pressure and felt they, like Ernest Long, "did him dirt." McQueen, on the other hand, was regarded by the editorial staff as supportive of Forrest. At the same

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[127]Plaut, Unfinished Business, pp. 290-291.

time, he was considered a friend by the Jewish community. Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, chairman of the Central Region JCRC, says, "he understood our anger and regretted the barrier."[128]

Over the next year meetings between United Church and Jewish community leadership continued. It was decided the libel suits would be allowed to lapse. McLeod and Morrison had lunch every two weeks for about six months with Lou Ronson, a member of the B'nai B'rith executive, and Herbert Levy, the executive vice-president of B'nai B'rith, where they worked out a joint statement of reconciliation. The statement represented a personal meeting of minds. Although it was not officially approved by the executive of the General Council, the signatories carried a great deal of weight.

The statement was presented to Forrest. In an interview with Reuben Slonim, Forrest recalled:

> There was strong pressure--strong pressure of various sorts--to repudiate the Booth piece. I said if anybody could show me there was anything incorrect or false in it, I'd apologize. To this day, nobody has shown to my satisfaction that there was anything incorrect in it.
>
> Eventually the moderator and the secretary of the General Council came to me with a statement they and some B'nai B'rith people were undertaking to sign. . . . I read it; it repudiated Dr. Booth for what he said. I said no, I'd have no part of it. I had asked Dr. Booth to write the piece; I had a certain responsibility.[129]

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[128]Pearlson, personal interview, Toronto, 4 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Jordan Pearlson).

[129]Cited by Reuben Slonim, Family Quarrel (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company, 1977), p. 11.

The statement was issued 4 May 1973; Sydney Maislin, the president of the Canadian B'nai B'rith signed in place of Lou Ronson.[130] True to his word, Forrest had no part of it. He did, however, seem to bend to the pressure. During the previous five years, criticisms of Israel appeared in more than half of the issues of the Observer. In 1973 and 1974, such editorials or articles appeared only four times in each of those years. From then on, the Middle East issue retained even less space in the pages of the Observer.

Forrest, however, did not let up in his criticisms of Israel and Zionists when he spoke to university, church or Arab groups. The rapprochement between the Jewish community and the United Church did not alter his sentiments or convictions. This could still be seen in his occasional article or editorial on the subject in the Observer. As late as October 1976 he ran a story about racist practices in Israeli athletics.

"According to the sports pages of Ma'ariv . . . . (Aug. 7, 1976), Israeli football teams have to be pure," Forrest wrote. He reported that a Yugoslavian immigrant could not play on an Israeli football team "because he couldn't prove his mother was Jewish." Forrest concluded:

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[130]See Appendix 5.

> It is this sort of thing, which is well known in the Third World but not in the West, which among other policies caused Asian, African, and Eastern European countries to brand Zionism as racist in the United Nations a year ago.[131]

The story showed more than Forrest's continuing antagonism towards Israel, it showed misrepresentation of the facts. In a Canada-Israel Committee newsletter addressed to Forrest, Nick Simmonds, the CIC director of communications, indicated first, the Ma'ariv article was not published on August 7th--which was a Saturday "and anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of Israel knows that newspapers do not publish on the Sabbath"--but on 8 July 1976.

Second, the article did not say or imply that Israeli football teams have to be pure. On the contrary, Simmonds named several Israeli Arabs and non-Jews who were among Israel's finest atheletes and coaches, including Rifaat Tourk who was on Israel's Olympic soccer team at Montreal.

Third, Forrest left out the most important sections of the article. Simmonds quoted directly from the Hebrew article which said the Yugoslav "is not eligible to sign up as long as he does not possess an immigrant's visa,"--just as someone who is not a Canadian citizen cannot work in Canada.[132]

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[131] Observer, October 1976, p. 11.

[132] Simmonds, letter from CIC director of communications to Forrest, Toronto, 22 October 1976.

In the years following the joint statement, there were a few other notes of discord, but they were more or less restricted to the Observer and not to the United Church as a whole. In March 1974, for instance, the Observer published a full page advertisement by G.J. Salter of the British-Israelite Federation. Slonim described it as "a mixture of obscure biblical interpretations, old fictions about a world Jewish conspiracy and anti-Catholic bias. Most publishers would have rejected it on grounds of incoherence."[133]

To many in the Jewish community it was just another example of Forrest's malice. To many of the Observer's readers, their editor had gone too far in publishing this fundamentalist and anti-ecumenical ad. In the May issue, Forrest devoted a full page to refutations, saying, "we confess we didn't read it carefully, or we would have rejected it on the grounds of taste."[134] This was a controversy, however, which involved less the Jewish community than the Church's own ministers. Slonim concluded, "Jews seem to feel they can mute their protest if others will do the shouting for them."[135]

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[133] Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 15.

[134] Observer, May 1974, p. 11.

[135] Loc. cit.

There was also an incident in 1974 over whether Plaut had reported to the CJC plenary in June that there had been an attempt to "stifle" Forrest. The quote was never adequately explained to Forrest's satisfaction. In addition, some tension surrounded the publication of Family Quarrel, a book on the controversy by Reuben Slonim.

The book, published in 1977, discussed a lot of the issues in the dispute and opened up some old wounds. United Churchmen who had been involved in the controversy regarded it for the most part as fair. He did not receive such warm reviews by his own community, however, because he was regarded as something of a maverick and a friend of Forrest. According to Rabbi Pearlson, "the liason between Forrest and Slonim damaged irrevocably the position of one of Canada's finest and most sensitive Jewish leaders. Slonim was tarred by Al Forrest's brush."

Since the 1972 statement of reconciliation there were also some encouraging signs involving the Observer. In April 1973, there was an article by Donald A. Gilles entitled, "Let's Forget About Converting the Jews." And in June 1974, there was an article exposing the bigoted and antisemitic views of the Western Guard. Roland de Corneille suggested to Jewish community leaders that the latter article be taken as a "real and genuine form of apology for the Salter advertisement." In his capacity as national director of the

League for Human Rights of B'nai B'rith of Canada, he wrote in a memorandum:

> It is my opinion that this article is critical of "Christian anti-Semitism", Nazis and the Western Guard (with a somewhat critical reference to the British-Israel Federation). It is critical not only of racism, but also of anti-Semitism. This, in my opinion, is the first evidence of a very clear and practical stand by the Observer against at least some form of anti-Semitism. There is nothing ambiguous about this article.[136]

Another sign of healing was a pulpit exchange between Plaut and McLeod. Rabbi Plaut invited Reverend McLeod to speak at Holy Blossom towards the end of 1973. McLeod reciprocated with an invitation to Plaut to speak at Bloor Street United Church. Both occasions went well, although Plaut had some apprehensions and had body guards at his appearance. As it turned out, he had no need for concern and the congregation readily showed their appreciation. McLeod recalls:

> November 1973, Bloor Street United Church held an anniversary service. There's often a special speaker and Plaut was invited to speak. He felt he needed body guards, but I still don't know why he did that. He spoke freely about the Jewish perception . . . and afterward the whole Church stood up and applauded. . . . There's subsequently been a strong exchange with Timothy Eaton [United Church] and Holy Blossom.

At the 1976 General Council Al Forrest was nominated for moderator. "Before the controversy," says McLeod, "he

would have been a shoo-in. . . . When he was defeated it showed that the United Church was not supporting him. That was the last time anyone thought about the controversy." Al Forrest was still highly regarded and loved by many in his Church. But he was also a controversial figure. The Church delegates registered by their vote they did not want someone who was so associated with controversy as moderator of the United Church of Canada.

After that Forrest turned his attention back to his original interests, to the parables. According to his friends, that was the interest which drew him to the Holy Land in the first place. On 27 December 1978, while working on his manuscript, The Parables, Al Forrest died of a heart attack. The controversy which had receded several years earlier died with him.

Although the altercation is over, the issues it raised remain largely unresolved. Few members of either community want to revive the bitterness surrounding the years from 1967 through the 1970s. And there are those who have actively worked towards improving Jewish-Christian relations generally in Canada through cooperation and dialogue. Nonetheless, how many, even of those involved in interfaith relations, understand the organizational, historical, theological, humanistic and semantic elements that color their various views

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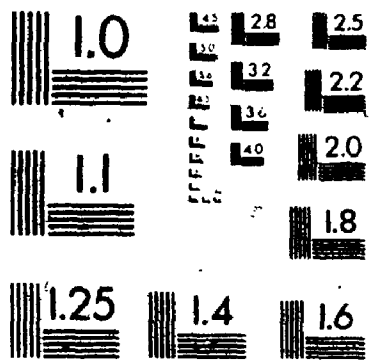

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on politics and other concerns? These are the issues that divided the disputants and often continue to cause tension in the relationship between Christians and Jews.

PART II

THE ISSUES

CHAPTER VII

POLITICS

The Six-Day War was a turning point not only in the relationship between the Jewish community and the United Church of Canada, but also between Jews and Christians in general. Before the 1967 war, Jews and Christians who joined together for the betterment of interfaith relations had in mind civil cooperation and theological understanding. Zionism and Arab-Israeli relations had little prominence in the dialogue. Rev. Roland de Corneille, who had been the director of Jewish-Christian dialogue for the Anglican Church in Canada since 1962, was therefore surprised by the reaction of the Jewish community during the 1967 war.

Jews, themselves, were for the most part unaware of how deeply they identified with the State of Israel until the Six-Day War. Arthur Hertzberg writes, "The days that led up to that event were filled with fear that a small state surrounded by enemies might become the object of a new holocaust."[136] According to Nathan Glazer, "all but a tiny minority of Jews now [saw] their interests fully bound up with the existence of the state of Israel."[137] There came an

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[136]Hertzberg, s.v. "Zionism," Encyclopaedia Judaica, (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 1062.

[137]Glazer, "Jewish Interests and the New Left," Midstream (Jan. 1971):34.

outpouring of money, political support and volunteers as never before.

While Arab states were threatening destruction and Egypt was blockading the Gulf of Aqaba and amassing 100,000 troops in Sinai, Jews pointed to the silence of the churches with frustration and despair. Emil Fackenheim's reaction was typical, "Do Christians think that Judaism could survive a second Holocaust--or that Israel could survive without her army? Are they to have dialogue with dead Jews?"[138]

The crux of the problem for Jews was the threat to Israel's survival. What they expected from their partners in dialogue was a clear statement supporting Israel's right to exist. Instead, church response was generally one of cautious neutrality. In Canada, Rev. Louis Levesque, president of the Canadian Catholic Conference, Rev. Howard Clark, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and Rev. Wilfred Lockhart, moderator of the United Church of Canada issued a joint statement on 31 May 1967 calling on Christians "to pray with their bretheren the world over that the leaders of the nations that are affected will seek guidance from God to bring about a just and honourable peace."[139]

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[138]Fackenheim, "The People Israel Lives," in Disputation and Dialogue, ed. Frank Talmage (NY: Ktav Publ. House, 1975), p. 306.

[139]Memo of the United Church of Canada, Toronto, 6 June 1967.

What accounted for this stated neutrality? Among other things, there was a belief that the Middle East conflict represented a rough balance and not a preponderance of right or wrong on either side. This, according to Eugene Rothman, was "the dilemma upon whose horns a number of Christian realists would unfortunately impale themselves."[140] Thus, Forrest wrote in an editorial, 1 August 1967, "While Arab threats to destroy Israel must be condemned, and other hostile acts and attitudes deplored, it must also be remembered that the provocations and threats were not all from one side."[141]

Evidently, Israel's successful defense was viewed as militarism, and this "became the key to the new position." Rothman explains that among some observers, "Israel's actions were no longer regarded as attempts to survive in the face of continuing Arab threats, but rather as one (Israeli) militancy opposed to another (Arab) militancy."[142]

By neutralizing the threat to Israel's survival, Forrest could champion the cause of the Palestinian refugees within a moral context. Two months after his "evenhanded" editorial, Forrest put out the special issue of the Observer

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[140] Rothman, "Christianity and Crisis: The Evolution of a Christian Perspective," Midstream (Feb. 1971): 6.

[141] Observer, p. 8.

[142] Rothman, p. 11.

entitled "Aftermath in the Middle East," with the subheading, "INJUSTICE: In Her Present Policies Israel Stands Condemned Before the World."

The issue placed a militarily strong Israel against the desperate state of the Palestinians and their stories of atrocity. Given such a presentation it was easy to place the preponderance of blame on Israel. But the cases of Israel and the Palestinians are incommensurable because they rest upon different premises.

Israel's militancy stemmed from its quest to secure its safety. And despite anonymous observations and disputed reports, the plight of the Palestinians is largely the result of Arab wars with Israel. Moreover, as Reuben Slonim points out, "The Palestinian refugee is not just the product of war with Israel."[143] He is also the victim of Arab rejection and Palestinian failure, writes Slonim:

> They lost chances in 1937 and 1947 to fulfill national aspirations. In the latter year they should have accepted UN partition; in the former it would still have been possible to work toward the formation of a binational state with Zionists like Weizmann, Magnes and Buber, who treasured the early dream of a secular, democratic Jewish government, with distinct separation of "church" and state and equal citizenship for Muslims, Christians and Jews . . .

The differences in the Israeli and Palestinian cases make oversimplified political presentations such as Forrest's

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[143] Slonim, Family Quarrel, pp. 115-116.

dangerous and distorted.

The complexity of the political issues was greatly increased with other related but separate concerns. There was the often-stated humanistic regard among United Churchmen not only for the Palestinian refugees, but also for the safety of the world threatened by the tinder box in the Middle East. And there were practical considerations for a church which maintained interests and affinities with Christians in Arab lands. Geoffrey Wigoder of the Israel Interfaith Association, notes this with regard to the churches in Israel, although it applies equally well to church bodies abroad:

> all the Churches . . . who number more congregants and interests in Muslim lands than in Israel--are in an exposed position. Any too pro-Israel manifestation evokes unfavourable reactions in these other lands. The higher the Church echelons, the greater the involvement in the Arab dimension.[144]

At issue also were differing theological perspectives of Jews and Christians toward the Holy Land. And many Jews viewed the controversy from the historical viewpoint of nearly two thousand years of Christian anti-Jewish theologizing and practice--which made Israel a haven from anti-semitism and persecution.

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[144]Wigoder, "Interfaith Dialogue in Israel: A Survey of the Current Position," Institute of Jewish Affairs Research Report 10 (June 1983): 4-5.

The chasm between the disputants was made especially wide by fundamentally different understandings of common terms such as: Jewish peoplehood, Zionism, Zionists, Christian Zionists, criticism, anti-Zionism, Semitic, and anti-semitism.

Before any of these issues can be addressed it is important to understand the nature of the United Church and Jewish communities. Both their similarities and differences led to misunderstandings and antipathy. Each community maintained an ethnic solidarity which frowned on dissent from within. But the nature of that solidarity reflected different community make-up, history and place in society.

The highly organized and coordinated Jewish community could not understand the nature of the relationship of the Observer to the United Church--which was at once affiliated and independent. At the same time, members of Canada's largest Protestant denomination interpreted the reaction of the Jewish community as clannishness and paranoia.

If the members of these communities are ever going to understand the controversy or completely heal the rift they must begin by appreciating their differences and similarities, and by addressing organizational issues.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

The United Church came into being in 1925 as a union of Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and local Union churches. The years of its formation were a time of growth and affluence for many Protestant churches. The idea of "social gospel"--the coming of an ideal, Christian social order--was prevalent.

According to Rev. John Webster Grant, a United Church historian, "there was a sense of progress, and this really encouraged the idea that the day of the Lord couldn't be far off. There was great optimism. And this came out of the social gospel, the idea of a sort of utopia on the way." The ideal social order would be one that was not only just but moral as well.

With the coming of the European immigrants, there was not only a desire to convert them to a particular denomination, but more importantly, to infuse them with what was regarded as the Canadian way of life. It was, of course, "not the French Canadian way of life. It was very much the way of life of the main Protestant churches," says Grant.

This was carried over in the United Church in two respects: personal morality and social action. Grant notes, "people who are enthusiastic about social change or some

ideal social order also see this in very moral terms." In other words, the ideal social order is perceived as the only "right" social order. Ironically, this sense of social justice was the basis of both the United Church's early alliance with Jews as well as its interest in the Palestinians.

The early attempts at interfaith relations between United Churchmen and Jews in Canada can be partially explained as an identification among minorities interested in social justice at a time when the establishment was Anglican. "The English Church had official favor, and the reformer could count on the support of at least a number of United Church ministers," says Grant. "There was a great deal of interest in getting rid of the Anglican establishment, and in equal rights for Methodists and Presbyterians." Roland de Corneille adds:

> They always seemed to find themselves allied on the same side, fighting for social justice, combating the establishment . . . What the liberal Protestant knew about Jews was from Reform Jews. Reform Jews had the sense that God spoke to all groups . . . so they thought they had common cause with the Jewish people.

In the last few decades, however, there has been a polarization in the United Church between the conservative segment who tend to be interested in social order and the liberal wing who are more interested in liberation theology and what is happening in Latin America and with the refugees

in the Middle East, particularly the Palestinians.[145]

According to David Demson, "The United Church is very keen to be a liberal church. . . . and the liberal wing really dislikes with quite a degree of intensity the small conservative segment." What holds the Church together is a denominational solidarity. "You'll find that in every religious group," notes Grant, "even among Roman Catholics."

Bruce McLeod speaks of it in terms of a family. "Outsiders do not understand the family nature of our Church," he said in a speech at the University of Windsor.[146] He explained the standing ovation Forrest received at the 1972 General Council in the same terms. It was the family reassuring one of its members who was being beleaguered, "as you would a member of your own family in a similar situation." He added, "Whoever it was that called for his dismissal could not have found a more effective way of rallying the whole United Church of Canada behind this able man."

This attitude also helps to explain the affinity within the Church to the Palestinians, "many of whom are Christians who belong to our family too."[147] Moreover, the solidarity within the church accounts for the reaction of

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[145] McLeod, "Christian-Jewish Relations in Canada," a speech delivered at Iona College, Univ. of Windsor, 5 November 1973.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

church leaders to United Church members who sided in the controversy with the Jewish community. Both Alan Davies and David Demson registered the animosity from their own church. Demson recalls:

> Ernest Marshall Howse just called me on the phone one day. He assumed that I was a minister eventhough I am not, and said, "One minister should never criticize another minister in public." I was surprised at how many people thought I was immoral, and this confused me for a while. . . . Finally I realized what it was: . . . a kind of ethnic solidarity. When one of your good WASPs is being criticized, especially by a non-WASP group, how you handle that is a question of diplomacy, but you certainly don't break rank.

According to Davies, the United Church "saw Demson and myself as traitors and troublemakers." As a kind of punishment, neither Davies nor Demson have been asked to do anything for the Church since the controversy. It is somewhat surprising, given the strength of the family solidarity in the United Church, that many of these same Christians criticized the cohesiveness of the Jewish community as clannishness. This was an aspect of each community that the disputants failed to recognize in the other.

Besides a feeling of family solidarity, however, there is little in the structure of the United Church to maintain cohesiveness. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church which operates according to the dictates of a highly disciplined hierarchy, the United Church is congregationally oriented, and it is up to the congregants to interpret, accept or disregard

the officially stated position of the church. For this reason, a United Church theological seminary could, in the midst of the controversy, register its opposition to Forrest's views by bestowing on one of his main opponents an honorary doctorate.

Although it may not necessarily dictate the actions of its members, the official views of the United Church are represented by its governing body, the General Council. The General Council meets approximately every two years to report and adopt resolutions on everything from church missions, education, finances, and elections to local, national and international crises.

Moreover, only resolutions that are adopted by the General Council, or statements that are made by official officers of the Church acting in their official capacities can represent the church's official policies. The officers include the current moderator, secretary of the General Council or the secretary of the division of the Church which is involved in the matter.

The United Church's main divisions are: Communication, Finance, Ministry, Personnel and Education, Mission in Canada, and World Outreach. During the controversy, the main divisional officer involved was Frank Brisbin of the Division of Communication.

Brisbin did not issue any statement regarding the

views of the Observer. The moderators in office during the controversy, Wilfred Lockhart (1966-1968), Robert McClure (1968-1971), A.B.B. Moore (1971-1972), and N. Bruce McLeod (1972-1974), never issued any statements supporting Forrest's views; any statements that were issued only supported his right to express those views. And the resolutions accepted by the General Council between 1967 and 1974 supported Israel's right to exist, and did not place the total blame in the Arab-Israeli conflict on Israel, deride Zionism or inject anti-Jewish stereotypes, which were the Jewish community's main complaints against the Observer.

Nevertheless, while the leaders of the United Church did not officially support Forrest's views, they neither officially nor unofficially stated that they disagreed with him. This confusing relationship between the United Church and the Observer was a bone of contention throughout the controversy, and gave rise to basically two different reactions from the Jewish community.

Even in retrospect, some members of the Jewish community maintain, "if the moderator and the people in the religious hierarchy had really taken violent exception to what Forrest was writing, they could have objected and they could have somehow made it clear to him that they wanted him to take a different tack."[148] Ben Kayfetz was personally

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[148] Rose, personal interview, Toronto, 6 March 198[illegible] (this applies to all further citations of Albert Rose).

shocked that the United Church did not at least take steps to separate themselves from the position of the Observer. As Emil Fackenheim points out, "I don't know of any member of the hierarchy of the Church who at that time made use of his own freedom of speech to say that he disagreed with Forrest."

The first response represents members of the Jewish community who wanted the United Church to pressure Forrest into taking a less hostile approach to Israel. The latter reactions represent those who only requested the Church leaders to indicate that their position was different from that of the Observer.

Church leaders could have satisfied the more moderate request by clearly stating the Observer did not represent the position of the United Church but that of Al Forrest. This distinction, however, was never made explicit. Instead, United Church leadership supported Forrest's freedom of expression and maintained that he had complete editorial autonomy.

This led to a great deal of confusion regarding the nature of the relationship between the United Church and the Observer; and it left many in the Jewish community thinking that the Church leadership could have forced Forrest to take a different position if they had wanted to. But to do so would have gone against the whole foundation of the United Church

and its attitude to fundamental human rights and freedoms. As Alan Davies points out:

> The United Church did not want to control the Observer. It wanted an editor, and still does, with an independent mind. And when you have an editor with strong views and a strong personality there is a tendency to make it all the more independent. In the case of Forrest, this is very much what happened. It was very much his paper, more than it was the paper of the United Church of Canada. Although in a formal sense it was the Church paper, in a real sense it was much more his personal paper.

Officially, the Observer says it is published under the authority of the General Council of the United Church. This supreme governing body appoints a board of directors for the Observer and a chairperson of the board. It also appoints the editor-publisher who is accountable to the board for the efficient operation of the magazine. But in theory and practice the magazine is both editorially and financially independent. Says Patricia Clarke:

> As far as independence goes, the editor is expected to be in fundamental agreement with the United Church policy. If he doesn't believe in God, if he doesn't think the Church is a good thing, then obviously the editorship of the Observer is not the right place. But within that fundamental agreement, the editor has the freedom to criticize, or to say that is not a good thing, or we have not said something about this and we should, or what we've said about this is wrong and we should say something else. Al saw his main responsibility to his readers, not to the hierarchy of the Church.

Hugh McCullum, the present editor of the Observer,

concurs with this view. The content of the magazine is aimed at its constituency, he says:

> which is essentially a slice of Middle-class Canada . . . the one thing they have in common is their membership in the United Church. But other than that, they are just ordinary people. We have to aim at that audience. . . . The United Church has to buy space in the publication for their ads the same as everybody else.[149]

During the controversy, McCullum was the editor of the Anglican Canadian Churchman. He states that his perspective on the Middle East was somewhat different from Forrest's, but he editorially supported Forrest's right to make his statements.

McCullum reflects the view of many in the United Church that anyone, including the editor of the Observer, had the right to voice his opinion. It was against the fundamentally liberal belief of the United Church to interfere with freedom of the press. The Church hierarchy only did so when they realized how much the dispute with the Jewish community had gotten out of hand. They eventually did put pressure on Forrest, not because they thought he was wrong in voicing his opinions, but because his opinions were tearing at the relationship between the Church and the Jewish community in a highly publicized controversy.

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[149] McCullum, personal interview, Toronto, 28 February 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Hugh McCullum).

CHAPTER IX

THE CANADIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

Much of the misunderstanding between Canadian Jews and United Church members stemmed from differences in their community organizations. Although the United Church maintains an ethnic solidarity it is much less ingrained and effective than the cohesion of the Jewish community of Canada. Such group solidarity is the result of both the nature of Jewish peoplehood in general and the make-up of Canadian Jewry in particular.

Jews, in general, constitute a people whose solidarity is motivated by common history, practices, beliefs and aspirations.[150] In Canada, this is recognized by the census which classifies Jews according to both religion and ethnicity.[151]

Canada, both in ideology as well as in practice, stresses a cultural mosaic over against the "melting pot" notion of society. Canadian ethnic diversity has its historical roots in French-English dualism. William Shaffir and Morton Wienfeld explain:

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[150] For a more detailed discussion of Jewish peoplehood see Chapter XIII.

[151] In the United States, Jews are only listed as a religious denomination. This distinction reflects a different perception of Jews by Canadian society as well as their own self-perception; for more of a comparison see Chapter XIV.

> The British North America Act did not declare the absolute equality of all citizens. Rather, by recognizing certain rights for religious groups (Catholics and Protestants) and linguistic groups (Francophones and Anglophones), it has legitimated a collectivistic approach to the notion of rights, in contrast to the American emphasis on individual liberties. . . . And with the passage of the Multicultural Act of 1971, the country adopted an official designation as a nation that is "multicultural in a bilingual framework".[152]

Canadian society, therefore, has actually encouraged Jewish cohesiveness as one among many ethnic groups. Nevertheless, multiculturalism does not preclude prejudice; and Jewish peoplehood continues to be misunderstood and misrepresented.

While plurality in Canada is accepted in principle, there still lingers the notion of the ideal (Christian) Canadian society. Slonim cites the view of one minister that is representative of many Christians:

> Why must a Jew remain a Jew and an outsider after a thousand years? Other people become Canadians. . . . Maybe, human nature being what it is, if the Jews insist on being different, they should be prepared to pay the price. . . . They are like no other people on earth.[153]

It is difficult for many Christians who are of the

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[152]Shaffir and Weinfeld, "Canada and the Jews: An Introduction," The Canadian Jewish Mosaic, eds. Morton Weinfeld, William Shaffir, and Irwin Cotler (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), p. 15.

[153]Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 68.

majority and identify themselves primarily as Canadians (or Americans for that matter) to understand ethnic solidarity that goes beyond a common religious denomination. This is particularly difficult in Canada where Jews tend to be more "Jewish" than their co-religionists across the border.

According to Shaffir and Weinfeld, Canadian Jews encourage more Jewish education, are more likely to belong to Orthodox than Reform or even Conservative synagogues, speak more Yiddish, have lower rates of intermarriage, give higher per capita contributions to the Jewish community and Israel, and are more geographically concentrated (mainly in Montreal and Toronto) than their American counterparts.[154] Their Jewishness is encouraged partially by the multiculturalism of Canadian society as explained above; but it is also due to the make-up of the Canadian Jewish community.

First of all, there is a much higher proportion of Jews in Canada, as compared to the United States, who are immigrants from places of persecution. This tends to give them a strengthened sense of Jewish identity. Foremost, are the large number of survivors from the Holocaust. They are an especially active segment of the Jewish community and represent the view, according to Albert Rose, that "they have to hit out at what they perceive as antisemitism at anytime, at all costs, and without reserve." Less vocal but also

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[154]Shaffir and Weinfeld, pp. 12-13.

present in the Canadian Jewish mosaic are the religiously observant Sephardic Jews who fled persecution in Arab lands, and Soviet Jews who sought religious and other freedoms in Canada.

Secondly, the Jewishness of Canadian Jewry is the result of their later settlement of North America. Lagging behind Jewish settlement in the United States by approximately a generation, Canadian Jews are likewise about a generation behind in their rate of assimilation.

In the United States, the mass of East European Jewish immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century were preceeded by a large group of Sephardic and German Jews. The earlier settlers were already well-integrated into American society, especially the German Jews who established Reform Judaism in the United States. They tempered the ethnic cohesion of the East European immigrants by encouraging their involvement in the more Americanized Conservative and Reform synagogues.

In Canada, the more assimilated German Jews were neither as numerous nor as prominent as they were south of the border. The impact of the East European Jewish immigrants was therefore profound. They came from poor villages ("shtetls"), culturally isolated from the non-Jewish world, and without money or possessions. But they brought new ideas of socialism and nationalism, and sought to preserve

both their religious and ethnic identity. "To put it another way," say Shaffir and Weinfeld, "the foundations of the Canadian community were cast more than fifty years after those of the United States."[155]

The Jewish settlers expressed their cohesion in the organization of Jewish community agencies. The Canadian Jewish Congress, first established in 1919 to represent the needs of Jews to the Canadian government, had become inactive with the founding of the League of Nations which assured that member nations would not discriminate against Jews and other minorities. It was reorganized in 1934 in light of Canada's anti-Jewish immigration policy, the rise of blatant and sometimes violent acts of antisemitism, and the economic burdens of the Depression.[156]

The activities of the Congress include overseas relief, efforts to admit Jewish refugees to Canada, community relations, Jewish education and culture, youth and adult social and cultural organizations, research, Jewish welfare services, promotion of Zionism and countering antisemitism. This organizaion's greatest asset has been its coordination on a

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[155]Ibid., p. 13.

[156]See pp. 6-10 above; see also Saul Hayes, s.v. "Canadian Jewish Congress," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 113-4; Erna Paris, Jews: An Account of Their Experiences in Canada (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980). p. 34ff; and Stuart E. Rosenberg, The Jewish Community in Canada, vol. 2 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), p. 36ff.

local and national scale of various Jewish services.[157] The cooperation is aided by the geographic concentration of Jews in Toronto and Montreal.

Because of its coordination and make-up, the Jewish community of Canada is much more of a monolith than it may even wish to admit. Congress, through its agencies, attempts to meet every need of Canadian Jewry. The system, which works by consensus, is quite effective. But it also tends to weed out dissent. It does not go so far as some members of the United Church may believe, however, that "they shoot off their mouths even to the extent of telling their brothers and sisters what they ought to be thinking."[158]

During the controversy, there was ironically the same desire to stifle public dissent in both communities. The Jewish community leadership no more wanted its members to publicly criticize its policies than the United Church leaders favored Demson, Davies and other churchmen's public opposition to Forrest.

The Jewish community, however, may be more effective in quieting dissent. The fate of Rabbi Reuben Slonim is an

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[157] Ibid.; see also Louis Rosenberg, "Some Aspects of the Historical Development of the Canadian Jewish Community," Population Characteristics Series, n. 4 (Montreal: Bureau of Social and Economic Research of the Canadian Jewish Congress, 1961), p. 141.

[158] McClure, interview.

example. He was caught up in the controversy as a sympathetic ear to Forrest's position. There were other factors which contributed to his alienation from the Jewish community but his rapport with Forrest irrevocably damaged his position in the community.

Slonim firmly maintains he is a Zionist. He holds many of the same views as the Israeli Peace Now movement in desiring to grant the Palestinians a right to an independent state on the West Bank. But his views made him a maverick in the Canadian Jewish community at a time when the Israeli peace movement was unknown. This, together with his seeming support of Forrest, earned him the label of anti-Zionist from many of his co-religionists.

When Slonim published his book on the controversy, people who had never even read it called the book antisemitic. To them, says Slonim:

> I'm an anti-Zionist, I'm an antisemite even. I didn't believe this until last December. One of my students called the [Jewish] bookstore to see if she could get a copy of my book. . . . She let me listen. . . . He didn't call me a "mishumat" [convert from Judaism] but he almost did. He wouldn't defile his shelves with my book. That's what he said.[159]

Gunther Plaut admits, the Jewish community "has a habit of looking at things as black and white, right or wrong,

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[159]Slonim, personal interview, Toronto, 4 March 1984.

if you're not for us you're against us."[160] Such an attitude is the result of more than just ethnic cohesiveness stemming from the make-up of the Canadian Jewish community. It is largely the result of the collective consciousness of the Jewish people to a history of persecution.

Jim Taylor observes, persecution "builds a mind set and a solidarity." During the controversy, he realized a similarity between his position and that of Jews:

> . . . as soon as I heard the name Al Forrest, or the Observer, the United Church of Canada, Israel, Palestine, or the Middle East, I got my defences up immediately. It was like, "what are they going to do to us this time?" It took about three weeks of that before it dawned on me that most of the people who had been phoning me and writing me weren't dealing with a six week conditioned reflex, they were dealing with a thousand year conditioned reflex. . .

Taylor was correct in realizing that the controversy involved to a great extent, historical issues of persecution and prejudice. Few Christians involved in the dispute, however, acknowledged the role of Christianity in building up the Jewish conditioned reflex to antisemitism.

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[160] Plaut, interview.

CHAPTER X

HISTORICAL ISSUES

According to Patricia Clarke, members of the United Church came out of the controversy "with an increased sensitivity to the reasons that Jews feel the way they do about it [the Middle East] and what we must do to ease both the feeling of threat and the need to feel threatened."[161] Rev. Bruce McLeod believes that Forrest erred not in what he wrote but because in writing it he was "not sufficiently sensitive to the Jewish situation."

Both mean well, but their words betray that there is little increased appreciation among many United Church members as to the reasons Jews feel the way they do about the Middle East, i.e., of the entire basis of Jewish attachment to Israel, or of Jewish wariness towards Christian criticisms of the Jewish state. Reducing Jewish reactions during the controversy to "the feeling of threat and the need to feel threatened" is both pejorative and condescending; the feeling of threat was a real component in the quarrel (there were many others) but such a statement shows little awareness of the historical basis to such feelings.

The crux of the issue is not the "sorry history of

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[161] Clarke, personal letter, Toronto, 5 March 1984; my emphasis.

the Jewish people"--as one administrator of the United Church puts it--but the part of Christians in creating such a sorry history. And many of the same medieval accusations Christians had directed against Jews are redirected against the Jewish state and Zionism. (This was especially evident in the John Nicholls Booth article, "How Zionists Manipulate Your News," published in the Observer in March 1972.) Within the Jewish community an extremist, although common position has developed that, "the church did not have a right to sit in judgment of the State of Israel given its record."[162]

Such a position is not healthy for Jews or for Jewish-Christian relations. The policies of Israel, like any other government, are open to criticism by Christians or anybody else. Nevertheless, if Christians are going to criticize Israel they are obligated to purge their remarks of any remnants of old stereotypes or patronizing Christian attitudes towards Jews. For Jews, this is the necessary first step in building trust.

But as Reverend de Corneille points out, "most Christians are unaware of the history of the church and its role in antisemitism," and therefore perceive Jews as paranoid, ready to label any criticism as antisemitism. The real difficulty for Christians, therefore, is attesting to Christianity's role in promoting hatred towards Jews in the first

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[162]Ages, personal interview, Toronto, 4 March 1984.

place. Roy Eckardt, a Christian theologian and participant in the Jewish-Christian dialogue, calls this "our Christian predicament." It is the inability of Christians to reconcile historical fact, theological claim and ethical behavior. It is the difficulty of juxtaposing a theology proclaiming love and brotherhood against a history of persecutions and barbarisms.[163]

Many Christians who can cite love-filled New Testament passages such as the parable of the Good Samaritan neglect to recognize other passages in the Gospels filled with animosity toward Jews. The Gospel of John, revered as one of the most inspirational books of the Christian Bible, is the source of some of its most hate-filled passages toward Jews:

> You are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. . . . But because I tell the truth you do not believe me. . . . He who is of God hears the words of God; the reason you do not hear them is that you are not of God. (John 8:44-47)

The record of Christian animosity toward Jews began in the first centuries of the Common Era, as the nascent church aggressively asserted its independent identity from the parent religion of Judaism. The New Testament continued to be a wellspring of enmity toward Jews throughout the ages. The

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[163]Eckardt, Your People, My People, pp. 68 and 187.

ringing charge of deicide is heard until today.[164]

Jews presented a threat to Christian faith and unity. It took the transformation of Christianity from a persecuted faith to the imperial religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century to be able to act upon that threat. With Constantine, there began a series of edicts restricting Jewish civil rights in an attempt to stem Judaizing in the church. Augustinian doctrine decreed that Jews must survive as a witness-people to the triumph of Christianity but in a reprobate status for their rejection of Jesus as the Christ. They were to subsist "for the salvation of the nation but not for their own."[165] In other words, they were to be protected from violence, tolerated, but denigrated as outcasts.

In the fifth century, the Christian empire was split between East and West. In Byzantium, Emperor Justinian attempted to unify his realm with missionary zeal and to influence, in the process, Jewish practices and beliefs. In his preface to Novella 146 (8 February 553) Justinian states:

> Necessity dictates that when the Hebrews listen to their sacred texts they should not confine themselves to the meaning of the letter, but should also devote

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[164]For a discussion of the New Testament and the theological component in Jewish-Christian relations see Chapter XI.

[165]Augustine, Enarratio in Ps. 58, I:22; cf. Haim Ben-Sasson, s.v. "History," Encyclopaedia Judaica, (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 654-655.

> their attention to those sacred prophecies which are hidden from them, and which announce the mighty Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[166]

The policies of toleration and gentle encouragement to convert the Jews were not always followed, however. From the fourth century, Jews were subject to mob attack and forced baptisms. One of the earliest reports dates from 418 CE when Severus, the bishop of Minorca, rallied the islanders against the Jews, destroying the synagogue, killing many of the congregants--especially women, and forcibly baptizing 540 Jews.[167]

In the West, another precedent was set as Pope Gregory I, at the end of the sixth century, instituted the use of economic pressure and reward to convert the Jews. During the next several centuries, the condition of Jewish life was largely regulated according to the whim of local king and clergy. While some were just and tolerant, others tried to forcibly convert Jews to Christianity or allowed them to live as Jews under penalty of heavy taxes and restrictions.

Widespread restrictions prevented Jews from owning land, and as non-Christians, they could not become serfs, soldiers, or members of craftsmen guilds. Jews were thus forced into trade and finance; and in some countries, their

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[166]Ben-Sasson, p. 656.

[167]Haim Beinart, s.v. "Minorca," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 41.

continued existence depended completely on their usefulness to church and ruler. One rabbi of the period advised, "Money is not only better than land, which one cannot conceal, but that money is a comfortable commodity which can save its owner."[168] But while revivalist preachers roamed the land stirring religious fanaticism, rulers plundered Jewish finances at whim in return for protection from the mobs.

In the East, Islamic conquests had overtaken the Holy Land and threatened Constantinople, the heart of Eastern Christendom. In 1095, Pope Urban II called on all Christians to retake the Holy Land from the Muslim infidels. The series of Crusades led to mass hysteria in Western Europe, and to religious fanaticism to kill the (Jewish) infidels at home. As a result, there were wholesale massacres of Jewish communities all along the path from France to Jerusalem.

The perpetrators were mostly peasants egged on by zealous monks, and nobles and knights, absolved of their debts to Jews, looking for fortune. On the whole, the Crusades gave an opportunity "for the oppressed masses to give vent to cumulative grievances and hatreds through acts of violence cloaked as meritorious deeds in behalf of religious ideals."[169] Unlike the characters out of Christian classics

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[168]Cited by Uriah Zevi Engelman, The Rise of the Jew in the Western World (NY: Arno Press, 1973), p. 31.

[169]Salo Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, vol. IV (NY: Colombia Univ. Press, 1957), p. 90.

(e.g., the knight in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales), for Jews the crusaders do not raise visions of chivalry and white knights, but barbarisms and bloodied days.

In the next several centuries after the Crusades, Christian imagination went wild. In the early feudal period, Jews were seen as unbelievers and associated with heretics. From the twelfth to the nineteenth century, they became ritual murderers and partners with the devil. Edward Flannery sees the beginning of this trend in the aftermath of the first Crusade. Christians troubled over their acts of violence and inhumanity rationalized that the Jews deserved it. "Strangely," he notes, "in the wake of the massacres, popular hostility toward Jews increased."[170]

Money-lending was also a factor in symbolizing the Jew as the "hostile stranger par excellence." These factors combined with the Johannine association of Jews with the Devil to instill in the Medieval Christian mind the image of Jews as "treacherous, blood-lusting, sadistic, God-hating and devil-worshiping."[171]

In Norwich, England, Jews were charged in 1144 with killing a Christian child to use the blood in the Passover ritual, thus initiating the popular "blood-libel." Although

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[170] Flannery, The Anguish of the Jews (NY: Macmillan, 1965), p. 92.

[171] Ben-Sasson, p. 669.

Jews were exonerated of the spreading libel by both Emperor Frederick II and Pope Innocent IV, it did little to stem the public frenzy as, right into the nineteenth century, missing children brought on the charge of ritual murder.[172]

The blood-libel led to other accusations such as the desecration of the Host, Jewish responsibility for the Black Death (1347-1350) and a world-wide criminal conspiracy among Jews. Each belief led to one even more wild. Jews were thought to do everything that is foul, disgusting and ugly, including cannibalism and intercourse with goats, pigs and other animals. Associated with defecation and filth, Jews were also said to have a putrid odor (later "scientifically" examined by Nazi doctors). "Jewish" characteristics ranged from the common to the bizarre: they were unscrupulous merchants, had horns, and their women gave birth to crocodiles.[173]

The mass of hatred was expressed in literature, art and drama. William Shakespeare, writing three hundred years after Jews were expelled from England, could still call upon prevalent Jewish stereotypes, such as the blood-thirsty, miserly Shylock in The Merchant of Venice. "Passion Plays" (of the crucifix ion of Jesus) around Easter led to yearly

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[172]Haim Ben-Sasson, s.v. "Blood Libel," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 1123-1124.

[173]See Léon Poliakov, s.v. "Anti-Semitism," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 101-108.

outbreaks of violence throughout Europe.

Many rulers decided the disadvantages and expense of protecting Jews outweighed their financial service. Ruler after ruler offered either baptism or expulsion, creating the reality of the "wandering Jew." The first large-scale expulsion was from England in 1290. During the next couple of centuries, they were expelled from places in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Lithuania, etc. In Spain and Portugal, the Inquisition was aimed at heretics, especially the many "Marranos," or secret Jews. Jews who had escaped conversion were resented for their continuing support of the Marranos, and for their prominence in finance and government. In 1492, they were expelled from Spain, and from Portugal five years later.

In places where the Jews remained they were systematically separated from the Christian populace. First it was in dress. The "Jewish badge," a discontinued Muslim tradition, was introduced into the Christian world in 1215 under Pope Innocent III. It was bitterly resented as a "badge of shame." Writes Abram Sachar:

> Nothing could have more quickly and more completely broken the proud spirit of Israel. The distinguishing mark called for ridicule and insult, and the ignorant populace was not slow to respond. The Jew was stoned and pelted, spat upon and cursed, compelled to slink through by-ways and side streets, in darkness and shame. He ceased to dress with care, to walk with head erect. He lost the power to speak with ease, and

> as he bowed and scraped his way through his tormentors, his self-respect disappeared. He was at last just what the Church had hoped he would become, a fugitive and a vagabond.[174]

The separation of Christians and Jews was made physical by the establishment of ghettos, beginning in Venice in 1516. It was common by the thirteenth century that Jews voluntarily congregated in certain parts of towns for protection and to maintain their own autonomy. But the Venetian ghetto, situated near a foundry ("getto" or "ghetto"), set the pattern for restricting Jews in a walled city with its gates bolted at night. Usually the ghetto was situated in the most filthy and worst part of town. It was not until the French Revolution that the ghetto walls began to come down.

Even after Jews in Western countries began to attain civil liberties and equality under the law, prejudice continued. In France, the nation that initiated Jewish emancipation, cries of "death to the Jews" were heard during the notorious court-martial of Alfred Dreyfus. A Jewish captain with the French General Staff, Dreyfus was accused in 1894 of spying for the Germans. Through the efforts of outraged and influential liberals like Georges Clemenceau and Emile Zola, Dreyfus was finally pardoned twelve years later to the utter humiliation of the church leadership and royalists who

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[174]Sachar, A History of the Jews (NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1978), p. 195.

had conspired against him. Many thought it marked the end of European antisemitism, but the illusion was shattered with the emergence of the Nazi tyranny.

Meanwhile, Jews in Eastern Europe had been restricted to the Pale of Settlement since 1791. Under the nineteenth century Russian Orthodox Tzars, Jewish life was intolerable. Twelve-year-old Jewish boys were conscripted to thirty-one years in the army in the hope that they would forget their Jewish roots. Jews in general were resented as foreigners, and the government fed the fear by publishing the forged Protocals of the Elders of Zion, purporting to show a world Jewish conspiracy.[175]

By 1880 there were enough Jews in liberal movements to make all Jews targets of Tzar Alexander III's anti-revolutionary program. The solution to the Jewish problem was supplied by Constantin Pobedonostsev, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod: one third of the Jewish population would emigrate, one third would die out, and one third would disappear through conversion.[176] The pogroms that followed led to the slaughter of thousands of Jews and mass emigration to North America and the land of Israel.

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[175] Léon Poliakov, s.v. "Elders of Zion, Protocols of the Learned," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 581-583.

[176] See Howard Sachar, The Course of Modern Jewish History (NY: Dell Publ. Co., 1977), p. 246.

Antisemitism continued in North America as described in the introduction. It was especially virulent during the years prior and during World War II. But the Holocaust brought antisemitism to a monstrous extreme. Previous Christian anti-Judaism allowed Jews the option of conversion. Antisemitism, founded on pseudo-scientific notions of race distinctions, offered Jews only horrific death.

Hans Küng, the renowned German theologian, stresses the Christian predicament is an inability to reconcile the fact that "without the almost two-thousand-year-long pre-history of 'Christian' anti-Judaism . . . [the Holocaust] would not have been possible!"[177] Forrest's inability to face this fact propelled him to defend the church in his editorial, "For the War Record."

The Christian predicament may also account for the conscious or unconscious efforts of many Christians like Forrest to minimize the significance of the Holocaust. As Slonim points out, they believe that suffering is universal:

> . . . neither [Clark] Macdonald [a recent moderator of the United Church] nor Howse is willing to concede that it is a unique crime. It is simply different in degree from that of the Assyrians who flayed their enemies and that of Joshua who demolished his foes without a trace. Whether extermination is by knife, crossbow, bullet, flaying alive or burning, says Howse, the history of the annihilation of all minorities is almost a normal part of human shame. "To

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[177]Küng, Introduction to Christians and Jews, eds., Hans Küng and Walter Kasper (NY: Seabury Press, 1974), p. 11.

> that extent Hitler did only what Joshua did." . . . Both men contend the sorrow of the world is universal and therefore indivisible, that Jews are identical in their failings when in power, and in their suffering when powerless, with all mankind and deserve no special concern.[178]

Although the Holocaust may not be quantitatively different from any other human mass destruction, it is qualitatively without parallel. "Unique in all human history," says Emil Fackenheim, "the Holocaust is evil for evil's sake."[179] Those who were put into concentration camps were not enemy soldiers or even civilian victims of war. They were largely assimilated members of a society singled out for special treatment. There have been other genocides in history, but even the massacred Armenians were not subjected to systematic dehumanization.

The Nazis prided themselves on their efficiency; it was anything but efficient to spend war funds on killing off productive members of society. And the case of the concentration camp victim forced to choose which of her children would be gassed and which would be spared served no other purpose than to break down her morality and humanity. How can anyone compare that to Joshua's military conquests or even the mob violence of the pogroms?

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[178]Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 103.

[179]Fackenheim, "The People Israel Lives," p. 298.

It is true, from the perspective of universal suffering, the Holocaust represents the utmost evil that human beings can perpetrate against other human beings. The very term has become symbolic of the very worst in human inhumanity. It is no wonder that if one wants to heighten people's emotions to some calamity the word "holocaust" is applied. Moreover, in making the term too particularistic to those times and to those perpetrators and victims, there is the danger of thinking that other people are not equally capable of such atrocities or that it could not happen again.

At the same time, however, the Holocaust was a uniquely Jewish experience; for it was the Jews who were the object of the "final solution." Even the term "holocaust" is a uniquely Jewish term. It derives from the biblical "whole-burnt offering." Writes Lucy Dawidowicz, "The implication is unmistakable: once again in their history the Jews are victims, sacrifices."[180] The Holocaust is the image of European Jewry burning in the crematorium. The term cannot be properly applied to any other situation.[181] "Genocide"

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[180]Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews 1933-1945 (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. xxiv.

[181]The murder of Leon Klinghoffer in October 1985 by the terrorist hijackers of the Achille Lauro, has been called a "holocaust of one." Although the incident was an atrocity, it was neither genocide nor holocaust. Also, "Nuclear Holocaust" has become a popular phrase of late. But even the self-annihilation of the human race is qualitatively different from the systematic dehumanization and murder of European Jewry under the Nazis.

is the universal term. The Holocaust is the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews.

Furthermore, how can any Christian say that the Jews as victims of the Holocaust "deserve no special concern" when the vilification of the Jews under the Nazis rested firmly on the foundation of two thousand years of Christian animosity? The "final solution" was the final solution of the Jewish problem that had haunted Christianity for centuries. The greatest hurdle in the Christian predicament is acknowledging Christianity's role in preparing the way for the Holocaust.

Some Christians involved in the controversy have, at least, gone as far as recognizing the sorry record of Christian treatment of Jews at home during the war years. Rev. Bruce McLeod, for example, says:

> I grew up in Toronto, you see, which is significant. Al Forrest grew up in Lindsay [about 100 miles northeast of Toronto, pop. 13,000] where there were probably not too many Jewish people. I, however, grew up in a city with lots of Jewish people and well remember, though I was young then . . . that in the 1930s in this city anti-Jewish feeling was extremely high. I had the opportunity to look into it because for three years after my term as moderator I was a commissioner on the Human Rights Commission in Toronto . . . On Balmy Beach where I live now there were signs that "NO JEWS ALLOWED ON BEACH."
>
> I went to a very good boys school in this city, Upper Canada College. And in 1942 I remember a Jewish boy in my class coming in after recess finding his desk all chalked over with dreadful antisemitic epitaphs. And I still remember his face as he wiped it off . . . and that boy is now my contemporary in Toronto. I know when I say anything, for instance,

> critical of Israel, he hears me not as an objective reporter or detached observer, but as a Christian through his memory of what had been the Jewish experience with Christians in this city. So, its not that I hesitate to criticize Israel, but I raise my awareness of how they'll be heard.

Demson believes "there's some bad conscience, but then there's also some resentment that one has a bad conscience in relation to Jews." This resentment is also part of the Christian predicament. In practice, there seems to be three main ways Christians deal with their predicament. Many simply ignore it and relegate the atrocities of the past to the net of universal suffering. Some even toss it back in the face of Jews as criticisms of Israel, unjustly comparing the treatment of Palestinians under the Israelis to the Nazi torture of Jews.

An example of this is found in "Harsh Life Under the Israeli Boot" (1 December 1968): Forrest described the demolishing of the houses of "commandos" (his word for terrorists) as extreme and unjust punishment. This Israeli action to root out terrorists may be unjust, or at least not the best means of handling the situation. In any case, it can hardly be compared to gas chambers, castration "experiments," the use of babies for rifle practice and all the other barbarisms of the Nazis to which Jews and other innocents were subjected. To suggest any similarity between the policies of the Jewish state and the practices of the Nazis is not just highly insensitive, it is malicious.

Other Christians, however, have attempted to deal with their predicament through frank discussions with Jews. Eckardt states:

> The new "dialogue" of Jews and Christians has not arisen because of any positive alteration or development within Jewish life in its essence. For Jews living in a "Christian" milieu, the internal need to confront that environment in the 1970s [or 1980s] is, in principle, no different from what it was in the 1920s or the 1870s. The peculiarities of the dialogue are largely a Christian problem. If nothing has changed for Jews, everything has changed for Christians. Christians have finally come under open attack by guilt.[182]

Reviewing the United Church Observer controversy, Clark MacDonald says, "It developed in part because Christians failed to realize the traumatic aftermath of the Holocaust on the Jewish people."[183] The controversy also developed in part because Christians failed to realize the traumatic aftermath of the Holocaust on themselves.

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[182] Eckardt, Your People, My People, p. 187.

[183] MacDonald, personal interview, Toronto, 5 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Clark MacDonald).

CHAPTER XI

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

The Christian predicament and Jewish sensitivities to judgments of Israel (especially by Christians) have deep theological roots, as indicated in the previous chapter. Reuben Slonim writes:

> With liberals predominant in both the United Church and the Jewish community, one might have expected theology to play a lesser role in their dispute, but it looms large. Indeed, according to some academics, it is as fundamental in United Church-Jewish relations as in general Christian-Jewish attitudes.[184]

Father Gregory Baum maintains, "No issue involving Jews can possibly remain a superficial phenomenon in a Christian Church. The Jews are too deeply woven into Christian language, Christian symbols, Christian worship."[185] He adds, "This is very painful for contemporary Christians to admit. Usually this negative symbolism is repressed."

Liberal Christians who believe themselves above prejudice are particularly resistant to such a suggestion. They believe antisemitism has by and large been rooted out of society except among some radical fringe elements.

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[184] Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 122.

[185] Baum, letter to Reuben Slonim, Toronto, Slonim Collection, National Archives, Ottawa.

Nevertheless, the old image of the Jews as the Christ-killers and the Shylocks of the world conspiring together still persists. It is reinforced by continued contact with sacred texts and by literature coming out of Arab countries. Nazem Nuseibeh, while Jordan's delegate to the United Nations said, "it is a well-known fact that the Zionists are the richest people in the world and control much of its destiny."[186]

The assertion comes directly from the notion of a world Jewish conspiracy first popularized in the notorious forgery, Protocols of the Elders of Zion. According to Daniel Pipes, visiting foreign dignitaries to Arab countries are often presented with copies of the Protocols. He writes, "While living in Tunis in 1970, I picked up a French translation published in Lebanon, and distributed gratis by the Saudi consulate."[187]

Forrest repeatedly cited Arab fears of Zionist expansionism. The worst bitterness in the controversy was over his publication of the Booth article, "How Zionists Manipulate Your News." This article was no longer a summary of the Arab case as it had been found previously in the Observer, but its total acceptance--and in the vilest of forms. Except for the insertion of the term "Zionist," the picture--of a

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[186]Cited by Daniel Pipes, "The Politics of Muslim Anti-Semitism," Commentary, August 1981, p. 39.

[187]Pipes, p. 42.

carefully orchestrated "penetration of every part of our nation" by Jewish organizations and synagogues--was the same as that portrayed by the Protocols. If Forrest did not regard this article he himself requested as antisemitism, it is only because he believed himself above prejudice. As Alan Davies points out, "the liberal mind, which believes itself above prejudice, is extremely resistant."[188]

The insidious spread of prejudice by Arab nations is predicated upon Christian antisemitism still fed by ancient passages of Christian scripture. Taken within the context of history, the verses of the New Testament represent a time when the followers of Jesus were attempting to define their own identity as separate from the Jewish religion of their master and his apostles. But a less sophisticated reading identifies the corrupt and murderous Jews of the Gospels with the Jews of today. For instance, Acts 7:51-52 reads:

> You stiff-necked people, uncircumcized in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous one whom you have now betrayed and murdered.

Echoing the same sentiment, Forrest wrote in the 1 February 1969 issue, "the Jews too often in times past

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[188]Davies, letter to Reuben Slonim, Toronto, Slonim Collection, National Archives, Ottawa.

maligned their wisest and ablest prophets."[189] Arnold Ages remarked, "it would be most interesting to know what 'prophet' Mr. Forrest had in mind."[190] Forrest also employed other well-worn images such as the unnamed "rich friend" from Los Angeles, "his jewelry hoarding wife, and their fat Florida friends."[191] He sat watch one Christmas with a Bethlehem shepherd who talked about "olden days," and contrasted the holiness of that experience with the "truck-loads of Israeli soldiers, their automatic weapons on display."[192] It is easy to draw the same conclusion as de Corneille, that the Arabs were like the faithful shepherds in the days of Jesus and the Jews like the oppressor Herod.

Rosemary Ruether identifies the basis for such a Christian position which continues to wittingly or unwittingly malign the Jews as the "left hand of Christology."[193] She contends that the very affirmation of Jesus as the Christ involved and became dependent upon a delegitimation of Judaism. Following the teachings of Jesus necessarily required the abrogation of Jewish law. But the son of God could not be in contradiction with divine scripture, so with Acts 7:53,

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[189] Observer, 1 February 1969, p. 9.

[190] Ages, ADL Basic Documents, p. 5.

[191] Observer, 1 December 1968, p. 29.

[192] Observer, 15 December 1969, p. 27.

[193] Ruether, Faith and Fractricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism (NY: Seabury Press, 1974), p. 12.

Christians held that the Jews corrupted or simply did not keep "the law as delivered by angels." Christians became the new Israel replacing the old Israel which was corrupt. Therefore Ruether maintains, denigration of Jews became basic to Christian theology and continues to exert an influence on Christian attitudes today.

Theology may account in part for many of the criticisms Christians make towards the Jewish State. At the foundation of the arguments are four related theological notions of: (1) the fall of the "old" Israel, (2) the wandering Jew, (3) Jewish sufferance, and (4) the Holy Land.

First, Christian theology has held that in punishment for their alleged crucifixion of Jesus, the Jews would not be restored in their ancient homeland until they came to believe in him as Christ. The turn of history has not eliminated this affirmation of faith for many Christians. Some rationalize the reestablishment of the Jewish State as "the work of the devil."[194] Such a theology may account, to some degree, for the readiness of many Christians to believe in the inhumanities of the Jewish State.

A second issue in Christian theology, related to the first, is the notion of the wandering Jew. Much of Jewish "wanderings" in the past have been the result of Christian

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[194]Eckardt, Elder and Younger Brothers: The Encounter of Jews and Christians (NY: Charles Seribner's Sons, 1967), p. 171.

persecution. The reestablishment of Israel, however, brought an end to this wandering image. The settlers of Israel, many of whom are survivors of the Holocaust, have resolved, according to Alan Davies:

> We may die on the sands of Palestine, but we will never again accommodate ourselves to your good graces or your prejudices. There may some day be another Massada . . . There will never be another Auschwitz. . . . We have folded our tents. We will be wanderers no longer.[195]

For Jews living in the Diaspora, there is the assurance of a home to which they will unconditionally be welcome. This has reinforced the importance of the survival of the Jewish state for the great majority of Jews outside of Israel. For many Christians, this has become an overrated point which they do not understand. They ask, "why can't Jews just see themselves as Canadians (or Americans, or Frenchmen, etc.) like everybody else?" Jewish attachment to Israel is regarded as a dual loyalty. They do not see a need for Israel to be a Jewish refuge.

For many Jews in the world, the need is very real. In Arab lands, particularly Syria, Jewish remnants face increasing (government-sponsored) antisemitism, as recorded by the 1980 policy statement of the National Council of Chur-

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[195] Observer, August 1970, p. 36.

ches.[196] Jews from the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Latin America and elsewhere find Israel a refuge from antisemitism, repression, famine and unstable governments.

Even Jews living securely under Western Democratic governments are not completely assured that another Hitler may not again rise up in the midst of troubled times and point to the Jews (or the "Zionists") as the source of their nations' ills. Many people call this paranoia, few acknowledge its cause. As Rabbi Pearlson puts it, "two thousand years of Christian love would make anybody nervous."

While nervousness over antisemitism reinforces outside Jewish support for the State of Israel, within Israel the attitude has become one of defiance. Jewish defiance stands in the face of a traditional Christian belief that "the Jewish people is an anachronism which may survive, if at all, only on sufferance."[197] This is the third issue in Christian theology which gives rise to criticisms of Israel.

Krister Stendahl, former head of Harvard Divinity School, observes that, "A militarily victorious and politically strong Israel cannot count on half as much good will as a threatened Jewish people in danger of its second holocaust."[198]

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[196]Cited by Rael Jean Isaac, "Liberal Protestants Versus Israel," Midstream 27:8 (October 1981): 10.

[197]Fackenheim, "The People Israel Lives," p. 306.

[198]Stendahl, "Judaism on Christianity: Christianity on Judaism," in Disputation and Dialogue, ed. Frank Talmage (NY: Ktav Publ. House, 1975), p. 306.

This was most noticeable following the Six-Day War when the Israelis were no longer perceived as the underdogs after their victory over the Arab armies.

Many Christians display their inability to understand or accept the aggressiveness of the Jewish state in their criticisms of Israeli retaliatory strikes. In the Observer, for instance, Forrest rarely mentioned the reasons for Israeli retaliation in the first place.

Among Israelis there is a determination that they will do whatever they have to do to survive. According to Eckardt, they have an attitude that, "We will not accept annihilation as our fate. If you refuse to acknowledge our dignity as human beings, you must expect to take the consequences."[199]

The first three issues in Christian theology arise out of a conflict between what has traditionally been expected from Jews and continued Israeli defiance of these expectations. The fourth issue arises out of a Christian romance with the the land of the Bible. There is a common feeling among Christians that supermarkets and highrises have no place in the Holy Land. In the Christmas story with the Bethlehem shepherd, Forrest described how it was better in the "olden days" (before the Israelis), pointing with dismay to a neon star erected above the Church of the Nativity.[200]

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[199]Eckardt, Your People, My People, p. 231.

[200]Observer, 15 December 1969, p. 26.

Christian resentment of Israel's introduction of modern Western society stems partly from nostaligia and partly from a dichotomy between such notions as "sacred" and "secular," "religion" and "politics." Hence, nationalism or Zionism is seen, from a Christian perspective, as being a purely secular or political phenomenon. Judaism, however, is more than a religion; it is a way of life. As such, politics may be viewed as part of religious life, and nationalism as part of the people of Israel.[201] As an example of such diverse points of view, Rev. Donald Ray, former secretary to the General Council of the United Church, notes:

> . . . very frequently its the culture that overtakes religious faith because the symbols that are used can be very powerful symbols--symbols of nationalism and symbols of survival. . . . and this is especially true for minorities. . . . certainly for Jews.[202]

For Jews, however, this in not necessarily the case because symbols of culture, like nationalism, do not vie with symbols of religious faith. They <u>are</u> symbols of religous faith for Jews.

Jewish attachment to the land of Israel stretches back to the beginnings of Judaism, to God's covenant with Abraham

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[201]For further discussion of semantic matters see Chapter XIII.

[202]Ray, personal interview, Toronto, 1 March 1984.

(Gen. 17:7-8). The covenant was reaffirmed with the children of Israel following their exodus from Egypt: "And the Lord said to him; this is the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, 'I will give it to your offspring'" (Deut. 34:4).

The land of Israel thus became the fulcrum of the Jewish people's covenant with God. It was only there that all of God's commandments could be fulfilled, and it was only there that the children of Israel could realize their fullest potential as a people. Since the Israelites first settled in what came to be known as Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel, it was never again completely devoid of Jews. Even after the destruction of the First and Second Temples, when the majority of Jews were forced to live in exile, Jewish attachment to Israel continued to be expressed in religious ceremonies and prayers.

Zion, which very early in Jewish history became a synonym for Jerusalem, came to symbolize the yearning of the Jewish people for its homeland. Thus the psalmist laments: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion" (Ps. 137:1). And throughout the ages, Jews daily prayed: "Let our eyes behold Thy return in mercy to Zion."

The root of the modern term "Zionism" is "Zion." Here is the theological foundation for the political movement with

the goal of returning the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael.[203] Because of their distinction between nationalism and religion, many Christians find it difficult to appreciate the theological underpinnings of Zionism. They therefore relegate the question of Israel to the political arena as having nothing to do with religion.

There is a lesson to be learned from Father Edward Flannery. He describes Judaism as a trinity of people, Torah, and the land of Israel. As for Israel, he says:

> There can no longer be any question but that the vast majority of Jews have identified with the State of Israel, whether they see it merely as a refuge from anti-Semitism, a source of Jewish identity, or as a messianic fulfillment. Israel has always been central to Jewish belief and to the Jewish soul, and in times of exile, an object of aspiration and prayer. The latest return to the land has revived the sense of this centrality to Jews everywhere.[204]

The role of Israel in Jewish theology has been variously interpreted by different groups of Jews at different times in history. Prayers for the return of the exiles to Zion and for a messianic restoration of Israel were common among all Jews until modern times. In the last century, Reform Judaism rejected a return to Zion as too particularistic. More liberal messianic notions were presented at the

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[203] For a discussion of political Zionism see Chapter XIII.

[204] Flannery, "A Christian View of Israel," cited by Roy Eckardt, Your People, My People, p. 115.

ground-breaking Pittsburgh Conference in 1885:

> We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect the approaching of the realization of Israel's great messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.[205]

By 1937, however, the "Pittsburgh Platform" was already modified by a conference of Reform rabbis in Columbus, Ohio. While affirming the loyalty of Jews to the nations in which they lived, the 1937 conference renewed the ties of Reform Jews to the ancient hope of a Jewish return to Israel. A statement issued by the conference reads:

> In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in this upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven or refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life. . . .[206]

Orthodox Jews have maintained the traditional notion of a personal Messiah who will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem

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[205] Louis Jacobs, s.v. "Messiah," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 1415.

[206] Ibid.

and bring about the ingathering of the exiles. Like Reform Jews, but for very different reasons, Orthodox Jews initially opposed the establishment of the State of Israel. While Reform Jews objected that Jewish nationalism was unnecessary and overly particularistic, Orthodox Jews rejected secular attempts at redemption. In time, the overwhelming majority of Orthodox Jews, like their Reform coreligionists, found theological significance in the establishment of the Jewish state. Louis Jacobs writes:

> with the establishment of the State of Israel, the widely held Orthodox view was to see the events in Israel as athalta de-geulla, "the beginning of the redemption," i.e., the foundations laid by humans, under God's guidance, ready to receive the building to be erected by God's direct act.[207]

Conservative Judaism always found theological support for the State of Israel; and many of the Zionist movement's staunchest advocates came from their ranks. Among the small minority of Jews who still ideologically oppose the State of Israel are those who belong to the American Council for Judaism or to the Neturei Karta. The former group derives its inspiration from classical Reform Judaism, the latter from the ultra-Orthodoxy.

The American Council for Judaism upholds a division between nationality and religion, and in agreement with

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[207] Ibid., p. 1416.

nineteenth century Reform, views Judaism as a "religion of universal values--not a nationality." Furthermore, "Israel is the homeland of its own citizens only, and not of all Jews."[208] The Council, which often promotes Arab anti-Israel sentiments, lost many of its supporters following the 1967 Six-Day War.

The Neturei Karta, on the other hand, reject the secular Jewish state as a sin and a denial of God. They remain a small and independent ultra-religious community concentrated in the Me'ah She'arim quarter of Jerusalem. Consisting of only a few dozen families, according to Menachem Friedman, "they gained some support in wider Orthodox circles by creating periodic religious controversies."[209]

Such Jewish opposition to the State of Israel is small and isolated in comparison with the great majority of Jews who find their identity bound up with the Jewish state. This is especially true in Canada where the Zionist movement, from its inception, had the endorsement of the overwhelming majority of Canadian Jews. It fostered not only support for the Jewish homeland, but also Jewish identity among the largely immigrant population. The strongest anti-Zionist force in

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[208] Frank Sundheim, s.v. "American Council for Judaism," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 820.

[209] Friedman, s.v. "Neturei Karta," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 1003.

Western Europe and the United States--the Reform movement--was virtually absent in Canada. Even the few Reform congregations did not try to denationalize their Judaism.

There was not the same "melting pot" mentality, as in the United States, in a nation with two official languages and ethnic groups. The Canadian census (unlike the American) has also defined Jews by both religion and ethnicity. Thus, Rabbi de Sola could declare in 1908: "Palestine is my fatherland, England [read: Canada] is my motherland, is a perfect definition of our position as British [read: Canadian] Jews."[210]

As Flannery points out, there are many bases of Jewish attachment to Israel. But any political discussion of Zionism must begin with an appreciation of Jewish historical and religious ties to Eretz Yisrael.

Putting the State of Israel in perspective is as important for Jews as it is for Christians. For many Jews, Israel is not only regarded as a central component of Jewish theology, but as the central component. For them, the political state has become sacred. According to Slonim, "the highest value in Judaism today is the State of Israel and it can do no wrong." He adds, "if you cast doubt on Israel you're challenging this sacred theology."[211]

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[210]Cited by Stuart Rosenberg, vol. 2, p. 17; see also Louis Rosenberg, p. 138; Shaffir and Weinfeld, pp. 14-16.

[211]Slonim, interview.

This attitude is most apparent among Jews, especially outside of Israel, who label any criticism of Israel as anti-semitism. Such quickness to uphold all Israeli policies and actions as just and honorable clouds the issues, and makes it all the more difficult to distinguish between antisemitic slander and legitimate complaints.

The State of Israel is also part of the sacred theology of some Christians. Rather than regarding the Jewish state as a defiance of Christian theology, they see it as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. This is common among fundamentalist and evangelical Christians.

Outside of Israel, these Christians are suspected of having missionary intentions, and their advances towards Jewish-Christian dialogue are usually spurned. Within Israel, however, their support is largely welcomed. The government and Jewish agencies in Israel have joined with various evangelical groups in sponsoring projects beneficial to the state.

As a gesture of identification with the State of Israel and with Jews, the International Christian Embassy was established in Jerusalem in 1980. This was a response by evangelical Christians to the UN condemnation of Israel's "Jerusalem Law," the law making Jerusalem Israel's capital, after which many countries responded by moving their embassies from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv.

Theological issues loomed large in the controversy.

They accounted, to some degree, for both Jewish and Christian support of and objections to the State of Israel. The Observer printed articles portraying Jewish Zionists as wealthy, arrogant and manipulating. The old images blended with pastoral scenes of simple Arab shepherds. And Forrest was aided in his denigration of Israel by William Gottlieb of the American Council for Judaism.

At the same time, many in the Canadian Jewish community defended the State of Israel with religious zeal. And they received support from Christians like Dolores Nicholls, Alan Davies and David Demson. These Christians have not necessarily favored Israel for theological reasons. They have defended the Jewish state mainly on humanitarian grounds, upholding Israel's right to exist and deploring Arab threats of genocide and acts of terrorism.

Humanitarian grounds have also been used to champion the cause of the Arabs. The issues are as complex and heated as those involving history or theology, and are especially intertwined with the theology of the New Left.

CHAPTER XII

HUMANISM

At the basis of humanism, is the concern for human welfare. It is tied to such notions as rights and freedoms. At a time when the world seems perched precariously on the edge of destruction, it is above all a concern for the safety of the world.

This was Forrest's stated basis of his whole position. He declared, "The Arab-Israeli conflict is a threat to peace and security in the world."[212] He was disturbed by the homeless and the injustice he perceived. For Jews, this was not at issue. Most Jews were equally troubled over the warring between Israelis and Arabs. Only the heartless could not be touched by the plight of the homeless. But for Jews, these included the Jewish refugees.

From the Jewish perspective, the real core of the issue was:

> . . . Forrest's attempt to pile up story after story of Arab misfortune and then deftly pin the responsibility for that misfortune on Zionism and Israel. Unfortunate events which have occured within the context of war in the Middle East are extrapolated by the editor in order to become the rallying point for insensate hatred towards Israel. Mr. Forrest makes cynical use of human tragedies to build a tendentious case against Israel.[213]

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[212] Observer, 15 September 1967, p. 10.

[213] Ages, ADL Basic Documents, p. 11.

If Forrest was concerned the Arab-Israeli conflict was a threat to world peace he did little to ease the tensions. Forrest was in fact faulted by Douglas Young, of the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, for writing not for peace but for the perpetuation of Arab animosity toward Israel. In Family Quarrel, Slonim writes:

> . . . The Observer could have made a greater contribution to the acceptance of the Palestinian plight (in fairness to its readers as well as to the Jewish position) if it had rounded out the problem and presented it in depth instead of publishing one-sided sentimental pieces which made victims out of the Palestinians and villians out of the Israelis. . . . and in so doing not only impeded Christian-Jewish understanding, but precipitated an open quarrel.[214]

Others concerned over the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially in Israel, have translated their concern into an impetus for healing among the religious faiths. Charles LaFontaine of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute puts it bluntly: "talk before you destroy one another."[215] The controversy, however, filled the channels of communication with bitter accusations and hostility.

In addition, Forrest's concern for humanity was tainted by his singular regard for the Palestinian people almost

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[214]Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 115.

[215]LaFontaine, "To Trialogue and Back," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 14 (1977): 402.

to the exclusion of other human suffering at that time, for example, in Biafra and Vietnam. Did these victims of starvation and bloody war rate less importance in the eyes of Forrest? It is hard to believe that a man so highly regarded for his sensitivity to human suffering could be insensitive to other tragic world problems.

Forrest explained his dedication to the Palestinian plight as giving air to an untold story. He advocated the Arab cause because he believed the media was biased toward Israel. He felt it was his duty, in the name of humanism, to "balance" the presentation.[216]

"Humanism" has been as abused on the Christian side, as "antisemitism" has on the Jewish side; the misuse and over-use does an injustice to both terms.[217] In the case of humanism, the rights of all are to be guarded. It is therefore not the duty of a journalist or any writer to "balance" news by presenting one side only, nor to describe the suffering of only one side in a war. Writes Ages:

> no sensitive person can help but commiserate with these suffering people. Mr. Forrest conveys the impression that the Israelis alone are responsible for their condition. But in war everyone suffers. Jewish children have also been casualties . . . Mr. Forrest knows that in war innocent children are maimed and

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[216]See, for example, Observer, 1 October 1967, p. 9.

[217]For a discussion of antisemitism see Chapter XIII.

killed. A fair-minded journalist should express concern for everyone's children.[218]

Partisan views on the Middle East may be expected from such magazines as Arab World or American Zionist. The editor of a church magazine, however, has an obligation not to "balance the news" but to present balanced news.

Nevertheless, Forrest was not alone in his views. He was part of a growing interest among liberal Protestants in Canada and elsewhere in "liberation theology"--a position that draws upon Christian religious teaching to champion the cause of subjugated peoples. In their particular advocacy of liberation theology, writers like Forrest and John Bennett in the United States, asserted a position which has come to be called the Christian New Left.

On the surface, liberation theology has more to do with humanism than with theology. As described by Father Marcel Dubois, it is part of theology of revolution "which is elaborated by Christian political leaders to validate the struggle for justice and for the defence of the downtrodden."[219] The Christian New Left is concerned with the destiny of underdeveloped countries and human rights. Since they are

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[218]Ages, ADL Basic Documents, p. 11. This is equally true of many guilty Jewish publications that in loyalty to Israel have not given air to legitimate criticism of policies of the state.

[219]Dubois, "Israel: Its Significance for Jewish-Christian Relations," a lecture delivered to the International Conference of Christians and Jews, Jerusalem, June 1976.

socio-politically supportive of the poor, on behalf of the poor Palestinian refugees, they are politically against Israel. In the name of justice, the cause of the Palestinians is often raised as a symbol of all who are oppressed and exploited, making Israel the supreme villain. Father Gregory Baum explains:

> . . . the New Left tried to understand world problems in terms of oppressor and oppressed and therefore applied this model to the Israel situation, putting Israel in the place of the oppressor. The New Left analysis could not recognize that in Israel we have the tragic conflict of two liberation movements, of just claims that collided, and that a simple oppressor/oppressed analysis simply distorts the facts.[220]

Dubois maintains that while Christians of the New Left are politically against Israel, in the end, they are theologically opposed to Jews and Judaism.[221] Such an assertion has led to a great deal of debate in general, and in the United Church Observer controversy in particular.

Forrest rejected the label of antisemitism. In his view and in the view of many who identify with the New Left, antisemitism is a deplorable form of racism that is associated with the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan, certainly not with a universalist Protestant liberalism. According to Dubois

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[220] Baum, letter to Reuben Slonim, Toronto, 18 July 1974, Slonim Collection, National Archives, Ottawa.

[221] For a discussion of the theological basis of many criticisms of Israel see Chapter XI.

and others, however, the hostility of the New Left is directed, knowingly or unknowingly, at both Israel and Jews. It is a "peculiar blend of an uncritical celebration of the Third World and a theological antisemitism that is nourished by a Christian universalism which cannot abide the earthiness of a Jewish particularism."[222]

When liberal Protestants and Jews in Canada continually found themselves on the same side combatting the establishment and fighting for social justice, there was a feeling of common cause. The feeling was reinforced by the dual nature of Canada which had always associated Jews with Protestant anglophones, rather than with French Roman Catholics. It was therefore natural, says Professor Grant, that "in Montreal for example, when Jews came along they became part of the Protestant school board, so that . . . Protestants would on the whole consider themselves closer to Jews than to Catholics." But when Jews, including those of the Reform branch, forwarded their own particular interests, first in separate education and then in Zionism, the common cause changed to divisivness.

Of the United Church, Alan Davies says:

> The United Church has never been critical of its own particularistic assumptions regarding the "Christian" character of Canadian society, for example (witness

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[222] Dubois, lecture; cf. Glazer, "Jewish Interests," pp. 34-35.

> the tensions in Ontario over the place of religious instruction in the public school), although Canada has no established church. United Church liberalism is largely tied to a W.A.S.P. vision of society--hence, Judaism can only be regarded as either another "denomination" or a stranger within the gate. . . . Thus Jewish liberalism and Protestant liberalism only united Jews and Protestants as long as the hidden particularistic assumptions did not surface. Today, over both the Middle East, which has brought Jewish particularism to the surface, and over the decline of the old W.A.S.P. establishment in Ontario, which has brought Protestant particularism to the surface, liberal Jews and Christians have collided.[223]

Forrest is an example of such WASP liberalism which regards Canadian society as Christian and Jews as another denomination or as strangers. In one article, Forrest told an Arab woman "at length what a beautiful, friendly, Christian city" Toronto is.[224] In another article he wrote, "I believe we should treat Jews exactly like Anglicans, Presbyterians, Englishmen and everybody else."[225] The problem is that Jews are not another Protestant denomination in Canadian society.

To David Demson, United Church liberalism "is still very much a kind of WASP liberalism." Liberal Protestants want to show themselves open to Jews, he points out, but not if Jews are going to start expressing special interests.

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[223] Davies, letter to Reuben Slonim, Toronto, 10 June 1974, Slonim Collection, National Archives, Ottawa.

[224] Observer, 1 April 1967, p. 13.

[225] Observer, 1 April 1968, p. 27.

He explains:

> Although one avows pluralism and one means it in society, at the same time, one doesn't want to meet any other attitude than one that is avowing pluralism. So if they meet another group that has definite and very clear opinions and loyalties and supports, many of the people in the United Church will feel uncomfortable. What they're really looking for is not a whole plurality of outlooks, but someone who in principle approves of a plurality of outlooks.

As an example, he says his colleagues at Emmanuel College would be horrified if laws or practices were instituted discriminating against certain groups in society. "But if it came to having a Hungarian teach on the faculty here, for instance, he'd never get a hearing" because the Hungarian would represent a different style of teaching. And since he "wouldn't be 'open' in the way they're 'open' they'd never have him on the faculty." According to Emil Fackenheim, Forrest had this same "kind of liberal openness provided the Jews keep their place."[226]

In principle, liberalism promotes tolerance as the logical extension of a belief in individual freedoms. It is the Voltairian notion of defending to the death an individual's right to say something with which you disagree. But human nature being what it is, even the most liberal of liberals finds it difficult to live up to such a standard. This is particularly true of those who firmly believe they are in

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[226]Fackenheim, letter (taped).

the right. Says Davies:

> . . . liberals, who define themselves as above prejudice, always confuse their own sujective ideas with objective truth. If they are religious as well, this failing frequently produces a self-righteous style which has been present in the UC in considerable measure.[227]

This, of course, is also true among Jewish liberals. And when the belief that one is right is combined with what is perceived as a personal attack, liberals of any sort will condemn those who oppose them. While members of the United Church defended Forrest's editorial freedom, his opponents were attacked for expressing their opposition. In essence, freedom of expression was upheld for one individual but refused for others. Fackenheim asks, "Where is the freedom of speech for those who disagree with him?"[228] In Family Quarrel, Slonim writes:

> Our mistake was in confusing liberalism with the absence of "envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness." We forgot that basic to liberalism, as to all schools of thought, is human nature, and when that is compounded with controversial issues, immensely powerful and by no means understood, the result is passionate conflict.[229]

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[227] Loc. cit.

[228] Loc. cit.

[229] Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 59.

An individual's fundamental right to express his or her opinions is hindered not only by human nature but also by law. In Canadian law, such limitations are called libel, slander and the promotion of hatred towards an identifiable group.[230]

In this respect, Forrest and many of his supporters saw the accusation of antisemitism as libelous. Many of Forrest's opponents, on the other hand, saw Forrest's writings not only as critical of Israel but also as promoting hatred towards Israel's Jewish supporters. The issue came to the fore with the libel suits between Forrest and the B'nai B'rith.

The libel suits moved the controversy far afield from concerns for humanity. They demonstrated the extent to which complex issues of organization, history, theology and humanism combined with politics could create misunderstandings and strife. The statement of reconciliation between the Jewish community and the United Church did not resolve the issues. It did, however, open the way to communication.

Perhaps the most troublesome issues were not of Church neutrality or Jewish solidarity, nor of past persecutions, Jewish sensitivity and the Christian predicament, nor of religious views making the state of Israel wicked or sacred,

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[230] See the Criminal Code of Canada, sections 261-281, 434, 513, 557 and 656, cited in Wilfred Kesterton, The Law and the Press in Canada (Ottawa: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), p. 66 f.

nor of a humanism which champions the cause of Israel or of the Palestinians. Perhaps the stickiest issues involved semantics. Afterall, there can be little true communication without an agreement on the meaning of key concepts and words.

CHAPTER XIII

SEMANTICS

Words, writes John Locke:

> . . . come to excite in men certain ideas so constantly and readily, that they are apt to suppose a natural connexion between them. But that they signify only men's peculiar ideas, and that by a perfect arbitrary imposition, is evident, in that they often fail to excite in others (even that use the same language) the same ideas we take them to be signs of: and every man has so inviolable a liberty to make words stand for what ideas he pleases, that no one hath the power to make others have the same ideas in their minds that he has, when they use the same words that he does.[231]

Such discrepancy over the meanings of terms was discussed earlier with regard to "religion" and "nationalism."[232] Nationalism, or more specifically, Zionism, is one of the most controversial concepts in any dispute between Christians and Jews. In the controversy between the United Church and the Jewish community, it was regarded variously as "racist Israeli ideology," "clever propaganda," and a "world conspiracy," as well as "this most pure form of a national liberation movement."

In addition to "Zionism," the disputants viewed from

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[231] Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Great Books of the Western World, vol. 35 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), p. 254b.

[232] See Chapter XI.

different perspectives the relationship between "Jews" and "Zionists," and had contrasting notions of "Jewish peoplehood" and the meaning of "chosenness." The difficulty with most of these terms is one of Jewish self-definition in conflict with Christian perceptions. This is the age-old "Jewish question."

JEWS are people unlike any other people. This has been a Christian (and before them pagan) complaint for centuries. The root of Jewish distinctiveness is their adherence to the Torah (as law or as the basis or Jewish culture, or both) and accumulated traditions. According to the great Jewish thinker, Ahad Ha-am (Asher Hirsch Ginsberg):

> A Jew may be a liberal of liberals without forgetting that Judaism was born in a corner and has always lived in a corner, aloof from the great world, which has never understood it and therefore hates it. So it was before the rise of Christianity, and so it has remained ever since. History has not yet satisfactorily explained how it came about that a tiny nation in a corner of Asia produces a unique religious and ethical outlook, which, though it has had so profound an influence on the rest of the world, has yet remained so foreign to the rest of the world, and to this day has been unable either to master it or to be mastered by it. This is a historical phenomenon to which, despite many attempted answers, we must still attach a note of interrogation. But every true Jew, be he orthodox or liberal, feels in the depths of his being that there is something in the spirit of our people--though we do not know what it is--which has prevented us from following the rest of the world along the beaten path, has kept us and our Judaism "in a corner" to this day,

because we cannot abandon the distinctive outlook on which Judaism is based.[233]

Possibly, even the most secular Jews retain some identity with the manners or morals, aspirations or esthetics of their people--whether it is religious laws, nationalism, Jewish ethics, partaking of the Passover seder, or making that annual trek to the synagogue for the High Holy Day services. A vivid portrayal of this point is Philip Roth's Portnoy's Complaint. The protagonist's problem, as Arthur Hertzberg expresses it, is that, "His mother wants him to look and act like an upper-class Gentile, but to come home every Friday night for Shabbat dinner, and to do both very successfully."[234]

This is the Jewish predicament. It is the question of how to be a part of society and still remain distinct; and it is largely a problem of Jewish identity. The basis of Jewish identity is halakhah, the rabbinic code of law, which defines a Jew as someone born of a Jewish mother or a convert to Judaism. Throughout the ages, however, the halakhic definition has often proved unsatisfactory in answering the Jewish quest for meaning.

With the evolution of the term, "Jewish" took on

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[233]Cited by Arthur Hertzberg, Being Jewish in America (NY: Schocken Books, 1979), p. 18.

[234]Ibid., p. 12.

religious, political, and national connotations. Already by the time of Esther (fifth century BCE), "Jew" signified an entity without differentiation between these categories.[235] Even Reform Judaism did not succeed in completely severing the connection.

JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD in its breadth of meaning may be the best answer to the question of Jewish identity, though it does little to solve the Jewish predicament. Slonim writes:

> Peoplehood is different from race, religion, state or culture yet includes them all, with the exception of race. Opponents of Israel describe her as "a racist state" because the definition of a Jew, who is admitted to instant citizenship, follows rabbinic law--one who is born of a Jewish mother. But the same law also recognizes a convert to Judaism. Blood is no criterion of Jewishness.[236]

Jewish peoplehood goes back to God's covenant with Abraham and his seed, "in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). This is the biblical source for Jewish peoplehood, reaffirmed with all of Israel at Sinai and through four thousand years of history. Jewish collectivity

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[235]Yehoshua Grintz, s.v. "Jew," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 22.

[236]Slonim, Family Quarrel, p. 69.

has been reinforced through laws, customs, literature and art.

Throughout Jewish history, Jews were separated from other peoples by different beliefs, practices and aspirations. Their separation was likewise imposed upon them from without by rulers with religious and economic motives. Jews were persecuted for their different world view and financially exploited.[237]

When the world discovered individual rights and liberties, Jews were still despised for continuing to be a people. Alan Davies observes, "Because liberalism is typically individualistic, religion is defined individually, and liberal Protestants are never able to grasp the covenantal or collective dimension to Jewish peoplehood as a religious idea."[238]

The Jewish claim of being the CHOSEN PEOPLE has added to the confusion and animosity of their neighbors. The claim has often been misinterpreted to mean that God chose the Jews as a people superior to others, and selected for some favorable treatment.

The Hebrew Scriptures are full of references to "chosen" as expressing the relationship between God and Israel.

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[237]See Chapter X.

[238]Davies, letter to Reuben Slonim.

But this special relationship does not imply that the people of Israel are inherently better than anyone else. Nor is Israel the spoiled child, as Amos 3:2 indicates: "I have known only you of all the peoples of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." In essence, the covenant imposes extra obligations and responsibilities. This is the source of the ethical monotheism Judaism gave to the world.

Because they are the chosen people, God expects Jews to be "a light unto the nations." Through their covenant with God, the children of Israel are to "be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6), and through them will "all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Samuel Dresner and Byron Sherwin explain:

> Each act that we perform can be either Kiddush Hashem --a sanctification of God--or Hillul Hashem--a profanation of God. Every deed takes on significance. Nothing can be left to chance.
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> When a Jew keeps the Sabbath, or is charitable and honest, or leads a pure family life, then others will say, "Yes, this is the people of God and it is well to follow them." The task of the Jew is to expand the presence of God in the world, to further His kingdom through one's deeds.[239]

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[239] Dresner and Sherwin, Judaism: The Way of Sanctification (NY: United Synagogue of America, 1978), p. 351.

ZIONISM, like the chosenness of the Jewish people, finds its roots in God's covenant. As indicated earlier, the core of Zionism is Zion, symbol of the homeland promised by God to the Jewish people.[240] This promise does not in itself provide grounds for the political state of Israel; yet it has been the emotional inspiration for it throughout Jewish history.

Howard Sachar writes, "It was the rise of Hebrew literature, of Jewish nationalism, and of czarist persecution which combined to convert the thought of a Return from a pious hope to a dramatic salvation."[241] It was only in the nineteenth century that the old messianic idea was transformed into a modern nationalist movement. The age was one of secularism and social reform. The Enlightenment had extolled reason over dogma, freedom of conscience over religious dominations, and individual rights and liberty over feudal servitude. For the first time in their history, Jews were given equal rights as citizens of their countries.

Jews caught up in the currents of the time sought to introduce Western secular ideas into Jewish intellectual life. The Jewish emancipation, or Haskalah, led to a revival of Hebrew letters and an advancement of Jewish scholarship.

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[240]For a discussion of the theological underpinnings of Zionism see Chapter XI.

[241]Howard Sachar, p. 266.

Although the Haskalah was shortlived under the pressure of assimilation that was inherent in emancipation, it "bequeathed a significant heritage to the subsequent period of Jewish nationalism."[242]

Within a century of the French declaration of the Rights of Man (1789), which held all men equal before the law, Jewish citizenship in the newly created European nations seemed all but complete. Even in Russia there was promise in the liberalism of Alexander II. Leaders of the Russian Haskalah firmly believed if only the Jews were to become as Russian as the Russians they would be granted full equality.

But with the Dreyfus affair in France (1894) and the wave of anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia following the assassination of Alexander II (1881), many Jews realized emancipation and assimilation was not the answer to the Jewish problem. Hertzberg observes:

> From a variety of perspectives the Jew who wanted to become part of the contemporary world was thus faced with ever more complicated dilemmas. He could choose to remake himself even more thoroughly than he had imagined and get rid of every trace of his supposed past nature. He would nonetheless remain confronted by some, such as the German historian Treitschke, who would continue to insist that the most dejudaized of Jews had not yet become German. A future therefore had to be fashioned by the modern Jew in another direction: the creation of some realm of his own within

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[242]Salo Baron, "The Modern Age," in Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People, ed. Leo Shwarz (NY: Random House, 1956), p. 381.

> which he could enter the contemporary would free of the intellectual and physical pressure of his enemies.[243]

The answer was a national definition of Jewish identity. Drawn from deep religious wells, it reemerged as a political ideal. The first concrete movement towards the national renaissance of the Jewish people and their settlement in Eretz Yisrael was Hibbat Zion ("Love of Zion").

Made up largely of disillusioned maskilim (the intelligentsia of the Haskalah), the Lovers of Zion (Hovevei Zion) founded the first modern agricultural settlements in Eretz Yisrael, including Rehovot, Roth Pinah, Rishon-le-Zion, Petah Tikvah, and Zichron Ya'akov. Their motives were practical. Faced with continuing antisemitism, they believed there would be no emancipation for Jews except in their own land. This ideology was expressed in Leo Pinsker's famous work, "Autoemancipation" (1882).

The practical motivations of the Hovevei Zion were sharply criticized by those who thought that Eretz Yisrael should serve not as a refuge, but as a spiritual center for world Jewry. The most renowned representative of this view was Asher Ginzberg writing under the pseudonym, Aḥad Ha'am ("One of the People"). He advocated Jewish scholarship and

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[243]Arthur Hertzberg, s.v. "Jewish Identity," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 61.

culture as the spiritual preparation for the settlement of Eretz Yisrael. Through such a grounding he "hoped to prepare the people for Zionism and protect them against cultural sterility and assimilation."[244]

Despite the importance of Ahad Ha'am's views, it was political Zionism, fathered by Theodor Herzl, that turned the hope of a Jewish return to Eretz Yisrael into a mass movement. As the Paris correspondent of the Vienna Neue Freie Presse, an influential liberal newspaper of the time, he initially proposed as the solution to the Jewish problem the mass conversion of Jewish youth and affiliation with socialism. He later rejected this idea, much influenced by the Dreyfus trial which he attended as a correspondent. Struck by renewed anti-Jewish agitation throughout Europe, especially in France, the birthplace of Jewish emancipation, Herzl concluded that the only solution to the Jewish problem was a Jewish state.[245]

In this respect he unknowingly shared the views of Leo Pinsker and the other disillusioned maskilim. But he went beyond the piecemeal methods of the practical Zionists in working towards the attainment of a document granting

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[244]Eliezer Schweid, s.v. "Ahad Ha-am," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 441-442.

[245]Alexander Bein, s.v. "Herzl, Theodor," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 408.

Jews sovereign rights to a national homeland. Towards this purpose he founded the World Zionist Organization in the fashion of a Jewish parliament. The First Zionist Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland in 1897.

Herzl looked to a Jewish homeland that would be a refuge for Jews, but for the majority of the political Zionists, not any refuge would do. They were tied to the ancient Jewish homeland of Eretz Yisrael. The strength of this bond was evidenced by the uproar Herzl caused at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, when he proposed temporary Jewish settlement in British East Africa. The "Uganda Scheme," as it was called, almost caused a split in the movement until Herzl convinced his opposition that Eretz Yisrael was and would forever remain the goal of Zionism.[246]

As Hertzberg notes, "the bulk of Herzl's followers, even though all assented to his political vision of a national movement treated as an equal among the powers of the powers of the world, came to his Zionism with less clearcut, more complicated motivations."[247] In the end, the movement was one of "synthetic Zionism," a term coined by Chaim Weizmann to indicate the need for political efforts, practical

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[246]Ibid., pp. 417-420.

[247]Hertzberg, s.v. "Zionism," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 1046.

settlement and cultural activities.

Zionism was thus formed of many ideas. It drew upon religious foundations, renewed interest in Jewish scholarship and culture, and the practical considerations of a people subjected to continued hate, and ultimately, to the Holocaust. The movement has included Jews ranging from the political right to the political left, religious Jews and secularists, philanthropists and socialists, intellectuals, artisans, and farmers. It has gained the allegiance of the vast majority of world Jewry, as well as the support of Christians from a diversity of backgrounds and ideologies.

On 14 May 1948, David Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign Jewish state of Israel, thus achieving the main objective of political Zionism. Zionism, however, remains the national liberation movement of the Jewish people; for, as Robert Rockaway emphasizes, "there are Jews yet to be liberated."[248] He explains:

> For the Jews of Russia, Syria and Iraq, Zionism promises religious, cultural, social, political and economic freedom in a Jewish State, free from persecution. For Jews in the free world, Zionism, through the establishment of the State of Israel, has created a new form of Jewish identity. The establishment of the State of Israel created a Jewish policy which is meaningful also to Jews who do not live in it: they feel that its survival is crucial to their own understanding of their Jewish being. Thus, their fate as Jews and the fate of Israel are inextricably bound together.

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[248]Rockaway, "Zionism--Then and Now," in What You Should Know About Zionism, Israel and Racism, ed. Rachmiel Wirnik (NY: World Union of General Zionists, 1967), p. 27.

The twenty-seventh World Zionist Congress, meeting in Jerusalem, June 1968, redefined the aims of Zionism in the "Jerusalem Program," as the following:

1. The unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life;
2. The ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Eretz Yisrael, through aliya from all countries;
3. The strengthening of the State of Israel, founded on the prophetic ideals of justice and peace;
4. The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values;
5. The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.[249]

ANTI-ZIONISM, then, essentially opposes all of this. At its foundation, it rejects all Jewish aspiration for a homeland in Israel. Ultimately, it is an attack on Jews and Judaism. It is as wide a topic as Zionism itself. To be anti-Zionist is to reject not only the political State of Israel, but also the dreams and efforts of Jews to make Israel a refuge and a spiritual center of Jewish life.

This is not necessarily intended by those who find fault with Zionism and Zionists. Sometimes the intention may simply be to criticize some policies of the State of

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[249]Cited by Mordecai Chertoff, ed., Zionism: A Basic Reader (NY: Herzl Press, 1975), p. 88; see also Rockaway, p. 27.

Israel. This was Forrest's aim as he and his defenders stated repeatedly. Even John Berthrong, the present Associate Secretary for Interfaith Dialogue for the United Church of Canada maintains:

> One of the problems that has perennially plagued Jewish-Christian dialogue has been the expectation that there can be no criticism on the part of the Christian churches of the policies of the present government of the State of Israel. I think quite understandably so, and Al Forrest being the most pertinent example that any kind of criticism of any set of policies would be taken as an outright condemnation of the entire package.[250]

Nevertheless, when criticism of Israeli policies is coupled with wholesale condemnation of Zionist ideology or the political entity of Israel, then it is "an outright condemnation of the entire package." This can be seen in Forrest's dismissal of Zionist publications as "propaganda," his suggestion to William Gottlieb to "take a crack at the Zionists," his bold headline declaring that "Israel Stands Condemned Before the World," and his dismay over the liberal Jewish leadership in Canada who are all "much influenced by Zionism."

Evidently Forrest did not understand the breadth and depth of Zionism as an ideology, nor did he contain his criticism to specific Israeli policies. And he readily acoepted

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[250] Berthrong, personal interview, Toronto, 2 March 1984 (this applies to all further citations of John Berthrong).

the anti-Zionist rhetoric of Arab sources and unnamed officials. According to Alan Davies, Forrest couldn't name any Zionist thinkers other than Herzl," and knew little of what he espoused.

A lack of knowledge regarding Zionist and Jewish attachment to Israel was and is still common among many United Church leaders. For instance, Bruce McLeod, a former moderator of the United Church who was instrumental in the reconciliation, still maintains, "Jews in Toronto didn't allow criticism [of Israel] especially by gentiles, I guess because many Jews feel guilty for not having gone to Israel, so they express their loyalty by blind support."

Robert McClure, another former United Church moderator, shares the sentiment of many of his coreligionists in finding "ridiculous such enthusiasm from people sitting comfortably many miles away from the crisis," and "you wouldn't find that in Tel-Aviv." Likewise, Forrest often asserted that many of his criticisms of Israel were voiced within Israel itself and would not have been so vehemently opposed there as in Toronto.

Forrest and his supporters failed to point out, however, that criticism by Israelis is restricted to government policies and not to condemnations of the state as an entity or to the ideology of Zionism.[251] Moreover, the case of most

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[251] This, of course, excludes those in Israel who do not consider themselves Israelis, such as Palestinian nationalists and members of the Neturei Karta (see note 209).

anti-Zionists is compromised by their almost wholesale support of the Palestinian cause to the total disregard of the position of Israel. While the right of the Palestinians to a national homeland is advocated, David Demson observes, "there is still little ability to perceive Zionism as a national liberation movement."

Instead, Zionism is branded as racism. There is, however, nothing in the affirmation of Israel as a national homeland for the Jewish people that denies the right of citizenship to non-Jews, irrespective of race or religion. If some Israeli actions have been unjust, it is the government bureaucrats responsible who are to be blamed, not Zionist ideology or the State of Israel as a whole.

It is curious, Eugene Rothman points out, that "Zionist insistence on the preservation of the Jewish character of Israel, as a national ethos and not as an individual creed was met with cries of 'exclusivism.'"[252] Ironically, many of Israel's critics voiced no objection to the Muslim ethos of Arab states and affirmed the Christian character of their own nations. For instance, while Forrest condemned Israeli racism, he boasted to an Arab woman "what a beautiful, friendly, Christian city [Toronto] was."[253] He evidently did not see anything particularistic about his own observation,

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[252] Rothman, "Rome and Jerusalem: The Uncertain Voice of the American Catholic Press," Midstream (April 1971): 42.

[253] Observer, 1 April 1967, p. 13.

although he repudiated any statement made by Zionists or by the "so-called Christian-Jewish dialogue people."[254]

Forrest maintained a distinction between "Jews" and "Zionists" even though he admitted he did not know of any Canadian Jewish leaders who were "not much influenced by Zionism."[255] The terms may be legitimately distinguished, but not by those who do so in order that their denigration of Israel can be seen as anti-Zionist, and not anti-Jewish.

"I think one can be critical of Israel and pro-Jewish," Davies notes, "I doubt if one can be anti-Israel and pro-Jewish."[256] In the same sense, being opposed to French policies does not make one anti-France; but if one espouses a position that is anti-France, and that is against what the French hold dear, is not one then anti-French? In the case of Israel, Davies says:

> Criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitism. . . . Anti-Zionism blends into anti-Semitism because it constitutes an ideological attack on Judaism. . . . Incidentally, the problem with the UNITED CHURCH OBSERVER is not its criticisms of Israel. The problem lies in the inability of the editor to distinguish between ideological attack and legitimate criticism that affirms the Jewish state in the act of criticizing.[257]

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[254] Observer, 1 March 1970, p. 9.

[255] See note 50.

[256] Davies, letter to Reuben Slonim.

[257] Ibid.

ANTISEMITISM is a term coined by Wilhelm Marr who, in 1879, founded the League of Antisemites (Antisemiten-Liga). The League echoed the quasi-scientific race notions popular at that time, especially in Germany and France.[258] The theory of racial superiority was developed to its limit and popularized by Comte de Gobineau in his infamous Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines ("Essay on the inequality of the human races," 1853-55). Gobineau established the superiority of the "Aryans" over "Semites" and other "inferior races," and the supremacy of the Germans over other "Aryans."

The terms "Semitic" and "Aryan" were borrowed from the field of linguistics and erroneously applied to racial classification. Imbued with the prevailing European prejudices, nineteenth century intellectuals took for granted that the peoples who spoke Indo-European (or "Aryan") languages were morally and intellectually, etc. superior to those who spoke "Semitic" languages, such as Jews and Arabs.[259]

The term "Semitic," like "Aryan," however, is baseless as a denotation of race. Jews, for instance, have long intermarried and accepted converts to Judaism from many backgrounds. There are "white" Jews of European descent, and

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[258] Toni Oelsner, s.v. "Marr, Wilhelm," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 1015.

[259] Leon Poliakov, s.v. "Race, Theory Of," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), pp. 1483-1486.

"black" African Jews, Oriental Jews and Jews of India. They are held together as a people by common traditions, beliefs and aspirations--not by race.

It is equally false to describe Arabs as "Semitic." And it is a semantic ruse when Arab propagandists use the term in connection with themselves to prove they could not be "antisemitic." Antisemitism, from its earliest appearance to its most current use has always indicated hatred towards Jews. Arabs can therefore be as antisemitic as anyone else. This is also true of Jews who express antipathy towards their own people.

Hatred towards Jews as a people, however, was largely absent in the Arab world until modern times. Jews, like Christians, had a special status as dhimmi, or protected people, under Islam--subservient to Muslims but still recognized and tolerated as "People of the Book." Despite discriminatory provisions, such as special taxes, distinctions in dress, and regulations against riding horses, carrying arms, building new places of worship, etc., some Jews attained influential positions as physicians, interpreters and financiers to Islamic rulers.[260]

The deterioration of the position of Jews accompanied the decline in power and prestige of the Arab world. At

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[260]See Claude Cahen, s.v. "Dhimma," The Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 277 f.; Salo Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, vol. III, p. 97 ff.

times, this was translated into violence, such as the notorious persecutions of Jews in Yemen in 1697, and in Iran in 1839.[261] Modern antisemitism, however, is largely due to the influence of Christian antisemitism and the publication of nineteenth century European antisemitic literature in Arabic. The most infamous source of anti-Jewish hostility is the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion published in Arabic (c. 1967) by Shawqī 'Abd al Nāṣir, brother of former Egyptian President Nasser. Copies of the Protocols are still circulated among Arab embassies.[262] Nevertheless, as Yehoshafat Harkabi indicates, "Though Arab anti-Semitism did not cause the Arab-Israel conflict, but rather was stimulated by it, it has aggravated Arab hostility."[263]

The Arab-Israeli conflict has led to accusations of antisemitism in other corners as well. It is a sticky subject since there is no clear cut definition of antisemitism. Perhaps Arnold Ages puts it best when he says it is a matter of degree of insensitivity to Jews rather than a principle of such insensitivity.[264]

The Canadian Jewish community was therefore divided

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[261] Poliakov, s.v. "Anti-Semitism," Encyclopaedia Judaica, pp. 100-101.

[262] See note 187.

[263] Harkabi, s.v. "Anti-Semitism," Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publ. House, 1972), p. 138.

[264] Ages, interview.

over whether Forrest's early criticisms of Israel were actually antisemitic. But when his denunciations of Israel were interwoven with subtle prejudice, the Jewish community and its supporters uniformly condemned his writings as antisemitic. He overstepped defensible bounds when he presented what was clearly an age-old stereotype of the rich Jew and his "Jewelry-hoarding wife." The final straw was the publication of the blatantly antisemitic Booth article on "How Zionists Manipulate Your News"--a reiteration of the medieval Jewish conspiracy libel under a new anti-Zionist guise.

Semantic questions of Zionism and antisemitism clearly overlap with the other problem categories of politics, organization, history, theology, and humanism. This classification system helps to make sense out of complex, highly integrated, and emotionally charged issues, and provides a model for investigating Jewish-Christian and other confrontations.

This model may be used, for instance, in looking at the different ramifications of the "Keegstra affair," which involved the teaching that the Holocaust was a hoax to students in Eckville, Alberta by Frank Keegstra. The neo-Nazi march in Skokee, Illinois raised more questions than just freedom of speech. And the recent divisiveness between Jews and Blacks since their united marches for civil rights, especially over statements by Black Muslim leader Louis Farrahkhan, involves changing aspirations and alliances, international politics and confusions over terms.

As an example of how this model may be applied, the following is a short analysis of Catholic-Jewish relations in the United States. It provides an interesting comparison with the controversy between the Canadian Jewish community and the Protestant United Church of Canada.

CHAPTER XIV

AMERICAN JEWISH-CATHOLIC RELATIONS

Worldwide Jewish-Catholic relations have greatly improved during the last twenty years since Vatican II. The second Vatican council, opened by Pope John XXIII in October 1962 and concluded by Pope Paul VI in December 1965, was intended as an aggiornamento of the Catholic Church. Among its programs for the rejuvenation and modernization of the church was an increased emphasis on dialogue with other world religions, including Judaism.

Until Vatican II, interfaith activities in the United States had been generally restricted to Jewish-Christian cooperation in civil matters, and involved many more Protestants and Jews than Catholics. Will Herberg, writing in 1955 observes, "Catholics are constantly concerned that interfaith should not lead to 'interreligious worship' or 'interreligious theological discussion' . . . or to the notion that 'one religion is as good as another.'"[265]

In contrast to these earlier stands by Catholics, the Vatican II statement of "Nostra Aetate" (no. 4) emphasizes:

> Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is so rich, this sacred Synod wishes to encourage and further their mutual knowledge of, and

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[265]Herberg, p. 260.

> respect for, one another, a knowledge and respect born principally of biblical and theological studies, but also of fraternal dialogue.[266]

Catholics in the United States were in the forefront of the new movement towards dialogue. Especially active in Jewish-Catholic rapprochement was the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and many Jews responded enthusiastically. Jews and Christians in general, particularly Catholics, made great strides in coming to understand each others' perspectives on many difficult issues. But a major stumbling block remained to cause tensions: Israel. As in Canada, this was realized fully following the 1967 Six-Day War.

The political ramifications in the United States were similar to those north of the border. While Catholic, Anglican, and United Church leaders in Canada called on Christians to pray for peace, church organizations in the United States had little more to say.

Curiously, Catholics involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue in the US voiced the same surprise as de Corneille in Canada over the "depth of Jewish concern for Israel's survival."[267] Evidently, Israel had not been a major focus of discussion throughout North America.

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[266] John Oesterreicher, ed., trans., "Text of Vatican II Statement on the Jews," in Brothers in Hope (NY: Herder & Herder, 1970), p. 33.

[267] Rothman, Rome and Jerusalem, p. 35; cf. Chapter II.

The nature of the American Jewish community has already been discussed in comparison with the Canadian Jewish community.[268] As indicated above, Jewish settlement in the United States preceded that of their co-religionists north of the border by approximately a generation. American Jews therefore tend to be more assimilated and less ethnically cohesive. These differences are reflected in both the organization of Jews in the United States and the perception of Jews by American society.

The US census, for instance, lists Jews only as a religion, unlike the Canadian census which defines Jews by both religion and ethnicity. American society has put much more emphasis on the "melting pot" and, consequently, less importance on multiculturalism.

Although both countries have been built up by immigrants from different lands, ethnic solidarity in the United States has been tempered, to a certain degree, by the force of "civil religion" which is unequaled in any other nation. In Canada, a country that has only recently adopted a national flag and has waited until 1982 to proclaim its own constitution, there is certainly a marked lack of the American brand of "civil religion."

Robert Bellah has labelled as "civil religion" a

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[268] See Chapter IX.

religious orientation conveyed in the myths, symbols, ceremonies and rituals of the nation which transcend denominational, ethnic and regional boundaries.[269] Presidential inaugural addresses have, for example, been cited as "expressing certain elements of religious orientation which most Americans share, which have played significant roles in history, and which provide some dimension to the fabric of American life."[270]

"Civil religion" fosters a breakdown of ethnic solidarity. As a result, there is more diversity of expression within ethnic groups themselves, as people develop their own balance of ethnic and American identity. In such a milieu, Jewish organization is not as cohesive or coordinated as its Canadian counterpart. Jewish services which are all assumed under the Canadian Jewish Congress are performed by different and sometimes competing agencies in the United States.

This diversification also allowed the existence of Jewish organizations that would be ostracized in Canada, such as the anti-Zionist American Council of Judaism. The Council is a factor of both the search for Jewish-American identity and the strong presence of Reform Judaism in the United States.[271]

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[269]Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," Daedalus (Winter 1967): 1-21.

[270]Harshbarger and Mourant, p. 441.

[271]See Chapter XI.

"Civil religion" also accounts for a certain amount of diversity among Catholics. Rothman adds:

> It was no longer possible to make the easy assumption that the Pope spoke for the prelates and the prelates for the American Catholic community at large on all issues. The social, political and religious forces that had been released during the modernizing reign of Pope John, the impact of Vatican II, the erosion of central authority in the Church and the increased and insistent questioning of hitherto unimpeachable tenets, the coming of age of the Catholic layman, and --in America--the election of a Catholic president, had all served to undermine the monolithic nature of the American Catholic community. This was particularly true of the assumption that on the complex issues involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict Catholics in this country would speak as one.[272]

As a barometer of Catholic attitudes, Rothman examined four examples of the Catholic press: The Catholic World, America, The National Catholic Reporter and Commonweal. Despite their divergent, sometimes diametrically opposed view, there were a few elements of consensus. Pre-1967 Catholic opinion, as expressed in these magazines, was almost uniformly in support of Israel, especially in the face of Arab threats to its survival; and there was a general decline in that support.

But as Rothman indicates, "It appears that this erosion of support for Israel was a widespread manifestation and could be found in much of both the secular and denomin-

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[272] Rothman, Rome and Jerusalem, p. 34.

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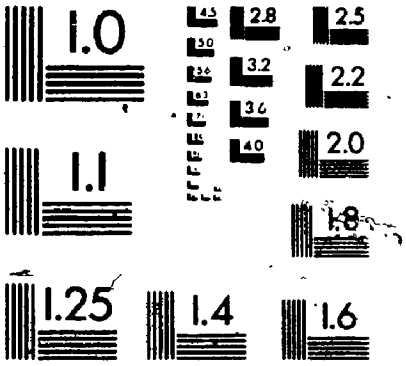

ational press."[273] Forrest was not alone in his disillusionment with Israel. And to differing degrees, the Catholic papers echoed his sentiments.

Although The Catholic World was critical of the degree of exclusivism evident in the Jewish state, it was for very American reasons. The editor, John Sheerin, remained supportive of Israel although its exclusivism was "at variance with the pluralism admired by American Jews."[274]

The Commonweal's point of departure was humanistic concern for the safety of the world, "because the seeds of nuclear war now find the most fertile soil in the Mideast deserts even more so than in Asian rice paddies."[275] Nevertheless, many of the same problems of humanism evident in the United Church Observer controversy were repeated in the Catholic papers.

Theology was also at issue in tensions between Catholics and Jews over Israel. As explained above, there was the problem of the "new" Israel recognizing the political renaissance of the "old" and fallen Israel. Moreover, as Rothman indicates:

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[273] Ibid., p. 41.

[274] Cited by Rothman, p. 36.

[275] Ibid., p. 40.

> it was difficult for the adherents of the Universal Catholic Church to comprehend the deep theological connection between Judaism and Jewish nationhood in the Land of Israel. . . . While states such as Spain or Italy might be identified with the Church, the Church was not identified with any particular state.[276]

Once again, a lot of misunderstanding was over terms. "The whole purpose of the Zionist program," was not "the erection of an ethnocentric exclusivist state," as the editor of The National Catholic Reporter claimed.[277] In addition, America repeated the mischievous distinction between Jews or Judaism and Zionist or Zionism:

> The Arab quarrel is not with Jews or Judaism. It is with the concept of Zionism and the exclusivist character of the Zionist state, which grants the fullest expression of civil rights to the Jews alone.[278]

This is, of course, false as Arab terrorist attacks (then and now) on non-Israeli civilians indicate. A clear example was the selective treatment during the 1985 hijacking of passengers aboard TWA flight 847 with "Jewish sounding names."

Both in Canada and the United States there is much below the surface of a political dispute over the Arab-Israel

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[276] Ibid., p. 42.

[277] Ibid., p. 41.

[278] Ibid., p. 38.

situation. There is even more at issue than the Jewish or Christian adversaries themselves realize. They may debate back and forth who is to blame in the Middle East crisis without ever understanding the real issues that divide them, even after the controversy has quieted down and the main protagonists are gone.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER XV

CHANGED TIMES AND CHANGED PEOPLE

The United Church Observer controversy has been relegated to the pages of history. Many of the people involved in it would just as soon forget it ever happened. After all, relations between the Jewish community and the United Church in Canada are better now.

How much have the relations changed? According to many of the leaders of both communities, there is "a dramatically different working relationship."[279] Alan Shefman, the national director of the B'nai B'rith League for Human Rights since 1980, notes, "the change in relations reflects changed times and people."[280]

For one thing, Forrest is gone. "I hate to say it," remarks Ben Kayfetz, but "as long as he was the editor, it was a big shadow between us." Shefman adds, the controversy "harmed relations for a decade. But they have been repaired by persons in the United Church with a good understanding of Jewish concerns."

One such person is John Berthrong, the associate secretary for interfaith dialogue with the Division of World

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[279] Berthrong, interview.

[280] Shefman, personal interview, Toronto, 29 February 1984 (this applies to all further citations of Alan Shefman).

Outreach of the United Church of Canada. According to Berthrong, it was one of the first positions at the national level of a church in North America to deal specifically with interfaith dialogue.

The position was established in 1974 and was first filled by Rev. James Seunarine. As a Trinidadian, however, his interests were more closely linked with Muslim and Hindu constituencies. Berthrong, who took over the position in 1980, was also more knowledgeable of religions other than Judaism, particularly Buddhism and Islam.

One member of the Jewish community who has worked closely with Berthrong notes:

> I think that in the beginning John had some hesitation about relations with the Jewish community. Not that he had negative feelings about it, but that his background caused him to feel relations with Islam and Buddhism were more important for the United Church. But he entered into our relations very open-mindedly and has become just warmer and more helpful as time has gone on.

Shefman calls him "a shining light" in the United Church establishment. Kayfetz adds, "The fact that John Berthrong is on the job, I think indicates a very positive development in the United Church. He's genuinely concerned about Jewish relations."

Berthrong indicates his involvement in Jewish-Christian dialogue comes most directly through the National Tripartite Liason Committee, "the most significant thing that's

happened in the last seven or eight years." The committee is jointly sponsored by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Jewish Congress, and the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews. Meeting every six or eight weeks, says Berthrong, "Officers from Congress and the various churches have now gotten to know each other much better." More importantly, he adds, "we have this liason group where we can bring potentially difficult issues to each other's attention prior to waging battle."

For example, following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, there were two meetings with about twenty leaders of various churches and significant people from the Jewish community. Victor Goldbloom, the president and chief executive of the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews, describes what became of the meetings.

> There were very intense discussions emotionally on both sides; and I mean that in the sense of caring rather than getting upset with each other. There was one person who misunderstood what I was saying about the possibility of Christians providing a mediary role and to communicate an element of trust to both Jews and Muslims. John Berthrong understood exactly what I was saying, and in fact, it derived from what he had been saying. . . . and we talked about the possibility of stimulating dialogue between Jews and Muslims. And his immediate reaction was to organize a dinner meeting with Edith Land and myself from CCCJ, and Clark MacDonald, Peter Gordon White, Douglass Jay and himself from the United Church. We did that twice and it was very helpful. . . . and I and one or two others

have been meeting very discreetly with leaders of the Muslim communities in Canada.[281]

Another positive step to come out of the National Tripartite Liason Committee was the habit of issuing invitations to the other committee members for national meetings. At the last two triannual meetings of the Canadian Jewish Congress in Montreal (1983) and Toronto (1986), church leaders came as observers and participants. And at the last General Council in Manitoba (1984), the United Church invited the CJC to have representatives there. The invitations have again been extended for the up-coming General Council in Sudbury, Ontario (August 1986).

As a consequence of these exchanges, leaders of the different communities are more informed as to what goes on at other national meetings. Such an exchange would have greatly reduced tensions between the Jewish community and the United Church during the years Forrest was editor of the Observer. At least, it would have reduced the likelihood of published rumors like those following the 1972 General Council meeting in Saskatoon, and after the 1974 plenary meeting of the CJC.[282]

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[281]Goldbloom, personal interview, Toronto, 6 March 1984.

[282]See Chapters V and VI.

In addition to John Berthrong, Hugh McCullum was a factor in the changed relations. As present editor of the Observer, McCullum has treated the subject of the Middle East much differently from his predecessor. He maintains there has not been a change in editorial policy regarding the Middle East, but he notes, "in Forrest's time the Observer did not concentrate on global issues very much except that particular one. . . . and right now we feel pretty strongly about . . . places like South Africa, the Middle East and Central America."

Regarding the Middle East, McCullum adds:

> I think we would--I want to be fairly careful in how to couch this--we would probably take a wider view. We would not as uncritically, perhaps, support the Palestinian cause. We would probably look at the wider socio-political implications of what is going on in the Middle East. Certainly it is a lot more complex now than it was even in Forrest's time. I think the whole events of Iran, the accord between Egypt and Israel, and that sort of thing, begs for a wider view.

The Observer, under the editorship of McCullum, has covered the Middle East but less frequently and from a wider perspective than in Forrest's time. For instance, in May 1982 it ran an issue on "Refugees." Treating the Palestinian refugees within the context of the worldwide refugee problem, McCullum received only a few critical letters from members of the Jewish community.

The most criticism he received was for printing a letter to the editor from "some jerk in Ottawa who had the old line that the Holocaust never happened." While his name was on the masthead, McCullum had actually not started as editor. "If I had been in charge at the time it would not have gotten in," he says, "but it slipped through because there was no editor."

For the most part, McCullum has maintained a good relationship with Jewish community leadership as well as with the Consulate and Embassy of Israel. In addition, McCullum and Berthrong planned a trip in 1983 to the Middle East, and they met with Victor Goldbloom and Rabbi Sternberg, then director of Religious Affairs of the CJC, to coordinate the Israeli part of the trip. Sternberg even decided to join them in Israel. "So it's quite a remarkable change and difference than it would have been a decade ago," says Berthrong.

Not everyone at the United Church is wholly pleased with the changes. Former Moderator, Dr. Robert McClure maintains there is an apathy in the Church towards the Middle East that was not there during Forrest's time. "I dont think our Church cares a hoot now about what happens in the Middle East." He acknowledges, on the other hand, that there is "an ecumenical spirit." He observes:

> We have Rabbi Plaut being invited to the pulpit in churches and Christian pastors occupying a pulpit at a synagogue. And young theologians are taught to understand in a more sympathetic manner both the modern Jewish religion and modern Islam.

Patrica Clarke, former managing editor of the Observer, adds:

> In my own congregation our Sunday school classes visit synagogues, Gunther Plaut has preached at Sunday service and we annually have a Seder supper. When I write it down, it doesn't sound like much, but it all is relatively new to our congregation. Timothy Eaton United Church has had several joint tours of Israel with members of a Forrest Hill synagogue. I'm sure there are similar initiatives in other congregations that I would not know about. One would hope that such things would not only break down negative stereotypes but create a positive appreciation.[282]

Nevertheless, there are on-going tensions. Some, notes Berthrong, are genuine and some are the result of simple lack of information. An example of the latter was an incident at the 1984 World Council of Churches meeting in Vancouver, where one Rabbi castigated the churches for not speaking out about the Keegstra affair. "What that demonstrated to all of us," says Berthrong, "is that rabbis, like ministers don't read their mail. If he would have read his mail, he would have known that the quickest and strongest condemnation of Keegstra came from the churches, much quicker than the government."

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[282]Clarke, letter.

There is, however, real continuing tension over Israel and the Middle East situation. But even in this regard the reactions of especially the Jewish community have changed in response to the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Within the Jewish community itself, there has been more dissent over Israeli policies. Both within and outside of Israel, questions were raised as to the necessity of such protracted conflict. Organizations such as the Canadian Friends of Peace Now won a measure of respectability in the Canadian Jewish community, and included some prominent Jews among its members. The Jewish community now "does tolerate dissent," maintains Kayfetz pointing to the Canadian Friends of Peace Now, although "there is still a lot of resentment."

Berthrong also notes that Jews "are learning how one can talk about the Middle East from different perspectives." Moreover, he says:

> The churches have worked very hard to eliminate traditional biases and separate them from political questions having to do with the Middle East. . . . I think both sides had learned through the dialogue in the last few years that one can learn to agree to disagree.

It would seem that relations between the United Church and the Jewish community in Canada have improved immeasurably, which they have. Yet, have the leaders of the communities really come to terms with all the issues that divided them during Forrest's time? According to Kayfetz, there still

seems to be a lack of understanding. How far has understanding progressed if Clark MacDonald, moderator of the United Church (1982-1984) can look back at the controversy and say, "The issue was the situation of the Palestinian people." Both sides still have a lot to discuss.

APPENDICES

(4) As the Arabs must accept the existence of Israel and learn to live with her as a neighbour, so Israel must accept her actual share of responsibility for compensation to the refugees, who now cannot be re-absorbed by Israel in their old homes for political and psychological reasons.

(5) The Jewish, Muslim and Christian world religious communities have legitimate interests in the security of, and access to, the holy sites (most of which are in Jordan).

B *Elements of a Peace Settlement*

(1) The U.N must accept responsibility to review its decisions on Palestine since 1947 in view of subsequent history, and see that a workable modification of them is actually enforced.

(2) The U.N., with Britain and the United States accepting major responsibility should make a new effort to bring both sides together through the Conciliation Commission, by linking the invitation with an offer of far-reaching benefits in economic aid and help in compensation to the refugees. Canada should continue her interest in this situation and, under U.N. direction make more generous gifts to help the refugees.

(3) Rational frontiers must be established and guaranteed by treaty involving Britain and the United States, and communications reopened across the frontiers.

(4) In the place of the probably impossible attempt to internationalize Jerusalem, the holy sites and access thereto for religious purposes should be under U.N. supervision and protection

for very firm action by the United Nations, the Jews were nevertheless preparing for their own defence."

"The Lebanon representative had said that the Arabs would grant the Jews individual if not collective equality. But homes for individuals were no substitute for a national home. For the Jews no question of integration into the Arab world existed, for they were not and did not wish to be Arabs."

"The Jews would accept nothing less than a state, and nothing less than the area decided upon by the Assembly. They would accord full rights to the Arab minority in their state, and offer peace and co-operation to their neighbours The Jewish state already existed in fact, and the energies of the Jewish people were mobilized to bring about its full development and international recognition."

2. THE ARAB POSITION

(Points from Jamal el-Husseini's Statement of April 26, 1948)

"The United Kingdom and the League of Nations had created the Palestine problem; if the right of self-determination had been applied in the beginning, such a problem would never have arisen—because the Arabs had been living in Palestine for at least thirteen centuries, and formed 93 per cent. of the population when the British occupied Palestine."

"The Mandate had been ratified without giving a hearing to the people of Palestine. During the Mandate, the United Kingdom had adopted a course of action which had opened up the country to the Jews and had neglected the well-being and progress of the Arabs."

"By the provision of the Mandate and League Covenant, the United Kingdom was obligated to hand over the whole of Palestine to one Palestinian Government representing the lawful citizens of the country. It had failed in its duty. Then the United Nations, instead of establishing this type of regime, had carried out an investigation guilty of fundamental irregularities."

"Partition was geographically impossible; it could not be carried out without consent of the majority of the population; and it had been adopted in circumstances unworthy of the United Nations."

"The Arabs had never been a race of subjects, they would never bow down to foreign domination, but would fight to the last man for the rights guaranteed by the Charter and the principles of democracy."

"How was it possible to speak of Arab invasion when no Arab had ever recognized the frontiers of Palestine which had been set up against his wishes? Meanwhile, young Jews and non-Jews were being trained in Europe and the United States, the Jewish Agency was buying large quantities of arms in the United States, and terrorism and sabotage were being taught in Poland and Russia."

"The trusteeship proposals could be examined—if they aimed at establishing an interim government for a short and previously determined period pending final settlement of the question. But it must be clearly understood that they were meant to lead to the independence of Palestine as a single democratic state in which the legitimate rights of the different sections of citizens would be safeguarded."

"Failing agreement, the majority of the people in Palestine would establish an independent government in conformity with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and Article 28 of the Mandate—which provided for such a government on the termination of the Mandate."

3. THE UNITED KINGDOM POSITION

(Points from Arthur Creech-Jones' Statement of April 23, 1948)

"The Mandate would definitely terminate on May 15, 1948. The United Nations had to decide who was to assume central responsibility in Palestine for law and order and all the administrative and economic functions of government. There was danger of anarchy in mid-May."

"In approving partition, too little attention had been paid to British experience or to the problem of implementation. Those standing by partition should consider squarely whether they were prepared to assist in enforcement, whether such action would secure the essential co-operation of the peoples concerned, and whether forces could be provided effectively by May 15."

"Proposals for a definite settlement could not be effected unless backed by very substantial means of enforcement."

"The United Kingdom had always pointed out that it could play no part in carrying out partition—but over a very wide field, short of implementation, British co-operation had been complete. But the Mandatory Power could not surrender its authority progressively, or open a port for Jewish immigration without inflaming the entire security situation and delaying the withdrawal of British forces."

"The United Kingdom had been severely criticized by both Arabs and Jews for not preserving order. Full security was virtually impossible without the co-operation of both communities. British administration had been impartial, and hundreds of British soldiers had been killed or wounded in discharging their duties. The security situation would have been worse if authority had been withdrawn piecemeal and transferred to a successor with no armed forces. Recognition of a Jewish militia would only have intensified the conflict."

"Arrival of the Palestine Commission before May 1 would have increased Arab violence and made it impossible to give any guarantee of the safety of the Commission. The United Kingdom had been prepared for discussion months before, however, and the delay had been due to delays on the part of the Commission."

"All British efforts had been directed towards securing a settlement between Jews and Arabs, steps had been taken aimed at maintaining essential services and normal life after the Mandate. No British ammunition or weapons were being sold to the communities or left behind."

"The restraint of British administration was about to be removed. A truce was of the first importance. A spirit of realism should prevail. Any final settlement without Arab and Jewish agreement could not be effected without force. Because of this, the United Nations was perhaps obliged to aim at a 'more modest objective' to prevent danger to world peace. The United Kingdom would co-operate, subject to the limitations involved in the decisions to terminate the Mandate on May 15, and to withdraw British forces by August 1, 1948."

APPENDIX 2

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS, 16TH GENERAL COUNCIL (1954)

(pp. 141-143)

X

ARAB-ISRAEL SITUATION

A General Statement

(1) The present situation in Palestine, more than five years after the conclusion of the armistice agreements is one of increasing bitterness, tension, frontier fighting and far-reaching political insecurity. The "Cease Fire" imposed by the U.N. in 1948 and the armistice agreements negotiated in 1949 left the basic questions unsettled, and no progress has been made subsequently toward their settlement.

(2) The responsibility for moving toward a solution lies most heavily on Great Britain, the United States and the U.N., who are jointly responsible for creating the present impasse. The efforts made to ameliorate the situation of the Arab refugees, through U.N.R.W.A., Point Four, have only prolonged it though making it less intolerable. Pre-occupation of the Great Powers and the U.N. with the Cold War has undoubtedly been a large factor in deferring action on Palestine.

(3) The thinking of people in this country and elsewhere is confused as a result,

(a) of the remoteness of the scene and the long drawn out series of developments;

(b) of failure to distinguish the Jews as a world wide religious and social group from Israel the political entity. (There is social and propaganda pressure on all Jews to stand behind the Zionist enterprise; well-meaning Christian sympathy for Jews as such, because of the appalling sufferings of the Hitler persecutions, is carried over into support of Israel where an attempt to meet one refugee problem has created another of similar injustice);

(c) of the immense propaganda advantage enjoyed by the Israelis over the Arabs, especially in North America.

(4) Israel propaganda seeks to persuade us that the Arabs themselves are responsible for the refugee problem, and that only Arab intransigence prevents the making of peace in the area. It glosses over the facts that the refugees lost their homes and property as a result of partition of the country without consulting its inhabitants, and as the direct result of the establishment of the State of Israel by force of arms; that the U.N. Assembly's action was never ratified by the Security Council; that Israel subsequently added 20 per cent. more than the territory assigned by the U.N. Assembly, by force of arms in defiance of the Security Council's "Cease Fire"; and that the U.N. resolutions on repatriation of refugees and internationalization of Jerusalem have been ignored by Israel.

(5) Israel has created a powerful modern army, and has the beginnings of a navy and an air force. More of the inevitable border clashes have been attributed to Israel by U.N. observers than to the Arab countries, and only Israel has sent detachments of her armed forces to engage in retaliatory massacres following

such incidents (e.g. Kibya). She has the potential for expansion, and her more truculent spokesmen contemplate the occupation of all of Arab Palestine to the Jordan.

(6) If the Arabs do not want a peace settlement it is largely because they have suffered a great wrong which is unacknowledged by Israel and is condoned or ignored by the world. They are conscious of immense reserves of men and territory, and of world Muslim sympathy. Above all they have reserves of time, they are not in a hurry, like the Israelis. This is unrealistic, and so far as it affects the refugees, it is callous. But it is rooted in their pride and sense of justice.

The Palestinian Arab Refugees.

As a result of events surrounding the establishment of the State of Israel, over one million Arabs were displaced from their homes.

The total number of official refugees, according to United Nations statistics, was 881,000 in January 1953.

Six years have now passed since most of these refugees left their homes.

Thirty-five per cent. of the Arab refugees are living in camps, the remaining sixty-five per cent. are scattered over the towns and villages of the Near East. They are living under very primitive conditions, and are suffering from inadequate housing, over-crowding, and malnutrition. They are not wanted where they are. They are suffering psychologically as well as physically. They have lost faith in the sense of justice of the Western Powers and the United Nations. They have lost heart, have lost their self-respect, have lost their moral standards, and have lost hope.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency bears the main responsibility for the case of the refugees. It has a three-year budget (1951-54) of $50,000,000 for relief and $200,000,000 for re-settlement. It provides bare subsistence. It has accomplished little in the way of re-settlement. The refugees are strongly opposed to efforts to re-settle them in other Arab countries because they know they are not wanted there.

The Christian Churches are ministering to these refugees. They are adapting their institutions and services to their needs, and are providing some special refugee services—providing clothing, food for supplementary feeding schemes, schools for refugee children, vocational training, training welfare workers. They have also undertaken housing schemes and made loans for re-settlement. The total Christian contribution to work among these refugees amounted last year to about $2,000,000.

Possible Lines of a Peace Settlement.

A. Basic Facts to be Taken into Account.

(1) The existence of Israel in Palestine is an unalterable fact of history, and a new, real political entity in the Near East. It is economically dependent at present on outside support, but has the available brains, energy and determination to become self-supporting.

(2) Both Israel and the Arab lands, especially Jordan, can become much healthier economically if large schemes of irrigation, soil conservation, rehabilitation and exploration of minerals could be undertaken.

(3) Peace at the frontiers, intercommunication, trade are necessary for economic rehabilitation; these require a modus vivendi for co-operation, with total peace as the ultimate result. Perpetuation of present hostility can only harm both sides.

(4) As the Arabs must accept the existence of Israel and learn to live with her as a neighbour, so Israel must accept her actual share of responsibility for compensation to the refugees, who now cannot be re-absorbed by Israel in their old homes for political and psychological reasons.

(5) The Jewish, Muslim and Christian world religious communities have legitimate interests in the security of, and access to, the holy sites (most of which are in Jordan).

B *Elements of a Peace Settlement*

(1) The U.N. must accept responsibility to review its decisions on Palestine since 1947 in view of subsequent history, and see that a workable modification of them is actually enforced.

(2) The U.N., with Britain and the United States accepting major responsibility should make a new effort to bring both sides together through the Conciliation Commission, by linking the invitation with an offer of far-reaching benefits in economic aid and help in compensation to the refugees. Canada should continue her interest in this situation and, under U.N. direction make more generous gifts to help the refugees.

(3) Rational frontiers must be established and guaranteed by treaty involving Britain and the United States, and communications reopened across the frontiers.

(4) In the place of the probably impossible attempt to internationalize Jerusalem, the holy sites and access thereto for religious purposes should be under U.N. supervision and protection

APPENDIX 3

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS, 18TH GENERAL COUNCIL (1958)

(pp. 147-154)

IX

23. Arab - Israel Relations

The problems of the Middle East are complex and many. In this we deal with only one of them—the Palestinian situation of which we have heard a great deal

Unfortunately for us much of what we hear and read comes from speeches and articles of those who have visited one side only There is an unnatural border cutting through the Holy Land over which shots are fired every day, but across which men may not pass. It divides the Holy City of Jerusalem where part of the boundary is rubble, broken buildings and the unhallowed graves of Jews and Arabs who died in hand to hand—house to house fighting in 1948.

It is about the tragic impasse of this border we write, for it is well-known that it could be the tinder-box of the world. Canadians—unless they are Jews—if they make their arrangements carefully beforehand may pass from one side to the other. At the moment Canadian soldiers of the United Nations Emergency Force are stationed there.

On the Israeli side we find a game little nation which has opened its doors to a million Jewish refugees from every part of the world to come and build a home.

With money and service and brains from the West it is building farms out of the desert, a magnificent university and splendid government buildings out of the bare rock of the Jerusalem hills, highways along the valleys, a shipping trade on the sea, and an industrial and agricultural economy out of the labours of people who until their return have been the shopkeepers of the world. In Israel today it is more dignified to farm or build than to buy or sell.

The Hebrew language and history must be learned by little children and urbane immigrant Jews from Europe and America. No Jew and few Christians can help but thrill at what is being accomplished in Israel.

It is recognized, however, that this is a national more than a religious movement. With superb skill Jewish leaders have kept their people from quarrelling over their religions. It is surprising to find communal settlements of one thousand or more where there is no synagogue, no rabbi, no priest, no worship on the Sabbath Day. However, the Sabbath is observed throughout the land, the community gathers for a Friday night reading of Scripture, and the Bible is their language and history textbook and the repository of their cultural heritage. They are determined that religious differences will not divide their nation.

The Israeli economy is dependent on gifts from the outside world—and the gifts are generous—$1,200,000,000 in the past ten years. Canadian Jews have given $48 million (more than we give to the M. & M.).

Her foreign exchange deficit is $300,000,000 a year and to keep it down to this level the Israeli live frugally and work hard. The carp pools for example supply much of their protein and every settlement has its fish pond. More fish are grown in their home-made pools than are taken from the sea.

26. Refugees in the Near East

If one could forget the presence of 900,000 Palestinian refugees who lost their homes in 1948 and are now scattered through the Arab world, Israel would seem to be one of the most glorious achievements of our time But one can never forget, either in Israel or in Jordan.

About one third of them are still in refugee camps living in tents, mud houses and subsisting on the United Nations' dole. They have been unemployed since the war of 1948. They can look across the border and see the homes they left to which they may not return and for which no compensation was given In Jerusalem they can stand 100 yards away and point to their former stores, shops and offices.

The Israeli say they were traitors and cannot be permitted to return. The Arabs say they fled for their lives. (There are many Arabs of course still in Israel—they have members of Parliament. There are no Jews in Jordan.)

Hatred of Israel is very bitter among the Arabs and it is being nurtured even in the United Nations schools for refugees, where the teachers and all but the most senior administrators are refugees. Many refugees are not destitute They include fine business and professional people. Others are nomads wandering in the desert. Missionaries in the Arab world on the whole seem very sympathetic to the Arab cause. The majority of them have not been to the other side.

The Israeli insist that no solution of the refugee problem may be reached until it is part of a larger settlement, including recognition of the State of Israel by the Arab nations Their hatred of Nasser is complete. They hope that Jordan and Syria might some day be friendly. In the meantime, the refugees have had no reparations for the lost land and homes, although it is probable that the majority of them are better fed and educated than they were before.

Behind all this is the resentment of the Arab world against this little bastion of western life and power in the Eastern Mediterranean world. Israel is the symbol of the West in the world they feel belongs to the Arab and the Middle East.

Even among the old Jews of Jerusalem one senses the resentment for it is obvious that Israel—although her government is democratic—is being run by the brains of European and American Jews.

The United Nations has no blue print solution for the refugee problem. They are being fed. Their children receive an elementary education. (It is said there are 500 applications for every scholarship offered.) And the world, which has never yet seen a successful wholesale return of refugees to a land from which they fled, hopes that time may somehow answer a problem which the best brains, in the presence of such hostility so far, has been unable to solve....

28. The Refugees—A World Survey

...In the Middle East, despite chronic controversy over the statistics involved, Arab refugees from Palestine exceed 900,000. Highest concentration is to be found in Jordan where, including those that have been granted Jordanian citizenship, they constitute over 50 per cent of the population They are located also in Lebanon, Syria, and the Gaza strip in Egypt. Although technically, not regarded as refugees a million Jews now in Israel must be included in any survey such as this Buchenwald and the other 129 extermination camps in Germany and Poland explain why many or most of the half-million and more European Jews have sought sanctuary in Israel. To this number must now be added more than 400,000 Jews who have felt forced to leave their homes in Iraq, the Yemen, North Africa and more recently Egypt....

...In 1956 in his report to the United Nations, Henry R. Labouisse, Director of UNRWA, the agency primarily responsible for the care of the Arab refugees, points out that the Arab refugees are "one of the most important causes of continual unrest and, at the same time, the victims of it." Whether one holds the view that there can be no peace in the Middle East until the refugee problem has been solved, or that the refugee problem cannot be solved until peace has been established among the Arab states and between the Arab states and Israel, it would appear that "nothing but a major political compromise" can break the grim deadlock that blocks any real headway in this area. Dr. Elfan Rees, who expresses this view and who is convinced that the resolution of the problem if left to UNRWA will be no nearer solution in 1960 than in 1950 goes on to say: "There is only irony in the fact that, political considerations aside, this is the one refugee problem in the world that could be easily and constructively solved."

The Arab states in the Middle East occupy an area of some 1,200,000 square miles. Much of this land is unoccupied and underdeveloped, but it is potentially one of the richest areas in the world. This land area compares with some 8,100 square miles in Israel.

30. What Must Be Done?

With this background what must be done? One point is clear. Repatriation cannot be achieved without the use of major force and the near certainty of war. The only solution not likely to lead directly to war is integration of refugees in host countries.

Order must be maintained. Channels of communication, particularly in the UN, must be kept open. A peace settlement must be sought.

Canada and the nations of the free world must adopt and apply a policy of sympathetic friendship to all nations and peoples in the Middle East. Strong support must be furnished those countries that demonstrate readiness and capacity for constructive negotiation.

It is difficult to see how settlement can be achieved without fair refugee compensation by Israel and a willingness on the part of the Arab states to use such compensation to open up land for irrigation and resettlement, both with international assistance. An international fund of $300,000,000 has already been created and is available for the transfer and resettlement of Palestine Arab refugees.

Reintegration of the Arab refugee population cannot be accomplished unless there is a marked improvement in living standards and employment opportunities in the Arab countries involved. Modest development projects such as are now under way, and larger regional projects on a scale comparable to the T.V.A. must be incorporated into any long-range programme of rehabilitation.

Actually there is not enough money anywhere with which to purchase security. Partisanship has become as futile as it is obsolete. Sanity requires the substitution of the spirit of reconciliation for retribution. Social responsibility, concern for human dignity, plain loving care for members of the family of man—these and these alone constitute the ingredients of peace. What is needed, if I may say so, is what we seek in the equivalent of a professional social worker: a capacity for *compassion*, an active and responsible *concern* for the social conditions that produce breakdown and threaten psychological survival; and *competence* chiefly in a disciplined use of oneself together with the relevant knowledge and skills involved in helping others to help themselves.

Actually the crucial test will lie in the arena of political action. The $4 billion dollar question is whether our political maturity will measure up to the moral imperatives that confront mankind.

31. Principles to be Followed

Increasingly social workers throughout the world and especially those who have had assignments in countries other than their own, including assignments with special agencies of the United Nations, are coming to recognize that their activities are based upon a common set of basic assumptions. Dean Donald S Howard of the University of California in Los Angeles, who has had extensive experience with relief operations in Asia and who specialized in studies of international welfare when he was on the staff of the Russell Sage Foundation, has ventured to identify this "common core" Briefly and partly in paraphrase it consists of such principles as the following

(1) Human well-being is dependent upon the recognition, preservation and enhancement of the intrinsic worth of individuals

(2) The well-being of individuals is dependent upon the level of well-being prevailing in the immediate community and in the larger society of which it is a part.

(3) The well-being of particular persons and groups in a community is the concern of the whole community and the well-being of communities, the concern of larger social wholes.

(4) Prevention of social ills is preferable to mere amelioration; constructive and positive promotion of well-being is preferable to prevention alone.

(5) Individuals, groups and communities unable to provide for themselves have right to the goods and services essential to their well-being.

(6) Individuals, groups and communities (normally) can best be helped to advance their own welfare if assistance to them is provided in a manner which preserves their dignity, fosters their strengths, and, so far as not inimical to their own good and that of larger social groupings, reserves to them the responsibility for control over their own affairs.

(7) It is recognized that individuals are motivated in part by unconscious influences and by external circumstances beyond their control and, consequently, they may not be wholly responsible for their own actions on the situations in which they find themselves

(8) To the extent that government, more effectively than families and broader voluntary associations, can supply services essential to social well-being, including basic survival and security, it is its responsibility, at all appropriate levels, to do so

These propositions may need some qualification For example, the word "only" might well be added at the beginning of point eight. They do, however, provide a positive and highly useful formulation, and one that has significant implications for social policy and the refugee problem.

Before his untimely death, Dr. Walter Van Kirk, then Executive Director, Department of International Justice and Goodwill, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., for whom I had profound respect, held out the hope that "under the aegis of the United Nations . . . utterly free of implications of power policies, or of racial or cultural favouritism, or of consolidating the economic forces of one group to the disadvantage of other groups, a new day of promise might well dawn for Arabs and Israelis alike." He goes on to say that this hope will not be realized if sole reliance is placed upon political, economic, and military measures "The tensions that have made of the Middle

East a breeding ground of hatred and despair cannot permanently be resolved short of the healing influences engendered in men s hearts and minds by the living God We may have come to one of those moments in history when opposing forces can be brought into reconciliation only by the redemptive power of love, a love not of men, but of God, a love which is capable of rising above all considerations of revenge and retaliation" This essential view might be stated in many forms Its relevance is not confined to the Middle East. In its essence, I too so believe

APPENDIX 4

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS, 23RD GENERAL COUNCIL (1968)

(pp. 442-444)

Middle East Policy

(EXECUTIVE OF GENERAL COUNCIL DECLARATION)

In view of the increasing threats to peace in the Middle East, and the desperate plight of nearly 400,000 persons displaced by the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, and an additional 350,000 to 400,000 persons made homeless by hostilities in the Suez area since, The United Church of Canada, through the directive of the General Council:

Calls attention to the fact that: On July 2nd, 1967, Israel assured those who fled in panic during the June war that they could return. However, only 40,000 of 150,000 who applied (the Israeli figures report only 100,000 applied) to return were given permits by Israel, and only 14,000 got back to their homes. And although some have put the blame on Jordan, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA has stated officially "Jordanian authorities did all that was humanly possible . . . to assist those who were given permits by Israel to recross the Jordan to their homes"

Makes the following declaration:

(1) We re-affirm that the State of Israel should be recognized by her Arab neighbours, and be permitted to live in peace, secure from threats or acts force. This position has been stated and restated by the General Council of the United Church of Canada since 1948.

(2) We reiterate our statement of June, 1967, that Israel should withdraw from territories she then occupied by force, with minor adjustments of bound

aries. (This is in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations; it is in accordance with the findings of the World Council of Churches in August, with the declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the resolution unanimously adopted by the U.N. Security Council, November 22, 1967)

(3) We urge that Israel permit all displaced persons to return to their homes. (This is in accordance with the pleas of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, who has stated, "On the grounds of common humanity . . . I urge that all displaced persons be permitted to return . . ." The World Council of Churches says all displaced persons "should be permitted to return to their former places of residence")

(4) We commend the Canadian Government for its increased contributions to UNRWA, and we urge the people of the United Church to give generous support to appeals for overseas relief, that the World Council of Churches and other agencies may help improve the desperate lot of the refugees.

(5) We commend the United Nations for its efforts to achieve peace, and urge that such efforts be increased. And we earnestly request Arab and Israeli governments to come together under United Nations auspices to arrange a settlement. Such a settlement must include the repatriation or compensation of displaced persons.

(6) We deplore suggestions that Christians who criticize Israeli policies are anti-Semitic and that those who criticize Arab policies are unsympathetic to the plight of the Arab people.

(7) We express our desire to meet with representatives of the Jewish and Arab communities in Canada and that we may find together some way to contribute to peace, justice, and the settlement of the refugee problem in the Middle East.

(8) We also express our deep fear that if Arabs continue to refuse to recognize Israel, and if Israel continues to occupy the lands she took, to obstruct the return of the homeless, to insist on meeting directly with Arabs without U.N. assistance, and to declare that Jerusalem is not negotiable, there will be war again in the Middle East, and a million and a half displaced persons will be condemned indefinitely to exist on the meagre subsistence of the world's charity, without homes and without hope.

• • • • •

Action of General Council

It was agreed that the resolution be made known to the Church through the medium of the *NewsLetter* and be sent to members of the Executive of General Council, to the World Council of Churches and to the Canadian Council of Churches.

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The General Council adopted the statement on Middle East Policy of the Executive of the General Council and referred it to a committee of the General Council for re-editing. The re-edited statement is as follows:

The General Council, in view of the continuing threat to peace in the Middle East, makes the following declaration:

(1) The Arab and Israeli government should come together under United Nations auspices to arrange a peace settlement. We commend the United Nations for its efforts to achieve peace and urge that such efforts be increased.

(2) The State of Israel should be recognized by the Arab nations and be permitted to live in peace, secure from threats or acts of force.

(3) As part of a general settlement, Israel should withdraw from territories she has occupied by force since June, 1967, with minor boundary changes.

(4) Israel should permit displaced persons to return to their homes, or provide compensation for loss.

(5) We urge the people of our United Church to give generous support to the World Council of Churches and other agencies in their efforts to assist Middle East refugees.

(6) We deplore suggestions that those who criticize Israeli policies are necessarily anti-Semitic and that critics of Arab policies must be unsympathetic to the plight of the Arab people. The policies of Arab and Israeli governments are always open to the judgment of public opinion.

(7) It is desirable that there should be meetings of Christians with representatives of both the Jewish and the Arab communities in Canada in order to seek ways to improve understanding and promote justice and peace.

(8) There is a deep fear among us that, if Arabs continue to refuse to recognize Israel and maintain a threatening posture; and if Israel continues to occupy the lands she took and insist on unilateral arrangements with Arab nations without United Nations assistance; there is likely to be war again with the result that a million and a half displaced persons—and more—will be condemned to exist indefinitely on charity, without homes and without hope.

APPENDIX 5

STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION (4 May 1973)

As representatives of the United Church Family and the B'nai B'rith in Canada, we have anguished over recent events that have driven deep wedges of misunderstanding and acrimony between us.

As we in the Church recall the record of the centuries, we acknowledge the Church's sorry role in fostering hostility between the Christian and Jewish communities. We seek to ameliorate our relationship and pursue the future unfettered by intolerance, prejudice or rancour, with common goals directed towards the betterment of the society in which we live.

We of the United Church deeply regret and disavow the insensitivity and inaccuracies contained in an article by John Nicholls Booth in the United Church Observer (March 1972). We of the B'nai B'rith deeply regret and repudiate invective as a form of expression and communication.

We recognize and appreciate the interests of Jews everywhere, and of the United Church, for the events in the Middle East and in the survival of Israel.

Though we may differ in opinion from time to time on some issues, we believe that co-operation and friendship can be achieved, and that criticism of each other can be constructive when offered in a spirit of mutual respect and integrity.

As growing problems and challenges face us here in Canada, and throughout the world, members of the United Church and of B'nai B'rith need to meet one another, share insights, discover differences and co-operate, where possible, in social action for the common good; but communication cannot take place in an atmosphere of ambiguity or doubt regarding the respect of one party for the other.

We jointly look forward to dialogue as the appropriate means whereby points of view can be expressed, reconciliation achieved and understanding established. We affirm that our combined energies shall be increasingly channelled in this direction.

Rt. Rev. N. Bruce McLeod,
Moderator,
United Church of Canada

Sydney Maislin,
President,
Canadian B'nai B'rith

Rev. Dr. George M. Morrison,
Secretary, General Council,
United Church of Canada

Herbert S. Levy,
Executive Vice-President,
Canadian B'nai B'rith

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