JULES ISAAC AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
ADVOCATE FOR SCRIPTURAL TRUTH

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ABSTRACT

This is the backstory of how the Catholic Church came to clarify, in terms of esteem, the role of Israel in salvation history, at the behest of an unlikely personality. In so doing, the Church put an end to a fifteen-plus centuries’ old tradition of anti-Jewish rhetoric that had served to nourish and sustain Jew hatred. This secular tradition, contemptuous of Jews and Judaism, is not easy to find in the Church’s own official documents and had never been denounced in so compelling a manner that the Church was forced to deal with it.

The point of the dissertation is to demonstrate that but for the thought and activism of the eminent French Jewish historian, Jules Isaac, the Jewish Question would not have been added to the agenda of Vatican II and the Council Fathers would not have had the opportunity to declare that the New Testament could no longer be read as if the Holocaust had not happened. During the interwar years, Isaac was author of a multi-volume *manuel d’histoire* for French secondary students and in 1936, he was appointed Inspector General of Public Education for France. His ouster from civic life under Vichy provoked in him a question – was it really *scripturally* true as Christianity had taught for nearly two millennia that the Jesus of history had rejected the Jewish people as a whole
and conversely, that the Jewish people as a whole had misjudged and rejected the Jesus of history. Isaac’s research led him to conclude in the negative to both questions. He devoted his remaining years to promoting a rectification of Christian teaching regarding Jews and Judaism. The centerpiece of Isaac’s thought in this regard is his *Jésus et Israël*, a book begun in clandestinity during the war years and amidst personal tragedy, completed in 1946 and published in 1948. Isaac’s campaign to purify Christian preaching and teaching of a secular tradition contemptuous of Jews and Judaism was to culminate in a private audience with Pope John XXIII that would set in motion a train of events that led directly to the conciliar statement on the Jews.
For Ava
It is without doubt a sign of the times that a conciliar text, one that we call upon to resound across the globe and that, I hope, will have happy consequences in the life of the Church, should have been inscribed in the program of an Ecumenical Council by a pope, and studied, discussed and adopted by more than two thousand bishops, at the request of a layman - a layman who was not Christian.

Mgr Charles de Provenchères
Archbishop of Aix, Arles and Embrun
Conférence prononcée à l’Amitié judéo-Chrétienne d’Aix
11 janvier 1965
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PROLOGUE

“In this age of ours when men are drawing more closely together…”¹ These are the opening words of the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, one of the fruits of the Roman Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council, convoked by John XXIII within a year of having been elected Pope. It was passed by an overwhelming majority of bishops on 28 October 1965, “surprisingly early”² according to one prelate, following the close of the continuous discussion phase of the fourth and final session. The declaration has come to be known by its opening words in the original Latin - Nostra aetate. The fourth paragraph deals with Jews and Judaism. Why not just the Jewish religion? Because Judaism cannot be separated from the Jews, because “[t]he Jewish religion without the Jewish people is a fiction,”³ remarked Fr John Oesterreicher, a co-author of the conciliar statement.

Some theologians regard this paragraph as clarifying the role of Israel in salvation history.⁴ Others regard it as espousing the Pauline view of the mystery of Israel.⁵ Still others regard it as propounding a new theological vision of, and corresponding new pastoral attitude to, Jews and Judaism.⁶ “Never before,” observed Johannes Cardinal Willebrants, secretary of the body that worked up this conciliar statement, had “…a systematic, positive, comprehensive, careful and daring presentation of Jews and Judaism

¹ AAS 58 (1966), 740-4 with English Translation SPCU.
been made in the Church by a Pope or by a Council.” The presentation was daring because the new teaching overturned two millennia of Church teaching. What had been this teaching? In a word, God hates the Jews. Gregory Baum, a co-author of the conciliar statement on the Jews, puts it this way:

Passages in the New Testament say that those who believe and are baptized will be saved, and those who refuse to believe will be damned. Some passages also say that the hard-heartedness of the Jews leaves them in darkness, deserted by God. They say that salvation is in Jesus and in no other name, and that the Gospel is the single offer of redemption for the sinful world. (Of course, there are also passages with a different message.).

On the basis of the exclusivist biblical texts, the Church began to teach ‘extra ecclesiam nulla salus,’ (outside the Church no salvation). This doctrine was preached with increasing severity. The Council of Florence in the 14th century decreed that schismatics, heretics, Jews and pagans go straight to hell after they die, even if their lives had been full of good works.

Nonetheless, he continues,

There are a few biblical passages that have a meaning in keeping with the Church’s essential message, among them especially Paul’s witness in Romans 11 that God has not rejected his people. The implications of this Paul did not clearly see. While the early Christians in Jerusalem went to pray in the temple believing God to be present there, there is no hint that Paul believed that God was present to the Jews in their synagogue. A radical division between Christians and Jews had taken place.

After the Holocaust, the Church, recognizing with shame the cultural impact of its anti-Jewish discourse and the implications this discourse had in legitimating antisemitism, was to read Paul’s letter to the Romans in a new way.

The revolutionary new teaching in Catholic history regarding Jews and Judaism is one whose purpose it is to address Catholics from a Catholic point of view, although the reactions of Jewish community members were not without interest to the Catholic

7 Ibid., 222.
8 Correspondence to the author dated 17 March 2014.
Church. What is this new teaching? The official Church, listening to the signs of the times, concluded that the scriptures could no longer be read as if the Holocaust had not happened. The official Church, appreciating that “…the theological negation of Judaism and the vilification of the Jewish people that were part of the Christian tradition were translated into genocidal action of monstrous proportions, not indeed by Christians themselves, but by a political party that used for its own purposes a heritage built up by Christianity…,” declared that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the living God whose great Name Israel is commanded to sanctify and whom Christians believe to be triune, abides and has never ceased to abide, in (covenantal) relationship adhuc (until now) with His first-chosen people, Abraham’s stock. “Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews therefore should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this came from the Holy Scriptures.” Cardinal Bea, evoking the distinction between Israel according to the spirit and Israel according to the flesh, between Israel as a church (corpus mysticum Israel) and Israel as a people (Jewdom) in Maritainian terms,

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9 Generally, "Church" with an upper-case "C" denotes a specific communion, such as the Catholic Church, while "church" with a lower-case "c" denotes the church universal.
10 Three emancipatory movements of the twentieth century - of the working class, of women and of colonialized people - were alluded to as such signs of the times by Pope John XXIII (Pacem in terris, nn. 39-43).
12 A trinity hinted at, contended Augustine, in the thrice-repeated name of God in the biblical affirmation of His unity “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone [Deut. 6:4],” (an affirmation that Jesus himself considered to be the first of all the commandments); a trinity of persons, Christians believe, by whose power the Son alone assumed human nature.
took pains to clarify that the Jewish people is no longer the people of God “in the sense of an institution for the salvation of mankind.”

The problem confronting the official Church was that a textual reading of Romans 9-11, “…however generous in the context of the New Testament,” explains Baum, “does not present the ongoing election of the Jews as a source of grace for them in the present: the election simply preserves them in present darkness for a future redemption...grace is offered to Israel only through conversion to Christ.” A new hermeneutic was required, a signs-of-the-times, post-Holocaust hermeneutic, a hermeneutic that permitted the official Church to declare, “…against the letter (though not the substance) of the scriptures,” according to Baum, “that Jewish religion remains a dispensation of grace and that Christians should, instead of trying to convert Jews, engage in dialogue and cooperation with them.” In response to what Paul refers to in his Letter to the Romans as the “transgression” of the Jews, the Second Vatican Council drew from the Roman Catechism (the Catechism of the Council of Trent) to declare in the final paragraph of Nostra aetate, 4: “…as the Church has always held and still holds, Christ freely faced His passion and death, because of the sins of all people and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation.” The Roman Catechism, published in 1566 as one of the fruits of the Council of Trent under Pius V, sets out guide-lines for orthodox instruction for preachers and catechists. It scrupulously follows the teaching of the Council of Trent.


\[^{16}\] Ibid., 142.
Since it was put together at an express resolution of the Council, it is considered to be a
pronouncement of the magisterium.\textsuperscript{17}

It was the peculiar privilege of the Redeemer to have died when he
himself decreed to die, and to have died, not so much by external violence,
as by internal assent; not only his death, but also its time and place were
ordained by him... for, as our sins consigned Christ our Lord to the death
of the cross, most certainly, those who wallow in sin and iniquity, as far as
depends on them, ‘crucify to themselves again the Son of God, and make a
mockery of him.’ This, our guilt, takes a deeper die of enormity when
contrasted with that of the Jews...\textsuperscript{18}

Observed George Tavard, another co-author of the conciliar statement on the Jews,

“Logically, this statement [when contrasted with that of the Jews] implies that Jews as a
whole have incurred some degree of guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus.”\textsuperscript{19} This implication
was rejected by the Second Vatican Council. “True, the Jewish authorities and those who
followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion
cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the
Jews of today.”\textsuperscript{20}

The fourth paragraph of \textit{Nostra aetate} stipulates that it is the task of Catholics to
engage in conversation and cooperation with Jews with a view to fostering mutual
understanding and respect. In this regard, Pope Paul VI, writing on 22 December 1977
through Secretary of State Jean-Marie Cardinal Villot to Paris Archbishop François
Marty , , said, “\textit{Jules Isaac} and his work, [is considered] a source of inspiration for all
those of good will who seek to promote mutual respect, esteem and friendship between

\textsuperscript{17} The next Catechism to be published by the Roman Church was the Catechism of the Catholic Church,
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{The Catechism of the Council of Trent}, trans. Rev. J. Donovan (Baltimore: Lucas Brothers, 1829), 47.
\textsuperscript{20} Cunningham, ed.
Jews and Christians…” On 31 May 1980, in his address in Paris to members of the French Jewish community, Pope John Paul II told them, “I pay homage to these victims [of the Holocaust] whose sacrifice, we know, has not been fruitless. It was from there that there really began, thanks to the courage and decision of some pioneers, including Jules Isaac, the movement that has led us to the present dialogue and collaboration, inspired and promoted by the declaration Nostra aetate of the Second Vatican Council.”

Who was this Jules Isaac whose person and work Paul VI described as a source of inspiration in Christian-Jewish dialogue? Who was this Jules Isaac who John Paul II called a pioneer in the promotion of Christian-Jewish dialogue and collaboration? Who was this Jules Isaac who, asserted French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas following Isaac’s death, “…permitted [the Jewish people] to assert an essential refusal, [who] repulsed the guilt whereby Jews were confined exclusively by a certain theology, a guilt that separated them from all human warmth- the refusal of the mephistophelian guilt of he who does good while wishing harm, or he who is said to have brought about the salvation of the world because he alone, in all of humanity, is thought to have the soul of an executioner.” Isaac himself will answer. He left us a two-page testament, in his very own script and captioned, “Who is Jules Isaac?” It was drawn up by Isaac in 1960 and sent to Reverend James Parkes in connection with Parkes’ publication in English translation in the U.K. of a lecture that Isaac had delivered at the Sorbonne on 15

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24 James Parkes Archives, University of Southampton, U.K.
December 1959 which had been published in France by Fasquelle under the title, 

*L’Antisemitism a-t-il des Racines Chrétiennes?*

Of a Jewish family and Alsacien-Lorrainer, though born in Rennes, Brittany (1877). Son and grandsons of soldiers, Jules Isaac was a professor and historian, cut from a combative cloth. He never ceased to fight for truth, for liberty, and for peace.

In his youth, during the Dreyfus Affair, he was the friend and companion-in-arms of the great writer Péguy… In his adulthood, by his *Cours d’Histoires* (Hachette), he taught the majority of French youth and he continues to do so.

Combatant in the Great War (1914-18); wounded at Verdun, decorated with the *Croix de Guerre*, he made efforts to extract from the harsh realities of the war its broad outlines, historically and politically. He made efforts to prevent a new French-German conflict, proposing a Locarno Pact of a moral nature (1936), provoking first meetings between French and German historians, and publishing principally two books: *1914, Le problème des origines de la guerre* (Rieder, 1933) and *Paradoxes sur la science homicide et autres hérésies* (Rieder, 1935). From 1934, he was an active member of the *Comité de Vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes*.

After the disaster of 1940, Vichy legislation stripped him of his high office as *Inspecteur Générale de l’Education Nationale*. While a refugee in Aix, he wrote under the pseudonym of Junius, *Les Oligarques, essai d’histoire partiale* for les Éditions de Minuit. He then turned his attention to the fight against antisemitism, principally in the religious context, and began to write *Jésus et Israël*. It was during that time that the drama (1943) took place, a Gestapo raid that he avoided by mere happenstance, the majority of his family members arrested and deported.

From that moment forward, that in which he was engaged took on the character of a sacred mission. Continued from safe house to safe house, *Jésus et Israël* was published in 1948. At the International Jewish-Christian Congress of Seelisberg (1947), Jules Isaac contributed to the adoption of a program of rectification of Christian teaching in ten points.

In France, he was a founder and facilitator of *L’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne*, of which [in 1960] he is, together with Jacques Maritain, *président d’honneur*. He gave to *Jésus et Israël* an addendum: *Genèse de l’antisemitisme* (Calmann-Levy, 1956). His last effort (1960) was to obtain from the leader of the Catholic Church, Pope John XXIII, a position in favour of the rectification of Catholic teaching concerning the Jews. The [papal] reception gave him cause for hope. In France, both in Catholic
and Protestant circles, a purifying tendency is making its way with ever more strength.

Was Isaac exaggerating when he intimated that he had “…obtained from Pope John XXIII a position in favour of the rectification of Catholic teaching concerning the Jews?” John Oesterreicher, co-author of the conciliar statement on the Jews, seemed to think so. Oesterreicher long downplayed the role Isaac played in the pope’s decision to add the Jewish Question to the agenda of Vatican II. In his Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Oesterreicher wrote, “That Jules Isaac’s visit had a lasting effect on John XXIII cannot, in my opinion, be doubted. On the other hand, it is questionable whether his was the decisive influence in moving the Pope to act, as is sometimes asserted. What he did, however, was to cause the Pope’s intentions, until then but vaguely formed, to mature.”

Oesterreicher reiterated this opinion, almost verbatim, in a collection of his essays, published in 1986 under the title, The New Encounter between Christians and Jews. As the narrative will evidence, Oesterreicher was an outlier in this regard. What about historian John Connelly, who in his prehistory of the fourth paragraph of Nostra aetate, writes,

Because Isaac met with John XXIII in 1960 and successfully urged the pope to commission a statement on the Jew, some historians have assumed a direct link between his ideas and the Vatican II document Nostra Aetate of 1965 in which the church formally broke with anti-Judaism and condemned antisemitism. Yet the story is more complicated. If the conversations with Jews in the postwar years opened Christian minds to new ideas, they did not necessitate their acceptance. The ideas had to be tested for theological soundness.

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25 Oesterreicher, 4.
27 Connelly, 178.
There may not be a direct link between the conciliar statement on the Jews and Isaac’ ideas. Isaac was a historian, not a theologian, and moreover, not a Catholic. The official Church needed a new theological vocabulary with which to speak of the Jews and Judaism. The evolution of this new vocabulary by mainly German converts to Catholicism is traced by Connelly in masterful fashion in his From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews 1933-1965. However, the new vocabulary would have been stillborn if the Council Fathers had not been empowered to address the Jewish Question in the first place. It is the point of this study to demonstrate that but for the novel manner in which Isaac chose to frame his research questions in relation to the gospels, but for his standing to speak for all six million Jewish victims because he had standing to speak for his own wife and daughter, but for his indefatigable postwar campaign to alert Christians of the chasm between scriptural truth and a contemptuous tradition regarding Jews and Judaism, a campaign that culminated in a private audience on 13 June 1960 with Pope John XXIII, the Jewish question would not have been considered by the Council Fathers because it would not have been on the Vatican II agenda.

Was Isaac the first to mount a “…fight against antisemitism, principally in the religious context,” by subjecting the canonical gospels to critical examination? He was not the first to note that these gospels took shape decades after the death of Jesus. Nor was he the first to posit a relationship between Christian teaching regarding the Jews and modern antisemitism. As early as 1933-34, simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic, Christian theologians were articulating these very sentiments. In The Christian-Jewish Tragedy: a Study in Religious Prejudice, published in 1933, Conrad Henry Moehlman,
James B. Colgate professor of the history of Christianity at Baptist-affiliated Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, wrote,

Until recently Christian historians had not critically examined the canonical gospels. What is worse – few Christians had taken the trouble to notice that these gospels took shape around and subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem in C.E. 70. For three decades after the death of Jesus, Jerusalem Jew and Christian lived on fairly decent terms, the one with the other. Jerusalem Christians visited the temple, offered sacrifices, and even kept the passover. The Christian believed that Jesus of Nazareth the predicted messiah; the Jew could not. In connection with the catastrophes of C.E. 66-73 and C.E. 132-135, which destroyed the Jewish state, the break between Christian and Jew became more and more pronounced. What occurred? The Christian proceeded to exonerate Pontius Pilate, the judge and executioner of Jesus.\footnote{Conrad Henry Moehlman, The Christian-Jewish Tragedy: A Study in Religious Prejudice (Rochester, NY: The Printing House of Leo Hart, 1933), 16.}

Moreover, concluded Moehlman, “The tyro in the study of the Christian-Jewish problem soon discovers that the ultimate reason for anti-Semitism, although the term itself is of very recent origin, is Calvary.”\footnote{Ibid., 9.} In England, Anglican priest James Parkes concluded in The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: a Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism, published in 1934, that Christian antisemitism is dislike of the Jews for reasons that relate more to projection of an image of the Jew created by Church preaching than to reality and “…it is in this conflict [between the Church and the Synagogue] and its issue that modern antisemitism finds its roots.”\footnote{James Parkes, The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism, reprint ed. (New York: Atheneum 1934), 374.} How, then, did it come to pass that the official Church would pay heed to Jules Isaac in particular? What was it about Isaac and the era in which he emerged that qualified him to be the one to play a catalytic role in provoking the official Church to change its preaching and teaching regarding Jews and Judaism, and this in the face of scriptural passages that the Jews were responsible for Christ’s death
(Acts 3:15), lived under a curse (Matt. 27:25) and that God’s covenant with the Jews was obsolete (Heb. 8:13)? It is the point of this study to show how.
Jules Isaac was born at Rennes on 18 November 1877 into a *judéo-lorraine* family, “more Lorrainer than Jewish,” as he would later put it. He was preceded by two sisters: Laure, born in 1867, and Lucie Henriette, in 1873. The emancipation of the Jews of France in 1791, in keeping with the Declaration of the Rights of Man, had “…brought with it the end of legal discrimination,” writes historian Aron Rodrigue, “in return for ‘regeneration,’ the rapid divestment of all external manifestations of particularism. Jews were to be made into Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, paralleling attempts at homogenizing regional and local cultures in France, with religion retreating into the realm of the private.” In 1890, in the realm of the private, young Jules would become a *bar mitzvah*, called to the Torah by the name given to him at his circumcision on the eighth day of his life - *Yaacov ben Avraham*. His birth in Brittany had been happenstance. His father, a career officer in the French army who had voted no in the 8 May 1870 plebiscite to reconstitute the Second Empire into a quasi-parliamentary regime, was stationed at Rennes as assistant director of the Artillery School. Young Jules arrived

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32 On 23 December 1791, in response to a motion presented in the Constituent Assembly by l’abbé Henri Grégoire (1750-1831), a pastor from the village of Emberménil and deputy of the clergy, the Jews of France were granted full citizenship.
33 The Declaration of the Rights of Man was a preamble attached to a constitution that was adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1791. The constitution in question contemplated not a republic, but a constitutional monarchy.
36 Isaac's Hebrew name as it appears on his ketubah (Jewish marriage contract).
into this world six months after the *seize mai* crisis,37 “the decisive incident,” according to historian Gordon Wright, “that converted the mass of Frenchmen to republicanism …

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37 The Second Empire dissolved with the French defeat to Prussia and its allied German princely states at Sedan on 1 September 1870, notwithstanding shortlived efforts in the defeat's aftermath to prop up the imperial regime under a military-led interim government. On 4 September, a demonstrating Paris crowd entered the hall of the Corps Législatif, turned to Léon Gambetta for leadership and followed him across town to the Hôtel de Ville, the traditional venue for the proclamation of a republic. By 23 September, Paris was surrounded by the Prussian forces and northern and eastern France was under occupation. On 7 October, Gambetta escaped to Tours from which he continued to lead the provisional government and attempted to organize an armed force. Over Gambetta's objections, foreign minister Jules Favre secured from Bismarck a three-week armistice to allow for a plebiscite on the question of war or peace. On 8 February 1871, a National Assembly was elected using the electoral machinery of the Second Republic. The Assembly initially convened at Bordeaux since Paris was under siege. The number of monarchist deputies elected was twicelfold that of republican, a signal that the nation had voted in favour of coming to peace terms with Bismarck. Adolphe Thiers was chosen as provisional executive to negotiate peace with Germany and on 1 March 1871, the Assembly approved the terms, an approval that prompted the immediate resignations of an outraged Léon Gambetta (who went into short-lived voluntary exile in Spain) and most of the deputies from Alsace and Lorraine. In March the Assembly voted to relocate to Versailles, as opposed to the traditional Paris, thereby provoking the bloody nine-week Paris Commune which pitted the Communards, mainly Jacobin egalitarian/patriotic or Proudhonian socialist in ideology, against the newly elected government. Before the Assembly could reconvene, its authority was repudiated by republican Paris, which resented the monarchist majority in the new Assembly, the implications of the choice of Versailles as the new seat of government and the lifting of the wartime moratoria on debts and rents. The last straw was an order by Thiers that the army remove the two hundred canons that had been cast during the Prussian siege and the cost of which had been underwritten by public subscription. In response, the Parisians repulsed the Versailles troops and lynched two generals. Thiers ordered the evacuation of Paris and placed the city under siege. The petty bourgeois and proletariat, the only remaining occupants to speak of, underwent a second siege in the space of six months, this time by the French army. When the siege was lifted, republicanism had been purged of its radical (egalitarian, patriotic, anti-clerical and Proudhonian socialist) leaders.

From 1871 to 1873, Adolphe Thiers was to combine the functions of head of state and prime minister. Never did there seem a moment more propitious for a restoration of the king, but which one, the Bourbon pretender, the Comte de Chambord or the Orleanist Comte de Paris? The monarchists were irreconcilably divided on the question. In May 1873, the monarchists, with a view to a restoration, provoked Thiers to relinquish the presidency and substituted Marshal MacMahon, who had commanded the French forces that had been cornered by the Prussians on 31 August 1870 and been defeated the next day. MacMahon invited the Duc de Broglie to form a government. The National Assembly adjourned on 31 December 1875, having passed a new constitution for the Third Republic, a constitution radically different from that of the short-lived Second Republic. The Second Republic was a presidential system comprised of a unicameral legislature elected for a three-year term by universal male suffrage and a president, elected by the same voters, for a four-year term. The Third Republic would be grounded in a bicameral, parliamentary system that consisted of an upper house (Senate), initially dominated by monarchists as a result of an indirect system of election, and a lower house (Chamber of Deputies) elected by universal manhood suffrage for a four-year term. The president of the Republic was elected by parliament for a seven-year term. In the general elections that followed in 1876, the republicans won a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Instead of turning to Gambetta, MacMahon first invited a centrist, Dufaure, then Moderate Jules Simon to form a government. On 16 May 1877, MacMahon, believing himself to be Parliament's equal, provoked Simon's resignation and nominated in Simon's stead a monarchist as premier. The Chamber refused to approve MacMahon's choice. Underlying this refusal was an assumption that the president's power to appoint a ministry was subject to parliamentary approval. MacMahon reacted by dissolving the Chamber and calling a general election. The republicans won a majority of seats in the Chamber and
[or] rather furnished proof that the conversion had already occurred."  

Seven years had elapsed since Alsaciens and Lorrains east of the Vosges had lost their French citizenship following Bismarck’s annexation of Alsace and a slice of Lorraine in the aftermath of the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. The Third Republic was, in Isaac’s words, “…bourgeois, still in its infancy and in mediocre health.”  

The outcome of the seize mai crisis would leave its mark. The power of the president to dissolve parliament and call an election, even at the request of the president of the Council (premier), was never again exercised during the life of the Third Republic – the power had been corrupted. Deputies were ensconced and secure in their seats for 4 years. The crisis also deepened the divide between moderate republicans (the Republican Left), and moderate ex-Orleanists (Left-Center), who might otherwise have been driven to collaborate in a coalition of the center. This was the France into which Jules Isaac arrived, republican for a third time, still in its infancy, fragile and resentful, if not hostile, to Jews.  

Initially, the family name had been “Isaac-Marx,” probably in response to a Napoleonic decree that required the Jews of France to assume a family name.  

MacMahon relented and named a premier acceptable to the Chamber. Two years later, in 1879, when republicans swept partial elections to the Senate, MacMahon abdicated in advance of the end of his seven-year term.  

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39 Isaac, 31.  
40 In 1801, having concluded a concordat with the Church under which Catholicism was recognized as the religion of a majority of Frenchmen, priests restored to the state payroll and bishops nominated by the state, Napoleon I had turned his mind to the Jews (Israelites) of France. The Empire was divided into circsoscriptions overseen by a Consistoire central. By the onset of the July Monarchy in 1830, rabbis were on the state payroll. From 1844, with Louis-Philippe still on the throne, ordained rabbis fell into one of four classes: (i) the grand rabbi of the Consistoire central, (ii) the great rabbis of the departmental consistoirs, (iii) communal rabbis and (iv) pulpit rabbis. With construction of the railway system in the mid-nineteenth century, the Jews began to move, westward to Paris. The relatively tiny, established, well-to-do community of Sephardi Jews of Paris, of which Jean Azévédo in François Mauriac’s Thérèse Desqueyroux, is representative, was to be submerged beneath the influx of waves of Judeo-German, Ashkenazi Jews, from Alsace, from Lorraine, from the Rhineland and from Germany. This influx was succeeded by another, of Polish and Russian Jews fleeing from Tsarist pogroms. By 1870, Paris was home to forty percent (30,000) of France’s Jewish population. The annexation of Alsace and a portion of Lorraine in 1870 accelerated this shift in Jewish demographics. Within the next decade, Paris would receive another 5,000 Jews who
grandfather, Elias Isaac-Marx (1791-1866), 41 uneasy with a family name that included as biblical an appellation as “Isaac,” unhitched the “Isaac” from the “Marx” and converted the former to a middle name, to become Elias Isaac Marx. (Curiously, Jules’s father, Isaac Marx (1829-1891), opted for “Isaac” over “Marx” as a family name – the only one of his siblings to do so – and added “Edouard” to become Edouard Marx Isaac). 42 Elias fought for Napoleon in Russia, was taken prisoner and returned to France in 1814 where he ended his military career in Napoleon’s Grande Armée at Waterloo. Jules’s father, Edouard, a Lorrainer from Metz, fought in the French army for Louis-Napoleon under the command of General Chanzy in the Loire army during the war of 1870-71, earning the rank of officier de la Légion d’honneur and chef d’escadron d’artillerie. Jules’ mother, Mathilde Léonie Massenbach (1844-1891), was Strasbourgeoise, the daughter of an Alsatian grain trader. Military discipline pervaded the Isaac household (at table, the children were not entitled to speak unless spoken to), a tradition which left its mark.

Years later, Fadiey Lovsky, a Protestant dialogue partner of Jules Isaac, would describe the latter as “…a great man, grizzled, rather old France; with the look of a retired colonel ... warm, but not easy.” 43 In 1882, when Jules was but five years of age, his father was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and the family moved to Valenciennes, a small garrison town in northeastern France on the Escaut River, adjacent to the Belgian frontier. Edouard Marx Isaac assumed command of the artillery unit. In the same year –

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41 Married to Baccarat Violette (1806-1887).
42 At the age of 29, Jules himself toyed with the idea of reverting to Marx as a family name; he would sign his first-ever published piece, a 1906 review of Georges Sorel’s Réflexions sur la violence in the periodical, Le Mouvement socialiste, “Is. Marx”.
1882 -although young Jules would have been oblivious to the fact, *l'Union générale* failed with a consequential financial loss to many Catholic stakeholders. *L'Union générale* was a bank founded by Paul Bontoux with a view to “…consolidating the financial resources of Catholics and thereby assume for their profit the power that they lack and that is to be found entirely in the hands of their adversaries in the faith.”

By 1885, young Jules was enrolled as a day student at the *lycée de Valenciennes* and immersed in the novels of Jules Verne and Alexandre Dumas. In that same year – 1885 - the general elections had resulted in an unexpected shift to the right. Monarchists and Bonapartists had more than doubled their strength in the Chamber, thereby depriving the Opportunists of their majority. This abrupt shift to the right was the product of a number of factors, including the *revanchiste* hope that was concretized with the formation in 1882 of Paul Déroulède’s *Ligues des patriotes*, and a growing dissatisfaction among the proletariat, as well as the reaction of monarchists and clericals to the Ferry School Laws, which had weakened church influence in education. After losing an election for the Chamber in 1885, Déroulède decided that the parliamentary system was sapping France of its vitality and should be replaced by a presidential republic of the sort envisioned by MacMahon and his sponsors - a cabinet appointed by and responsible to a popularly elected president. The Opportunists needed support from either their (Radical)

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44 Quoted in Pierrard, 26-27.
45 The republicans (as opposed to monarchists) initially consisted of three factions. From left to right along the republican ideological spectrum, these three factions were: (i) the Republican Union (popularly called Radicals, such as Gambetta); (ii) the Republican Left (moderate bourgeois republicans such as Grévy, Ferry, Simon) and (iii) the Left-Center, (ex-Orleanists such as Thiers and Casimir-Périer). The Republican Union split over the question of whether the National Assembly that had been elected in February 1871 had a mandate to draft a constitution. Ever the statesman, Gambetta persuaded many, but not all, of his fellow Radicals to approve the constitution of 1875. The rift caused the Republican Union to split into two factions labeled "Radical" and "Opportunist," the latter absorbing into itself the Republican Left.
left or the Right-Center. A center-left governing coalition gave way to a center-right coalition. General Georges Boulanger, *le générale Revanche*, misperceived by Radicals such as Clemenceau as an authentic republican, was appointed minister of war. Within a year of his appointment, Boulanger was to become a lightning rod for a populist wave of nationalism among those republicans disappointed by *le parlementisme*, among Catholics still smarting from the adoption of the Ferry School Laws, and among monarchists, worn down by internal divisions between Legitimists and Orleanists. In 1887, well in advance of the 1889 general elections, his sponsors began to test the waters by entering Boulanger’s name in a series of by-elections with consistently favourable results.

It was in the autumn of 1888, as Boulanger’s ascent was gathering steam, that young Jules entered *lycée Lakanal* as a day student en cinquième. The switch in schools was provoked by the retirement at age fifty-eight of Jules’ father. To top-up his pension with a view to making ends meet, Edouard Marx Isaac assumed the direction of a refuge for training delinquent boys on one of three estates comprising the village of Plessis-Piquet, to the south of Paris, near the small town of Sceaux. *Lycée Lakanal* is bounded by the small towns of Sceaux and Bourg-la-Reine, on the outskirts of Paris. Rain or shine,

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46 As far as the Ferry School Laws were concerned, on the eve of the Ferry reforms, France’s educational system had consisted of two parallel tracks: Catholic and public. At the primary level, the Catholic system was the oldest and most dominant; in many villages, the Catholic primary school was the only option. At the secondary level, the Falloux law, passed in 1850 by president (as he then was) of the Second Republic Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, made religious education compulsory in primary and secondary schools operated by the state and gave the church the right to establish and operate secondary schools (collèges) in parallel with those of the state lycées. Since the passage of the Falloux Law, Catholic collèges had proliferated. By the time of Jules’ birth, the collèges were attracting one out of every two male secondary students and substantially all of the female secondary students in France. Under the Ferry Laws, passed between 1879 and 1885, Catholic universities, which had been authorized in 1875 by one of the last laws passed by the monarchist-dominated National Assembly, were required to call themselves Institut Catholique, religious education was replaced with civic education in public schools and Catholic religious and priests were disqualified from teaching in public schools.

47 In the French school system of the nineteenth century, unlike the North American, one progressed from higher number grades to lower number grades.

48 Plessis-Robinson today. The other two estates were owned by members of the Hachette and related families.
Jules would make the journey from home to school and back on foot, through the main streets or using a shortcut through the countryside. Ahead of the general elections of May/June 1889, a by-election was called for 27 January in the staunchly republican district of la Seine, which included Sceaux and Bourg-la-Reine. Government leaders challenged Boulanger to run as a candidate and the challenge was accepted. At every opportunity, Boulanger supporters would cover the signage of the republican opponent with signage of their own candidate. Homeward-bound from school, “…if the opportunity presented itself,” Isaac recalled, “and casting precautionary glances in all directions I was assured of not being seen, my republican sentiments were kindled: in one stroke, I would pull, peel off or tear away the Boulangist sign, almost always brand new, which covered Jacques’ signage – a delicious feeling, however brief, since I had to take flight, pursued by those yelling loudly at me.”

The republican sentiments to which Isaac alluded were informed by a home environment characterized by what he later remembered as “…a staunch republicanism, tricolor, liberal in the manner of the period (but liberal nonetheless), vaguely democratic, perfectly bourgeois, well fitted to the social order, firmly entrenched in its antipathy to socialism.” Boulanger went on to handily defeat his opponent in the Paris by-election, evidencing nationalist sentiments that augured well for a coup d’Etat. But Boulanger chose to hold back, probably anticipating a sweep to power in the ensuing spring general elections. Prior to the general elections, he was tricked into believing that the government had evidence of his treason to the republic and that he would be put on trial in the Senate, whereupon he took flight to Brussels and into the arms of his mistress. “Thus,” wrote Isaac, “did Marguerite de

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49 Isaac, 30-31.
50 Ibid., 24.
Bonnemains overcome the Duchess d’Uzès, and Marianne, Boulangism.” Thus did the 1889 general election assure the Opportunists - moderately conservative bourgeois republicans - another decade in power and thus did it vindicate a republic to which Pope Leo XIII recommended Catholics should rally.52

Alas, in his fourteenth year, Jules’ carefree existence was cut short abruptly and traumatically with the deaths of his parents, Edouard from a stroke on 24 September 1891 and Léonie, six days later, from diabetes-related complications. “The blow was so sudden, so unexpected,” Isaac recalled, “that at the time, it did not fully penetrate into my consciousness. I still retain, however, two indelible memories: one is of the painful moments in which I was led before my father’s deathbed; the other, of that minute – almost timeless – in which my mother made desperate efforts to take me one last time into her arms, as if she wanted (and certainly did want) to make me feel in every fiber the infinite sweetness of a maternal tenderness from which I was about to be forever severed, and for which I would forever thirst.”53 Custody of young Jules passed to bourgeois d’affaires Salomon Blum, husband of Laure, the elder of Jules’ two sisters.54 It was decided that Jules should become a boarder at lycée Lakanal. On 1 October of that annus horribilis, 1891, young Jules found himself not only orphaned, but wrenched from familial surroundings. In the preceding academic year 1890-91, he had been a day student en troisième and stood first in his class. He began the 1891-92 year as a boarder en seconde. Among the cagneux de première année,55 five years Isaac’s senior, was a demi-

51 Ibid., 31.
52 Only thirty-eight declared Boulangists won election, including novelist Maurice Barrès.
53 Isaac, 36.
54 Lucie Henriette was married to Lyonnais Théodore Picard.
55 A cagneux had received his baccalauréat and was enrolled in a structured program of study for the competitive examinations for admission to the École Normale Supérieure.
boursier destined to become one of France’s most illustrious poets, essayists and editors, who as Isaac would later recall, “… gave the appearance of having arrived, by what trajectory one knew not, straight out of the French Christian middle ages, from the thirteenth century, unless it was the fifteenth, this younger brother and companion of Joan of Arc…” Whether young Jules would have been as transfixed had Charles Péguy arrived at Lakanal one year earlier when Jules was still a day student and both his parents still living, we shall never know. “During that academic year 1891-1892,…I watched him frequently, observed him for long periods, without being aware perhaps: proof that he had a certain striking presence, even for the child that I was, not so much by virtue of his reputation as the outstanding cagneux, than by a continuous energy that emanated from his very being, imposing itself upon me and upon all.” These were the first impressions of Charles Péguy as apprehended by a traumatized, newly orphaned and very lonely fourteen year old, a Péguy always flanked at his right in this most republican bastion of France by fellow cagneux, lycée d’Orléans classmate and best friend, judéo-Alsacien Albert Lévy, son of a rabbi, and at his left by fellow cagneux Albert Mathiez. “[T]hey would stroll, their strides synchronized in military fashion, engaged in a never-ending conversation, not in circumambulation around the grounds, but following a straight line, always the same, tracking a paved drainage groove…from the covered gallery to the gate

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56 Isaac, Péguy en Sorbonne. Discours du cinquantenaire (des Cahiers), 365-75 at 370.
57 Ibid., 45.
58 In 1899, Albert Lévy would begin teaching at Strasbourg, then to the midi for health-related reasons, where he became the doyen de la Faculté des Lettres at Aix-en-Provence. At his death in 1929, he was succeeded in the position by Lakanalien classmate, Victor L. Bourrilly. On the night of 24 or 25 June 1943, Mme Lévy-See, widow of Albert Lévy, was arrested by the Germans and transported to Marseilles where she remained under house arrest for 5 months until her deportation in November 1943.
overlooking the park and back.”59 After one rather than the usual two years of *cagne*, Péguy would sit the competitive examinations for entry into *Normale Supérieure*, “a kind of forcing ground for the best intellects in France,” in the words of French historian Gordon Wright, falling just short, ending his oral examination but half a point behind the last of the admitted candidates and standing second among the waitlisted. “When one considers for one in his early twenties,” Isaac would later remark, “the maturity of his soul and the power of his intellection, harnessed to the prodigious capacity for work, it is appalling to realize that in 1892, he fell short in his orals by half a point and that his lowest grade was in *explication française*. What influence a half point may have in the destiny of a man!”60 In the next succeeding academic year 1892-93, Jules was *en rhétorique* and Péguy no longer at Lakanal; the latter had decided to complete his year of military service as a member of the 131st infantry regiment in Orléans. At the June close of academic year 1892-93, however, Péguy would return to Lakanal for a fortnight of compressed preparation in advance of a second attempt to gain admission to the *Ecole Normale*. Isaac recalled the visit. “The image is etched in my memory: toward the end of the [academic 1892-93] year, the sudden appearance in class of an infantryman in uniform; dark blue tunic, red épaulettes and pants; sensational, I shall never forget it! He seated himself in the front row, bathed in our awe; it was Péguy, having returned from the

59 Isaac, 46. Unbeknownst to Isaac at the time, he had more in common with Péguy than appeared at first sight, the latter having also lost a parent – his father - in early childhood and both having been steeped in a patriotic, anticlerical republicanism.
60 Wright, 252.
61 Isaac, Annexe I - Précisions sur la vie scolaire de Péguy, 295-303 at 303.
Orléans barracks to do a lap of instruction, *en cagne*, in the company of his competition. “62

It had been during Isaac’s first academic year as a boarder at Lakanal – on 20 April 1892 to be precise – that the first issue of an antisemitic daily, *La Libre Parole*, appeared on the newsstands. This newspaper was Edouard Drumont’s medium for the dissemination of his Jew hatred. Drumont had risen to national prominence on the coattails of Boulangism. One day in early April 1886, novelist, unbeliever and good republican Alphonse Daudet, creator of Tartarin and Nouma Roumestan, told his son, Léon (who himself would trod the path from antisemitism to anti-Dreyfusism and thence to the *Action Française*), “It’s tomorrow that Drumont’ book, *La France juive*, appears. He’s playing the bookseller’s game: two large volumes, full of facts and documents, as interesting as an adventure novel. The people he depicts will try to keep their silence. But I do not think that’s possible. One of them will talk, and by breaking the pact, launch the book.”63 Alphonse Daudet was wrong. Even the laudatory review published by Dominican P. Georges de Pascal in the 16 April 1886 issue of the Assumptionist daily, *La Croix* (founded in 1870 and with a then estimated circulation of at least half a million) did not have the desired catalytic effect. To salvage what might otherwise have been a stillborn creation, Daudet put in a good word with Francis Magnard, editor-in-chief and part owner of *Le Figaro*. On 19 April 1886, the 80,000 readers of *Le Figaro*, which included all of high society Paris, were treated to a rave review by Magnard in which qualifiers such as “dreadful” were juxtaposed with “amazing” and “formidable.” Forty-

62 Ibid., 59. Lakanal buddies, who had completed their second year of preparation, such as Albert Levy, Albert Mathiez and Victor Bourrilly, gained admission to the École. Péguy falling short by one-quarter of a point, ended at the top of the wait list.
63 Quoted in Pierrard, 31.
eight hours later, the first edition had sold out; within the next year, there would be more than 100 successive editions.\footnote{Drumont would recall de Pascal, and not Magnard, as the first favourable reviewer of La France juive.} In 1890, Drumont confidently asserted that the Jews in France numbered 500,000. According to the official census in that year, there were 67,780 Israelites living in metropolitan France, of which 43,556 were settled in the Paris Consistoire. In addition, there were 44,208 Jews living in Algeria, then an integral part of France, who became citizens of France with the enactment in October 1871 of the decree sponsored by then justice minister Adolphe Crémieux.\footnote{In 1863, Crémieux became the president of l’Alliance israelite universelle, founded in 1860 to defend the Jews of France from prejudice and discrimination.} Drumont’s Jew hatred was based on race, not religion. “In 1790 (sic),” Drumont wrote, “the Jew arrives; under the First Republic and under the First Empire, he enters, he acclimatizes, he searches for his place; under the Restoration and the July Monarchy, he seats himself in the salon; under the Second Empire, he reclines on the bed of others; under the Third Republic, he begins to rout the French from their homes and forces them to work for him.”\footnote{Quoted in Pierrard, 40.}

In his racial antisemitism, it has been suggested, Drumont was not a disciple of Gougenot de Mousseaux, Commander of the Order of Pius IX, who in 1869 had published, \textit{Le Juif, Le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des peuples chrétiens}. “A comparison of the first pages of Gougenot des Mousseaux’s thick book, and the departure point of \textit{La France Juive}, published only seventeen years later, is telling;” wrote Protestant scholar Fadiey Lovsky, “Gougenot denounces a ‘talmud-ism,’ [the false Israel] however imaginary, which he juxtaposes with ‘Moses-ism’ [the true Israel] out of which the Church came forth – a point of view still ‘Christian,’ however nefarious, however unfair, however regrettable; Drumont, on the other hand, juxtaposes the Semite and the Aryan.
From that moment onward, traditional Christian antisemitism, aggravated by the worsening situation, was nothing more than the antisemitism of the era.”

La Libre Parole had been on the newsstands but one month before Drumont was the object of an action in defamation. The plaintiff was minister of public works Auguste Burdeau, government spokesman of a bill to extend the privilege accorded the Bank of France. Drumont had written that the bill, if enacted, would compromise France’s security in placing its resources in the hands of a Jew – Alphonse de Rothschild – and that Burdeau had been bought off with bribes. On 15 June 1892, after a trial of the action, Drumont was sentenced to three months in prison. Within weeks of the trial, La Libre Parole had doubled its subscribership. Beginning 3 September 1892, La Libre Parole (under the penmanship of Boisandré, then of Félix Martin) accused the government of complicity with the directors of the Panama Canal Company. This company had been formed in 1880 by Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal, to dig a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. When the company became financially stressed in 1888, its promoters had sought to capital raise through a lottery loan, bribing a sufficient number of parliamentarians to secure the required legislative approval from the Chamber in April and from the Senate in June 1888. Within one year, the company collapsed. La Libre Parole concentrated its fire on two Jewish agents of the company: Jacques de Reinach and Cornelius Herz. These two targets had a falling out and each began to feed information to Drumont in the hope of buying protection from the newspaper’s attacks. Reinach’s suicide on 19 November 1892 provoked the government to set up a parliamentary commission to investigate; on 28 November, the government itself would fall.

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At the close of academic year 1894-95, after seven years at lycée Lakanal, four of them as a boarder, Isaac received his baccalauréat with the mention, Très bien. In 1895, Isaac would spend two years in preparation for the Normale Supérieure entrance examinations - the first at Lakanal (academic 1995-96) and the second at lycée Henri-IV (academic year 1896-97). During these two years, he learned Greek and Latin, in that epoch languages foundational to the preparation for admission into the École Normale. Twice he passed the written exam and twice he fell short on the oral. It was while Isaac was still cagneux at lycée Henri-IV, in academic 1896-97, that he would cross paths again with Péguy, this time with enduring aftereffects. Isaac was then in his twentieth year. No doubt, he would have been aware of Péguy’s conversion to socialism in the spring of 1895 (during Péguy’s first academic year at the École Normale), not a sudden conversion but rather the culmination of at least three years of gestation.

Péguy and three of his E.N.S. classmates, two of whom were en cagne with Péguy at Lakanal - Albert Lévy and Albert Mathiez - and Weulersse (nephew of Georges Renard, director of la Revue socialiste), experienced what they came to call their turne Utopie. Until then, Isaac had paid scant attention to the social question. Yet, as he recalled, “…with each passing day of freedom [at Henri-IV] reminding me of the family milieu that had become mine – that of the bourgeoisie d’affaires – I experienced an increasing aversion (and perhaps also disproportionately so), to the bourgeois mentality and egoism, to bourgeois customs and marriages, to the bourgeois-ification of religion and of the Churches, to l’Argent-Roi. I visited the bible infrequently, even less frequently the

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68 In academic 1893-94, his third year as a boarder at Lakanal, Jules was en philosophie and Péguy was completing his second year of cagne, but not at Lakanal; rather at lycée Louis-le-Grand, while enrolled on full scholarship at adjacent collège Sainte-Barbe. At the close of the 1893-94 year, Péguy gained admission to Ecole Normale, sixth among the admitted candidates.

69 Lévy and Mattiez had been en cagne with Péguy at Lakanal in the 1891-92 academic year.
synagogue, yet – I still have the precise recollection – the admonitions of the prophets increasingly resonated.”70 That the admonition of the prophets resonated in relation to the social question is not surprising. In Third Republic France, the universal human rights and justice proclaimed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man were understood to be the same principles for which the Judaism of the Mosaic legislation and the prophetic message stood. Moreover, Isaac had not been the first socialist for whom the prophetic message had resonated. As Erich Fromm notes in his On Being Human, “If Marx had been allergic to religious words…would the student Marx have attended a course of lectures on the prophet Isaiah as the only non-obligatory course in his study plan? Would he, many years later, have told his wife, who was interested in attending some lectures by a very liberal minister: ‘If you really are interested in religion, read the prophets instead of listening to banalities…’”71

Isaac’s discontent with the embourgeoisement of his Jewish middle class milieu may have been driven by a multiplicity of factors. When Isaac was but fourteen, it had been homme d’affaires Salomon Blum who had piled one trauma upon another by banishing the newly-orphaned Jules from the family home. It is also possible that it was not Isaac’s embrace of socialism that led to his encounter with Péguy, but Isaac’s desire to encounter the adult Péguy that led to the former’s embrace of socialism. In any event, Isaac chose to break the bounds of his family milieu, which he described as “…firmly resolved in its antipathy to socialism. The violence of the Commune had left a horrific memory in the minds of the French bourgeois…For the young child that I was at the time, the term ‘communard’, which was often heard in the course of conversation among adults,

70 Isaac, 97-98.
71 Erich Fromm, On Being Human (New York: Continuum, 1999), 166.
had a sinister resonance, and seemed to be a synonym for brigand or assassin.” The meeting between Isaac and Péguy was brokered by a mutual friend, Henri Boivin, older brother of Emile. The rendez-vous took place one fine afternoon in May 1897 at the jardin du Luxembourg. Isaac recalled feelings of trepidation in advance of his one-on-one encounter with the charismatic Péguy upon whom six years earlier it is possible the fourteen year old, newly-orphaned Isaac might have projected his own father. “What apprehension at not being on a par with, not sufficiently worthy of, such a dialogue partner. No academic examination had ever caused me this state of anxiety. In truth, was this not a test, a test of whether to merit admission into the Péguy elect, an elect akin, I had heard, to a mysterious and religious order?”

The Péguy encountered by Isaac in May 1897 was a rising star. He was enrolled at the Ecole Normale in pursuit of an agrégation (de philosophie), having spent the immediately preceding academic year on leave at Orléans to write his Jeanne d’Arc. By the end of 1897, Péguy would have abandoned his studies at E.N.S., published his Jeanne d’Arc through la Revue socialiste, married Charlotte Baudouin (over his mother’s furious objections), and plunged headlong into the battle for revision of the verdict in the Dreyfus case, and for social justice generally, as publisher and bookseller via la librairie Georges Bellais, “...a venture in communist institution and not an achievement

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72 Isaac, 24.
73 Isaac was close to both Boivin brothers - Henri and Emile - fellow Orleanais of Péguy. The younger, Emile, was only months older than Isaac. The brothers Boivin would marry the sisters Crémieux, daughters of Adolphe Crémieux.
74 Isaac, 98-99.
75 Charlotte was the sister of prodigy Marcel Baudouin, fellow cagneux with Péguy at Sainte-Barbe. The friendship that evolved between Péguy and Baudouin “...was unlike any other, a fraternal in addition to mysterious friendship, a tight and semi-mystical union, so deeply rooted that it never manifested itself, never expressed itself like the other of Péguy's relationships...” (Les Expériences de ma vie I: Péguy, 83). Tragically, Beaudoin passed away in 1896, during his year of military service.
76 Two of the four witnesses to this marriage were fellow Lakalaniens Collier and Mattiez.
77 By the close of 1897, it had become evident to E.N.S. librarian Lucien Herr, and therefore to Péguy, that Dreyfus had been the object of a gross miscarriage of justice.
in individual capitalist enterprise.”78 The economic redemption of man contemplated by Péguy was not an end in itself, but a means to an end: the redemption of man. In this regard, Péguy was no different than Karl Marx. As Erich Fromm notes, “Only a relatively small number of Marxist scholars – among them pro- and anti-Marxists – have pointed out that Marx’s final goal was not economic but human change; and that the idea of the primacy of the drive for possession is a bourgeois and not a Marxist concept…His aim was the liberation of man from crippledness, from his loss of himself, from his alienation. The socialist society was not an aim in itself, but a means to the full realization of man.”79 While socialism’s roots in France as political theory were old and deep, it had only recently come into its own as an organized political force, given the repression of the Commune in 1871. At the first socialist workers’ congress of 1879, it was the Marxian, rather than the Gallic Proudhonian or Blanquist, faction that won the day, under the leadership of Jules Guesde. In the 1890s, socialism in the Third Republic came of age as a political movement. In 1893, the number of socialist deputies (representing at least five different organized socialist factions, including independentistes such as Jean Jaurès) swelled from a handful to fifty, all of whom were anticlerical, anti-militarist, internationalist and pacifist in outlook. It took the next succeeding decade before these competing factions could be brought under the panoply of one unified party, thanks in large part to the efforts of Jean Jaurès. In response, by the end of that decade, the Moderates (a new label for Gambetta’s Opportunists) were increasingly inclined to form coalitions with Left-Center ex-monarchists.

78 Isaac, 237 (Deuxieme cahier, p. 4).
79 Fromm, 132-33.
Péguy’s doctrine was well developed by the time he met with Isaac. By August 1897, this doctrine had been set down in writing in a brochure, “thin and modest” recalled Isaac, “…with a grey cover, six and one half pages, ‘price 10 centimes.’”80 It was Péguy’s first ever published work, under the title De la cité socialiste (1897) and the pen name Pierre Deloire (de Loire). “Péguy’s socialism was no mere inclination,” recalled Isaac, “there was nothing heated or sentimental about it; it transcended nations, was entirely revolutionary; his program was always collectivism as he precisely defined it in his 1897 brochure De la cité socialiste.”81 It was a socialism whose end was not the socialization of large enterprises, although such socialization was contemplated, but the emotional and intellectual redemption of persons, a redemption that Péguy considered to be precarious without their economic redemption. Isaac signed on as a disciple without hesitation to become one “…not among a thousand, but among twenty.”82 So it was that Isaac became the youngest of Péguy’s disciples and, after Albert Lévy, the second who was Jewish.83 “However, [Isaac]’s status was particular;” observed Géraldi Leroy, “he was, if one may put it this way, a Jewish friend who did not figure among Péguy’s Jewish friends. It was not as a Jew that [Isaac] entered into and remained in the ‘compagnonnage.’” Having received from his mother a meagre Jewish education, he considered himself thereafter perfectly agnostic and a stranger to every religious tradition.”84 It was not as a Jew that Isaac entered into the compagnonnage because Isaac,

80 Isaac, 99.
81 Ibid., 237.
82 Ibid., Péguy en Sorbonne, discours du cinquantenaire (des Cahiers), 365-75 at 366.
83 In the nine Cahiers of the fifteenth and last series, five were written by Jews: Edmond Fleg, Joseph Reinach, Julien Benda, André Saurès and Georges Delahache.
like many of his bourgeois co-religionists, had been raised as a *Juif d’Etat*. The Jew in Isaac was one with republican France.

“After [the Revolution of 1789],” according to historian Aron Rodrigue, “modern civilization was destined to triumph everywhere as it was doing in France. The identity between the principles of 1789 and of purified Judaism shorn of the superstitions that it had acquired during the centuries of oppression meant that Jews could now partake as full-fledged citizens in the onward path of civilization.”85 In the course of their encounter at the Jardin de Luxembourg, Péguy adumbrated the practical side of his program for his newest recruit - participation as a comrade-in-arms in the struggle for social justice and the payment of monthly dues to finance the establishment of a periodical “*socialistement socialiste,*”86 a periodical whose purpose it was to convert those of Péguy’s generation. The one-on-one meeting with Péguy was forever etched in Isaac’s memory. “The agreement was sealed, the commitment made (by me). I can envision as though it were yesterday the very spot where, before we parted, I said to Péguy, with the total conviction that was invigorating me: ‘You can count on me.’ ... On that day, at that hour, *I received a sacrament* [emphasis added] ... The imperative of spiritual integrity and social justice that, in my eyes, Péguy incarnated, and which would inform so nobly the first editions of the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*... this imperative became mine, it took root in me with such force, at such a depth, that even today, on the eve of my eighty years, it remains alive, as

85 Aron Rodrigue, "Totems, Taboos, and Jews: Salomon Reinach and the Politics of Scholarship in Fin-de-Siècle France " *Jewish Social Studies, New Series* 10, no. 2 (Winter, 2004): 2. With a view to propagating the normative nature of this French-Jewish path to emancipation, a network of French Jewish schools was created around the mediterranean basis by the Alliance Israëlite Universelle.

86 Isaac, 101.
alive as on the first day, despite the dissipated illusions, the lived experiences, the vanished hopes.”

Having failed to gain admission to the École Normale Supérieure, Isaac could have spent another year en cagne at Henri-IV and made a third attempt in 1898. He could have succumbed to the entreaties of a relative and become involved in a family enterprise. He did neither. The competition for E.N.S. in 1897 happened to double as a competition for bursaries to pursue a licence en Faculté. Isaac won funding to pursue a licence in history (and geography, a relatively new discipline in France) at the Sorbonne, still under renovation that had begun in 1885. In 1897, he abandoned all hope of gaining entry into the three-year program at Ecole Normale leading to the agrégation en lettres, instead opting to enroll at the Sorbonne beginning in October 1898 in a two-year program leading to the licence en Faculté (a first credential in the march to the agrégation, the admission ticket to a professorship at a lycée). In October 1897, he commenced his year of military service as infantryman, second class, in the 76th brigade headquartered in the barracks in faubourg Bannier. Within a fortnight, he had been promoted to the rank of caporal-instructeur, without stripes. These stripes Isaac would not be judged to merit at the close of his year of service for reasons having to do with the Dreyfus Affair. It was during the course of his year of military service that Isaac, the son and grandson of military men, would be observed reading Dreyfusard material. “At its beginning,” in Isaac’s words, “a tragic episode that did not go unnoticed, far from that, but at the time (so it seemed) did not cause any trouble except for the family involved and the small

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87 Ibid., 101-102.
88 Today, "agrégatif."
89 The licence d'histoire (et de géographie) was a product of a decree of 25 September 1880; the other two products were the licence de lettres and the licence de philosophie.
circle of close friends: the arrest, the trial – in camera – and the finding of Dreyfus guilty of high treason. This series of events, occurring in 1894, did not constitute strictly speaking (dare I say) the ‘Affair’ the real, the unsavory ‘Dreyfus Affair.’ It did exist, but subjacent, in total obscurity, and for some three years followed a subterranean course. Its sordid flow finally burst forth into clear air in 1897 and especially in 1898, after the novelist Emile Zola published – 13 January 1898 – in Clemenceau’s journal, L’Aurore, the resounding J’accuse.”

On 19 November 1892, judéo-alsacien Alfred Dreyfus graduated from the Ecole supérieure de guerre (ninth out of a class of eighty-two) and on the basis of his standing, was selected (the first Jew to be so) to work as a stagiaire at general staff. On or about 25 September 1894, an unsigned bordereau addressed to the German military attaché in Paris and retrieved in pieces from his waste basket by a cleaning lady in the employ of French counterintelligence, arrived at the Statistical Bureau. On 6 October, suspicions regarding Captain Alfred Dreyfus as the author were transmitted to minister of war General Mercier and a rush to judgment ensued. On 11 October, a petit conseil of ministers authorized Mercier to arrest Dreyfus. On 15 October, Dreyfus was summoned for a handwriting test, but despite consistent protestations of innocence, was arrested and sent to Cherche-Midi military prison. On 29 October, following seven interrogations, General de Boisdeffre was advised that the evidence for a conviction was fragile. On 31 October - 1 November, Major Joseph Henry, an officer in the Statistical Bureau, leaked details to Edouard Drumont, whose November 1st issue of La Libre Parole broke the story, identifying a Jewish officer as the suspected author of the bordereau and charging that wealthy Jews were attempting to buy his freedom. “[Drumont] milked the story for

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90 Isaac, 114.
all that it was worth,” Isaac recalled, “…supported for the most part by the major newspapers, and by the ‘good La Croix,’” published by the Assumptionist Fathers and flanked by the rural les Croix.⁹¹ So much so that it is no exaggeration to affirm: without Drumont and La Libre Parole, without the outbursts in the press, there would not have been a Dreyfus Affair. Indeed, this claim is made in black and white in its 18 November 1894 issue (prior to the trial) by [La Libre Parole] itself: ‘Without the alert that we were the first to publish, Dreyfus would have escaped punishment certainly.’ For in flagrance of fundamental principles of law, Dreyfus was pronounced guilty before having been found so: he was the ideal traitor by virtue of his status as a Jew.”⁹²

On 22 December 1894, after but an hour of deliberation, the judges found Dreyfus guilty of treason in a court martial proceeding in which Major Henry perjured himself and secret documents, forged or altered, were considered by the judges. Dreyfus’ sentence was military degradation and imprisonment for life. The public degradation took place at the Ecole militaire on 5 January 1895 in the presence of a crowd of thousands screaming, “Down with the Jews!” On 17 January, he set off for Devil’s Island, off the coast of French Guyana, where he arrived on 13 April 1895 to begin serving his life sentence. Mathieu Dreyfus, Alfred’s brother, and Lucie, Alfred’s wife, would indefatigably wage a campaign for Alfred’s release and acquittal. As early as 1896, they would get the attention of respected Normale Supérieure historian, Gabriel Monod, as well as life senator for Alsace and vice-president of the Senate, Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, both Protestant and as Isaac observed, “…marked (in face, appearance and dress)

⁹¹ The Assumptionist Fathers was a religious order that was founded in 1845, but little heard of until the national disaster of 1871. For two generations, until its expulsion from France in 1901, this order appealed to the mystical, the emotional, the fanatical, among French Catholics. The growth of its journal, La Croix, to a readership of 500,000 and a hundred provincial (rural) editions, was nothing short of spectacular.
⁹² Isaac, 116-117.
by a certain puritan tradition, a touchy and proud solidarity, and – much to their honour even if not shared by all of them – intellectual courage… capable of overcoming this prejudice through the sheer force of probity.”

Gabriel Monod would raise the affair with fellow Protestant Paul Dupuy, who in turn would raise it with Catholic Lucien Herr, chief librarian at *Normale Supérieure*. The beginning of a doubt about Dreyfus’s guilt followed the publication in Brussels on 6 November 1896 of Bernard Lazare’s *Une erreur judiciaire* (republished a few days later in Paris), in which it was revealed that minister of War Mercier had acted in violation of the law and had sought to influence the judiciary via the delivery of the secret dossier (unbeknownst to the accused and his counsel), and the publication of the *bordereau* on 10 November 1896 from which it would become possible to infer the real culprit. It was in the summer of 1898, following the spring general elections that returned a majority of republicans to the Chamber, that the Affair would unravel. As a consequence of the dogged persistence and unbreakable integrity of intelligence officer Colonel Marie-Georges Picquart, the *faux Henry* was discovered (13 August 1898), Henry confessed, was arrested (30 August 1898) and within twenty-four hours of incarceration in the prison of *Mont-Valérien*, had taken his own life, Esterhazy (the apparent real culprit) was released from the army, Lucie Dreyfus demanded the revision of her husband’s case, Cavaignac resigned as minister of war (3 September 1898) and Esterhazy fled to England via Belgium (4 September 1898).

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93 Ibid., 121.
94 Picquart had discovered that Esterhazy, the apparent real culprit, had been in the service of the German military attache, his Esterhazy’s script was identical to that on the bordereau and that there was no smoking gun in the secret dossier delivered to the judges behind the back of the accused and his counsel.
Péguy declared, “This [Dreyfus] affair finished, we begin the rest of the social revolution.”95 But by the time Isaac commenced his studies at the Sorbonne as a boursier de licence in October 1898, the Affair was again unfinished business. It had been kept alive by an impassioned defense of Henry published in the 5 September 1898 number of the Gazette de France by an obscure young journalist named Charles Maurras. These are the words addressed by Maurras to the departed Henry: “Colonel, your blood which flowed to the middle of the cell from the cot upon which you lay stretched, has been, reports the press, mopped up on orders from the commander of Mont-Valérien. But this is a great mistake. Know that not a single drop of this precious blood, the first shed in the Dreyfus Affair, does not smoulder wherever there beats a French heart. This blood smoulders and will cry out until the bloodshed is expiated, not by you, who has yielded to grand despair, not by the shameful coterie of ministers, but by your first executioners, to wit, the members of the treasonous Syndicate.”96 A native of Martigues in the Provence, Maurras had settled in Paris in 1886 (the year in which Drumont’s La France juive was published) where he came under the influence, as did many of his generation, of novelist and Boulangist Maurice Barrès. In the words of historian Gordon Wright, “An ‘integral nationalist,’97 lifelong republican who preached authoritarianism, mystical unbeliever who deeply admired the church, spokesman for the extreme right who advocated a kind of socialism, Barrès epitomized in his person many of the complexities and contradictions of the new era and of the new twentieth-century right wing in politics.”98

By the time of Henry’s suicide, Maurras had moved beyond Barrès’ republicanism to

95 Quoted in Isaac, 132.
96 Quoted in Pierrard, 170.
97 A phrase borrowed from Charles Maurras.
98 Wright, 283.
royalism, following a visit to Athens to cover for the *Gazette de France* the Olympic Games of 1896 (the first Olympiad to be held in the modern era). Maurras’ epiphany was that France had been at her greatest under the Bourbon kings and had suffered her greatest reverses under the Bonapartes who would never have come to power but for the Revolution. Maurras’ ideology rested on two pillars: (i) France was controlled by an increasing number of foreigners, so-called *métèques*, consisting of freemasons, *la colonie étrangère*, Protestants and Jews, and (ii) France would be unable to recapture its cohesion without a restoration of the monarchy. L’*Action Française* was not founded by Maurras, although his goal of allying as many intellectuals as possible in opposition to the Dreyfusards likely provoked its creation.

With the onset of the academic year 1898-99, Isaac’s life was that of an undergraduate. His bursary was 90 francs per month. He lived on the *rue de Tournon* in a small rented flat with low ceilings, perched on the top of two grand multi-storied apartments, at an annual rent of 250 francs. But his existence was not limited to academe. Concurrent with the commencement of his studies at the Sorbonne, Isaac began his activism as a member of the Péguy elect. During academic1898-99, when he was not in class or studying, Isaac would be fending off assaults by anti-Dreyfusard Sorbonne law students, in the company of Péguy and fellow comrades-in-arms at *la librairie Bellais*,

When Isaac began his studies, Sorbonne faculty medievalist, Charles V. Langlois (1863-
1929), and Charles Seignobos (1854-1942), first holder of the Sorbonne chair de pédagogie des sciences historiques, were about to publish their groundbreaking Introduction aux études historiques, a manual that was to become the methodological bible of apprentice historians. Both were Dreyfusards, classés à gauche. Also on the Sorbonne faculty was instituteur national Ernest Lavisse,101 by then a household name for his “Petit Lavisse,” the multi-volume manuels d’enseignement primaire.102 “[A]lready in his sixties,” as Isaac remembered, “thus older than Langlois and Seignobos, he ruled over all, presided over all; rues des Écoles, at the Sorbonne in historical studies, although it seemed that the scepter had passed to [Langlois and Seignobos]; boulevards Saint-Germain and Saint-Michel, at Hachette and Armand Colin, the two great publishing houses specializing in the historical and academic; rue de Grenelle, at the ministry of public education, on the board of same;…and between everything else, his presence at the annual prizegiving in the tiny village of his birth, Le Nouvion-en-Thiérache.”103

Lavisse did not have much time to fraternize with his students; Isaac was to catch his eye, however, and from then on, Lavisse was le protecteur and Isaac, le protégé. “[In his large and tranquil face, eyes of a very pure blue projected a meditative air, of a sensitive and attractive humanity,” recalled Isaac, “This was what I found appealing; he was human, very human, benevolent toward his students.”104

During the academic year 1898-99, the Dreyfus Affair was front and centre. On 29 October 1898, the request for revision was granted by the chambre criminelle de la

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102 These manuels scolaires were published by Armand Colin beginning in 1884. Hachette was the publisher of Lavisse’s Histoire de France.
103 Isaac, 265-66.
104 Ibid., 266.
Cour de cassation; on 10 February 1899, a law was passed removing carriage of the case from the chambre criminelle to a plenary Cour de cassation, and on 16 February 1899 Félix Faure, president of the Republic and in Isaac’s view, “de coeur avec les antidreyfusards,” died suddenly. On the day of Faure’s funeral, 23 February 1899, Péguy, intuiting the vulnerability of the Republic to a military coup by anti-Dreyfusards, such as Déroulédès’ ligueurs des patriotes, stationed his comrades-in-arms at various locations in Paris to sound the alarm and call for reinforcements if necessary. “Where was I stationed?” recalled Isaac, “On a boulevard that I seem to recall, without being certain, was the boulevard Voltaire or l’avenue de la République… There was a crowd, turmoil and anticipation – of what one did not know.”

It was on 3 June 1899 that forty-four judges of the Cour de cassation overturned the verdict of Dreyfus’ guilt and ordered a new court martial. The next day, Sunday 4 June, at the Grand Steeple-Chase run at Auteuil, president of the Republic Emile Loubet was heckled by ligueurs de droite who had amassed in front of his stand, even assaulted by one of them, the baron du Christiani, who with his cane struck Loubet’s hat off his head.

On the following Sunday 11 June, the races were held at Longchamps, Bois du Boulogne, on the banks of the River Seine. “During the preceding week, the word had gone out to all corners of Paris: ‘Sunday at Longchamps!’” Isaac would later recollect. “When that Sunday arrived – a magnificent Sunday – one would have thought that all of a sudden, all of Paris had come rushing to the rendez-vous: from all parts and by all means of transportation – omnibus, horse-drawn carriage, hirondelle or bateau-mouche

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105 Ibid., 148. Two days later, Moderate Emile Loubet was elected by a majority of left-leanning parliamentarians.
106 Ibid., 149.
107 The new court martial of Dreyfus would take place at Rennes from 8 August to 9 September 1899.
on the Seine, all full-up – and on foot, on the freshness of the paths of the Bois, in small groups, streams that merged to form a river, an immense crowd, resolute, in song, joyous – the weather was so beautiful, so sunny…but the image in particular that is etched indelibly in my memory: the sight of this never-ending column of people stretched across the Bois, powerful, massive, giving the impression of irresistible power, of revolutionary power – where was I, in June 1899 or in June 1792? It seemed as though the Great Revolution was reliving itself.”

On the following day, 12 June 1899, the Dupuy government fell and was succeeded by a government that would last three years, under the leadership of Waldeck-Rousseau, a Moderate, but unlike prior Moderate-led governments, this one would be dominated by Radicals and supported by socialists. “There was nothing banal in this cabinet where the général versaillais marquis de Galliffet was to be found with socialist Millerand…,” observed Isaac, “History has also not been fair to the man who headed this cabinet, Waldeck-Rousseau. This great lawyer, former collaborator of Jules Ferry, most moderate republican, was one of those rare statesmen of the Third Republic; he belonged to that breed, rare in our contemporary France, of intelligent conservatives, akin to the tory Canning or Disraeli, capable of initiatives and of serious reforms.”

This left-wing coalition of Radicals, Socialists and Waldeck Moderates would endure for five and one half years with only two cabinets - a record - and it would mark a watershed in Third Republic France. Thenceforth until 1940, the Radicals, notwithstanding their

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108 Isaac, 151-53.
109 Ibid., 154.
110 After the Clemenceau cabinet (1906-09), there would be a succession of 10 cabinets within the space of 5 years.
egalitarian and Jacobin roots, “less a party than a state of mind”\textsuperscript{111} in the words of historian Gordon Wright, would replace the Moderates as the governing party, usually in coalition with a segment of the Moderates.

The summer of 1899 would prove to be no less eventful than had been the summer of 1898. On 20 June 1899, at a meeting of the \textit{Ligue de la patrie française} chaired by François de Mahy, socialist Henri Vaugeois founded \textit{le Groupe d’action française} and on 10 July of the same year, the \textit{Petite revue grise} was launched as its bi-monthly periodical, under Vaugeois’ direction and editorship.\textsuperscript{112} On 7 August 1899, Dreyfus’s second court-martial opened in Rennes. On 9 September, incredibly, he would be found guilty yet again in a split decision and sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment. His demand for revision was withdrawn on 15 September to allow for president of the Republic Loubet to grant a presidential pardon on 19 September 1899.\textsuperscript{113} In December of that year, the first \textit{Congrès general des organisations socialistes françaises} took place. Isaac was invited to accompany Péguy as a delegate. Both were supporters of Jaurès. “We passed the days together, passionately,” Isaac later recollected, “engaged in passionate debate, where orators such as Guesde, Jaurès, Briand, Viviani would clash in the immense, smoke-filled gymnase Japy.”\textsuperscript{114} In those days, the French socialist movement was split into five organized parties and a rather immense jumble of persons under the rubric, the \textit{Confédération générale des socialistes indépendants}, whose spokespersons were well-known deputies such as Jaurès, Viviani and, until he was

\textsuperscript{111} Wright, 239.
\textsuperscript{112} In anticipation of the 1898 general elections that Radical-Socialist Henri Vaugeois, assistant secretary of the \textit{Ligue de la patrie française}, and publicist Maurice Pujo had established a Comité d’action française.
\textsuperscript{113} On 12 July 1906, the Cours de cassation would hand down a judgement declaring that “...in the last analysis, of the charges laid against Dreyfus, nothing remains standing and that the annulment of the judgement of the court martial (of Rennes) does not leave anything that could be construed as a crime or delit.”
\textsuperscript{114} Isaac, 199-200.
invited to join the cabinet, Millerand. The most strictly Marxist party was *le Parti ouvrier français* of which Jules Guesde was founder and leader. Briand, who would be elected to the Chamber in 1902, inspired the formation of the *Fédération des socialistes révolutionnaire indépendants* (F.S.R.), which advocated the general strike as a new means to the revolutionary end. The *Cercle socialiste, anciens élèves du lycée d’Orléans* (of which Péguy was the authorized delegate to attend the congress) was formally affiliated with the F.S.R. although the differences were slight between the F.S.R. and Jaurès’ *Confédération générale des socialistes indépendants*. Jaurès was unsuccessful in his efforts to save his colleague, Millerand, from having to resign his cabinet seat. The congress approved by a vote of 818 to 634 the motion that the class struggle not allow for a socialist deputy to be part of a bourgeois government. Isaac and Péguy voted against the motion. “The duel [between Jaurès and Guesde] reached its climax on the evening of the fourth day, Wednesday 6 December [1899] when it came time to vote,” recalled Isaac, “…the tumult grew, turned into a storm, a number of *congressistes* (Péguy and myself included) climbed onto the tables, applauding, crying out, shouting down, *(hélas! I overturned an inkwell onto my overcoat, but this sartorial disaster did not subdue me).*”

On the question of socialist unity, it was Jules Guesde’s dogmatism, “his intolerance camouflaged as discipline” that prevailed over Jaurès’ “humanized marxism à la française;” although liberty of discussion and debate on all questions of doctrine and method was preserved, all socialist reporting was to conform strictly with decisions of the congress, as interpreted by the General Committee.

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115 Isaac recalled at page 201 of his *Expériences de ma vie: Péguy*, “I never heard Péguy speak of Briand: like the rest of us, it was in Jaurès that he placed his trust, a short-term trust that proved to be misplaced.”
116 Isaac, 206.
117 Ibid., 210.
Péguy could not abide by this infringement on freedom of expression. In his view, socialism could not be truly redemptive if it were not a socialisme libertaire, if it were not nourished by individual conscience. “It is noteworthy,” Isaac remarked, “that Péguy, in reacting thus, was adhering to the most healthy tradition of French socialism, that incarnated by Proudhon, too little read, too much forgotten in our day, even in France.”

Péguy declared, “Henceforth, socialism must be distinguished from the Socialist Party in the same manner as Christianism or Christianity from the Church, in the same manner as the Republic from the various republican parties,” and simply assumed the board of the Société nouvelle would share his sentiment. But he had misjudged his board, whose members interpreted his contemplated initiative as anarchical and contrary to that socialist unity for which they had all been striving. Péguy withdrew, reassembling his elect at 19 de la rue des Fossés-Saint-Jacques, the apartment of disciple Charles Tharaud. If liberty of thought and action was to be stifled, Péguy would withdraw from la Société nouvelle to struggle against the orientation and decisions of the Congrès socialiste through a new medium - des cahiers libres. Péguy’s withdrawal from la Société nouvelle meant the same for Isaac. “As for myself, I was one of these elect, fiercely dedicated to Péguy and certain, among the most certain, of his genius, of his creative force, among the most decided to follow him in his struggle against any intolerance, any dogmatism, any Jesuitism, with a view to the triumph of a libertarian socialism of which the maxim was, ‘The social revolution will be moral or it will not be.’” Thus it was that Isaac severed his connection to la librairie de la rue Cujas, as well as his allegiance to Guesde’s marxism and to state socialism, the whole to support Péguy to found the Cahiers de la

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118 Ibid., 209.
119 Quoted in ibid., 238.
120 Ibid., 213-14.
quinzaine, initially at 19, rue des Fossés-Saint-Jacques, then in a boutique at 16, and ultimately at 8, rue de la Sorbonne. Thus it was that these twenty, Isaac included, would be recalled by Péguy as “…the twenty poor souls who sustained us during the first and second series.” The first Cahier (de la quinzaine) was published on 5 January 1900.

At the close of the academic year 1899-1900, following the submission of a mémoire de licence dealing with mendicancy in the provincial assemblies founded by Necker on the eve of the French Revolution, Isaac received his licence and a bourse d’agrégation that boosted his monthly income from 90 francs to 100 francs. The next milestone stage was the one-year program leading to the diplôme d’études supérieures, the principal requirement of which was a more lengthy and fulsome travail historique. Isaac chose sixteenth century France as his field of inquiry and after spending academic year 1900-1901 immersed in research and writing, he submitted a lengthy mémoire, “…supplemented by photographs taken at Lyon of drawings copied at the Nationale (by

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121 The first number was published on 5 January 1900. There would be 229 issues, divided into 15 series. The last number would be dated 7 July 1914, two months before Péguy was killed on 5 September 1914 in the Battle of the Marne.
123 In September of that year, Péguy attended the Congrès national des organisations socialistes françaises, held in Paris, for the purpose of reporting on it in the seizième cahier of the IIe series. Isaac also attended, and would recall in particular the impression that Rosa Luxembourg had made on all the delegates. Péguy was still a stockholder of the Société nouvelle – he owned 200 shares, all the remained of the Baudouin funds that had backed his original venture, la librairie Georges Bellais. The conflict between the board of Société nouvelle and Péguy culminated in proceedings of an extraordinary general meeting for the purposes of considering “l’incident Péguy.” The meeting took place on 17 January 1901. Péguy appointed Isaac as his proxy to attend. “It was against me especially that the most hardened of [Péguy’s] adversaries concentrated all of their fire with an implacable hostility: why? Because they saw in me his agent, Péguy’s representative, his collaborator at the Cahiers; also because my insignificance, my timidity seemed only to egg them on. Incredibly timid, I was in effect completely lacking in self-confidence, nonetheless, I was entirely loyal to Péguy, resolved not to retreat, not to concede one inch.” (Expériences de ma vie: Péguy, 224).
124 Isaac was one of the first to receive the diplôme d’études supérieures, which was created in 1886 at the instigation of Ernest Lavisse. From 1894 onward, this diplome was a condition precedent of the agrégation d’histoire, the latter defined by decree dated 29 July 1885.
an artist friend who was soon to become my fiancée).”\textsuperscript{125} The mémoire was successfully defended and Isaac received a prize of 500 gold francs, a fortune of money in those days, and sufficient to enable him to realize his dream of hiking, with backpack, in Austria, Italy and Germany. On his return in the autumn of 1901, he began the year of preparation for the concours d’agrégation, becoming engaged in November of that year to artist (in the school of Eugène Carrière) Laure Ettinghausen, whom Jules had first encountered when only twelve years of age. Laure was born in Paris in 1878. From a very early age, she was aware that she had artistic talents and wanted to become a painter, much to the chagrin of her nineteenth century bourgeois parents who sent her to Russia as an au pair under the tutelage of a brother. In short order, Laure returned to France where it did not take her long to gain admission to the studio of Eugène Carrière.\textsuperscript{126} The preparation for the concours d’agrégation was tedious and arduous. “The spiritual climate of the Cahiers, the utterances of Péguy - oral or written – were more than ever necessary to counterbalance, to juxtapose the doctrinaire, soul-destroying Sorbonne instruction,” Isaac recalled. “They were the antidote. Although I had ceased to actively participate in the publication of the Cahiers, I continued to see a lot of Péguy; our small group – the Boivin, Deshairs, Tharaud – augmented by André Bourgeois,\textsuperscript{127} would lunch and sup together, initially at the small Cluny restaurant, and next door at the restaurant coopératif du Quarter Latin established in November 1901 at the same time as was established the

\textsuperscript{125}Isaac, 273.
\textsuperscript{126}She also spent time in the studio of Jean-Paul Laurens.
\textsuperscript{127}When Isaac was no longer able to function as secretariat for les Cahiers de la quinzaine, Péguy tapped lycée d'Orléans and Lakanal classmate, André Bourgeois, to replace Isaac.
boutique des Cahiers at 8 rue de la Sorbonne; a meal usually followed by a stroll in Luxembourg or on the embankment.”

By the time Isaac had commenced his year of preparation for the concours d’agrégation, all but Barrès and Déroulède had been persuaded to abandon their republicanism in favour of Maurras’ integral nationalism, a “nationalism…,” according to historian William Curt Buthman, “not complete…not nationalism in its entirety, without royalism ‘since the monarchical institutions alone satisfied all the national aspirations, all the national ends, as the integral reproduced the sum of all the values of an algebraic function.’” At first, the staunchly Catholic royalist party stood aloof because of Maurras’ atheism but gradually came around. In the words of a priest-member, “If one is not politically a Catholic, one does not join the Action Française; metaphysically, you can be whatever you like.” Bishops by the dozen, with Louis Cardinal Billot leading the way, religious, priests, intellectuals such as Bernanos, Maritain and Massis, Catholic professors such as Louis Dimier, all subscribed to the daily Action française. “It was on the shoulders of Maurras and [Léon] Daudet that Drumont’s mantle fell;” wrote historian Eugen Weber, “it was because of the Action française and several generations of publicists whom it helped to launch that anti-Semitism spread in France. They provided the theoretical arguments that made base prejudice socially acceptable and even, in a sense, defensible…The Action française alone, despite occasional denials, kept the

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128 Isaac, 278.
131 Even the papal excommunication of Maurras, in effect from 1926-1939, and the placement of the daily on the Index, would not shake Maurras’ hold on Catholic conservatives.
anti-Semitic fires burning, maintaining the traditions of Drumont and anti-Dreyfusism.”¹³² This was the France in which Jules Isaac came of age.

¹³² Weber, 200.
Eighth-ranked among the ten agrégés des Lycées dans l’ordre de l’histoire et de la géographie named on 3 September 1902 was Jules Isaac, boursier à la faculté des lettres de Paris. Following the concours d’agrégations, keen to renew the research pursued during his année de diplôme, Isaac applied for a bursary with assurances that it would be awarded. To his astonishment, he was notified by correspondence dated 5 September 1902 from the Sorbonne: “The Secretary of the Faculty of Letters has the honour of informing M. Isaac, further to direction from the Minister (2 September), that the budget for secondary education does not permit the grant of a bourse d’étude or de voyage to any agrégé d’histoire, de langues vivantes et de sciences.” Isaac inferred that the services of all ten newly minted agrégés d’histoire were required for secondary teaching and that he and Laure had better marry before the start of the 1902-03 academic year. “When [Laure] married Jules Isaac,” wrote her son, Jean-Claude, “she and he, united by the same goal, established a household animated by this sole religion: ‘faith in the divine virtue of creative realization.’ No other religion was ever admitted and [the divine virtue of creative realization] was the spiritual formation imparted to their children.”

On 25 September 1902 (23 Elul 5662 in the Jewish calendar according to the Jewish marriage certificate), Jules and Laure were married by the rabbi of Saint-

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133 Isaac was not the first Jew in France to attain the agrégation. Adolphe Franck had passed the agrégation in philosophy as early as 1832, been elected to the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques in 1844 and become the first Jewish professor at the Collège de France in 1856.

134 Jules Isaac, “Expériences de ma vie II. De la paix à la guerre.” (unpublished)

Etienne and awaited Jules’ nomination... which did not arrive. The news that fellow agrégé Albert Thomas, top-ranked on the list, had departed for Berlin armed with one of these officially withdrawn bursaries, a bourse de voyage, did nothing to allay Jules’ anxiety. October came and went. No nomination. “For us, “ Isaac recalled, “young and newly-married, for me who had neither bursary nor wages, the situation was becoming catastrophic... until the last days of November [20 November 1902], when I know not by what chance, a vacancy arose for the position of professeur d’histoire in Nice and by virtue of the concerted intercessions of Lavisse and Gréard, influential persons of the Université, I received the nomination, notwithstanding that the position was by no means one for debutants.” This would not be the last time that Lavisse interceded on Isaac’s behalf. In later life, Isaac would muse how different the course of his life might have been had he not obtained a teaching appointment. In 1898, at the close of his année de cagne at Henri IV and following a second failed attempt to gain admission to E.N.S., a certain well-heeled relative living in Elbeuf had prevailed upon Isaac to come work for the family enterprise as he had not a son to succeed him. “In response to my surprise and unease, he made the case how such a life of business, of freely-taken initiatives, of risk but also of large material gains, would be preferable to the meagre existence of a professor... however, I had not the least aptitude for what is called ‘les affaires’ while I had great aptitude, already demonstrated, for ‘les études’; the spiritual won me over the...

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136 After World War I, Socialist Albert Thomas would found le Bureau International du Travail de Genève.
137 Isaac, “Expériences de ma vie II. De la paix à la guerre.”
138 Thanks to Lavisse, Isaac would win a bourse d’études in 1905 and be introduced one year later to normalien Guillaume Bréton, directeur de collection at Hachette, an introduction that would lead to the engagement of Isaac by Hachette to draft aides-mémoire d’histoire for use by baccalaureate candidates. Isaac would be a regular correspondence partner with Lavisse and endeavoured to persuade his Maitre, an ardent proponent of la bonne cause de la France, that the war being fought was new, it was not a repeat of the war of 1870.
temporal.” During the months of October and November 1902, these same bourgeois family members again entreated Isaac to join them; “…all the more reason to resist. I did not succumb mea culpa…the adventurous spirit does not mix well with family responsibilities.”

Six weeks after the start of academic 1902-03, Jules and Laure arrived in Nice and he began his teaching. The year 1902 happened to be the centenary of the lycée system in France, a system then still reserved for a narrow bourgeois elite. At the turn of the twentieth century, there was but one Nicoise lycée – Masséna - whose enrollment barely accommodated the city’s large and growing population. Isaac was required to give seven 3-hour classes per week to a class of 200 students. Each class consisted of two hours of history and one of geography instruction. Each of these hours required “…a meticulous preparation,” recalled Isaac, “…double preparation addressing simultaneously the questions to be raised and the diverse methods of treating these questions.” On his first day, Isaac, barely 25 years of age but younger in appearance, was confronted by the professor who had just completed teaching the class. “’What are you doing here?’ ‘The class’, I replied in my most dignified tone…he had mistaken me for a student.”

Teaching at a lycée en province was a solitary activity with few encounters between professor on the one hand and townsfolk or colleagues on the other. Only the encounter with students, the class to be taught, counted. “Riding a bicycle to the lycée,” wrote Isaac, “more often than not, I was escorted by a gaggle of students from the quartier; we chatted together, laughed together; sometimes, they would await me at the door of my

139 Isaac, Expériences de ma vie. Péguy, 111-12.
140 Isaac, “Expériences de ma vie II. De la paix à la guerre.”
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
home, 20 bis rue Rossini.”  

La jeunesse niçoise, distracted by the beckoning blue sky and warm temperatures, proved to be more of a challenge than the Parisien youth Isaac had encountered during his pre-agrégation two-week stage, when he had replaced geography professor Gallouëdec at lycée Charlemagne, an established Jesuit institution of la rue Saint Antoine in Paris. But Isaac proved to be a quick study and it did not take him long to learn the art of managing students. “The ideal professor was not like a virtuoso soloist before an attentive and passive audience, but rather like an orchestra director, guiding, instructing, stimulating his whole team of musicians, not letting his glance fall away – it is the gaze that captures.”

In the spring of 1903, Isaac, the most recently appointed agrégé du lycée at Masséna, was invited to give the discours de distribution des prix, a mid-summer tradition. Generally, these discours were given by history teachers to students, faculty and town notables to mark the anniversary of some republican event or personnage. By 1903, the rabidly anticlerical Radicals held the balance of power in republican politics. The general elections one year earlier had been followed by the voluntary resignation of Waldeck-Rousseau as government leader. Radical Emile Combes had succeeded Moderate Waldeck-Rousseau as président du Conseil (prime minister). In his two and one half years in office, Combes would double-down on the anticlerical policies of his predecessor. In 1905 he would request the French parliament to abrogate the century-old concordat with the Catholic Church and followed up with legislation cutting all ties between Church and State, removing priests and bishops from the state payroll, expropriating all church property and delegating committees of Catholic lay persons to

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143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
administer church affairs in each parish. It was in the spring of 1903 that a ministerial circular was sent to all Recteurs instructing that history professors give a lecture on the exemplary life of republican Edgar Quinet.\textsuperscript{145} “It is appropriate to emphasize the necessary and fundamental distinction (especially in France) between Government and Administration:” noted Isaac, “the Government decides, decrees; the Bureaucrats apply – or don’t … However, Radical and secular was the government of the day, the \textit{Haute Administration}, even in the University, was much less so. Not all of the Recteurs shared the government’s point of view. The Recteur of the Academy of Aix, upon whom I depended, conveniently left the government circular in his pocket or in a drawer.”\textsuperscript{146} In any event, Isaac had decided to speak about Edgar Quinet. This French historian, born one century earlier, in 1803, republican and secular like Isaac, had fought the good fight to keep the Church out of higher education. In Isaac’s words,

\begin{quote}
The life of Edgar Quinet was militant, passionately militant; the central episode occurred under the July Monarchy, the courses taught at the \textit{Collège de France}, in the company of colleague and fellow combattant [Jules] Michelet, over Church and Jesuit influence in education (1843-1846); a violent battle for or against university instruction; a secular instruction, then undergoing fierce assaults by the conservative press and a clergy unleashed. Now in the year 1903, the very same battle was raging. With this difference that in 1846, the ultra-conservative Guizot, minister of Louis-Philippe, banned Quinet from teaching his courses, while in 1903, the republican government sided with secularism. What would I have to lose, me, a young republican professor, in speaking in a lycée of the Republic and recalling the valiant combat waged by Edgar Quinet?\textsuperscript{147}
\end{quote}

In fact, Isaac had much to lose. Although conservatives were no longer in government, they still held an important place in \textit{la grande administration}. In

\textsuperscript{145} In Third Republic France, la grande administration, through its local executive agents (prefects), was more robust than was the government of the day, which tended to be more fragile. Ten cabinets fell in the space of five years following the Clemenceau government of 1906-09.
\textsuperscript{146} Isaac, “Expériences de ma vie II. De la paix à la guerre.”
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
commenting on the actions of Guizot against Quinet in 1846, Isaac addressed the assembled guests as follows: “…Two years later [in 1848], as the minister Guizot had banned courses given by Quinet, the Parisians banned minister Guizot, banned all the government, banned royalty itself. And Quinet, ‘in the name of the Republic’ regained his chair [at the Collège de France].” A draft of this address, submitted in advance to the Recteur, was returned to Isaac with the appended note, “A journalist’s pamphlet rather than a professor’s lecture.” Isaac made some inconsequential changes that did not detract from his republican clarion call and delivered his lecture without reading from the text on 31 July 1903. His lecture was met with “…a warm response on the part of local republicans, and especially on the part of the students, my own applauding particularly loudly; but a glacial silence and raised eyebrows on the part of those on the dais.” In the days that followed, the complete text of Isaac’s lecture was published in the local newspaper.

While Jules and Laure were preparing to return to Vence for the month of August, a letter arrived from the Inspecteur Général in which the latter, making reference to a prior request of Isaac to be nearer to Paris, informed him that a teaching position had become vacant in Sens and requested a decision without delay. “Of course, Sens was closer to Paris, relatively speaking,” recalled Isaac, “But Sens after Nice, this did not seem like a promotion; rather the contrary.” Nonetheless, he accepted the offer and spent the next two succeeding academic years teaching a less burdensome course load to fewer Sénonais lycée students, years that left Isaac with “better memories…Following the

\[148\] Ibid.
\[149\] Ibid.
hard apprenticeship of Nice, I was able [in Sens] to take full charge of my métier.”\textsuperscript{150} Although the pedagogical environment improved, the Isaacs did not mix well with the Sénonais. Neither Jules nor Laure identified with the individualism of the bourgeois kind typified by the Sénonais, an individualism which saw in each individual a small fictitious god obeying only itself (as Jean-Jacques Rousseau expressed it) nor with the embourgeoisement of Third Republic institutions. The Isaacs’ first child, a daughter, Juliette, was born in Sens on 3 September 1903, prior to the October commencement of academic 1903-04. Midway through Laure’s pregnancy, which was not an easy one, the Isaacs lost confidence in their médecin de gauche and Jules replaced him with a médecin de droite. In the days following, the left-leaning newspaper ran a piece which included the following rhetoric: “A young, fatuous, so-called socialist has committed the weightiest of sins by peddling the most serious of accusations against a third party, that truly amount to defamation… This little imbecile…, this sad individual, when ordered to provide evidence of his claims, has beat a hasty retreat and was not surprisingly met unflinchingly head on with a hail of criticism. By Abraham, we have every reason to believe he is mistaken if he thinks that things will remain there.”\textsuperscript{151}

During his two years of teaching in Sens, Isaac’s secularist point of view would again get him into hot water. This time, it was a sympathetic presentation of Ernest Renan in a class to girls aux cours secondaires, given in the presence of the Directrice. Isaac urged his young Catholic audience to familiarize themselves with the writings of Renan, most notably Ma soeur Henriette and Souvenirs d’enfance et de jeunesse. Ernest Renan had left the church midway through his training for the priesthood to pioneer the

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Reproduced in André Kaspi, Jules Isaac ou la passion de la vérité (n.p.: Plon, 2002), 48.
secular study of religion, a secular study that had culminated in the publication in 1863 of
La vie de Jésus, a work in which Jesus had been depicted as entirely human “…a
Galilean,” in the words of Susannah Heschel, “who underwent a transformation from Jew
to Christian…purified of any Jewishness.”152 In his Souvenirs d’enfance et de jeunesse,
which deals with the period of studies at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, Renan wrote that
his study of the Bible had led him to conclude that “…this book was not any more
exempt than any other ancient book from contradictions, inadvertencies and errors. One
finds in it fables, legends, traces of an entirely human composition.”153 Given Isaac’s
presentation of Renan to his students, it can be inferred that he shared Renan’s
presuppositions when it came to sacred scripture. Renan’s self-declared impetus as a
truth-seeker resonated with Isaac, whose goal it was, as a Péguy disciple, to strive for the
emotional and intellectual redemption of his students. The day after Isaac had extolled
Renan to his students, he received a long letter from the Directrice, who cautioned him
as follows: “If I did not have the highest regard for you, I would have allowed things to
take their course knowing full well that it would not be long before you would have
provoked an undending war…You don’t know Sens, you don’t know how much trouble
you will bring upon yourself…You should not touch upon the religious question, which
you did by extolling Renan and advising that he be read.”154 Isaac was stunned.
“Undoubtedly, it did not appear to be at odds with academic freedom of expression and
neutrality to extol a great, and classical, author; this was in no way intended to be a

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154 Isaac, “Expériences de ma vie II. De la paix à la guerre.”
challenge to the Catholic faith of my students and in this regard, I would redouble my vigilance.”

In 1905, with assistance from Lavisse, Isaac won funding for two years of Paris-based research to culminate in an essay on the controversial figure of Etienne Dolet, an essay that had been promised in 1903 for publication in Péguy’s *Cahiers*.  

“Disheartened by a certain small-town environment,” Isaac recalled, “…desirous of dedicating myself to historical research rather than to teaching, I [wished to throw] myself body and soul into the seething sixteenth century [France].” The words of a true academic. Péguy undertook to assist Isaac to supplement his bursary with remuneration as a *chargé de cours* at Sainte-Barbe. It was the least Péguy could do to reciprocate for Isaac’s unwavering loyalty and financial support that had been forthcoming since the spring of 1903. By letter dated 31 May 1903, Péguy had reached out to Isaac as follows: “Could you lend us a sum of between 500 and 1,000 francs; it is not that the *Cahiers* are faring badly, but my revenue budget has been adversely affected by Bernard Lazare’s persistent illness.” The Bernard Lazare to whom Péguy alluded, who was to pass away in 1903, had been the first Dreyfusard in the public sphere. Moreover, “Bernard Lazare has interested commentators and historians,” writes Aron Rodrigue, “…for his distinction as the first French Jew to make the transition from an almost self-hating endorsement of total assimilation as a solution to the Jewish problem to a full embrace of the cause of Zionism.” Bernard Lazare was apprehended by Péguy as an incarnation of

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155 Ibid.  
156 While teaching in Nice, Isaac had also undertaken to write a piece for the Cahiers on the carnaval de Nice, a piece that never saw the light of day.  
158 Quoted in Leroy: 44.  
159 Rodrigue, "Rearticulations of French Jewish Identities after the Dreyfus Affair," 2.
the Jewish mystique. As Péguy recovered his own faith, he would come to see the
*dreyfusiste* mystique as a particular example of the Christian mystique. In Péguy’s own
words, “Our *dreyfusisme* was a religion, I am using the term in its most precise literal
sense, a religious impulse…I might add that for us, among us, within us, this religious
impulse was in its essence Christian…its source was Christian, from a most ancient
wellspring.”¹⁶⁰ In this regard, Isaac parted company with his mentor. “Would that ‘our’
dreyfusisme had been a mystique, had been a religion; but, it was to [human, temporal] Truth itself at which we aimed our fervour and our cult, it was [human, temporal Truth] alone that inspired our actions, it was out of love for it and to safeguard it that we helped
Péguy found the *Cahiers*. A free and honest pursuit of the truth was our law, the essence
of *dreyfusisme* in its most pure.”¹⁶¹ Christianity does not concern itself with human,
temporal categories; “[i]n its essence,” continued Isaac, “Christianity is religion about
grace, religion about love, religion about poverty, religion about hope (in God), faith in
the righteousness of God, in the truth of the Incarnation, the Resurrection; our human
justice, our human truths, concern it not and do not have their roots in its soil: the whole
of history proves it, beginning with the Scriptures.”¹⁶²

Isaac’s research on Etienne Dolet proceeded slowly and the volume of documents
increased apace. “[U]nforeseen circumstances,” recalled Isaac, “some family-related [a
second child, Daniel Edouard Marx, called Dani, was born on 6 January 1907], some
d’ordre public, would gradually derail me from this trajectory, in any event, launch me in
a new direction. From 1906, I would find myself engaged in publishing - *publications
scolaires* - that at first served to assist me to simply live, to overcome my budgetary

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 164.
¹⁶² Ibid.
difficulties, to pursue my other work. As it happened, I would find myself increasingly trapped in a vicious cycle from which I would be unable to extricate myself and which would to a greater or lesser extent come to absorb the whole of me.”

The *publications scolaires* for which he was contracted by Hachette were short chronologies and *résumées aides-mémoire* having their genesis in the seven-volume, 3,000-page *cours d'histoire Malet*, published by Hachette and single-handedly authored by historian Albert Malet, *professeur agrégé at lycée Louis-le-Grand* and tutor to King Alexander of Serbia from 1892-1894. The *cours Malet* arose from the educational program adopted by the ministry of education on 31 March 1902. It contemplated the division of the study of history into two cycles: from the sixième to the troisième, lycéens studied the period from ancient Egypt to 1889 (the first centenary of the French Revolution) and from the seconde to the terminale, contemporary history was the object of study. The author of the work was Malet; the behind-the-scenes collaborator, Isaac. Each worked independently of the other and hardly knew each other. Little did Isaac then suspect that within a decade, fate would thrust him into Malet’s role. The resumption in 1907 of his career as a lycée professor in Saint-Etienne brought to a close the research project on Dolet as well as a decade of collaboration between Isaac and Péguy, a collaboration marked by visits to one another’s homes and shared meals, not infrequently at the *restaurant coopératif* at the corner of *la rue Thénard* and *la rue Sommerard*, followed by strolls in the Luxembourg Gardens or on the banks of the Seine. Isaac would teach at *Sainte-Etienne* until 1910 and thereafter at *lycée Ampère* in Lyon until the onset of war in 1914. As Isaac would later

164 In 1902, Lavisse, who had no interest in authoring scholarly manuals for secondary students, introduced Albert Malet to Guillaume Breton, then director of Hachette. It was also to Lavisse that Malet owed his tutorial role in Belgrade.
recall, “[D]espite some periods en province (Nice, Sens), I remained in close touch with Péguy until 1907; much less so thereafter, being at a distance from Paris (Saint-Etienne, Lyon), and preoccupied by various responsibilities and concerns.”

It was in 1908 that Isaac found himself denouncing antisemitism not only in universalist terms, based on the “…identity between the principles of 1789 and of purified Judaism shorn of the superstitions that it had acquired during the centuries of oppression,” as historian Aron Rodrigue puts it, but in particularist terms, as a French Jew. By letter dated 30 March 1908, he wrote Péguy, “I must tell you that I am repulsed by Romain Rolland’s shameful antisemitism, intertwined with false sociological sympathies. It is very à la mode in the Cahiers, well I know. And I detest it. I much prefer the other antisemitism, the real, that of Drumont, that of Léon Daudet. It is more authentic, more intelligent and tidier. I feel myself to be perfectly French, and I have all the rights to so feel, as much as Rolland, as much as all of you. I am unable to abide by being told in an unsupportably sugared tone, ‘The Jews’ affairs are not our own. And as for those of La France…” Isaac closed his correspondence with a rare allusion to his Jewishness: “You must come to visit us in this most admirable of countrysides. You will receive under our Jewish roof a most French hospitality, and in the final analysis, you have few friends who love you as do we.” In the spring of 1911, Isaac received a copy of Péguy’s Oeuvres choisies, with an inscription (destined to be his last to the Isaacs).

165 Isaac, Expériences de ma vie. Péguy, Annexe II - Les amitiés juives de Péguy, 304-11 at 308.
166 Rodrigue, “Totems, Taboos, and Jews: Salomon Reinach and the Politics of Scholarship in Fin-de-Siècle France”: 2.
167 Cited in Leroy: 47.
168 Ibid., 48. To Isaac’s chagrin, one of the first reviews of le Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d’Arc and titled, la “Jeanne d’Arc” d’un ancien dreyfusard appeared in the 10 March 1910 issue of La Libre Parole, under the signature of Edouard Drumont.
dated 27 May 1911. “I am more affectionately and devotedly yours than you know.”

Isaac, by then a professor at lycée Ampere, replied by letter dated 12 July 1911,

“...Unfortunately, it is a fact that the milieux that are open to you henceforth will be
firmly shut to me... the milieux lyonnais – Catholic bourgeois, whether ‘liberal’ or
conservative, nonetheless antisemitic - ...Frankly speaking, they will be with you, my
friend, when you are no longer with us. Selfishly, it is my hope that this day never
comes.”

This correspondence is evidence that by 1911, Isaac had come to terms with
the fact of an antisemitism that was deeply embedded within French Catholic circles.

On 3 August 1914, at 18h 15, Germany declared war on France. The next day, Great
Britain was drawn into the conflict following the German violation of Belgian neutrality.

On the eve of the war, Isaac was a lycée professor in Lyon and in his thirty-seventh year.

His publications were scant – résumes aide-mémoire, the prize-giving address regarding
Edgar Quinet, the mémoire for his diplôme d'études supérieures, as expanded in 1906-07
and published in la Revue d'histoire de Lyon (1913) - yet sufficient to earn him an
appointment to teach at lycée Rollin in Paris, notice of which would arrive just prior to
his mobilization on 4 August 1914 as territorial in the 111ieme Régiment territorial
d’Infanterie.

In Isaac’s view, the seeds of the war had been planted with the Entente cordiale
between France and England of 8 April 1904. He later commented,

This [Entente cordiale] was too brusque a blow for a Germany,
accustomed to exercising command over Europe...from then on, by
whatever means (with a preference for bungled means), the imperial

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169 Cited in ibid., 42.
170 Cited in ibid., 48-9.
171 The onset of the war caught Laure Isaac flatfooted in Clamart, near Paris. She travelled to Saint-Etienne
to join her sister, Rosa, thence to Lyon to see Jules off, then back to Paris to reside with her mother and a
sister-in-law. These peregrinations culminated with the lease of an apartment on the boulevard Pereire.
government undertook to denounce the bonds of a friendship it considered to be sacriligious. Looking beyond the complexities of diplomatic discussions and until the eve of the [First World] war, one can trace the tenacious efforts that came to be the predominant element of German foreign policy and gave it coherence from 1905 to 1914… For those of us who lived these events (in France) and recall our memories…there was not a doubt: the year 1905 was a watershed year…Prior [to 1905], one spoke of peace and war, but (we at least, from the generations born after 1870) one did not know of what one spoke; peace was a given, the air which one breathed without thinking about it; war was a word, a purely abstract concept. When suddenly we had the revelation that this concept could transform itself into reality, we were shocked to the depths of our being, a shock which the passage of time has not erased.172

In September, Isaac’s regiment departed for la vallée de l’Ubaye, overlooking the Franco-Italian frontier. At his departure, he was unaware that on 5 September 1914 (the eve of the Battle of the Marne), his friend, mentor and leader, Charles Péguy, had been killed with a bullet to the forehead in Villeroy, Seine-et-Marne. Isaac would recall Péguy’s own words: “‘One is not entitled to be right…it one is not ready at each moment, on all occasions, to pay with one’s life to evidence the rightness of one’s truth.’ Yes, Péguy was ready, at any moment, on any occasion, to pay the ultimate price, to put his life on the line. He said it; he did it.”173 But Péguy would live on, in Isaac’s psyche. There was in [Péguy],” Isaac reminisced on the occasion of the semi-centennial of the launch of the Cahiers de la quinzaine,

a natural superiority, native, visible, a superiority that one might even say as immediately evident to the naked eye. For those who did not know him, how to give an idea of such a personality, completely, profoundly, original, unique in his essence? He was a small unforgettable individual, different from all others, and yet so French, so much a product of his region, of his faubourg, ‘deeply rooted’ in the French soil, so peuple français, not at all bourgeois, finished, without the least trace of vulgarity – nor of elegance; dressed in black, spartanly but properly, at all times manteau le caban.

172 Jules Isaac, 1914, le Problème des origines de la guerre. Un débat historique. (Paris: Rieder, 1933), All copies on which the Germans could lay their hands were destroyed in 1942. The book is cited in Experiences de ma vie II: de la paix a la guerre (unpublished).
173 Isaac, “Expériences de ma vie II. De la paix à la guerre,” The Péguy quote is from Feuillete, no. 26, p.4.
cape fluttering behind; his features regular, firm and flexed, obstinate, open, highly-strung, becoming flushed when the cerebral machine, always under pressure, began to vibrate in him.\textsuperscript{174}

From the end of 1914 to April 1915, Isaac was in the \textit{Aisne} front, in the \textit{Soissonnais} and from the summer of 1915 to April 1916, in the trenches in the \textit{Champagne}. From 1915 forward, Isaac’s \textit{travail de territorial} would consist of digging, repairing and protecting trenches. In May 1916, the French army created a new unit – \textit{Section de Repérage par les Lueurs} (SRL) of which Isaac formed a part. From May 1916 until he was wounded, Isaac was a flash spotter to the west of Verdun. His last post was situated in the Hesse Forest. During his service, Isaac (to his disappointment) was never to rise to the rank of officer, only to that of staff-sergeant. While absent from home, he kept close tabs on how his two children were faring. At the onset of the war, Juliette was in her eleventh year; Daniel in his seventh. In correspondence to Laure dated 21 August 1915, Isaac adumbrated his view of history’s ebb and flow. “I understand from you that my little Juliette finds herself somewhat disorientated in penetrating the history of the Middle Ages and is having difficulty in understanding (The Seignobos or the Lavisse is clearer). Nothing is more confusing since the Middle Ages begins with a return to barbarism and barbarism is nothing but confusion. Here is what you must try to explain to her: after centuries of civilization,…the Greeks and the Romans became cultivated in spirit…having ideas on the great questions that are not dissimilar to ours…In contrast, the men of the Middle Ages - the first centuries of the M.A. – were semi-barbarians, as difficult for us to comprehend as are the savages and semi-savages of today…Only after centuries did their consciousness evolve to the point where they began to understand the

\textsuperscript{174} Isaac, \textit{Expériences de ma vie. Péguy}, Péguy en Sorbonne, discours du cinquantenaire (des Cahiers), 365-75 at 369-70.
classical tradition, to penetrate its profound meaning and to perpetuate it (*la Renaissance*). …Their consciousness was confused and primitive, everything that proceeded from them was confused and they were thereby difficult to understand.”

It was on 28 June 1917 at or about 17h 30 that Isaac was flash-spotting, “imprisoned in my concrete cage,” as he put it, behind the French line to the west of the Verdun front. “German artillery very active. Shells begin to fall around the lookout post. But too much work to be interrupted. I was at the sighting telescope with headphones…I alerted Central. I told Garnier to cry out, ‘Attention’ when the shells landed because between my headphones and the cannonade, I did not hear their arrival. A shell landed not 5 or 6 metres away. We ducked. One minute later, ‘Attention!’ At the same moment, I was grazed on the right side of my head. Then, blackness. Thick smoke accompanied by burning particles. My mouth felt as if it were full of cinders; that I was going to suffocate. Anquish! I cried out to Garnier: ‘Open the tunnel, we are all going to be asphyxiated… Blackness, only blackness. The smoke was not dissipating. Garnier did not know where he was and was not hearing me. I slipped into the tunnel and groped my way to the *Centrale téléphonique* – where I was seated and graciously comforted with a shot of hooch.”

Isaac was hospitalized for the ensuing three months where he was observed to be “…persistently chronically fatigued and hyper-emotional,” and spent the next succeeding two months convalescing *en famille* in Paris on the boulevard Pereire.

On 14 December 1917, through the intercession of historian Ernest Lavisse, Isaac was

177 Michel, ed., 287.
posted to the foreign intelligence unit of the *Grand Quartier Général* at Chantilly where, as he recalled, “…our primary duty consisted of taking cuttings out of newspapers for use by the office of the *général en chef*.” 179

By 1 February 1918, he was back in Paris in the *service de l’information* at the Office of Foreign Affairs and shortly thereafter, on 27 May 1918, Isaac’s third and last child, a son, Jean-Claude (called Janet), 180 was born. Jean-Claude would be raised in a world so different from that in which his two elder siblings had been that he would have little in common with them but a set of parents. The Great War, not the turn of the century, had brought to an end *la belle époque* in which his two elder siblings had spent their childhood. Two months after his birth, Laure wrote her husband, “If you see Lavisse, 181 tell him that I would love for him to be godfather to our son, and in any case, I consider him as such, even if [Jean-Claude] does not have the same given name.” 182 With Jean-Claude’s arrival, Isaac moved his wife and children away from Paris, then perceived to be under threat from the Germans, and returned to a solitary existence. He passed his time writing articles for different newspapers, such as *le Matin*, and renewing contact with Guillaume Bréton, his editor at Hachette. He was demobilized on 14 January 1919 and returned to civilian life with a *citation à l’ordre de la division*, a *Croix de guerre* with silver star and a profound aspiration for an enduring peace. In an article published in April of 1919 in *La Revue de Paris* and titled, “Nous, les revenants,” Isaac wrote, “This life of former times, into which we were brusquely reinjected, was liveable no more. We desired to gently pick up where we had left off, the frame unfrozen: it was not possible

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180 On his return from Auschwitz, Jean-Claude would change his family name from Isaac to Janet.
181 Isaac was to lose his protecteur in 1922.
An invisible force prevented us. All the distant past, the ‘pre-war’ past, had uncoupled from us. Behind us, we saw only cinders and ruins; in front of us, we perceived the dawn of a new beginning.”

“The war had made of me another man,” Isaac recalled in later years, “more mature, harder, - more clear-thinking also. I emerged having completed forty years of my life, teeth clenched, all illusions lost, doubly resolved to employ my energies – my creative energies – that I felt well up inside me, to use these energies not as a means to strict erudition, but to action, efficacious and worthwhile action. Having lived through wartime and peacetime, I did not hesitate, I knew what sort of action imposed itself on me; in all directions and with all forces, the struggle against ‘brainwashing’: a good turn of phrase even in its vulgarity…” Isaac would spend the interwar years waging a historically positivist battle to expose the legends of the Great War with a view to preempting its repetition. Given his experience and credentials, he considered himself eminently qualified to be a participant in the debate on the origins of the Great War, as it then was called. For this positivist and disciplined historian, history was neither relative nor subjective; there was no compromising with the facts. “He who, for patriotic, religious or even ethical reasons, in the facts that he studies, in the conclusions that he draws, allows for the most trivial of suppressions or the most non-substantive of alterations, is not worthy of having a place in Science’s grand laboratory where probity is a ticket of admission more indispensable than skill.” In an undated, unpublished sequel, “Nous, les revenants II,” written no earlier than the establishment of the League of

Nations, to which it refers, Isaac wrote presciently, “The monstrous cadavre of war could infect the world, if we are not vigilant: we must throw it into the deepest recesses of the ocean…The unholy marriage of science and death could tomorrow lead all of Humanity to barbarity or mass suicide…At all costs, we must try to imagine this awful menace. Let us try, we, veterans, who have seen, who know, who know what war really is and who don’t wish our children to experience this monstrous revelation.”

The Great War not only ended la belle époque; it also ended le cours Malet. On 25 September 1915, the author of the cours Malet who had been mobilized like Isaac from the onset of hostilities, was killed during an attack from entrenched Germans in the Artois at Roclincourt (Pas-de-Calais). With the death of Malet, Hachette’s Bréton reached out not to Isaac, but to Pierre Grillet, professeur agrégé at lycée Louis-le-Grand, and Malet colleague, to update the next succeeding edition of the multi-volume cours Malet. This edition, to be titled le Malet-Grillet, would be published in 1921. Isaac was relegated to writing a succinct history of the Great War as a chapter in this edition. In a letter dated 17 December 1917, he vented to Laure, “I suspect that the attitude of B. [Bréton] is in part driven by my name: you are aware from which clientele the work of Malet generates his profits. The Malet-Grillet has also been successful among the priests; it is a factor. With a Malet-Isaac, there will be no demand from that market. And this perhaps explains it all. But I much prefer, a thousand times more, that these things are said to my face – instead of being stabbed in the back.”

187 In May 1918, Isaac contracted with Hachette to complete the collection of résumés aide-memoire that had been a pre-war work-in-progress.
188 Quoted in Kaspi, 88.
The antisemitism to which Isaac alluded continued to be the order of the day in interwar France. French Catholics continued to be seduced by the writings of Charles Maurras, in the tradition of Toussenel, Gougenot de Mousseaux, de la Tour du Pin and Edouard Drumont. The message, in a nutshell, was that the Jews, in concert with the Protestants and the freemasons, were those who increasingly had their hands on the levers of power. In this regard, the Rothschilds were a recurring leitmotiv. In 1926, *Action Française* was the subject of a papal ban, not for Maurras’ anti-Jewish rhetoric, but for his heterodox Catholicism.\(^{189}\) Many Catholics and clerics were complicit in the anti-semitic rhetoric by their silence, a silence that would anesthetize the French public to the potential consequences of such rhetoric. In a review of *Notre cher Péguy*,\(^ {190}\) published in the 15 June 1926 issue of *la revue Europe*, Isaac wrote, “The first time [the brothers Tharaud] wrote me – as -on several occasions– for my recollections of Péguy, I did not reply. Why? It was too close to the end of the war, I had just read *Quand Israël est roi*, and, having just come out of the trenches, I was in no mood to receive this volley of shots in the back, and say thank you…,”\(^ {191}\) a not so subtle reference to the Tharaud brothers’ having, in the words of historian Eugen Weber, “…left their Catholic middleclass readers with ideas of which the *Action française* was for a long time the most persistent and effective exponent, until overtaken at last by louder, more voracious offspring.”\(^ {192}\)

By the start of the academic year 1920-1921, Isaac was supply teaching at *lycée Louis-le-Grand*, Malet’s old stomping ground. While supply teaching, Isaac again found

\(^{189}\) Into the vaccuum came the anti-parliamentary leagues, including, but not limited to de la Rocque’s Ligues des patriotes, established in 1928.

\(^{190}\) J. & J. Tharaud, 2 vol (Plon, 1925).


\(^{192}\) Weber, 201.
himself in negotiation with Hachette director Bréton, this time to take charge of the overhaul of the *cours d’histoire* as required by a revised curriculum propounded by the ministry of public education. This time, Isaac was adamant – he must receive credit as author. This time, Hachette would acquiesce - at least in part - “…although not without some perceptible hesitation, “ recalled Isaac, “due to my biblical name, with little consequence for the most part – especially in the free schools. Thus was born *le cours d’histoire Malet-Isaac*, entirely different from its predecessor the *cours Malet*.” Isaac was on his way to attaining celebrity among generations of French secondary students, not be face, but by name. By the 1921-22 academic year, Isaac had secured a permanent position as a *professeur agrégé* at *lycée Saint-Louis*, where he would teach for 15 years. The *A. Malet/P. Grillet cours complet d’histoire* - complete with Isaac’s chapter, “La France dans la guerre” - was published in time for use in that academic 1921-1922. Isaac’s name was buried in the last two lines of the preface: “M. Jules Isaac, professor at *lycée Saint-Louis*, is responsible for the updating and completion of the present work.” In the Isaac chapter on the Great War, the view was expressed at page 1064 that “…the fundamental cause of the war” was to be found in the German psyche, a point of view not inconsistent with French historiography at the time. (In his rewritten *cours Malet-Isaac*, completed in 1930, Isaac was to correct himself, not with a view to Franco-German *rapprochement* (though a laudable end to which he was striving), but

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193 Isaac, "Survol," 221. The *cours Malet-Isaac* was the offspring of the educational program adopted in 1923 and 1925 which replaced two cycles with one continuous, chronologically sequenced study of history.

194 In correspondence to Isaac dated 25 April 1955, Albert Camus wrote, “…I am among those in effect to whom you taught history.” Le Fonds Jules Isaac, Bibliothèque Mejanès, Aix-en-Provence.
because his earlier point of view was found to be historically incorrect. The fundamental cause of the First World War was identified as “the [German] fear of encirclement.”)\textsuperscript{195}

The gargantuan task of rewriting, and publishing in stages, the \textit{cours Malet} was to occupy Isaac without distraction for seven long years (1923 - 1930). In his own words, “Despite precious collaboration to which I was compelled to resort in order not to succumb beneath the load, the writing of the \textit{cours Malet-Isaac} required seven years of exhausting work, all the more exhausting in that it was informed by a root principle that I made my own: a continuous resort to the sources, to textual documents. A knowledge of history, albeit an uncertain knowledge, came at such a price.”\textsuperscript{196} The collaboration to which Isaac refers was provided by Gaston Dez, \textit{professeur agrégé d’histoire} at lycée de Poitiers (for the \textit{manuel de sixième}), by André Alba, \textit{normalien}, future \textit{professeur agrégé d’histoire} at lycée Henri-IV and Isaac’s principal collaborator (for the \textit{manuels de cinquième, de quatrième} and \textit{de philosophie-mathématique}), fellow \textit{Lakanalien} and Péguy disciple, Charles-Victor Bourilly, professor at l’Université de Aix-Marseille (for the \textit{manuel de troisième}) and Charles-Henri Pouthas, \textit{professeur agrégé} at lycée Janson-de-Sailly and future Sorbonne professor (for the \textit{manuel de première}). The last volume, for use \textit{en philosophie-mathématique}, was published in 1930 and bore only the name of Isaac as author, albeit under the generic, \textit{Cours d’histoire Malet-Isaac à l’usage de l’enseignement secondaire}. The \textit{Malet-Isaac} was an overnight success and was to remain in use until the 1970s, as revised and updated to reflect evolving ministry of education edicts. “Having completed this arduous exercise [to publish the \textit{cours Malet-Isaac}], it


\textsuperscript{196} Isaac, "Survol," 222.
became possible for me to regain my *poste de combat.*”\(^{197}\) The enemy was *l’histoire officielle,* oftentimes but myth and legend.

Having completed the all-consuming task of publishing in stages the new *cours Malet-Isaac,* Isaac was able to weigh into the debate among historians concerning the fundamental causes of the Great War. “One must first determine the fundamental causes, these underlying forces, before rising to the surface as represented by diplomatic history,” wrote Isaac in 1932,\(^{198}\) a diplomatic history that had begun to express itself in 1929 with the first publication (thence at the rate of three volumes per annum) of *Documents diplomatiques français.* The debate was catalyzed by article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles (War Guilt clause), which provided, “The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.” Historians on the allied side set out to vindicate the language of moral culpability implied by the phrase, “imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies;” German historians set out to refute this language. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, only in the United States were historians at liberty to say what they thought without risk of censure.

In an article titled, “*Quelques aspects actuels de la question des responsabilités de guerre,*” published in the April/May 1931 issue of the journal *La Paix par le Droit,* Isaac wrote that historians must be ever vigilant not to “…leave out facts that are bothersome or to push them aside into the shadows; to force documents and to convert

\(^{197}\) Ibid.

into a certitude the most dubious of hypotheses.” In the same article, he reported that 35,000 French army archival documents were available for examination, but he was not one of the privileged few (among whom Camille Bloch and Pierre Renouvin) yet allowed to research these archival documents at the Quai d’Orsay. In the January 1932 issue (pp.1-25) of the Revue d’histoire de la guerre mondiale, Bloch and Renouvin published an article titled, “L’article 231 du traite de Versailles, sa genèse et sa signification,” in which they argued that the purpose of article 231 was to establish the juridical, and not the moral, responsibility of Germany in order to justify allied claims for reparations. In response to American historian Sydney B. Fay, who asked Isaac what he thought of this interpretation, Isaac wrote on 28 January 1933, “Perhaps in drafting article 231, the notion of Germany’s general culpability was not in mind, but it is there in the two words, “imposed” and “aggression.” Moreover, forthwith and officially, article 231 received this interpretation. It is a little late to realize that [this interpretation] is incorrect.” In his research to discover the fundamental causes of the Great War, Isaac pioneered a new methodology, la méthode de deux points de vue, “...a methodology that seems to us in our day natural, obvious, unavoidable,” according to historian André Kaspi, “and which nonetheless was most innovative. [Isaac] had recourse to both German and French sources. He would place side by side the German interpretations and the French interpretations. He invited his readers, his young readers, to compare [the competing interpretations], to exercise their critical faculties. ‘After having set out the facts, [Isaac] explained thirty years later, I reproduced at length an excerpt from one among the best of German manuel [d’histoire] with a view to demonstrating how the same question appears

199 Quoted in ibid.
200 Quoted in ibid., 47.
to German youth.” A decade later, Isaac, in employing this same *método de deux points de vue*, Isaac would note discrepancies between the gospel texts and a secular Christian tradition.

From 30 January 1933, the date on which Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor by a reluctant, but cornered, President Paul von Hindenburg “…international relations would be ever-deteriorating, overshadowed by the terrifying menace incarnated by Hitler.” The sombre mood was broken by the celebration in Paris on 20 March 1933 of the marriage of Daniel Isaac to Juliette Schmidt. Jules’ and Laure’s new daughter-in-law was a granddaughter of an Alsatian pastor and a great-granddaughter of Charles Schmidt (1812-1895), who had taught theology as a member of the Protestant faculty at Strasbourg. At the time of the marriage, Daniel was a *fonctionnaire* at the ministère de la Marine. One year later, a year that would include the possible attempt on 6 February 1934 by authoritarian leagues to topple the Republic, on 14 August 1934, Juliette Isaac married Catholic Robert Boudeville in the church of Saint-Palais-Sur-Mer. The completely revised *Malet-Isaac* was first published in 1933. So was Isaac’s 270-page *Un Débat historique: 1914, le problème des origines de la guerre* (Rieder), the first part of which reproduced two articles published in 1932 in the *Revue d’histoire moderne*. Isaac’s central thesis was that Russia bore the greatest responsibility for the outbreak of the Great War. “Declaration of war against Serbia, partial mobilization on the part of Russia, general mobilization on the part of Austria, *Kriegszustand* in Germany, general

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203 In October 1895, Juliette’s paternal aunt, Elisabeth Schmidt, had married Charles Andler (1866-1933), German professor at the Sorbonne, Jauresian socialist and specialist in Nietszche. Andler would pass away 11 days after the marriage.
204 Daniel and Juliette had two daughters, Marie-Claire, married to Michel Evdokimoff, and Hélène (called Cathy), married to Tuan N'Guyen.
mobilization on the part of Russia, general mobilizations on the part of Germany and of France, this would seem to be the normal chronology of events, and that as it appeared in 1914 (and a long time afterward) to the uninformed French people. Entirely different was the unfolding of events in fact. A coup de théâtre was orchestrated on 30 July that great pains were taken to keep from us: Russia’s general mobilization, ordered by the Tsar, in advance of all the other [general mobilizations].”205 While not denying the roles of the central powers in the outbreak of the Great War, it was Isaac’s view, similar to that argued by American historian B. Schmitt and in contrast to that of Pierre Renouvin, that it was more correct to speak of responsibilities shared in unequal portions than to speak of primary German responsibility. Another collection of essays decrying the risks attendant on the technologization of warfare followed as a book in 1935 under the title, Paradoxe sur la Science homicide et autres hérésies (Rieder). Extant copies of both these books would be destroyed by the Germans in 1942.

Isaac’s activism was not limited to publishing. It included efforts to promote Franco-German rapprochement, efforts that included involvement with l’Union pour la Vérité and a proposition for a pacte de Locarno moral, continuing contacts with German academics, membership in the ‘Comité de Vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes, (it was at Isaac’s home that the commission de la paix convened and various brochures de propagande drafted) and collaboration in connection with a Franco-German colloquium dealing with the disputed points in the teaching of history. In 1935, the Sorbonne approved a doctoral thesis proposal submitted by Isaac regarding the evolution of France’s foreign policy under Poincaré’s [prewar] ministry, “…a taboo subject: Poincaré

was not yet discussable,” on condition that Poincaré’s name did not figure in the title. By letter dated 1 March 1935, Isaac rejected the Sorbonne’s terms. “With appreciation to the Faculty and without purporting to take issue with its decision,” he wrote, “I am unable to abide by the condition imposed, since such a condition would render the subject unintelligible, (for of what significance is the period January 1912-January 1913 if not to the time Poincaré was in power?), and in particular since it seems to me that political correctness is entirely incompatible with the exigencies of scientific inquiry.” There was one particularly noteworthy out-of-academe encounter in the mid-1930s. “…As a consequence of an article appearing in *la Revue Historique* (1935),” recounted Isaac, “I received an unexpected invitation: Marshal Pétain to whose defense I had come [in the article] – for his military command – proposed ‘a confidential meeting’. Could he have found in me [his] historian, [his] dreamt of apologist? This would have been a grand delusion on his part. But the meeting did take place for two hours [on 22 February 1936], in his spacious office in *les Invalides*. I came away disappointed, my erstwhile admiration in ruins. There was no follow-up, on my part. Might it have been a premonition that it would be impossible for me to have acted otherwise?” In April/May 1936, further to the general elections, the Socialists found themselves for the first time in the position of having to form a government, one which came to be known as the Popular Front government. And France found itself for the first time under the premiership of a Jew.

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209 The cabinet presented by Léon Blum, leader of the Socialists, to the Chamber consisted of thirty-five members, sixteen of whom were Socialists, thirteen of whom were Radical Socialists three, dissident
On 30 September 1936, Jules Isaac was named *Inspecteur général de l’Instruction publique* for France on the recommendation of Jean Zay, *ministre de l’Instruction publique* in Blum’s government. This appointment was the crowning achievement of an illustrious career as professor and noted author. “One more time, in the year 1936, fate would place me at a crossroads,” Isaac would later recount. “Pushing sixty years of age, I was contemplating taking an anticipated retirement, when I was named Inspecteur-Général [de l’instruction publique]. An appointment that would have been unthinkable in ordinary times: not that my credentials were lacking; the problem was my bureaucratic standing [left-of-centre republican]. It took a minister [of education] the likes of Jean Zay to transcend.”

The fact that Isaac and Zay were coreligionists may or may not have been a factor. What was a factor were Isaac’s well-known republican convictions. In May 1937, Zay decided that the secondary school program should be restored to two cycles, as had been the case from 1902 to 1923. Jules Isaac, by then inspector-général, had reservations about these reforms and growing anxieties about the state of international relations, as he would later recollect.

The fallout consisted of the requirement to put together a new *cours d’histoire* - *Cours J. Isaac* this time. Added to this was the presidency of the *jury de l’agrégation d’histoire*, implying new responsibilities, a new noviciate effort. So many problems to be addressed, experiences lived, obstacles to be overcome, and at the same time, my physical energies, diminished by an illness in remission for a long while, an illness that was to re-express itself in a full blown way within the next ten years...I persisted in struggling until the last minute for the defence of peace, ever more at risk. In extremis, I placed my hope in a new association where one encountered lucid souls such as Detoeuf, Henri Bouche, Simone Weil, whose daring and original views would be expressed from 1937 in the

Socialists and three of whom belonged to no party. Twenty-seven were deputies, four were senators and four were non-Parliamentarians.

Nouveaux Cahiers. One had not finished with this debate when the war broke out, hurling us into a demonic future.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., 224.
The German invasion of France on 10 May 1940 caught Isaac flatfooted at “La Cagouille,” the Isaac vacation home at Saint-Palais-Sur-Mer in Charente-Inférieure. By 8 June 1940, the German panzers were within forty miles of Paris. On 10 June, the French government departed the city for Bordeaux and six days later, a majority in the Reynaud cabinet voted to request armistice terms. Reynaud resigned as président du Conseil and recommended to président de la République Lebrun that Pétain be invited to form a government. On 22 June 1940, with Pétain at the helm of a new French cabinet, the armistice was signed in Compiègne forest in the very same railway car in which the 1918 armistice had been. Pending what the French hoped and contemplated would be an early peace settlement, two-thirds of France, comprising the territory north of the Loire valley plus a strip along the Atlantic coast, was to be occupied by German troops and France was to pay the costs of this occupation. The French forces were to be demobilized. Parliament, whose sessions had been suspended during the invasion, reconvened at Vichy in the unoccupied southern zone on 9 July. On the next day, a joint session of parliament empowered, in Isaac’s words, “…a new government, Pétain at its head, with un Maurras as directeur de conscience,”212 to draft a new constitution. ‘Travail, famille, patrie’ replaced the republican trilogy ‘Liberté, égalité, fraternité.’ As Isaac would later recall, at Saint-Palais, “a meanspirited denunciation [now, to have been a democrat was a mark of infamy]213 reduced me to the status of a hunted man.”214 He fled across the Demarcation

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212 Ibid., 225.
Line to Vichy, a spa town whose grand hotels had been hastily converted to government ministries, arriving at Vichy on 20 July 1940. There Isaac would remain until 24 December 1940, lodged at l’hôtel de Lucerne, exercising the office of inspector general of public education and président du jury d’agréation until 19 December. “[I]t would not be long, however, before I was for many, including some of my own colleagues, a marked man,” recalled Isaac, “marked with a flaw ever more visible – a flaw ever more prudent and wise to discard… From the statute of October, I became a ‘leper’ officially, on two months of reprieve following which I would find myself on the street - with my own, since a return to Paris, where I had my domicile, was not permitted by the occupier.”

The statute of October to which Isaac refers was the Loi portant statut des juifs (“Statut des juifs”), adopted on 3 October 1940 and published on 18 October. It contained the usual Vichy preamble: “Nous, Maréchal de France, chef de l’Etat français, le conseil des ministres entendu.” Section 1 deemed to be a Jew any person having three grandparents “of the the Jewish race” or two grandparents [typically one Jewish parent] if his/her spouse were Jewish. By this definition, not only were Jules and Laure Isaac Jewish, so was son Daniel, who had converted to Protestantism and on 20 March 1933

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214 Isaac, "Survol."
217 In contrast, the German ordinance issued 27 September 1940 deemed to be Jewish anyone belonging to "the Jewish religion" or having more than two Jewish grandparents, who in turn were deemed Jewish if they belonged to the Jewish religion. Despite more severe sanctions, there was no mention of "la race juive," nor of the status of half-Jews (i.e. those with one Jewish parent), nor did the marriage of a half-Jew with a Jew have implications.
married Juliette Schmidt, granddaughter of an Alcasian pastor and great-granddaughter of Charles Schmidt (1812-1895), professor of theology at the faculté protestante de Strasbourg. Section 2 of the Statut des juifs provided that access to, and the exercise of, enumerated public offices and positions were off-limits to Jews. This list included members of the “corps enseignants.” Section 3 permitted Jews to exercise public offices other than those listed in section 2 provided they were veterans and had received the Légion d’honneur à titre militaire or the médaille militaire. Section 4 provided for a numerus clausus when it came to Jews in the liberal professions, the free professions, and the exercise of functions as ministerial officials and auxiliaries in the justice system.

The Statut des juifs constituted the crescendo of a first wave of Vichy measures that singled out for discrimination a religious or ethnic group in metropolitan France. But it didn’t stop there. The law of 22 July 1940 provided for the creation of a commission to review, and, on advice from the Conseil d’Etat, revoke any naturalization. This was followed by the exclusion from cabinet posts of French persons not born of a French father (law of 17 July 1940), the revocation of naturalizations accorded subsequent to the law of 1927 (law of 22 July 1940), and the revocation of the right of naturalized persons to practise as licensed medical doctors, dentist-surgeons, pharmacists and midwives (law of 16 August 1940), a revocation extended ultimately to naturalized lawyers (law of 10 September 1940). These last two measures, according to historian Michael Marrus, “…were applied with particular rigor to Jews; and even though the word Jew does not appear in their texts, Jews were generally understood to be prominent among those whom

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218 Elisabeth Schmidt, a paternal aunt of Juliette Schmidt, had been married since October 1895 to Charles Andler (1866-1933), professor of German at the Sorbonne, French socialist and specialist in Nietzsche. Andler passed away eleven days after the marriage of his niece, Juliette Schmidt, to Daniel Isaac.
the laws were designed to restrict.”

A law of 4 October 1940 authorized the internment of foreign nationals “of the Jewish race” in camps spéciaux or résidences forcées; a law of 7 October 1940 repealed the Crémieux decree of 24 October 1870 which had accorded French citizenship to the Jews of Algeria.

In a telegram to Gaston Henry-Haye, French ambassador to the United States, Jacques Guerard justified the Statut des juifs in the following terms: “Accordingly, we have concluded that a condition of national renewal is the exclusion of the Israelites from certain categories of work that would otherwise allow them to exert on our administrations, on public opinion and on our youth an influence that we have come to recognize is harmful. No impulse to revenge has provoked the law just promulgated. On the contrary, it should preempt spontaneous antisemitic activity whose excesses are difficult to contain. Moreover, it should be noted that no measures have been taken against their persons or their property.”

Did the impetus for such a law originate with the German occupiers of the northern zone? Archival research by historians Marrus and Paxton led them to conclude in the negative. “Any simple notion of German diktat can be dismissed summarily. When Raphaël Alibert, minister of justice in 1940 and author of the Statut des juifs, came to trial in March 1947, the attorney-general found, to his astonishment, that the accused’s dossier contained no evidence of contact with Germans, official or not, and was obliged to drop, from among the charges, the accusation of intelligence avec l’ennemi. Years of scrutiny of the records left by German services in Paris and Berlin have turned up no trace of German orders to Vichy in 1940 – or, for that

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220 Under police surveillance in a remote village.
matter, to any other occupied or satellite regime of that year – to adopt antisemitic legislation.”

Werner Best, chief of the civil administration arm of the Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich (MBF), attested, “…The ordinance of the Chief of the Military Administration in France [that is, the German ordinance of 27 September 1940] was issued on the Führer’s order, and it was consciously judged necessary to have it antedate the French law in order that the regulation of the Jewish question appeared to emanate from the German authorities.”

What, then, was the provenance of a Statut des juifs? Its principal sponsor was Raphaël Alibert, minister of justice. Who were his principal advisers in this regard? Who drafted the text of the statute? What discussion ensued within the ministry of justice? There appear to be no answers. We do know, however, that Alibert was forced to resign from the cabinet at German instigation, further to a leading role played by Alibert in Pétain’s ouster of Pierre Laval from the cabinet on 13 December 1940.

All four of Isaac’s grandparents were Jewish and therefore Isaac was a Jew as defined by the Statut des juifs. Therefore he was no longer eligible to be a member of the teaching corps. Isaac wrote Maréchal Pétain, “I would respectfully remind you that I am the historian whom you at one time summoned to your office at les Invalides, and to whom you kindly showed your esteem. We read in the newspapers yesterday: ‘The Cabinet continued looking at clarifying the status of Jews.’ With this simple phrase, I find myself instantly excluded from the French national community, and along with me - French to the marrow of my bones - so many others, from Bergson, who taught us all,

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222 Marrus, 5.
223 Quoted in ibid., 13. In 1951, after having been granted clemency and released from a Danish prison where he was serving a 5 year sentence (his death sentence had been commuted), Best returned to West Germany and became a lawyer for Stinnes Co, founded by Hugo Stinnes.
down to the classes of ’38 or ’39, who have served France well with all their genius, or all their blood.” Pétain’s chose to reply through his secretary. Pursuant to the *statut des Juifs*, passed by Vichy, “…M. Isaac Jules, Inspecteur général de l’Instruction Publique (*Enseignement Secondaire*), whose services were terminated on 19 December 1940, is entitled to a pension commencing 20 December 1940.”

This reply was a paraphrase of section 7 of the *Statut des juifs*, which provided, “The Jewish public servants contemplated by sections 2 and 3 will cease to exercise their functions in the two months that follow the publication of the present law. They are entitled to claim their rights to a pension if they have the requisite years of service.” It is open to question whether Isaac’s letter was even brought to Pétain’s attention. According to Marrus, “It is conceivable that the old man was not shown the dozens of pathetic letters from Jewish veterans of Verdun and others who sought to penetrate the screen of the ‘king’s friends,’ unable to believe that the Marshal himself could be aware of what French officials were doing to them and yet do nothing to stop them. In any case, he does not seem to have answered any of them personally.”

On 24 December 1940, Isaac checked out of *l’hôtel de Lucerne*, a fortnight after Laval’s ouster as vice-president of the Council. “Liberated from oppressive Vichy,” remembered Isaac, “I recovered my peace of mind: did I not have still the most important, a family life of seemingly indestructible solidity, and my freedom to work? I could be stripped of my civil rights, of all benefits acquired and recognizable, but not of my very

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224 Kaspi, *Jules Isaac*, as quoted at 142.
225 Ibid., as quoted at 143.
226 Marrus, 85.
227 Pierre-Etienne Flandin was Laval’s short-lived successor, until 10 February 1941 when Admiral François Darlan replaced Flandin as vice-president of the Council, assuming also the foreign affairs, interior and naval portfolios.
being, not of my soul: I was the same, always the same."  

La famille Isaac congregated through the holiday season at their *maison de vacances* in *La Palud en Charentes maritimes*, implying, at least for Jules, a westward transversal of the Demarcation Line. It was here, at their *maison de vacances*, that Jules and Laure received an offer of American emergency rescue visas and passage to the United States. Helene (Caty) Isaac, granddaughter of Jules and daughter of Daniel and Juliette, has transmitted her mother’s recollection of events as that fateful year drew to a close. “A Jewish organization had organized passage to the United States for certain scholars and my [in-laws] had their luggage packed. But my [father-in-law] experienced a last-minute change of heart about leaving his native land. Soon after, they departed for Aix-en-Provence.”

In Aix, they were interim guests of Charles-Victor Bourrilly, fellow *Lakanalien* and Péguy peer, whose research interest concerned Guillaume du Bellay. Thenceforth, Aix would be “*la petite patrie de son coeur*.” Within a matter of weeks, the Isaacs would purchase a property, christened *la Pergola*. It is one of two homes, surrounded by gardens, on the left side of *avenue des Amandiers*, a short deadend at the top of *montée St-Eutrope* (renamed *montée Jules Isaac* in 1965).

As France entered 1941, Michael Marrus tells us, “[t]hings seemed to be settling into an uncomfortable but not mortally menacing normalcy: foreign and stateless Jews harassed and interned; French Jews forced from public service and teaching by an official
discrimination softened by notable exceptions; the rest wounded and humiliated in their feelings, but – as the frequent Vichy phrase went – ‘neither in their property nor in their persons.’ There was no particular urgency among Jews at this point to leave the country…”

But as early as January 1941, Theodor Dannecker, a twenty-seven year old SS officer charged with setting up a special police branch for Jewish questions (Judenreferat) in the Paris headquarters of the German military administration, began lobbying the Vichy government to create a central Jewish office that would serve to advance the antisemitic program. Darlan, resisting at first on the basis of concerns regarding native French Jews, concerns he attributed to Pétain, eventually capitulated. The Commissariat-General for Jewish Affairs was created by a French law of 29 March 1941 “…without prior submission to the German military administration,” in the words of Marrus, and Xavier Vallat (whom Pétain had appointed secretary for veterans’ affairs in July 1940) was named commissioner-general for Jewish affairs, “…again without clearing it with the occupiers.” This was the same Xavier Vallat who five years earlier, on 6 June 1936, as deputy for the Ardèche (1919-24; 1928-40), had addressed the Chamber as follows: “…For the first time, this old gallo-roman country will be governed by a Jew…To govern this rustic nation that is France, it would be better to have someone whose origins, however lowly, are rooted in our soil than a subtle Talmudist.” Léon Blum, observe Marrus and Paxton, “…French to his fingertips, represented to Vallat the quintessence of what he hated in Jewry.” This was the same Xavier Vallat who five years later, at his trial before the Haute Cour de Justice in 1946, would elaborate his

234 Marrus, 76.
235 Ibid., 83.
236 Ibid.
237 Quoted in Kaspi, 57-58.
238 Marrus, 91.
point of view in the following terms, “The Jew is not only an unassimilable foreigner, whose implantation tends to form a state within a state; he is also, by temperament, a foreigner who wants to dominate and who tends to create, with his kin, a super state within the state.”

It was under Darlan’s government, at Vallat’s initiative as commissioner-general of Jewish affairs, that the *Loi du 2 juin 1941 remplaçant la loi du 3 octobre 1940 portant statut des juifs* was adopted. The second statute (*la loi Vallat*) published on 14 June 1941, was according to Marrus, “…no mere revision of the earlier statute, it was a new text based upon the experience of the first seven months of official antisemitism as well as upon ‘the study of measures taken abroad.’” The earlier *Statut des juifs* deemed to be a Jew any person having three grandparents “of the same race” or two grandparents if his or her spouse was Jewish. Section 1 of *la loi Vallat* deemed to be a Jew (i) any person, of whatever confessional status, having three grandparents “of the Jewish race” or having two grandparents of the Jewish race [typically one Jewish parent] if his or her spouse had two grandparents “of the Jewish race”; and (ii) a person having two Jewish grandparents [typically one Jewish parent] and belonging to the Jewish religion, or who so belonged at 25 June 1940. In this latter regard, there was but one way for a half-Jew (having two Jewish grandparents) in the right circumstances to demonstrate non-Jewishness: proof of adherence to one of the other confessions recognized by the state before the law of 9 December 1905 which separated Church and State; in effect, by proof

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239 Quoted in ibid., 88.
240 By the time Vallat had left office in March 1942, yet a third Statut des juifs, never to see the light of day, had been drafted at Vallat’s initiative and under his oversight, and vetted by Darlan and the Conseil d’Etat (see Marrus and Paxton at p. 94).
241 Marrus, 98.
242 For this purpose, a grandparent was deemed to be of the Jewish race if the grandparent belonged “to the Jewish religion.”
of baptism. La loi Vallat also set the stage for a purge of Jews from the liberal professionals, trade, industry and finance. By a separate statute, adopted concurrently with la Loi Vallat on 2 June 1941 and published on 14 June 1941, all persons who were Jewish as defined in la loi Vallat were required within one month of publication (the deadline was extended to 31 July 1941) to file with the prefect of the department or subprefect of the arrondissement in which their domicile or residence was situated a declaration in writing that they were Jewish according to the law and to disclose their civil status, family situation, profession and the composition of their property.243 The sanction for non-compliance was imprisonment for up to one year and/or a fine of up to 10,000 francs. Darlan’s government threw its weight behind this census. Writes Marrus, “Henri Chavin, secretary-general for police in the Ministry of the Interior, underscored its importance in a circular to prefects on 12 July: ‘I draw your special attention to how important it is that this census, a measure of public order, be carried out carefully and supervised with all the means at your disposal.’”244 Buried in the Aix-en-Provence city hall records is an acknowledgement dated 31 July 1941 evidencing the receipt of three declarations filed by Jules Isaac, one for himself, one for Laure and one for younger son, Jean-Claude, the whole in compliance with the census. Finally, with a view to erasing all Jewish influence from the national economy, a law adopted 22 July 1941 provided for the placing of Jewish property under the control of administrators who were empowered to convert the property to cash. The property declared under the law of 2 June was subject to seizure and sale under the law of 22 July.

243 The Jews in the occupied zone had been the object of a census by virtue of a German ordinance of 27 September 1940.  
244 Quoted in Marrus, 100.
What was the fate of the *Malet-Isaac*? Since 21 August 1940, professors had lost control of the manuals from which they could teach. Publishing houses were subject to the oversight and control of the Vichy ministry of education, as supplemented from 3 March 1941 by German oversight. It is noteworthy that only two volumes of the *Malet-Isaac* were included among the 95 proscribed manuals on lists circulated 25 July 1941 and 31 July 1943. Hachette commissioned historians André Alba, André Dieny, Maurice Gourzet and Pierre Renouvin (the latter of whom, to his credit, refused to participate) to put together a new series of manuals to replace the *cours Malet-Isaac*. The impetus for this initiative was explained by Hachette literary editor René Vaubourdolle.

“From one day to the next, the law may expand the bans decreed against French of Israelite race. *Entre nous*, it is illogical to prohibit an Israelite professor from teaching 25 students and to effectively permit him, via the medium of a manual, to teach 25,000 students.” Isaac was vehement in his protestations not only with Vaubourdolle, but also with Alba, whom he suspected of having betrayed him. On 1 September 1942, Vaubourvalle wrote Isaac, “I understand that your course [manuals] is at risk of excommunication. At the initiative of the Maréchal’s cabinet, the decision has been delegated to the *commission de contrôle des livres en usage dans l’enseignement secondaire*. The assigned reporter is Madame Etienne, professor at lycée Racine.”

The proscription of the *Malet-Isaac* would follow in November 1942. In the words of Abel

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247 Quoted in ibid.
Bonnard, minister of national education, writing in Gringoire in 1942, “It is inadmissible that the history of France be taught to young Français by an Isaac.”

The suicide of the Third Republic had profoundly affected Isaac as a republican; the antisemitic measures, as a Jew. These were the circumstances in which, “…confronted by a hypocritical regime born of defeat and with clandestine goals,” Isaac chose to “…affirm, to proclaim, my ardent love for democratic liberties: at a distance of more than 2,000 years, there was a striking parallel between the defeated Athens of 404 B.C. and the France of 1940: without forcing the texts, step by step, without losing sight of historical truths, but juxtaposing openly and faithfully oligarchy and democracy, I wrote Les Oligarques, a biased history, a hymn to ‘lost divine liberty.’” This last turn of phrase was inspired by Maurras, no doubt. According to its preface, Les Oligarques was written in 1942, although it was likely in gestation as early as 1941. The manuscript was completed on 17 October 1942, “somewhere in France – or what used to be France,” according to its closing paragraph. On 17 October 1942, Jules and Laure were still living openly in Aix-en-Provence, but not for long. On 11 November, the Germans would roll into the southern zone “…ending the relative peace and quiet of our aixoise sojourn,” remembered Isaac. He had hoped to publish Les Oligarques forthwith upon its completion, through a clandestine French press or a non-French publishing house, but the German occupation of the southern zone intervened. The book was first published in

248 Quoted in ibid., 147.
249 Isaac, “Survol,” 226. Les Oligarques addresses the causes and conditions of the fall in 1940 of the Third French Republic while Marc Bloch's Etrange défaite addresses the causes and conditions of France's military defeat in 1940
250 A more explicit allusion can be found in Isaac's use of the phrase "divine surprise" to describe the unexpected and disastrous defeat of Athens at Syracuse in 413 BCE (p. 54, n. 1). Maurras had used this phrase to describe the unexpected defeat of France in June 1940, a fortuitous event for adversaries of the Third Republic ("La Grande Besogne," Candide, 15 January 1941).
April, 1945 and again in the second trimester of 1946, and under the pseudonym of “Junius,” itself a clue to the subversive nature of the work. A Prière d’insérer included with the 1946 edition reveals the author’s identity and elaborates upon the subtitle, essai d’histoire partiale (a biased history) in respect of which, Isaac later wrote, “…one [knew] that I [was] not much of a specialist.”

Without any attempt at impartiality – on the contrary and the subtitle so alerts the reader – the author of Les Oligarques has comprehensively dealt with the most striking of historical parallels, the events inside of Athens during the Peloponnesian War, a foreign war complicated by a civil war, and the events inside France during the great debacle that, in our day, opposed western democrats against nazi Germany. The Oligarques were the fifth column in Athens, building the triumph of their miserable fanaticism upon the ruins of their country. And the same love, the sacred love for country and liberty, that inspired la Marseillaise of Rouget de l’Isle, la Marseillaise de Rude, inspires each page, each line of this subversive work, written in clandestinity and for clandestine consumption.

The preface closes, “Rather than in space, being sedentary by nature, [the author] chose to take flight in time,” a noteworthy remark in light of the offer of safe passage to America that had been extended to the Isaac in December 1940 or January 1941.

“Following step by step Thucydides [The History of the Peloponnesian War] and Xenophon [Hellenica], Andocides and Lysias [Against Eratosthenes],” wrote Isaac,

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252 In 1989, it was published by Calmann-Lévy (without the Prière d'insérer) along with Isaac's Paradoxe sur la science homicide and "Nous les revenants."
253 During the war, the presses of Editions Minuit were situated in Switzerland.
254 No doubt, intended to allude to the Letters of Junius, published in London from 1769 to 1772 against the "personal government" of George III.
256 The national anthem of France, written and composed in 1792 by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle (10 May 1760 – 26 June 1836), a French army officer.
257 A stone relief, 42 feet in height, on the Arc de Triomphe by French sculptor Francois Rude (4 January 1784 - 3 November 1855).
258 On the death of Thucydides in 411 BCE, Xenophon continued the account of the Peloponnesian wars. They were incomparable as historians, in Isaac's estimation. "The account [of the Peloponnesian Wars] of Thucydides has an ending: it is by Xenophon...They are of the same blood; but one of them, Thucydides, never forget that he is Athenian, - the other, Xenophon, that he is an aristocrat." (p. 93)
“I wrote *Les Oligarques, essai d’histoire partiale*, imagining the shadow of my *vieux maître* [Sorbonne classicist Paul Guiraud] looking over my shoulder, encouraging me, smiling with his customary affability, enhanced by a generous dose of liberalism.”

The noting of parallels between historical and contemporary events was not new, although the end of such historiography was generally academic in nature. For Isaac, the technique was a means to an end – the denunciation in the present of *L’Etat français* and the *révolution nationale* under cover of commentary regarding fifth century Athens. Periodically, the author emerges to alert the reader to toggle forth to the present – for example, his allusion to Charles Maurras. “*Listen, listen well, I implore you…* The law is made by the weak [and for themselves]…But nature herself shows us that rightfully, that which is worth more should overwhelm that which is worth less, the capable over the incapable…”

The ideological impetus for the overthrow of Athenian democracy was caused by “…*à la mode* magicians – the sophists – coupled with the evil influence inimical to human well-being: the demon of war.” Other signals to fastforward to the present are to be found in Isaac’s use of catch phrases. Following the final defeat of Athens by Sparta at Aegospotami in 404 BCE, when a terrorized Athenian assembly was manipulated by the Thirty to end democratic rule, Isaac writes, “*(Athènes aux Athéniens,*

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260 Albert Thibaudet in his *La campagne avec Thucydide*, written in 1917, had toggled back and forth between the Peloponnesian Wars and the First World War. Clemenceau had made use of this method in his *Démosthène*, a work in which he had identified himself with the Athenian orator. Isaac was also not the only scholar who had noted parallels between the events of 1940 in France and those of 404 BCE in Athens. Hellenist Pierre Jonguet, living in Cairo in 1942, had noted the same and published *Révolution dans la défaite: Études athéniennes*.


262 Ibid., 21-22.
The will on the part of those seeking to overthrow democratic rule to disguise their true aims is what Isaac refers to as “…the admirable formula pursuant to which each person sees what he wants: ‘The Constitution of our ancestors, the city’s security.’” Under the cover of describing the oligarchs of Athens in 404 B.C.E., Isaac described l’Etat français and the Révolution nationale thus: “By means of a remarkable deception, the Thirty evaded the task for which they had received a mandate [to draw up a new constitution]…from week to week, month to month, through hypocritical argument, they postponed the constitutional work …Thereby, they lost the respect and support of honest folk in whose eyes the new regime, demasked, appeared with its true face: a usurping and tyrannical oligarchy.”

Throughout Les Oligarques, Isaac evidences a keen insight into human nature and democratic institutions, insights potentially relevant to making sense of the events of 1940 in France. “Nothing is more dreadful,” he wrote, “than hatreds driven by ideology, if not hatreds driven by religion, a close relative. The truth is, ideology is often but a mask behind which hides the grimace of material interests, injured or at risk. The fanaticism of the believer is the equivalent of that of the owner. Both are merciless.” Was Isaac thinking of fifth century B.C.E. Athenians or his own compatriots when he wrote, “But for the Athenians, capitulation, far from being a fatal imposition, was joy, hope; [capitulation] was a response to their awaiting, to their secret yearning; they had no

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263 Ibid., 123.
264 Ibid., 64.
265 Ibid., 136.
266 Ibid., 11-12.
less a taste than a desire for it. But ideologies alone cannot carry the day; anti-democratic arguments, however seductive, remain impotent unless and until taken up by adversaries of democracy (who see the ideology as a means to an end: their own rise to power). As far as these adversaries are concerned, “They are not a majority of the aristocrats,” wrote Isaac, but a minority “…whose matchless attribute was its capacity to hate,” and for whom “…politics is nothing but a game in which all means to win are legitimate, democracy an institution against nature to be shamelessly exploited and to be shattered without remorse.”

Was Isaac thinking of fifth century B.C.E. Athenians or his own compatriots when he wrote, “The Thirty talked of renovating the city by means of justice, virtue, truth and peace; never did more noble words serve as brazenly to hide a contrary reality. Behind the guise of renewal, there was terror, prolonged bloodshed; in place of justice, the good pleasure of tyrants and their flunkeys; in place of truth and good faith, lies, denunciations by the hundreds; in place of virtue, a refined villainy, unequalled corruption; in place of peace, civil war and a spartan military occupation.”

Yet Isaac never wavered in his faith in la France. “Athens – it might be more correct to say: the little that remains of Athens – was subjected to dismal, burdensome hours, the hardest that it had ever known. Compared to the recent past, the present seemed even more unbearable… on the Acropolis, prohibited to citizens of Athens, Callibios’ Spartans are camped; now, to have been a democrat was a mark of infamy, it entailed the confiscation of property, exile or death; now, Alcibiades and Theramenes had perished, exiled

Thrasybule had disappeared; now, the oligarchy ruled and each knew what it was:

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267 Ibid., 113.
268 Ibid., 18.
269 Ibid., 24.
270 Ibid., 135.
hypocrisy and robbery, betrayal and treason, moral degradation and tyranny. The thought of living for much longer in such circumstances was odious for most. Even the former adversaries of democracy – at least the more honest of them – have distanced themselves from a regime in which they saw nothing but a contemptible counterfeit of their ideal. All illusions up in smoke, young aristocrats like Plato have turned their backs on politics in disgust, seeking a refuge in philosophy. The bulk of the population was silent and submissive, but in their heart of hearts, invincible."

Isaac mailed a copy of the first edition to General de Gaulle, who responded with a typewritten note dated 15 May 1945 in which he added in his own script, “Quelle belle leçon de chose et d’histoire!” Had de Gaulle recognized himself in Thrasybulus, democrat and soldier who, having taken refuge in Thebes with his troops, was destined to liberate Athens from its oligarchic subjugation at summer’s end, 403 B.C.E.? Had he interpreted Les Oligarques as an ode to himself? A review of the first edition appeared in the 19 August 1945 Sunday New York Times. The reviewer, still ignorant of the author’s identity, speculates that the author is “…a specialist in ancient history who is still coquettishly hiding behind a pseudonym,” and continues, “The last lines of this fascinating ‘Essay in Biased History’ clarify the author’s intentions: ‘In this whole disconcerting story the evildoing of the ‘good men’ is surpassed only by the clemency of the ‘bad men.’ I am writing these lines somewhere in France – in what was France – on Saturday, 17 October 1942: the ‘good men’ are still doing as much evil; it remains to be seen whether the ‘bad men’ will be as magnanimous.” In fact, De Gaulle was to

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271 Ibid., 160-61.
magnanimously spare Pétain from a firing squad. *Les Oligarques* was intended as a *pamphlet contre Vichy*. “The alert reader,” continues the reviewer, “is constantly aware of the parallel between the Cagoule and Vichy on the one hand and the men who wanted so badly to keep Athens for the “good” Athenians that they called in Sparta’s arms. Yet only rarely does the author indulge in so direct a thrust as when speaking of the council of ten ancients he refers to the poet Sophocles, over 80 years old; he adds: ‘the revered name of a famous old man looks well on certain wreaking companies,’” a reference to Marshal Pétain, no doubt. Even without the benefit of the *Prière d’insérer*, the polemical nature of the work was explicit. “A reader will interrupt me:” wrote Isaac, “‘You have scarcely learnt from Thucydides…Was it from such a mentor that you picked up the biased nature that is atomized shamelessly throughout, even to the cover of the work, this brazen liberty of interpretation that colours that past with the present, this rhetoric more suited to a pamphleteer than to a historian?’ May I not retort that polemicism also has its time, its place?”

The death of the Third Republic had wounded Isaac as a democrat. Vichy’s ouster of Isaac from French civic life wounded him as a Jew and provoked in him a question – to affirm his Judaism through observance or to convert to Christianity. In a 1941 encounter in Aix-en-Provence between Isaac and “le père des juifs Italiens durant la guerre,” Capuchin friar P. Marie-Benoît, Isaac confessed that the Vichy oppression of the Jews had confronted him with a dilemma: to adhere overtly to his Judaism or to convert to Christianity (as had Isaac’s son, Daniel). At that moment, P. Marie-Benoît would later

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274 The Oligarchy of the Thirty was dominated by Critias, who was not comparable to Pétain. Critias, student of Socrates, was an aristocrat and intellectual, not a war veteran. To find a parallel to Pétain, Isaac reached back to the first step in the dismantlement of Athenian democracy – the replacement of the 500 with a council of 10 “Anciens” that might have included the poet Sophocles.

recall, Judaism seemed to Isaac as something old, dépassé, so Isaac began to delve into Christianity. On 21 August 1941, Isaac made the following entry in his diary: “Utter confusion. Faith – Natural movement of the soul…Temptation…The touching fervour of ‘A’ – a Blondel disciple, on the threshold of Catholicism ([a threshold] he dares not yet step across).” On 28 August, “Yesterday as I was getting into my car, I encountered ‘A.’ how sad his face, what stigmata! The entire history of Judaism – of persecutions endured. Attack (missed?) against Laval…. On 3 September, “All religions deny having evolved and being in the process of evolution. Pretensions to a truth revealed once and for all …This same idea of divine election in space and time, poor human categories. All is in flux. God bears man and man bears God. Will I say that no man has borne God as much as Jesus? (I would say if I were Jewish, I would be Christian). But my most secret attachment is for paganism.” Isaac repeated these sentiments in a chain of correspondence to his son, Daniel, the first of which is dated 31 December 1942, the month in which Daniel would traverse the Pyrenees into Spain to join the French forces in North Africa.

You know what my own personal position is. I believe in God as the mystery that man bears within himself and that sustains man, raising him above himself. I feel profoundly that it is the contemplation of this mystery that leads to peace of mind, to which I aspire, without no doubt being worthy of this grace. That which I am unable to conceive is the limitation of divine grace in time and space, and also within the social ladder. [Revelation] is the intervention of an historical event in a sphere

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277 Isaac’s “most secret attachment” is evidenced in the following words - circled by Isaac – that were uttered by Albert Camus in the course of an interview published in the 21 December 1957 issue of Le Figaro: “I have nothing but respect and veneration before the person of Christ and before his history; I do not believe in his resurrection. My preoccupations are Christian, but my nature is pagan…I feel at ease among the Greeks, not those of Plato: the pre-socratics, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Parmenides; my faith is in the values of antiquity, notwithstanding that these have been badly perceived since Hegel.”
where human history is created. Belief in God cannot be but belief in the eternal, universal presence of God.\textsuperscript{278}

Two months later, in a letter dated 1 February 1942, Isaac wrote,

Even in the current circumstances, I am loath to be an observant Jew. If I were a practising Jew, I would be a Christian. It is futile to class me as Jewish: I am not, in any way. I will go further: I give thanks to God that there was a Greek people, not that there was a Jewish people to propagate a religiously exclusivist claim… I prefer Socrates, man of God.\textsuperscript{279}

In addressing the religious question, perhaps influenced by his Protestant son,\textsuperscript{280}

Isaac began with scripture - the New Testament, not the Old, as he recalled in later life.

... I became interested in the fate of the persecuted Jews ... I approached for the first time rabbis and grand rabbis, men like Edmond Fleg, Léon Algazi, and also the great Catholic philosopher Maurice Blondel. Then the debate on the religion question began in me. I recognized the high spiritual value of Judaism, and it came into my inner life. I remain, however, non-confessional.

In that year, ’42, I began rereading the Gospels. Why not the Old Testament, you will ask? I came to the Old through the New. I told this to Pope John XXIII, and he laughed. As a historian, I know that one should not rely on translations. And although I’m enough of a Hellenist to read the New Testament in the original, I am not at all a Hebraist. It was thus to the Gospels that I returned. And after reading them, I wrote a dozen pages that I sent to Maurice Blondel and the pastor Trocmé, in which I noted my discovery, the basis of all my later work: in many respects, there is a gulf between evangelical reality and certain traditional Christian teaching.\textsuperscript{281}

Protestant minister André Trocmé, whom Isaac knew personally, encouraged him to persist in his efforts.\textsuperscript{282} Catholic philosopher Maurice Blondel,\textsuperscript{283} on the other hand, paid scant attention to Isaac’s dozen pages in his reply of 13 June 1942.

\textsuperscript{279} Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 150.
\textsuperscript{280} For Protestants, scripture is paramount (sola scriptura).
\textsuperscript{281} Jean Toulat, Juifs, Mes frères (Paris: Fayard, 1968), 137. Isaac was wary of translations (from Greek to Latin and the vernacular) and when it came to Jesus’ teachings, of translations of translations (from Aramaic to Greek, from Greek to Latin and from Latin to the vernacular).
\textsuperscript{282} In 1934, André Trocmé, whose uncompromising pacifism had placed him at odds with his own church hierarchy, had begun a one-year appointment as interim minister in the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in south-central France. Two years later, in correspondence to Isaac dated 5 February 1936, Trocmé wrote
Without delay, I wish to assure you on my favourable understanding of the epithet, ‘unassimilable’ that so perturbs you, as if it evokes a malignant connotation of the French patriotism of Israelites. In contrast, I frequently recognize and laud the fervour of those who are more attached than any other to our country where they feel more welcomed, and more diversely influential than in many other states….When I was appointed maître de conférence at the University of Lille, I encountered there a singular professor…this excellent man who wished to mentor me in my role as correcteur de copies and in the discernment of the aptitudes of different constituencies in matters academic. Of most interest were the data regarding Israelite candidates. He told me that he was not wrong in his predictions more than one in ten times. When I inquired what the distinctive character traits were that he had discovered, he said: ‘It’s quite simple. At the age of 18 years, our young Aryans are still confused, without real goals, without lucidity in thought or conclusion, while at the same age, the Israelites are most resourceful, more thoughtful, more lucid in their expression, more capable of reasoned conclusions, already firm and precocious…

In closing his letter to Isaac, Blondel wrote, “I assure you, I have the best of intentions and express my profound sorrow regarding your plight, confronted by attitudes and measures unworthy of Frenchmen against Frenchmen, unworthy of men of good faith and men of faith vis-à-vis those who embody the highest of intellectual, moral and religious values. Moreover, it is only under oppression and for a short while that this fanatical barbarism triumphs.”

Was it scripturally true, Isaac wondered, as Christianity had taught for nearly two millennia, that the Jewish people – his people - were responsible for the death of Jesus and have since remained so, that as a consequence, the Jews had forfeited their very

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283 Catholic philosopher Maurice Blondel (as well as Catholic theologian Karl Rahner), for whom God was immanent in human life and history, would influence theologian and essayist Gregory Baum. (See Gregory Baum, "Jewish and Christian Reflections on Divine Providence" in Signs of the Times: Religious Pluralism and Economic Injustice (Ottawa: Novalis, 2007), 99).

relationship with God, or worse still, were the object of a divine curse? The historian in Isaac determined to limit the inquiry to the historical Jesus, to the inter-relationship between the historical Jesus and the Jewish people of his time. “What was my initial concern?” Isaac later wrote, “To know, as current Christian thinking would have it, as a living tradition teaches, if Jesus truly rejected Israel - the Jewish people as a whole – if he declared its fall, condemned and even damned it; conversely, if it were true that Israel misjudged Jesus, refused to see in him the Messiah and Son of God, rejected, ridiculed and crucified him; if Israel deserved nearly two millennia of the heinous stain as the ‘deicide people’…”

When Isaac says, “In that year, ’42, I began to reread the gospels,” his son, Daniel clarifies that it was between February and June of 1942. Beginning in 1941, Daniel Isaac, no longer eligible to remain a public servant in the ministère de la Marine, had moved to Chambon-sur-Lignon where he was teaching classics at Collège cévenol, established in 1938 at André Trocmé’s initiative. When Isaac says, “…after rereading them, I wrote a dozen pages,” Daniel adds that it was in June 1942 that these dozen pages were written under the title, “Quelques constatations basées sur la lecture des Evangiles.”

The dozen pages under the title, “Quelques constatations basées sur la lecture des Evangiles” was the culmination of a critical reading of the gospels using la méthode des deux points de vue, which had been pioneered by Isaac during the interwar period in determining the various responsibilities for the outbreak of the First World War. One point of view was the New Testament; the other, traditional Christian commentary. Comparisons of the gospel texts with even the best of the commentators led Isaac to

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286 Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 181.
unearth a certain tradition (labeled by Isaac, a contemptuous teaching) regarding Jews and Judaism that had been unquestioningly accepted by force of habit for at least fifteen centuries, a secular (man-made) in contrast to a sacred (inspired) tradition, according to Isaac, “...a custom more than a tradition, a custom made up of deep-seated prejudices and of the most odious habits of mind, heart, and tongue,”\textsuperscript{287} traditions that were no more than “...theological myths which overreach everywhere the bounds of historical and even of scriptural accuracy.”\textsuperscript{288} For example, the theme of a degenerate, ossified Judaism at the time of Christ; for example, the notion of the Jews as a carnal people, incapable of discerning the spiritual meaning of their own scriptures; for example, the notion of the Jews as a reprobate people, damned by Jesus himself; for example, the notion of a Messiah misperceived and rejected by a stubborn and blind people; for example, the notion of the Jews as a deicidal people, collectively and forever responsible for the crucifixion; for example, the notion of the Jewish dispersion as having occurred in 70 C.E. and as divine punishment for the crucifixion. This contemptuous teaching had as its corollary a system of restrictions, exclusions, humiliations and servitude (labeled by Isaac, a system of degradation). Bracketed by God for their final conversion, wretched witness “of their own iniquity and of our truth,”\textsuperscript{289} in the words of St Augustine, the Jews as a witnessing people had to become so by a visible loss of rights. Under early Christendom the rights of which Jews were deprived included the right to own Christian slaves, occupy positions of political authority or marry Christians. But these relatively benign measures would give way to more malignant ones following the call to liberate Christ’s tomb from

\textsuperscript{288} Ibid., 34.
Islam in 1095 by Pope Urban II, a call which sacralized bloodshed for the first time in Christian history and marked a watershed in Christian-Jewish relations. “The real evidence that the origin of antisemitism was abnormal,” according to Anglican priest James Parkes, “is that it took nearly a thousand years for the ordinary Christian to be convinced of the reality of the theological picture. Religious fanaticism sometimes led to violence in earlier centuries, but it was only with the beginning of the Crusades that the public, profoundly stirred by their appeal, turned upon the Jews who had for centuries been their neighbours.” In the centuries following the First Crusade, it was “…the Papacy [who] was responsible for the most fatal blows struck at Jewish life in the Middle Ages,” writes Parkes. “The Jewish badge, which exposed the Jews to insult and ill-treatment from the Christian populace; the destruction of Jewish religious books which worked havoc with their intellectual life in northern Europe; segregation in compulsory ghettos; conversational sermons which enabled fanatical priests to enter the synagogues, and compelled the Jews to listen to violent insults to their religion; all these measures decreed by the Papacy, at successive councils, as means of protecting Christians from Jewish influence and converting the Jews, or at least humiliating them as a deicide race.”

Inside la Pergola, the evolution of the manuscript for Les Oligarques and the critical comparison of the New Testament with Christian commentary were proceeding apace. In France, all was not going well for Isaac’s coreligionists. On 20 January 1942, the Nazi policy of extermination of the Jews of Europe was formalized at the Wannsee conference in Berlin. On 27 March, the first 1,112 Jews were to leave Drancy for

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291 Ibid., 74.
Auschwitz (in third class carriages – the only deportees to travel in other than freight cars).\textsuperscript{292} On 26 April 1942, Pierre Laval reassumed power as vice-president of the Council with the portfolios of Interior, Information and Foreign Affairs. In May, Xavier Vallat was replaced by notorious antisemite Darquier de Pellepoix as commissioner-general for Jewish affairs. On 4 July 1942, the Vichy cabinet acquiesced to the deportation of all foreign or stateless Jews from both zones. In Paris, on the morning of 16 July, 9,000 French police rounded up and arrested 28,000 Jewish men, women and children. Six thousand were sent to Drancy and the remainder, including 4,000 children, to Vel d’Hiv, which had a capacity of 15,000. On 2 August, Gerhard Riegner, director of the World Jewish Congress Geneva office, would be told of the Final Solution. On 26-28 August 1942, there were major roundups of foreign and stateless Jews, men, women and children, in the unoccupied zone. The arrested Jews were taken to assembly points, thence to concentration camps, thence to Drancy, thence to the death camps. “To find the proper doors to knock on, police used the censuses that Darlan had ordered,” write Paxton and Marrus, “…After the first day, the police looked for those who had prudently stayed away from home. They searched for concealed children in convents and religious boarding schools. They watched forests where fugitives tried to subsist without food or shelter. For many Jews, the game was up at month’s end when they had to renew their ration cards.”\textsuperscript{293}

Upon the German occupation of the southern zone beginning on 11 November 1942 in response to the allied invasion of North Africa, Jules and Laure departed la

\textsuperscript{292} These first deportees included the mostly foreign Jews who had been arrested in Paris in August 1941 and the mostly prominent French Jews arrested in December 1941, all arrested in German reprisals and initially interned in a prison compound at Compiegne (see Marrus and Paxton, \textit{Vichy France and the Jews}, pp. 226-27).

\textsuperscript{293} Marrus, 258.
Pergola without notice to neighbours and sought refuge in the Protestant Haute-Loire, then a haven for Jews. They arrived in Chambon-sur-Lignon, home to the courageous pastor and righteous among gentiles, André Trocmé, and also to their son, Daniel, who had begun teaching classics at Collège cévenol in 1941. From Le Chambon, Jules and Laure were temporarily housed in an abandoned farmhouse in Ladret; then relocated to a hotel room in the village of Saint-Agrève. “It was in the spring of 1943, on a table in a hotel room, that I began to write [Jésus et Israël],” recollected Isaac. The next step was to assume new identities. “On a day in November 1942, someone told me, ‘Go to near Saint-Agrève, a man has need for false identity and ration cards so he can continue to live a clandestine existence, his name is Jules Isaac,’” recounted André Chouraqui, then a rabbinical student connected to the resistance network in the Haute-Loire. “I went immediately and there, before my eyes, to my astonishment (having graduated from university), was none other than the author of the books that had been a part of my secondary curriculum. We shook hands. He seated himself at a table from which he picked up a thin cahier d’écolier, which he handed me when he learned that I was a student at the l’Ecole Rabbinique de France, that I had an interest in the Bible and that I could read Hebrew. I can see in my mind’s eye this thin cahier whose pages were covered by Jules Isaac’s script, so beautiful, so clear, so firm, so honest and so solid. He had penned a title on the cover page of this thin cahier d’écolier: ‘Chretiens: n’oubliez-”

294 At the end of December 1942, Daniel would traverse the Pyrenees into Spain, and after imprisonment of a short duration, would make his way to Algeria where he joined de Lattre de Tassigny’s 1ère Armée française as an officier de commando. He participated in the landing on the shores of Provence and in the entry at Colmar into Germany where in he was wounded in action in the Black Forest. Administrateur général de la marine for France, recipient of the Croix de Guerre, Légion d’Honneur (at the time of his death on 11 April 2005 (at the age of 98) he was Commandeur of the Légion D’Honneur.

The thoughts and reflections inside this notebook, prompted by the question of whether antisemitism might have roots in Christianity, represented the earliest stages of what would become *Jésus et Israël*. These thoughts and reflections would also influence the course of Chouraqui’s own life trajectory.

“From the beginning of 1943, I began to write *Jésus et Israël,*” wrote Isaac in later life. “With each passing day, I was more and more astonished at the depth of the Jewish roots of the gospel message and of the depth of the Christian roots of antisemitism. I had to communicate this, to all open hearts. The work proceeded slowly – work for which I was ill-equipped – until the furious storm by which my life was to be forever demolished. October 1943…We were aware that our German persecutors, together with their French acolytes, were hardboiled, maniacal, pitiless, without scruples; we had no idea, for much time to come, I did not know, did not believe to what lengths the human bestiality across the Rhine would go, to mass murder: *homo homini lupus*. Without our being aware, our lives hung by a thread; on the French side, we had no protection upon which we could rely, no support, official or unofficial; there was only the devotedness of a handful of men and women of great heart, known or unknown.”

As 1943 wore on, Saint-Agrève came to attract the attention of the Germans because of its strategic location. The village was perched on the edge of the plateau of Haut-Lignon, forming a crossroad between roads emanating from the interior and roads descending steeply into the Rhône valley. “We ought to have hidden ourselves within the deepest reaches of remote forest,”

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297 André Chouraqui was born in Ain-Temouchant, Algeria. He pursued Jewish studies at the Rabbinical School of France and philosophical studies at the Sorbonne. From 1941 to 1945, he directed the network of resistance in the Haute-Loire. From 1959 to 1963, he was personal adviser to David Ben-Gurion. In 1965, Chouraqui became deputy mayor of Jerusalem. He was a permanent member of the Universal Israelite Alliance.
lamented Isaac, “to have searched for the most inaccessible refuge. Imprudently, we did exactly the opposite…”

Jules and Laure wanted to be closer to their daughter, Juliette, who had turned forty on 3 September 1943. Juliette’s husband, Robert Boudeville, was with service central of Agence Havas, in Vichy and Clermont-Ferrand. There was a third reason for changing domiciles, personal to Jules Isaac alone. “In the spring of 1943, I had begun to write Jésus et Israël of which the first two parts were completed, but to deal with the third part, I needed material that I did not have, that I hoped could be found in the large libraries of Clermont, a university center made more important since the library of the University of Strasbourg had been transplanted there [prior to the German invasion of France],” recalled Isaac. “We asked the advice of the Boudeville, who advised that we resettle in Riom, at a good hotel there, well situated – the Grand-Hôtel nearby a large square, place Desaix - Riom: tranquil and picturesque small town...; by train a half hour from Clermont. It was rather tempting, at least for a stay of short duration.”

But Riom was situated in the department of Puy-de-Dôme, proximate to Vichy, especially dangerous geography. In early October 1943, “not without second thoughts and not without reluctance” according to Isaac, he and Laure departed Saint-Agrève for Riom. A car rented at Chambon for the purpose was the medium of transport to a train station “...was it Yssigneux, Le Puy, Grioude? My memory fails in this respect.” The drive on the open roads of German-occupied territory was made more stressful when, after 25 to 30 kilometres of travel, Laure realized that she had forgotten something in Sainte-Agrève

299 Ibid.
300 Part III of Jesus and Israel addresses the problem of Jesus and Israel in their reciprocal relations.
302 Ibid., 9.
303 Ibid.
for which she had to return. At last, upon their arrival in Riom, the Isaac checked into the Grand-Hôtel “…under false identities [M. et Mme Imbert], with false papers entirely in order,” Isaac recalled. “The proximity of our daughter Juliette filled us with joy, especially my wife, a devoted mother. We would telephone her, pay her a visit. It was a short-lived euphoria. All of a sudden, silence. A silence all the more anxiety-producing as the younger of our two sons, Jean-Claude, had also just descended from the mountains to visit the Boudeville. A visit that was not without good reason and not without danger: [Jean-Claude] was the agent de liaison to his brother-in-law Boudeville, a member of Super-Nap – noyautage des administration publiques par le centre, les administrations centrales.”  

The silence drove Laure to forget that she was in German-occupied territory. She kept trying to reach her daughter by phone, recalled Isaac,

telephone calls just of the sort that would alert and inform the Gestapo of our presence and our identity; travel to Clermont and inquiries at the domicile of our children; banging our heads against a wall, or rather throwing ourselves into the wolf’s jaws.  

The consequences proved to be not long in coming. The Gestapo came for us, the morning of [7 October 1943].

It happened that I was at the barber. As the morning was so beautiful, after my shave, I took a stroll around place Desaix, after which I returned to the hotel, and realized immediately that something was not right. Gently, the hotel manager recounted that the Gestapo had come, searched our room, taken my wife and having given up awaiting my return, had charged the manager to caution me that they would be returning for me in the late afternoon; until then, no one was permitted in the room. The blow was staggering, simultaneously numbing and surreal. For if these policemen

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304 Ibid., 9. The task of Super-Nap, a branch of the French resistance movement, was to introduce resistance agents into the highest levels of the civil service.

305 Robert Boudeville, Juliette Isaac’s husband, had not thought, or was too preoccupied with resistance matters, to provide his wife with false identity papers. Or perhaps he was not fully aware of what fate awaited his wife if she were arrested by the Germans.
wanted to arrest us, how bizzare a protocol than to make an appointment, how offhand or indifferent!

I was overwhelmed in the moment, unable to get a hold of myself, to decide whatever. Then, the thought came to my mind that I had to know whether the Gestapo had taken what remained in our room: my suitcase contained not only my clothes, but two precious manuscripts and some files— the manuscript for Les Oligarques, that pertaining to the first two parts of Jésus et Israël, notes for the writing of the third part.

By dint of my pleading and a promise not to remove anything, I secured the key to the room and the right to remain there for several minutes. I rushed over to my suitcase; they had touched nothing, these careless policemen; manuscript and files were still there. I removed them and put them in my briefcase...but I dared not take my overcoat, hanging on a hook. Of our luggage, my wife had taken only a small sac de voyage and her purse.

Then, I was thrust into the unknown, having lost my mind, not knowing what to do, where to go…I recall walking back and forth on a straight main road that must have been the road to Clermont, then I returned to town and rang at the door of the Collège, where I was given the name and address of a professor, Rodolphe Faessel, about whom I had heard as one of Baulig’s students and one whom I could trust. He was not home, but I was allowed to await his return inside…Finally, he arrived and it was a great relief to speak to someone in confidence, my true identity having been disclosed. Faessel appeared a very young man, sympathetic, deferential, empathetic and desirous of helping me to the extent he could without placing himself at risk. Since time was passing and I could not be out on the street, he drove me to a farmhouse – on the outskirts of town – where Madame Léon Blum had stayed during the trial of her husband. I was decently received and stayed two nights in Madame Léon Blum’s former lodging, where her suitcases still remained.

Through Faessel, I learnt that the Gestapo had returned, taken my suitcases and clothing, and charged the hotel manager to let me know that if I continued to evade, if I did not turn myself in at Clermont, it would be my wife and children who would suffer the consequences. Of course, I had to depart for Clermont at once and deliver myself to the authorities, but only after consulting my friend, Baulig. How naïve of me to have first taken seriously this simple-minded trick of the German authorities, and this in the autumn of 1943, when the death machine put together and overseen by Eichmann was in full swing, the gas chambers of Auschwitz,

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306 Juliette Isaac, her husband, Robert Boudeville and the younger of Juliette’s two brothers, Jean-Claude, who had been attending the resistance meeting at the home of his sister and brother-in-law, were arrested, presumably as a result of a denunciation.
Birkenau, Maidenek, Treblinka, Bergen-Belsen; but of this machine, of these atrocities, of the ‘final solution’ adopted as early as 1941, I was ignorant and I was not the only one to be so. Despite the B.B.C., ignorance was more common than was knowledge [of the death camps].

My host had given me but two nights’ accommodation and I was not informed of the Gestapo threat until the second day. Unable to depart at night for Clermont, I turned my attention to finding lodging. I was told of a modest, but suitable, hotel a little on the outskirts of [Riom]; I went straightway and got myself a room. Tormented, I was unable to sleep.  

One evening in October 1943, somewhere in Royat, a suburb of Clermont-Ferrand, Paul Léon inquired of his wife, Jeanne, “Can we house Jules Isaac the historian, all of whose family has just been arrested by the Gestapo? He arrived at the Parodi home, but they cannot accommodate him tonight, there is not enough room as they are hiding several people already.” Thus it was that Jules Isaac came to be a guest in the Léon apartment in Royat during the first weeks following the catastrophe, until the Parisot were able to find him safer accommodation. He arrived with just the clothes on his back and his briefcase. “We had to find him clothes, shoes, etc…without attracting, attention…,” remembered Jeanne Léon.

Meanwhile, all was not going well for Isaac’s wife, daughter, son and son-in-law. At 10 30 h on 28 October 1943, train 61 bound for Auschwitz and carrying 1,000 deportees departed from Bobigny Station in Drancy. The deportees included Laure Isaac, Juliette Isaac and Jean-Claude Isaac. Also included were 125 children under the age of eighteen years. Upon arrival at Auschwitz, 613 of the deportees – the number of mitzvoth in the Torah – were sent to the gas chambers. Among these 613 were Laure Isaac and

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307 Isaac, "1943, Les Heures Noires (Experience IV)," 10-11.
309 Ibid., 12.
310 Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 166.
Juliette Isaac. Only 42 survived, including Jean-Claude Isaac, who managed to escape a death march and return to France via Switzerland in May 1945. Jean-Claude survived in Auschwitz by using his mother’s artistic talents, which he had inherited, to paint portraits of German officers. His survival instincts impelled him not to complete one portrait without first having started the next. As for Robert Boudeville, he was deported to Buchenwald and then transferred to Bergen-Belsen where he perished. Incredibly, on the eve of her deportation to Auschwitz, Laure was able to compose and smuggle a final communication to her husband, a communication from which it can be inferred that on the eve of her deportation, she had no knowledge of the death camps.

My beloved,

We leave tomorrow, it's very hard, and the greatest suffering is having had no word about you since the awful day of separation. Take care of yourself for us, have confidence and finish your work that the world is awaiting. The three of us are still together the children support me though they not be near you. But soon we will find each other again, the nightmare will not last, we love you so much, patience and prudence, I entreat you, do not tread where there are risks of contagion. We will give news as soon as we can and do not know where we are going. But we must hope, we must find each other again, and we should not be discouraged. My friend, goodbye, I love you and I kiss you with all my soul. Bye for now; we are fine.

In November 1943, upon the dismantlement of the Brive resistance network, Germaine Bocquet and her husband, both ordinary Français, finding themselves betwixt and between, were staying with her elderly grandmother who had retired to a bourgeoisie farmhouse in Prault, in a remote and forgotten about corner of the Berry. “M. Pataud, the schoolteacher in the neighbouring village of Segry, asked us whether we could shelter a

312 As recounted by Jean-Claude Janet to Dominique Mazel, conservatrice en chef honoraire, Le Fonds Jules Isaac, Bibliothèque Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence.
313 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 167. In relation to this message, Jules Isaac comments, in his papers, "Une sotte modestie m'a fait effacer: 'ton oeuvre que le monde attend.'"
person whose family had been arrested and who was, himself, hunted,” recalled Bocquet. “Contact to be made in Clermont-Ferrand; the rendez-vous would take place at the home of friends. I did not hide from [Jules Isaac] the spartan conditions to which he would be subject: a farmhouse without amenities (we drew water from wells and cut firewood) and extreme isolation. [Jules Isaac] was keen nonetheless and about to give me his name, which I considered irrelevant information; the status of being hunted was sufficient. But he insisted. ‘Did you pursue secondary studies?’ he asked me. I nodded. ‘What was your manuel d’histoire?’ ‘Malet et Isaac,’ I replied. ‘Well, I’m Jules Isaac.’”

Thus did the Bocquet acquire an “uncle,” M. Jean Breton, retiree, born in Valenciennes, a town with which Isaac was familiar having spent part of his childhood there, and from whence hailed an in-law of Bocquet. She returned to the Berry to await Isaac’s arrival in Issoudun. From Issoudun, they made their way ten or so kilometers to the farmhouse in Prault. There was not a single habitation within two to three kilometres of the farmhouse. “Jules Isaac insisted that I disclose his identity [to my grandmother],” remembered Bocquet. “The prospect of offering no more than mediocre living conditions to ‘Monsieur l’Inspecteur général’ filled my grandmother, a retired village schoolteacher, with embarrassment. But she was quickly put at ease by the simplicity of her guest who volunteered with good humour to participate in the menial household tasks…There were few contacts with the outside world. My husband, engaged by then with the BCRA, made but one or two visits in between missions. From time to time, a schoolteacher

315 The Bureau Central de Renseignements et d’Action (Central Bureau of Intelligence and Operations), referred to by the acronym BCRA, as the forerunner of the French Intelligence Service. The BCRA was established by the Free French chief-of-staff in 1940 and it was commanded by Major André Dewavrin, who took the nom de guerre, “Colonel Passy.”
friend would bring us mail, a clandestine newspaper, news heard on the BBC that we were unable to make out from the sputtering of our old radio set, all of which would give us an echo of the outside world.”

It was in the winter of 1943-1944, in a bourgeoise farmhouse in a remote corner of the Berry, in the company of Germaine Bocquet and her grandmother, that Isaac, bereft of his wife and children, began to write Part III (which addresses the problem of Jesus and Israel in their reciprocal relations) of Jésus et Israël. The required sources were procured by Bocquet in the library of the Sacré Coeur of Issoudun with the assistance of Fr. Klein, who would bring certain books at his own initiative. Isaac’s discovery of a contemptuous Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism, which overreached the bounds of scriptural and historical accuracy, did not square with what Bocquet had learned in her catechism – that the Jews had given the world the prophets, the virgin Mary, the Christ and the apostles; that the Jews were the people of the covenant and the promise, that Jesus had been entirely observant of the law that he had come not to abolish, but to fulfill, that it was not the Jews, but humanity’s sins that had crucified Jesus, which his passion and death had redeemed. Isaac “listened [to all of this] with great attention and empathy, but not without some skepticism,” according to Bocquet. “All was made clear when he learnt that the instruction I had received had been given by a friend of [progressive Catholic philosopher] Maritain…Jules Isaac made me read certain texts [about Jews and Judaism] that he had assembled, horrible in their virulence, written by theologians - Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox – and I discovered to my astonishment to what extent this commentary on the Scriptures tended to arouse and create a climate of misapprehension, nay hatred, toward the Jewish people….From then on, the urgency and

316 Bocquet: 13.
importance of the task which he had assigned himself and which could not but improve and purify our faith became evident to me."\(^{317}\)

One night in the spring of 1944, Bocquet, her grandmother and Isaac were awakened by loud knocking on the front door of the farmhouse. “Lights could be seen at the edge of the forest. We did not budge, in conformity with the intention to give the impression that the house was deserted,” recalled Bocquet. “Again, loud knocks. The lights receded. We never found out who was behind the attempt to gain entry that night, but by the dawn, a decision had been taken to changes residences. Jules Isaac contemplated taking flight to London. The resistance member in charge of liaisons with England, and with whom my husband made contact, replying ‘There are enough Jews in London,’ refused to assume the task. Compelled to find another solution, we called upon a sister-in-law, then living in Levroux, a small town filled with refugees, and she was able to find, not without difficulty, for our ‘uncle’ a back room in somewhat more comfortable lodging. My husband and I installed ourselves on the village outskirts in the home of two elderly women."\(^{318}\)

It was in Levroux that Isaac would complete Part III of his *Jésus et Israël* “… [the part] in which exegesis played the largest role,” wrote Isaac. “I was most happy to have had at my disposition, thanks to the generosity of my friend, Gustave Monod, the four classic *Commentaires* of Père Lagrange; these were the solid foundation upon which I was able to construct my work."\(^{319}\)

Continued Bocquet,

Adopted by relatives and friends who saw a close resemblance with [Isaac’s] ‘nephews’…life became somewhat less spartan than it had been

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317 Ibid., 13-14.
318 Ibid., 14.
at Prault….For lunch and dinner, we were en famille at my mother-in-law’s; afternoons, [Isaac] would take me for long walks. He was indefatigable; confiding about this and that, he would speak about his activism in Péguy’s compagnonnage, the Dreyfus affair, the Great War, the responsibilities of a historian, of science….Invariably, we would return to the subject of religious teaching regarding Israel, and the walk would often end with [Isaac’s] invitation, ‘Come, you have to read the commentary of [such and such a commentator],’ or with generosity of spirit, after having read to me the most recently written pages of his manuscript, ‘Does this not offend your Christian conscience? Have I been too heavy-handed? .... Sundays, we would gather in his room to hear him read the classical poets, and especially, especially his dear Péguy.

Then came 6 June [1944], the [Normandy] landings, a day of hope. A restless waiting took hold of us making focus difficult….We followed the advance of the allies day by day on a map pinned to the wall. The summer came and went. On 25 August Paris was liberated. Our day [of liberation] would be 28 August….Alas, our liberation would be shortlived. The quiet of the afternoon of 30 August would be broken by the marching of boots, the rolling of tanks, distant explosions. German troops in retreat passing through the village (elements of the ‘Das Reich’ division, we would later learn). Jules Isaac had left half-open the door and was on one knee endeavouring to ascertain the significance of the troops that were passing no more than 100 metres away. I was standing next to him. Suddenly, I noticed two SS officers emerging from the countryside behind us. As calmly as I was able, I said ‘Uncle, get up and go hide.’ He turned, saw the soldiers and entered the house. They also saw him rise from his kneeling position and shouted, ‘Maquis, maquis!’ In the moment, things suddenly fell into place. To turn my back would be risking the worst. I had to advance toward them, which is what I did. They grabbed me and took me into the house. One of them held me against the wall while the other – inexplicably, providentially – opted to walk around and enter by the front door rather than by the back door [to Isaac’s room]. The soldier pinning me was called by his companion. I had very little time to lunge into the house, say, ‘Uncle, save yourself; make a dash for the woods, quickly,’ then return to where [the German soldier] had left me before the two were returning, pushing ahead our two elderly owners. As they rounded the corner of the house, I caught the shadow [of Isaac] disappearing into the woods. [The Germans] saw nothing. They entered the house, this time through the back door leading into the room where Isaac had just been hiding, found no one but my sister-in-law whom they gathered up together with us. (They had not entered – God save us – the room where the children were sleeping). Again, expressions ‘Maquis, Kaput;’ the little German I knew came to me: ‘Nein, nur Frauen, nur Frauen.’”

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^320 Bocquet: 14.
Their aggression abated. They re-entered the house. We waited our hearts beating. They left again, this time with my bicycle, on which they both perched and then left! They departed! As soon as they were out of sight, we dashed into the countryside to wait until the German troops had passed through. The last retreating soldier having disappeared from view, I hurried back, only to encounter Jules Isaac rushing from the neighbouring house. Without these neighbours – a blessing unto them - who had strenuously prevented Isaac from rejoining us to explain, the outcome might have been different. A few days later, the route to Paris was free. Jules Isaac, restless, was unable to wait any longer and intended on the first opportunity to reach Paris. He told us shortly afterward that he had learned that his elder son [Daniel] was in England, but it would be several months before Isaac would learn by telegram that his younger son [Jean-Claude] was the only family member who had escaped from the camps.

After the war ended, Germaine Bocquet’s career would require that she and her husband live outside of France. But they would return almost every summer and each time, pay Isaac a visit at his home in Aix. “His legacy to us, his love of truth, the force of his character, his invincible hope, his loyal friendship,” said Bocquet, “will forever remain etched in our hearts. We thank God for having blessed us with the chance to have lived – for however short a time – with a Just.”

Upon his return to Paris, Isaac was restored by de Gaulle to his pre-war function of Inspecteur général de l’Instruction publique for France. “…[B]y the autumn of 1944,” he recalled, “I was joyfully reunited with my elder son [Daniel], a commando officer in de Lattre’s army.” But the fate of his wife, Laure, daughter Juliette and her husband Robert Boudeville, and of Jean-Claude, Isaac’s youngest, was still unknown. Isaac retired from public service on 14 October 1944, a retirement made retroactive to 18 November 1942, his sixty-fifth birthday. Formally, he would remain Inspecteur général de

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321 Perhaps convalescing, after having been wounded in the Black Forest
322 Bocquet: 15-16.
323 Ibid., 16.
l’Instruction publique until 30 September 1945; thereafter, he would be Inspecteur général honoraire. 325 “So enduring were my illusions,” remembered Isaac, “that in May 1945 when Germany surrendered, I had not lost all hope, continuing to anxiously scrutinize the lists of returnees posted at l’hôtel Lutetia. At last, of the four of mine who had been deported, one, the youngest, my younger son [Jean-Claude], returned, the only one, and by what miraculous good fortune, after Auschwitz and Dora, a deportee who survived; it was pure miracle. It was then, only then, but not through [Jean-Claude], that I learnt the truth about Auschwitz, the monstrous truth.” 326

Isaac was demolished. “[The news] reduced me to a living dead man, in a dazed state, petrified within life’s warm current. To snap out of it or to succumb, there was no other alternative.” 327 But his wife’s last words to him continued to echo in his mind: Take care of yourself for us, have confidence and finish your work that the world is awaiting. “I attended to [this sacred task] desperately, with all my diminishing energy stretched to the extreme:” recalled Isaac. “...a real race against the clock, for illness coupled with despair was biting at my heels. In my aixoise retreat, a precious helpmate [Dr. Marie-Françoise Payré] most particularly allowed me to complete [the manuscript] of Jésus et Israël.” 328 As 1946 began, in a short note to close friends scribbled on 2 January 1946, Isaac wrote, “Know this, and rejoice with our wonderful friend in God, Marie-Françoise Payré: tonight, I got up, by command, I knelt, I prayed - I could pray! I cried; I was born again. But I know I still have far to go.” 329 Marie-Françoise Payré was a medical doctor

325 In France, the "honoraire" is not descriptive, but is part of the title of a retired Inspecteur-général.
327 Ibid., 229.
328 Ibid.
329 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 248.
in Aix whom Jules and Laure had first come to know, along with her husband, also a medical doctor, in 1941-1942. By the war’s end, Payré was a widow, Isaac a widower. She would become his physician and helmpmate. Was it irony or premonition that had led Laure Isaac to remark to her son, Jean-Claude, when they were living in Aix that Marie-Françoise Payré wore too much lipstick? Isaac retreated to “…his dear Pergola where the hours silently flow, where the visible and the invisible ever coalesce,” in his words, “where distractions are rare, where my only neighbours are meadows and the familiar mother goat with her two leaping children, this very dear Pergola enclosed in its cypress hedges…” It was here, at la Pergola, that he settled in to see to completion his sacred mission of fighting for a wounded Israel, for brotherhood against hatred, by immersing himself in the writing of Part IV (which addresses the Christian accusation of deicide), the final part, of that for which the world was waiting.

330 As recounted to the author by Dominique Mazel, conservatrice en chef honoraire, responsable scientifique des archives Jules Isaac.
CHAPTER FOUR

SCRIPTURAL TRUTH

It was February 1946. Eighteen months had elapsed since the liberation of Paris, twelve months since the liberation of Auschwitz; nine months since the military act of surrender had been signed on behalf of the Nazi armed forces in Reims and in Berlin. The scale of the crime that had been perpetrated upon European Jewry by the Nazis was only beginning to emerge. The first-ever international conference of Christians and Jews, organized with the express purpose of discussing (as the report of the conference would put it) “…their mutual responsibilities and the possibilities of joint action in relation to human welfare and order on the basis of their common convictions and with proper regard for differences of faith and practice,” had yet to take place. It was to be held at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford from 30 July to 6 August 1946 under the joint auspices of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (established in 1928 to denounce the anti-Catholic activities of the Klu Klux Klan in opposing Catholic Al Smith’s candidacy for president of the United States) and the British Council of Christians and Jews (founded in 1942 by Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Joseph H. Hertz, and William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury). Christian and Jewish members of such joint bodies as were then known to exist or to be in the process of formation were invited to attend in their personal, not officially representative, capacities, one hundred and fifty in total. “Of all the various group tensions,” stated one of the conference commission reports, “that known as anti-Semitism concerns the whole world and calls for special treatment. Recent history shows that an attack on Jewry is an attack on the fundamental principles of

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Judaism and Christianity on which our ordered human society depends. Accordingly it is advisable to deal with anti-Semitism as a special case requiring special treatment, though suggestions for dealing with anti-Semitism may be applicable to other types of group tensions.\textsuperscript{333} The fruit of the conference was the establishment of an International Council of Christians and Jews, headquartered at 10 rue de la Madeleine in Geneva, with an executive committee of which the presidents in 1946-47 were Professor Henry Noble Mac Cracken of New York and Neville Laski, K.C. (brother of the then chair of the British labour party).

It was February 1946. While browsing in a bookstore in Aix, Isaac’s attention was caught by the recently-published 17\textsuperscript{th} edition of \textit{Jésus en son temps}, authored by Henri Daniel-Rops, a Catholic destined for the \textit{Académie Française} and the order of the Grand Cross of Saint Gregory by Pope Pius XII. “Until then,” Isaac was later to recall, “we had had cordial relations which had become frayed further to a meeting of l’Union pour la Vérité where it had seemed to me Péguy had been the object of unjustifiable calumny, and I had come to his defense.”\textsuperscript{334} Upon learning that Isaac’s wife, daughter and son-in-law had perished in the death camps, Daniel-Rops had sent not one, but two, handwritten condolence notes, the first dated 22 September 1945 and the second, 19 October 1945, both expressing profound sadness over Isaac’s “grave loss.”\textsuperscript{335} But now, in 1946, Isaac’s eyes fell upon Daniel-Rops’ commentary on Matthew 27:25: “Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be upon us and upon our children!'”\textsuperscript{336} Isaac’s heart skipped a beat

\textsuperscript{335} Quoted in Kaspi, \textit{Jules Isaac}, 186.  
\textsuperscript{336} Jakob Jocz, quoted at page 69 of Gregory Baum's \textit{The Jews and the Gospel} (London: Bloomsbury, 1961), is cited as representative of the better understanding of this verse: in his, \textit{The Jewish People and}
as he read, “Perhaps it was necessary for Israel to kill their God, whom they failed to recognize; but since blood mysteriously invokes blood, does it not perhaps belong to the charity of Christians to let the horrors of pogroms compensate, in the hidden balance of the divine intention, for the unbearable horrors of the crucifixion?” In implying that the murder of six million Jews might be continuing divine retribution for the crucifixion, Daniel-Rops was drawing upon a Christian tradition dating, if not to the first three centuries, to the next succeeding fifteen, a tradition that “…is not easy to find… in the Church’s official documents,” according to Gregory Baum. “Since this [tradition] was not a contested teaching, there was no need for the official Church to deal with it.” The time had come to contest it. Isaac returned home and penned a first draft of a letter to Daniel-Rops. On the night of Easter Sunday, he wrote a second draft which was mailed. In the closing paragraph, Isaac drew upon the thoughts of his dearest, departed friend, Charles Péguy, thoughts echoed in Part IV of his yet-to-be-published manuscript of Jésus et Israël.

How can I explain what I felt in reading such turns of phrases, sagely balanced, perfidious in their form, deliberately abstruse! I find in them a sacrilegious stench. They express I don’t know what secret satisfaction, and a most odious perception of divine justice. Do you really think this God, one with Jesus, the God not only of justice, but also of love and mercy, would refuse to grant the wish of his Son: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’, but instead choose to grant the wish of Jesus Christ, Jocz writes, “The behaviour of the crowd before Pilate was by no means vox populi in any sense. The gospels make it clear that the crowd demanding the death of Jesus was the priests’ crowd…Are we to regard (this crowd) as more representative (of the Jewish people) than the thousands of believers who joined the Church?” (p.3). In his l'Enseignement du mépris (Fasquelle, 1962), Isaac wrote, ”[Matt 27:25], which has caused so much grief, which has been exploited against the Jewish people for so many centuries by so many Christian writers, is unique to the gospel of Matthew, is more in line with the apocryphal gospels, and is unhistorical (Jésus et Israël, pp. 457-515, p. 489 especially). It is intended to discharge the Roman authority from all liability for the crucifixion and to impute the liability for all time to the Jewish authorities and the Jewish people in its entirety (p. 141, n. 1).”

339 Correspondence with the author dated 19 January 2015.
the ‘Jewish rabble’: ‘His blood be upon us and upon our children!’, as if this wasn’t the same God who, six hundred years earlier, had spoken to his people through the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel: ‘The son will not bear the iniquity of the father and the father will not bear the iniquity of the son…I will judge each according to his ways, house of Israel…”

Do you not see that you are repeating Pontius Pilate’s gesture, and that according to the psalmist’s formula, you are ‘keeping your hands clean from guilt’, from the guilt associated with the millions of Jewish martyrs, murdered at Auschwitz and other places of horror, fraternally united with the millions of Christian martyrs.

I don't hold Christianity responsible, far from it, but you, a certain Christian pharisism that you do not have the courage to repudiate, you who are perpetuating a murderous tradition, yes murderous, I will tell you straight up: it leads to Auschwitz. You speak of Jewish responsibilities; the time has come to speak of Christian responsibilities, or that of pseudo-christians. The truth is that the Christian faith does not demand this inhuman doctrine, this barbaric conception of divine justice, this negation of the universal fruits of the mystery of the Cross and of Redemption...Jesus’s foes in Palestine were the very same encountered in all other countries, in all other times, the same always, amongst all peoples: the leaders, the illustrious, the ‘respectable.’ The Jewish people are nothing but a metaphor, a metaphor for humanity in its entirety. Péguy, this Péguy who you apparently as little understood as you do the Gospels, Péguy said, ‘It is not the Jews who crucified Jesus Christ, but the sins of all of us; the Jews, who were but the instrument, participate like others in the font of salvation.’

This is how a true Christian speaks. It was Péguy who brought us together. It is Péguy who today splits us apart.

Aix-en-Provence
Easter Sunday, 21 April 1946.340

Isaac waited for a reply but none was forthcoming. He decided to publish his letter to Daniel-Rops, “…not out of animosity toward Daniel-Rops…,” Isaac would later explain, “but for two main reasons: the first was the risk that the resounding success of [the 17th edition of Jésus en son temps] would affect and intoxicate its readers by the tens, by the hundreds, by the thousands; the second was the nature of my critique which showed the

work of reducing to a soft mass, of deforming, of a tendentious selection of scriptural passages, trends in Christian literature – Daniel-Rops did not have a monopoly.”

On 4 May 1946, Isaac departed Aix for Paris to persuade a review to publish his letter and to complete the research for *Jésus et Israël*. On the evening of 7 May, he met with Vercors (writer Jean Bruller) who was entirely supportive of Isaac’s point of view. “My piece on D. Rops is with *Esprit,*” wrote Isaac on 9 May. “If it does not pass muster, as I hope it will, my default will be to give it to *Europe*. Vercors, whom I have seen again, is turning his mind to this very supportively….”

*Esprit* editor Emmanuel Mounier vetoed the publication of Isaac’s letter; *Europe* editor Jean Cassou, to his credit, agreed to publish it. Isaac’s letter to Daniel-Rops appeared in the 1 July 1946 issue of *Europe* under the title, “Comment on écrit l’Histoire (sainte).” French readers were astonished. Was this the same Jules Isaac whose *manuels d’histoire* they had used as secondary students, the same who had served as Inspector-General of public education under Leon Blum’s government? Further to Isaac’s denunciation, Daniel-Rops modified the next succeeding edition of his *Jésus en son temps*, but without noting the fact (an omission that prompted Isaac to publicize the correction in the 1 December 1947 issue of *Europe*).

“Without addressing the unsolvable question of the responsibility of a people for the acts of its leaders,” wrote Daniel-Rops, “a Christian cannot help but wonder if, in this drama, Israel,

341 Ibid., 140.
343 In an interview with *L'Arche* in October 1963, one month after the death of Jules Isaac, Daniel-Rops paid tribute to “the memory of the great Jewish historian … For Jules Isaac will go down as one of the most moving authors, among the witnesses, one of the most persuaded of the friendship between the Jews and the Christians. One might, on certain points, disagree with him; one could consider that certain Christian positions seemed to him to be closed, which led him to judge with a severity that was not always equitable: one never doubted for a moment the sincerity and the generosity of spirit that he invested in conducting that which he took to be an apostolate: the establishment between Jews and Christians of a climate of truth and of charity.” Kaspi, as quoted at 188.
as a metaphor once again for all humanity, was not expressing the refusal of sinful man to the news of Salvation, and [a Christian cannot help but wonder] if… Péguy was not correct when he wrote, ‘It is not the Jews who crucified Christ, but the sins of all of us.’”

Isaac’s letter to Daniel-Rops became the talk of French Catholic circles. “[Stanislas Fumet] informs me that the note in Europe had made a noise and that it was much talked about,” wrote Isaac on 29 September 1946. “P. de Menasce had read it, and even as far as the first paragraph is concerned, found nothing inconsistent with Catholic faith…Fumet is convinced that they will not be able to suppress [the publication of] my book and that it will have reverberations.”

The piece provoked many to write supportive letters to someone they knew only by reputation. In response to one such letter, from Jacques Madaule, Isaac replied on 344 Cited in Isaac, L'enseignement du mépris, 142.

345 It was at Christmas 1940 in Lyon that Stanislas Fumet, then editor of Temps présent, together with Louis Terrenoire of L'Aube, launched the weekly, Temps nouveau, whose object it was to defend the Christian position as confronted by nazism and the influence of l'Action française. During France's occupation by the Germans, Lyon became the locus of French resistance. The city was the largest in the southern (until November 1942, unoccupied) zone. It was also peopled by progressive Catholics. At the turn of the century, Lyon had boasted more Catholic Dreyfusards than any other city in France. Temps Nouveau was shut down by Darlan on 15 August 1941. In 1945, Fumet published an article in Bulletin du service central des déportés israélites entitled, "Les innocents à l'abattoir" in which he denounced "...Pétain's crime, a crime of omission, and the silence kept about the deportations en masse of foreign Jews who had arrived in France seeking refuge from the Hitlerian menace." "It is breathtaking," continued Fumet, "that the Church did not rend its garments amidst wailing, and that it did not do public penance after having learned what happened at Auschwitz where God's image was embezzled, covered in refuse and spittle, molested and defigured. For in the last analysis, I listened attentively during the occupation and heard nothing. With few exceptions, Pétain had buttoned the lips of our highest clergy.”

346 At pp.129-30 of Les relations entre les Juifs et les Catholiques dans la France de l'après-guerre (Parole et Silence, 2009), Paule Berger Marx writes, “The père Calliste Lopinot would resign and be replaced in the chair of [Seelisberg] commission [III] by Jean de Menasce. The père Démann is down on record to this effect [cf. Sens, 1998 n° 10]. After giving effect to the change, the commission would be presided over by its vice-president.”


348 Jacques Madaule, born on 11 October 1898 in Castelnaudary (Aude), historian by formation, essayist by vocation, published at least 30 works. His literary critique of Claudel confirmed Madaule in a disciplined, but progressive, catholicism. Agrégé d'histoire et de géographie, he began his teaching career at Bizerte, then two years at l'Ecole française in Rome and in 1935, was appointed to the lycée Michelet at Vanves. A member of the MRP, he worked with Francisque Gay when the latter served as président du Conseil (1945-46) and was mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux from 1949 to 1953. Madaule succeeded Henri Marrou as president of l'Amitié judéo-chrétienne de France.
29 August, “The support of Catholics, you, Maurice Blondel, Père de Lubac and Père Bonsirven,\textsuperscript{349} are for me the most precious of encouragements. This note to [Daniel Rops] is but a skirmish and it is my hope that the debate will evolve on better foundations when I shall have completed the manuscript for, and published, \textit{Jésus et Israël} – without doubt some time next winter. I intend on travelling to Paris and would be delighted to see you again, not only to erase the memory of the inspection, of so little importance!”\textsuperscript{350} To what inspection was Isaac referring? In the spring of 1938, Madaule had been teaching history at \textit{lycée Michelet} in Vanves. “I had the honour of being inspected... I can’t quite recall the subject-matter of my lesson on that day. What I do recall,” remembered Madaule, “…is that taking no account of the inspector general’s presence, I picked up my lecture where I had left off in the previous class and so the lecture pertained to two quite different subject-matters. I finished dealing with the first and then began treating the second. This did not at all please Jules Isaac and he made known to me his displeasure at the end of class.”\textsuperscript{351}

\textsuperscript{349}P. Henri de Lubac was one of three Jesuit theologians who, together with P. Pierre Chaillet and P. Gaston Fessard, expressed the outraged Christian conscience through the medium of \textit{Les Cahiers du Témoignage chrétien}, fifteen issues in total of which were clandestinely published between November 1941 and July 1944. Jesuit theologian P. Joseph Bonsirven was a pioneer regarding Catholic-Jewish rapprochement in France. As early as 1927, in \textit{Les Études}, Bonsirven began a chronique juives. In 1938, Bonsirven published through Grasset an essay titled, "Sur les ruines du Temple" in the Maurice Brillant-edited book, \textit{La vie chrétienne}. In this essay, Bonsirven cautioned his Christian readers that the riches of Judaism were "...encased in a messianism gone astray and a narrow particularism," these observations were made with "a sadness, a respect and an empathy for the custodians of these inestimable riches." (quoted in Pierre Pierrard, \textit{Juifs et catholiques français, d’Edouard Drumont à Jacob Kaplan 1886-1994} (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 266). Although a progressive among French Catholics, Bonsirven, like Maritain, believed in mission to the Jews as elaborated in \textit{Juifs et Chrétiens}, published in 1938. As anti-Jewish rhetoric in France was ramping up, from 10 February 1938 to 26 May 1938, P. Bonsirven inaugurated a series of public lectures Thursday nights on Judaism at the l'Institut catholique de Paris.


“This morning, I shall try to make presentable for Albin Michel my manuscript [for Jésus et Israël];” Isaac wrote on 30 September 1946. “I am anxious. Having reread the first few pages, I am of a mind to start all over again for a third time.” On 2 October, he wrote, “Late afternoon yesterday, visit of Raymond Lindon, always supportive. He is going to send my article [in *Europe*] to Aimé Pallière, and do all he can to expand its audience.” In November, Isaac returned to Aix-en-Provence and threw himself into the revision of the book manuscript with such abandon that he fell gravely ill and was forced to suspend work. After two months of convalescence, he had recovered sufficiently to complete the task and on 28 February 1947, he delivered the book manuscript to his publisher, Albin Michel. “I had a long, cordial and frank conversation with Sabatier [of Albin Michel],” wrote Isaac on the following day. “He is still eager to publish me and denies seeking a way out, but says he is overwhelmed by difficulties of all kinds, his heavy publishing schedule, and also by not being able to assuage my impatience.” Isaac’s suspicion that Sabatier might be seeking a way out of having to publish *Jésus et Israël* called to mind Mounier’s reluctance to publish in *Esprit* Isaac’s letter to Daniel-Rops. While awaiting surgery, which was scheduled for 29 March

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353 Aimé Pallière (1875-1949), wishing to learn more about Judaism than could teach Lyon-based abbé Augustin Lémann, and scandalized by the suggestion of Dominican priest P. Henri, who regretted that all the Jews had not been burnt at the inquisition stake, made himself a pupil of the grand rabbi of Livorno, Eli Benamozegh, whose last work, *Israël et l’humanité* (Paris: Albin Michel/reprint 1961) was published posthumously by Pallière. The principal thesis of *Israël et l’humanité* has been adumbrated thus: Judaism addresses two messages to two constituencies - one a universalist message to all of humanity, the other a particularist message to the Jewish people. The universal message is comprised of the Noachide laws; the particularist in the mizvot by which Jews are bound. Since Noachism is a universalist revelation, there is no need for another. Pallière was greatly influenced by Benamozegh and at the age of twenty-five, “converted” to Judaism and thereafter devoted his life to correct the misapprehension of his fellow Catholics that Judaism was but a nationalist, ethnic religion. See Pallière’s *The Unknown Sanctuary: A Pilgrimmage from Rome to Israel*, trans. L. W. Wise (New York: Bloch, 1930/reprint 1985) with pref. by David Novak.
355 Ibid.
1947, Isaac stayed with son Daniel and daughter-in-law Juliette at 30 rue de Calvaire, in the Saint-Cloud suburb of Paris. There, he would receive a regular stream of notables who were intent on lending him their support. On 8 March, he had a “…warm, moving and penetrating” meeting with Catholic Jacques Madaule. “We were in agreement on on many issues,” Isaac noted, “most notably that there cannot be a religious life without a persistent effort to renovate and purify.” Madaule undertook to introduce Isaac into certain Catholic circles, such as *Union Catholique Universitaire*. “Today, I met with [Protestant] Jacques Martin (of *Christianisme social*) and P. Gerome, but of most interest,” noted Isaac in correspondence of 10 March, “is a letter that I just received from Samy Lattès, (secretary of the Centre d’information Israélite) who asked me whether I would participate, with Edmond Fleg, and certain Catholic personalities, in a *comité d’études* preliminary to a reform of Catholic religious education, which in France is within the jurisdiction not of the Vatican, but the French episcopate. The initiative appeared to be very serious and of course, I accepted. L’abbé Vieillard, secretary of the French episcopate, seems to be favourably inclined. This [initiative] is precisely what I have in mind.”

On 15 March, a letter arrived from Dr. Pierre Visseur, who had read Isaac’s note in *Europe*. Geneva-based Visseur, European director of the International Council of

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356 Ibid.
357 Edmond Fleg (Flegenheimer) was born in 1874 in Geneva. His mother and paternal grandparents were Alsatian Jews. Fleg attended lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris and received his agrégation in German from Ecole Normale Superieure. Rather than teach, he became a playwright, poet and author. Fleg was in attendance at the Third Zionist Congress in Basel in 1899 and in 1917 joined the Ligue des Amis du Sionisme. During the interwar years, in 1934, he became president of the Eclaireurs Israélites de France which played a significant resistance role during World War II. Fleg, together with Jules Isaac, Jean Daniélou, Henri Marrou and Samy Lattès, was an original participant in the réunions à cinq, the first meeting of which was held 4 May 1947 and whose object it was to purify Christian teaching of its anti-Jewish rhetoric. Fleg passed away in the same year as did Isaac - 1963.
358 Payré, 136.
Christians and Jews (ICCJ), requested Isaac to contribute material for an International Emergency Congress on antisemitism to take place in the Swiss village of Seelisberg from July 30 to August 5 1947.\textsuperscript{359} The initiative for this conference, a follow-up to that which had taken place in Oxford the previous summer, was primarily British and American. Participants included eminent members of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities who by virtue of their experience, credentials and authority, would be capable of contributing in a substantive manner to the themes of the conference. On 18 March, Isaac received a visit from Samy Lattès and Edmond Fleg, both of whom pledged their support for the important work on which Isaac was embarking. On 19 March, they returned with Catholics Abbé Vieillard and Henri Marrou.\textsuperscript{360} With the approach of his hospitalization and surgery, Isaac was at peace. “I have been greatly blessed to have been able to complete my book, assure its publication and begin a battle that should bear fruit,” he wrote on 20 March 1947. “I take great comfort from all this. It allows me to contemplate life and death with greater peace of mind.”\textsuperscript{361}

Following his surgery, Isaac returned to Saint-Cloud to convalesce on 14 April 1947. “The departure from the hospital Monday was like an escape,” he wrote. “It was a marvellous ride through Paris and the Bois in the radiant sunlight of spring. It was so beautiful, so impressionable, so miraculous, there was such an outpouring of memories, that I was moved to tears.”\textsuperscript{362} On 15 April, he received a visit from Visseur. The purpose of the visit was twofold: to personally invite Isaac to participate in the Seelisberg

\textsuperscript{359} William W. Simpson, OBE, MA was to serve as the other executive secretary. In 1938, Rev. Simpson became the first secretary of the newly-established Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe. In 1942, he was appointed as the first secretary of the British Council of Christians and Jews, a post which he held for more than 30 years.

\textsuperscript{360} From 1945, Henri Irénée Marrou had held the chair of "histoire ancienne du Christianisme" at the Sorbonne.

\textsuperscript{361} Isaac, "Corrépondance inédite de Jules Isaac: Extraits de lettres à son médecin (1946-1948)," 5.

\textsuperscript{362} Ibid.
conference and to invite him to create a French affiliate of the ICCJ. While Isaac’s impressions of Visseur were not entirely complimentary, he accepted in principle and undertook to follow up in June with a report that could be translated into English and be distributed to the majority of English-speaking conference participants. Visseur, for his part, undertook to do what he could to persuade the director of Albin Michel to fast-track the publication of *Jésus et Israël*. The manuscript of this work would be made available to Seelisberg Conference participants. During a visit on 20 April from Samy Lattès, Isaac showed him the 4 April 1947 issue of *Témoignage Chrétien* in which an entire page had been devoted to reproducing the foul writings of historian Henri Guillemin. Isaac asked Lattès to bring to the attention of *Témoignage Chrétien*’s Père Chaillet “…the sacrilegious and odious nature of these literary exercises that respect neither history nor scripture;” in Isaac’s words. “A traditional mentality among Catholics that they don’t even realize: their eyes must be opened.” Seven days later, Isaac wrote “We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated by the massive (Catholic traditional) consensus confronting us. We shall breach it provided we are united, resolved and decisive.”

On Sunday, 4 May 1947, the first of the *réunions à cinq* took place. Jesuit priest and *Les Études* editor Jean Daniélou (whose father, a minister of the navy, was known to Isaac), stood in for P. Chaillet, who was to depart for America later that month and

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363 In correspondence dated 11 February 1949 to Maurice Vanikoff, Isaac referred to Visseur's "chatter having no great import" and in correspondence dated 21 February 1948 to Fadiey Lovsky, "Let's leave the bla-bla-bla to Visseur."
364 Rutishauser: 43.
365 Lyon-based Jesuit theologian P. Pierre Chaillet (1900-1972), with fellow Jesuit theologians P. Gaston Fessard and Stanislas Fumet, launched the clandestine review *Les Cahiers du Témoignages Chrétiens* in 1941. With Pastor Roland de Pury, P. Chaillet founded l’Amitié chrétienne whose object it was to save Jews. In August 1942, P. Chaillet saved the children of Vénissieux and was named a Righteous among the Gentiles in 1999.
367 Ibid.
distracted with other responsibilities. The *cinq* consisted of Isaac, Daniélou, Henri Marrou, Edmond Fleg and Samy Lattès. “I had drawn up a number of exact propositions that were approved and would serve as a basis for the final versions to be transmitted to Abbé Vieillard and thence to the French episcopate,” wrote Isaac on 5 May 1947 to his physician, Marie-Françoise Payré. “Next meeting at Saint-Cloud on 14 [May]. It is difficult to schedule these *réunions à cinq*. So we shall try to complete it all at the next meeting (I had contemplated two further meetings: one dealing with *Jésus et Israël*, the other with the decide myth). It is going to be a delicate task to draw up on these two subject-matters a new series of precise demands, framed in a manner to be accepted on the Catholic side. Protestant friends of Daniel [Isaac’s elder son] brought me the issue of *Foi et Vie* about which you had spoken. This issue is on the whole excellent and prior to my departure, I must make contact with professor Lovsky.” Protestant Lovsky had been tasked by Pastor Charles Westphal with editing a first *Cahier d’Études juives* issue of *Foi et Vie*. “My [residential] address appeared [in this issue],” recalled Lovsky. “Now, Jules Isaac had a son who was Protestant [Daniel]. He showed the issue to his father who invited me to come and visit him at Saint-Cloud.” The invitation was by letter.

30, rue du Calvaire, St. Cloud (S. et O)

4 May 1947

Monsieur le Professeur,

I have just read issue no. 3 of *Foi et Vie*, the first *cahier d’études juives*. Allow me to thank you for your objective and sympathetic piece devoted to my debate with Daniel-Rops and to congratulate you for the whole of the

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368 Ibid., 7.
cahier, as you were charged in particular with this work. I find in it the resonance that I was hoping for.

As our respective activities are directed to the same end, it would be most pleasurable – and certainly profitable to chat with you. Alas, I contemplate returning to my domicile at Aix-en-Provence in eight days, at the end of a convalescence (following surgery) that required a long rest. I venture out as little as possible and would not have the audacity to ask you to come to see me at Saint-Cloud. Perhaps by telephone we could try to schedule a rendez-vous.

With utmost respect, Monsieur le professeur,

Jules Isaac
Inspecteur-général honoraire de l’instruction publique

“But we cannot expect decisive results from meetings such as last Sunday’s,” Isaac wrote on 8 May. “We must have high hopes and few illusions: it is not I who shall cure the Christian world of this antisemitic leprosy. I am not of the sort, I have too much awarenesss of my unworthiness and inadequacies; it is true, I have faith in God’s help (I say it not without trembling), but the evil is so profound, so old, repeated in so many generations, that it will take generations to cure.”

On 16 May, Isaac returned to la Pergola and typed up an eighteen-point programme of rectification of Christian teaching about Jews and Judaism titled, “The Eighteen Points of Jules Isaac: a Christian teaching worthy of this name should….” These Eighteen Points were to be translated into English and distributed to Seelisberg Conference participants. From each of the Eighteen Points, one may infer a specific instance of deviation between secular and inspired Christian traditions regarding the Jews. Even the gospel texts themselves, “…’inspired’

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372 These eighteen points, reproduced in Appendix I hereto, were appended to the 1st edition of Jésus et Israël (Ed. Albin Michel, 1948) under the heading, "Annexe ou conclusion pratique. Le redressement nécessaire de l'enseignement chrétien."
evidence for a man of faith, but also incriminating evidence," in Isaac’s view, were not immune from corruption. According to Catholic doctrine, the last redaction of the gospel texts themselves bears the imprint of the Holy Spirit. Isaac was not persuaded that the New Testament (or the Old Testament, for that matter) is inerrant.

In the Christian’s eyes, the Gospels are inspired texts. They are nonetheless texts set down by the hand of man, and for that reason necessarily subject to the laws of criticism, textual, literary, historical, which no exegesis, even the most orthodox, may evade. One must decipher the manuscripts, collate them, choose between variants, eliminate copyists’ errors and suspect interpolations: textual criticism. One must discern the peculiarities of the evangelical Greek, of the Greek of each evangelist, the Semitisms that have more or less penetrated into it: literary criticism. For each Gospel, one must establish (if possible) by whom and when (at least approximately) it was written, in what surroundings, under what conditions: historical criticism. And these three kinds of criticism envisage the same aim: to reach evangelical truth, to extricate it from all the dross, from all human impurities, as the archaeologist, discovering a marvelous buried statue that is stained, battered, broken, sets to work enthusiastically, reverently, to extricate it from the earth that holds it, stand it up in the light, restore its integral and divine beauty. What nobler task, provided that love of God and of truth – the inseparable from the other – is the deep impulse that inspires it?

The Eighteen points constituted a summary of Isaac’s theses and were set out in paragraph IV of a mémoire titled, *Christian anti-Semitism and the means of remedying it by the reform of Christian education*, this remediation dealing in particular with eighteen clearly defined points. The Eighteen Points had their genesis in the Twenty-One Propositions (chapters) of *Jésus et Israël*, propositions of which the world was not yet aware and with which the Eighteen Points should not be confused. Eight of the Eighteen Points were cast in positive terms to recall long concealed, if not suppressed, truths that: Jesus was Jewish (Point 7); the first apostles were Jewish (Point 9); Jesus was “born under the [Jewish] law” (Gal. 4:4), lived “under the law” and did not stop practising

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374 Ibid., 562.
Judaism’s basic precepts to the last day (Point 8); to the last day, Jesus received the
enthusiastic sympathies of the Jewish people (Point 10); Christianity was born of a living
and not a degenerate Judaism (Point 4); a large part of the Christian liturgy is borrowed
from the Old Testament (Point 2); it was to the Jewish people that God first revealed
himself (Point 3); and the Old Testament was the scripture of the Jews before becoming
the scripture of the Christians (Point 1). The remaining ten of Isaac’s Eighteen Points
were cast in negative or near-negative terms to address the non-correspondence between
inspired scriptural truth and a secular anti-Jewish Christian tradition. Jesus had not been
personally rejected by the Jewish people (Point 11), had not been rejected by the spiritual
elite of Judaism, but by members of a narrow oligarchic caste, subjugated to Rome and
detested by the people (Point 12). The Jewish people had not committed the inexpiable
crime of deicide, knowingly and willingly (Point 14). The non-correspondence between
history and the myth that the dispersion was providential punishment for the crucifixion
was to be kept in mind (Point 5); the faithful were to be warned against certain stylistic
tendencies in the gospels, notably the frequent use in the fourth gospel of the collective
term “the Jews” in a restricted and pejorative sense (Point 6); the scriptural texts were not
to be strained to find in them a universal reprobation of Israel or a curse, which is
nowhere to be found (Point 13); the Jewish people were not involved in the trial of Jesus,
played no role in it and probably were entirely unaware of it (Point 16); and the chief
priests and their accomplices acted against Jesus unbeknownst to, and even in fear of, the
people (Point 15). Jesus was condemned for messianic pretensions, a crime in the eyes of
the Romans, not the Jews; his punishment was a Roman, not a Jewish, punishment, his
crowning with thorns was a cruel jest of Roman soldiery and not of the Jewish people,
and the mob whipped up by the chief priests was not to be equated with the whole of the Jewish people or even the Jewish people of Palestine (Point 17). Finally, one should be mindful not to forget that the cry, “His blood be upon us and on our children!” (Mt 27:25) could not prevail over the Word “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34) (Point 18). That “[Jesus’] own received him not,” in the words of Fr Léonce de Grandmaison, is unhistorical. “There is not one line of Gospel text that allows us to answer the question [whether the millions of Jews dispersed throughout the ancient world knew Jesus, let alone rejected him],” Isaac contends. “If the Jewish world in the Diaspora, or at least those who represented it at Jerusalem during the feasts, had really been touched by Jesus’ teaching, in whatever way, with whatever effect – whether they were offended or attracted – it would be strange that no trace of any sort remained of this for history to perceive.” As far as the Jewish dispersion is concerned, notes Isaac, “…that Dispersion perennially offered to Christian thinking – often from the height of the pulpit – as punishment for the crime, took place several centuries before Jesus’ time, before the crime…If there was punishment, it was anticipatory…”

The specific agenda of Seelisberg included “…the development of practical measures to combat anti-Semitism at all levels of society, through short-term strategies or long-term measures to obstruct its re-emergence.” English and French were the two official languages of the conference, German having too bitter a postwar aftertaste. Participants were inundated with no fewer than fifty-five documents, thirty-two of which were country-by-country reports detailing the situation of European Jewry and of the

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375 Quoted in ibid., 157.
376 Ibid., 165.
377 Ibid., 167.
378 Ibid., 158.
379 Rutishauser: 38.
status of antisemitism in the aftermath of the war. An alert congress participant might have noted that there were but five papers dealing with the relationship between Christians and Jews, one of which was signed by a French Jewish historian. There were sixty-to-seventy conference delegates, all attending in their personal capacities, all having received invitations from the executive committee, priests, pastors, rabbis, lay persons, from Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the United States, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. The composition was international and interconfessional. As a Frenchman, it seemed a shame that the French churches, Catholic and Protestant, were not represented, recollected Isaac. “Could this have been the result of the conference organizers having aimed too high, extending invitations to the likes of Cardinal Saliège, Pastor Boegner, Ambassador Maritain, académicien Etienne Gibson, each of

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380 There were no orthodox christians from the Soviet Union.
381 There can be no passing reference to Jules-Géraud Saliège, archbishop of Toulouse, in whose cathedral in the 11th century there had been a tradition of publicly slapping a Jew during Holy Week as a reminder of the slap received by Jesus (Baum, The Jews and the Gospel, 267 at note 16). There can be no passing reference to this Righteous prelate among the Gentiles, this Catholic for whom a memorial plaque is affixed to the wall of the oldest synagogue in Toulouse and whom De Gaulle perceived as his ecclesiastical beachhead in the fight against Pétain’s Vichy regime as early as May 1942. Laval had made a faustian pact with the Germans to trade the lives of 85,000 Jewish French citizens in the occupied zone for the lives of 40,000 stateless Jews in the unoccupied zone. On 8, 10 and 24 August 1942, amidst scenes of Jewish mothers forcibly separated from their children, 1,000 Jews were taken from Récébédou. In the midst of this horror and perhaps with foreknowledge of the first roundups (on 26 August 1942) in the unoccupied zone of Jewish men, women and children, on Sunday 23 August, Mgr Saliege broke the silence of the French episcopate, nay the Vatican itself, with the following words in a pastoral letter read aloud without commentary by priests at masses in all churches and chapels in his diocese. My very dearest brothers,

There is a Christian ethic. There is a human ethic that imposes obligations and recognizes rights. These obligations and these rights are the products of personhood. They are God-given. They may be violated. No mortel is empowered to suppress them…In our diocese, we have witnessed scenes of the most horrific nature in the camps of Noé and Récébédou [in the Haute-Garonne] Jews are men; Jewesses are women. They are untouchable, these men, these women, fathers and mothers. They are human beings. They are our brothers [and sisters], like any other. A Christian cannot forget this. France, our beloved country, France that bears in the conscience of all its children the tradition of respect for the human person, chivalrous and generous France, there is no doubt in my mind that you are not behind the perpetration of these atrocities…
whom for one reason or another, was unable to make the trip to Seelisberg and did not send replacements in his stead?“382

The French participants consisted of one Catholic, Mlle Marie-Madeleine Davy, lecturer at l’École des Hautes Études where she was pursuing graduate study in Jewish philosophy of the middle ages, no Protestant, one rabbi (grand rabbin Jacob Kaplan) and Jules Isaac. Notable Protestants from other countries included professors Bickel of Switzerland and Allen from Durham University. Notable Catholics included Rome-based Capucin priest P. Calliste Lopinot, a stand-in for P. Marie-Benoit, “le père des juifs italiens durant la guerre”383 and spiritual director of the Grand Institut des Capucins in Rome, who was ill at the time and unable to make the trip,384 and P. Jean de Menasce, University of Fribourg and P. Paul Démann, Louvain (the latter two Jewish converts to Catholicism). Charles Journet, professor at the University of Fribourg, founding editor of the journal, Nova et Vetera,385 Maritain correspondence partner and, according to professeur honoraire, l’Institut catholique de Paris, Pierre Pierrard, “one who seemed to have the Vatican’s ear,”386 was also present. Jewish participants included Rabbi M.A. Halevy, vice-president of the Union of Roumanian Jews and president of the Society of

As did many at the time, Saliège assumed (incorrectly) that Vichy was acting under German pressure. On the following Sunday 30 August 1942, Pierre-Marie Théas, bishop of Montauban, followed suit with a pastoral letter of his own; on 6 September Lyon Cardinal Gerlier also denounced the arrests and deportations, the same Cardinal Gerlier who had told Vallat at a meeting not one year earlier, “Your law [Statut des juifs] is not unjust, …but it lacks justice and charity in its enforcement.” (Quoted in Marrus, Vichy France and the Jews, 200) Of the 95 archbishops and bishops in France, at best six would denounce the antisemitic measures adopted by the Vichy regime and carried out by the French police.


383 Pierrard, 358.


385 Born in Geneva, Charles Journet studied at the seminary in Fribourg before being ordained to the priesthood on 15 July 1917. He did pastoral work in the Diocese of Fribourg until 1924, and taught at the seminary from 1924 to 1965. Journet was raised to the rank of Cardinal on 22 February 1965.

386 Pierrard, 345. Journet was unable to attend the full conference because of other commitments.
Jewish Studies of Roumania, and Fabian Herkovitz, Grand Rabbi of Budapest. The conference chairs were Willard E. Goslin, superintendent of the Minneapolis school board, and Neville Laski. “Finally, on Friday 1 August [1947], it was decided that there would be five working groups and the real work commenced,” Isaac recalled. “In truth, and conference members were unanimous in recognizing this fact, the primary task belonged to Commission III [the Task of the Churches], the only working group that could develop an effective action plan as there was consensus among the Jewish speakers that in the struggle against antisemitism, the Churches had adopted a neutral stance, when in point of view, they were the most qualified to take over the fight.”

Isaac was assigned to commission III (The Task of the Churches). In addition to Isaac, this commission included Fr Lopinot (Rome), chair, Bishop Miroslav Novak (Prague), vice-chair, Rev. Dr. E.L. Allen (University of Durham), secretary, Prof. Dr. Erich Bickel (Zurich), Professor Dr. Mlle. Madeleine Davy (Paris), Fr Dr Paul Démann (Louvain), Pastor A. Freudenberg (Geneva), Rabbi Jacob Kaplan (Paris), Fr Jean de Menasce (Fribourg), Rabbi W. Rosenblum (New York) and Rabbi Tzvi Chaim Taubes (Zurich).

Of all the commission III members, it was the son of Rabbi Tzvi Taubes, Jacob Taubes, who must have accompanied his father to Seelisberg, who most resonated with Isaac. “The most likeable personality was a very young Jew whose light shone, son of the Grand Rabbi of Zurich and descended from a religious dynasty,” wrote Isaac in correspondence to Marie-Françoise Payré. “What was amusing is that he plays the role of

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388 Ibid., 363.
389 Jacob Taubes was on the Faculty at Columbia University in the 1960s
my mentor: I am an old Telemachus. But I listen deeply to him, since despite our differences in age and social background, what matters is our spirits.”

At the opening of the Conference, in a world in which antisemitism was remarkably on the rise yet again, a five-page, typewritten, single-spaced message from Catholic philosopher and France’s ambassador to the Vatican, Jacques Maritain, was read aloud by Abbé Charles Journet. Conference participants heard in part the following.

Antisemitism cloaks itself in an infinite number of masks and pretexts, - in fact, it is Jesus Christ in his race that [antisemitism] seeks to strike. Six million Jews have been liquidated in Europe…This bestial hatred has supernatural eyes. The truth is it is their very election, it is Moses and the prophets who are pursued in them, it is the Saviour who came out of them that is sought…As Christianity is hated by virtue of its Jewish origins, Israel was hated by virtue of its belief in original sin and the redemption, and of Christian mercy that was a consequence. In the words of the Jewish writer Maurice Samuel, it is not because they killed the Messiah, it is because they gave the Messiah to the world that the Hitlerian antisemitic rage has dragged through filth and blood the Jews in all of Europe, has snatched children away from their mothers henceforth dispossessed even of their name, has undertaken to drive to despair an entire race. Thus it is that unbeknownst to it, Israel has been pursued by the same hate that pursued in first instance Jesus Christ. Its Messiah has configured it in sorrow and abjection in advance of one day configuring it in the light…Like strange bedfellows, Jews and Christians are making their way together on the road to Calvary. And most mysteriously is that Israel’s suffering has taken on ever more distinctly the form of the cross.”

Isaac is said to have remarked to Journet that Maritain had “…said, from a Catholic viewpoint of course, everything I am putting forth in a book on which I am working.”

Were the closing lines of the yet-to-be published Jésus et Israël inspired by Maritain’s address at Seelisberg? “The glow of the Auschwitz crematorium is the beacon that lights,
that guides all my thoughts. Oh, my Jewish brothers, and you as well my Christian brothers, do you not think that it mingles with another glow, that of the Cross?”

Rabbi Kaplan tabled Isaac’s Eighteen Points in the hope they would be adopted as framed. The Jewish members of the commission withdrew and on the basis of the Eighteen Points, the Christian members of the commission worked up a draft. “In all haste, because there was no time, we addressed the fundamental problem of setting right Christian teaching,” recalled Isaac, “and despite all the clashes (emphasis mine), we did produce something. To be sure, not the eighteen points that I had submitted to the congress, but nine significant points.” Not six months later, Isaac disclosed in personal correspondence, “I think I can confirm that the two principal draftsmen [of the Ten Points of Seelisberg] were Fr de Menasce (Fribourg) and Fr Démann (Louvain),” both of whom were Jewish converts to Catholicism. The draft was reviewed and commented on separately by Catholic and Protestant members of the commission and then brought back to the full commission. The Jewish commission members attested in writing that “… they took no position on the theological or historical perspectives of the text.” The statement was reported back to the conference plenum for adoption, with the understanding that an abbreviated version would be published immediately following the close of the conference. Prior to its release, the statement was circulated among ecclesial authorities of the various churches for approval. The full version of the statement was presented to the plenum and affirmed without discussion. Three months after the close of

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396 Chevalier: as quoted at 22.
the congress, on 10 November 1947, Fr Lopinot advised Visseur that there was no
theological impediment to the publication of the Ten Points. Whomever Lopinot
consulted in this regard, apparently it was not the Pope. Two years later, Pius XII would
profess ignorance of the Ten Points of Seelisberg during a short audience with Isaac at
Castel Gandolfo.

The Ten Points of Seelisberg were not created \textit{ex nihilo}; they had their genesis in
Isaac’s Eighteen Points, of which the world was not then yet aware.

1. Remember that it is the same living God Who speaks to us
   through the Old and the New Testaments.
2. Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the
   seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His
   everlasting love and forgiveness embrace His own people
   and the whole world.
3. Remember that the first disciples, the apostles, and the first
   martyrs were Jews.
4. Remember that the fundamental commandment of
   Christianity, to love God and one’s neighbor, proclaimed
   already in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is
   binding upon both Christians and Jews in all human
   relationships, without any exception.
5. Avoid disparaging biblical or post-biblical Judaism with
   the object of extolling Christianity.
6. Avoid using the word \textit{Jews} in the exclusive sense of the
   enemies of Jesus, and the words \textit{the enemies of Jesus}
   to designate the whole Jewish people.
7. Avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring
   odium of the killing of Jesus upon Jews alone. In fact, it
   was not all the Jews who demanded the death of Jesus. It is
   not the Jews alone who are responsible, for the Cross which
   saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ
   died.
   Remind all Christian parents and teachers of the grave
   responsibility which they assume, particularly when they
   present the Gospels, and particularly the Passion story in a
   simplistic manner. By so doing they run the risk of
   implanting an aversion in the conscious or subconscious
   minds of their children or hearers, intentionally or
   unintentionally. Psychologically speaking, in the case of
   simple minds, moved by a passionate love and compassion
for the crucified Savior, the horror which they feel quite naturally towards the persecutors of Jesus will easily be turned into an undiscriminating hatred of the Jews of all times, including those of our own day.

8. Avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: *His blood be upon us and upon our children*, without remembering that this cry should not prevail against the infinitely more weighty prayer of Jesus: *Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they do.*

9. Avoid promoting the superstitious notion that the Jewish people is reprobate, accursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering.

10. Avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not been Jews.

The first three Seelisberg Points correspond with Isaac’s eight Points of a positive character. The Jewish provenance of Jesus and his first apostles in Seelisberg Points 2 and 3 correlate with Isaac’s Points 7, 9 and 10. According to Reverend Henri Monnier, writing in *La Mission historique de Jésus*, “Jesus was not, properly speaking, Jewish; he was Galilean, which is not the same thing.”

No so, reminds Seelisberg; Jesus was born under the law (Gal. 4:4) and was circumcised (Lk. 2:21). “[F]rom [Israelites], according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever,” according to St Paul. The genealogy that opens the gospel of Matthew attests to Jesus’ Jewishness, so does Hebrews, “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah…” His very name, notes Isaac in the manuscript of his yet-to-be published *Jésus et Israël*, “…is the Greek transcription *Iesous* of the Hebrew name Jeshua (Yeshua) or Jehoshua, which is also transcribed Joshua, and which means ‘Yah [weh] is salvation.’”

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398 Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, reproduced at 404.
399 Jesus was Jewish (Point 7); the first apostles were Jewish (Point 9) and to the last day, Jesus received the enthusiastic sympathies of the Jewish people (Point 10).
400 Quoted in Isaac, *Jésus et Israël*, 37.
401 Rom. 9:5.
403 Heb. 7:14.
404 Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 22.
Eberle in an article in Schönere Zukunft, “the Virgin Mary was removed as it were from the natural context of the Jewish people.”\textsuperscript{405} Not so, reminds Seelisberg; that the first apostles were Jewish is scriptural. “Let us name in the lead ‘[t]he one who is infinitely queen because she is the humblest of creatures; because she was a poor woman, a pitiful woman, a poor Jewess of Judea,’” Isaac notes in Péguy-esque language. “She was called Mariam or Miriam. Mary is the English transcription of this Semitic name, which was sometimes lengthened to Mariane, or, more often, abridged to Maria….Joseph, James, Simon, Jude, all English names derived from Hebrew by way of Greek and Latin transcriptions.”\textsuperscript{406} There does not appear to be a Seelisberg correlate to Isaac’s Point 8: Jesus was “born under the [Jewish] law” (Gal. 4:4), lived “under the law” and did not stop practising Judaism’s basic precepts to the last day. That he lived under the law is scriptural; not only did he not condemn any ritual commandment, but on occasion recommended its observance.\textsuperscript{407} “Whether one accepts it or not,” according to Isaac, “it is a fact attested to by the Gospels, more particularly by the Synoptics, that to his final hour, Jesus did not stop practising the basic rites of Judaism.”\textsuperscript{408}

The continuity in the scriptures highlighted in Seelisberg Point 1 correlates with Isaac’s Points 1, 2, 3 and 4. The admonition to avoid disparaging biblical or post-biblical Judaism in Seelisberg Point 5 follows from Isaac’s Points 2 and 4. Liturgically (Isaac Point 2),\textsuperscript{409} Christianity was born of a living and not a degenerate Judaism,

\textsuperscript{405} Quoted in Connelly, 131.
\textsuperscript{406} Isaac, Jesus and Israel, 15.
\textsuperscript{407} Mk. 1:44; Mt. 5:23-24.
\textsuperscript{408} Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 105.
\textsuperscript{409} Isaac notes in particular the correspondences between Mt. 6:6 and 2 Kings 4:33, Mt. 6:7-8 and Is. 1:15 and Eccles. 5:2-3 and Mt. 6:9-10 and Is. 63:16, Ps. 89:26, 146:10, the Kaddish and Talmud, Berakoth 29b "R. Eliezer says, 'Do Your will in heaven above, and grant well-being to them that fear Thee below,'" and Mt. 6:11-13 and Prov. 30:8, Ecclus. 28:2 and Talmud, Berakoth 60b "...bring me not into transgression, or into iniquity, or into temptation...And deliver me from evil..."
notwithstanding assertions such as that of Catholic writer Julien Green that “Israel worshiped God, only in a conventional manner.” Historically (Isaac Point 4), Christianity was born of a living and not a degenerate Judaism, notwithstanding assertions by Protestant and Catholic authors that at the time of Jesus, the Jewish religion was nothing more than, in the words of German Catholic theologian Karl Adam, “…a world of ossified belief in the letter, of a narrow-mined caste spirit and materialistic piety, a world of skepticism, doubt and libertinism.” That “[t]he religious life of the Jewish people, led astray by the Pharisees, was on the road to decadence…,” or that “[t]he religious life of the Jews was reduced at the time of Jesus to a mere external formalism…,” as found in manuels of religious instruction for youth, does not correspond to the data of history. That “[t]he scribes and Pharisees had not the slightest concern for moral or spiritual purity,” as writes M. Lepin, professor at the Major Seminary in Lyon, in his Introduction to L’Évangile de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ, is unhistorical. Equally unhistorical is the assertion that “… [t]o a formalism that was strict and detailed to the point of absurdity, [the scribes and Pharisees] brought the most consummate pride and hypocrisy.” “The Pharisees …are hypocrites, their religion is a farce, they overload the law of God with countless minutiae and elaborate rites…but underneath, their hearts are full of pride, ambition, and malice,” write the Sisters of

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410 Quoted in Isaac, The Teaching of Contempt, 77.
411 See, for example, Marcel Simon's Verus Israël, 2d, 1964. In the post-scriptum to the second edition (p.477), Simon writes, “Most particularly, to my knowledge, virtually no one has refuted the legitimacy of my central thesis: the Judaism [of the period 135 C.E. to 425 C.E.], far from having withdrawn into itself, was for Christianity for the whole of the period under study a real, vibrant and often successful competitor.”
412 Karl Adam quoted in Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 75.
414 Quoted in Isaac, The Teaching of Contempt, 78.
415 Quoted in ibid., 79.
Bernadette in *Sainte Bible ou Histoire sainte*, No. 4, p. 73; an overreach of the bounds of scriptural and historical accuracy.

Seelisberg Point 4 is novel. The principal commandment of Christianity, love of God and of neighbour, announced in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, set out in Seelisberg Point 4 has no exact counterpart in Isaac’s Eighteen Points. But Seelisberg Points 6, 8, 9 and 10 can be traced to one or more of Isaac’s 18 Points. The admonition in Seelisberg Point 6 (to avoid using the term “Jews” to refer exclusively to Jesus’ enemies and the words, “the enemies of Jesus” to designate the Jewish people as a whole) and Seelisberg Point 10 (to avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not been Jews), have their counterpart in Isaac’s Point 6.⁴¹⁶ Seelisberg Point 8 correlates with Isaac’s Point 18.⁴¹⁷ Point 8 admonishes to avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: *His blood be upon us and upon our children,* without remembering that this cry should not prevail against the infinitely weightier petition of Jesus: *Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they do.* “As if God could ratify the outcry of a group of demonstrators, worked up by their ringleaders, and have it descend as a curse upon millions of innocent people,”⁴¹⁸ would write John Oesterreicher in his account of *Nostra aetate* in Vorgrimler’s *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II.* Seelisberg Point 9 (to avoid encouraging in any way the opinion that the Jews are a people accursed, reprobated and set aside for perpetual suffering) has its correlate in

⁴¹⁶ Warn the faithful against certain stylistic tendencies in the Gospels, notably the frequent use in the fourth Gospel of the collective term “the Jews” in a restricted and pejorative sense – to mean Jesus’ enemies: chief priests, scribes and Pharisees – a procedure that results not only in distorting historic perspectives but in inspiring horror and contempt of the Jewish people as a whole, whereas in reality this people is in no way involved.
⁴¹⁷ Last, not forget that the monstrous cry, “His blood be upon us and on our children!” (Mt. 27:25), could not prevail over the Word, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34).
⁴¹⁸ Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 15.
Isaac’s Point 13. That “God has forsaken the Jews [who] have denied the Father, crucified the Son,” as says John Chrysostom, that “the vengeance of God will fall without mercy on this deicide people,” as writes Fr Ferdinand Prat, in his *Jésus-Christ*, that “[t]he murderous people eternally nailed to the crossroads where the destinies of mankind meet and intersect,” as writes Fr Fessard in his *Pax Nostra*, is nowhere to be found in the gospels. That “[f]or hundreds of years, Israel was as though abandoned by God;” as writes Gunther Dehn in the first volume of his *Le Fils de Dieu: commentaire à l’Evangile de Marc* (1936), that “the living God of their fathers had become a God remote and inaccessible,” overreaches the bounds of scriptural and historical accuracy.

The most significant pronouncement of a theological nature would appear to be Point 7 of the Seelisberg program: “…for the Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died.” This assertion is nowhere to be found in Isaac’s Eighteen Points. The statement is theological in nature and therefore, strictly speaking, beyond the bounds of Isaac’s expertise. But this perfectly sound Christian doctrine had been buried under two millennia of secular traditions about Jews and Judaism. Did Isaac play a role in its resurrection? In efforts to keep alive his dearest friend and mentor, Charles Péguy, Isaac had managed to quote Péguy no fewer than thirteen times in the manuscript of his yet-to-be-published *Jésus et Israël*. In one instance, upon which Isaac had drawn to close his letter to Daniel-Rops, Isaac had written, “Péguy said: 'It is not the Jews who crucified Jesus Christ, but the sins of all of us; and the Jews, who were but the instrument, participate like others in the font of salvation.' Here, it seems to me, is

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419 Take care not to strain the texts to find in them a universal reprobation of Israel or a curse which is nowhere explicitly expressed in the Gospels; take into account the fact that Jesus always showed feelings of compassion and love for the masses.

Christian language, Christian conviction. This is the conviction, I know, of a Christian elite, Catholic and Protestant. But they represent a tiny elite, scarcely heeded, while the murderous tradition continues to be planted in defenseless souls by routine theologians, heedless writers, more concerned with worldly success than with unadulterated truth."421

In the new revised edition of Jésus et Israël,422 Isaac added, “[Péguy’s conviction] is also sound and orthodox Christian doctrine, too often forgotten. The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches: ‘In this guilt [for Jesus’ death] are involved all those who fall frequently into sin; for…our sin consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the Cross.’ We can relate this to the seventh of the Ten Points of Seelisberg: ‘…The Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died.’”423 In the twilight of his life, Isaac would express his point of view thus: “From the point of view of theology, Jewish responsibility is subordinated to the collective responsibility of sinful humanity. Or if you prefer a symbolic interpretation, the Jewish people are but an image of humanity as a whole. In either event, who is the real culprit, the real ‘deicide?’ The human race, the whole of sinful mankind…”424

Isaac returned from Seelisberg with a heightened sense of optimism. On 18 November 1947, he turned seventy years of age.425 Did he suspect that his Eighteen

421 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 515.
422 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, New Revised Ed.
423 Ibid., Note Complémentaire regarding p. 515 at 595.
424 Isaac, The Teaching of Contempt, 122.
425 Upon his return from Seelisberg, it is probable Isaac followed closely the birth pains of the embryonic Jewish homeland as played out among the General Assembly members of the United Nations, territory that Pope Pius X had told Theodor Herzl “is sacred in the life of Jesus Christ. As head of the Church, I cannot say otherwise. The Jews did not acknowledge Our Lord and thus we cannot recognize the Jewish people. Hence, if you go to Palestine, and if the Jewish people settle there, our Churches and our priests will be ready to baptize you all.” (Uri Bialer, "Israel and Nostra Aetate: The View from Jerusalem," in Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Catholic-Jewish Relations: Proceedings of the International Conference held in Jerusalem 30 October - 1 November 2005, ed. Neville Lamdan and Alberto Melloni (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), reproduced at 63-4.) It has been suggested the Pope’s response was rooted in the Christian theological view that the loss of Jewish sovereignty over the land was a sure sign of
Points had given birth to something that would eclipse and transcend him in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations? Little might have Isaac suspected that the Ten Points of Seelisberg, inspired in large part by his own Eighteen Points, would give way to something larger, much larger, which but for his continued activism, would probably never have come to pass. How disappointing it must have been when on 16 October 1949, Pope Pius XII would profess ignorance of the Ten Points during Isaac’s short audience at Castel Gandolfo. Isaac would be directed by the Pope to place the documents on a table in the corner of the salon in which Isaac was received. Fr Démann, a principal draftsman of the Ten Points, who was to assume the direction of *Les Cahiers Sioniens*, the review of the missionary priests of Notre-Dame de Sion in 1948, would use the Ten Points as the template from which they would be restated in slightly different form in a monograph entitled *Les Juifs dans la catéchèse chrétienne*, published in 1952 (with the approval of Msgr. de Provenchères, Archbishop of Aix and then president of the Episcopal Committee for the Catechism). Gregory Baum, in the first edition (but not the revised, by which time the fourth paragraph of *Nostra aetate* had been promulgated) of his defence of the gospels would choose to reproduce as an Appendix the Ten Points of Seelisberg.

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transgression in the eyes of God and deserving of punishment. It has even been speculated that the failure of the Vatican to give open and public aid to the Jews during the Second World War had been driven by a concern that the migration of Jewish refugees to Palestine might undermine the status of the Church in the Holy Land. Among the arguments made in an internal Vatican document authored by the Vatican’s Secretary of State, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, in May 1943 in support of the Pope’s refusal to help rescue 2,000 Jewish children from Slovakia were (i) the Vatican’s non-recognition of the Balfour Declaration and the British plan for establishment of a National Home for the Jews; (ii) concern that the sanctity of the Holy Places would be at risk by an influx of Jews into Palestine; and (iii) the theological view that Palestine was holier to Christians than to Jews. It is therefore not surprising that Pius XII expressed strong opposition to Britain’s plan to withdraw from Palestine and leave the decision about its fate to the United Nations. The struggle in the United Nations which culminated with the vote on 29 November 1947 was marked by a flat refusal on the part of the papal representatives to support the Zionist cause and efforts on their part to lobby Latin American states to adopt the same position. One day before statehood would be proclaimed, L’Osservatore Romano, the semi-official daily newspaper of the Holy See, asserted that “…modern Zionism is not the true heir of biblical Israel. […] Therefore the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, which is the true Israel.” (Quoted in Bialer at p.65).
Following the close of the pre-preparatory phase of Vatican II, the memorandum drawn up in August 1960 by Paul Démann in the name of the Apeldoorn working group of priests and laypersons addressed to “…those who in any way, direct or indirect, have a part in the teaching office of the Church or in the forming of opinion among the faithful, whether their field of work be the training of priests, catechesis, preaching, journalism or other writings” would manifest the imprint of the Ten Points of Seelisberg. Paulist priest Fr Thomas Stransky, a ground-floor staff member of the Secretariat for Christian Unity whose initial members consisted of Bea, Willebrands and Arrighi, one of a number of Vatican II-preparatory commissions created by Pope John XIII, when asked to put together a dossier for the first members of the sub-commission regarding “Problems concerning the Jews” (a rendering of the expression used for the item on the agenda and for the title of the preparatory text, Quaestiones de Iudaeis), thought first of the Ten Points of Seelisberg. “I still find the best and clearest summary of the corrective [to the anti-Jewish tendency] in the Seelisberg list,” Stransky would one day write, “and in hindsight Vatican II’s De Judaeis can be traced back to the ten points.” A.-M. Henry in his edited locus classicus on Nostra aetate titled, Les Relations de l’Eglise avec les Religions non Chrétiennes: Déclaration “Nostra aetate” published in 1966, would

426 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 12.
427 In 1958, priest Anton Ramselaar, theological adviser to founder of the Dutch Catholic Church for Israel, Miriam Rookmaaker van Leer, a convert from Protestantism. In 1958, Ramselaar, further to prodding by Otilie Schwarz, a Viennese convert, convoked an international symposium in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands. Participants included France's Paul Demann, Germany's Karl Thieme and Gertrude Luckner, Israel-based Abbot Leo Rudloff and Fr Jean-Roger Hene, British Irene Marinoff and by then American John Oesterreicher.
428 Related to the author at a meeting with Fr Thomas Stransky in New York City on (Good) Friday 3 April 2015.
choose to reproduce as an annex (along with successive drafts of the conciliar statement on the Jews) the Ten Points of Seelisberg.\footnote{In May 1950, at Bad Schwalbach, near Wiesbaden, a group of German Catholic theologians, notably Karl Thieme, in consultation with German Protestant theologians, notably Pastor Freudenberg, drew up what they considered to be a theologically sounder version of the Ten Points of Seelisberg.}

The Seelisberg Conference sponsors had left an impression on Isaac. In the second quarter of 1948, on 6 May to be precise, the articles of l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne, as drawn up by Isaac, were adopted. l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne was the culmination of feasibility that had begun in 1947. In correspondence to Payré dated 13 October 1947, Isaac had written, “I spoke with Fr Daniélou about the possibility of establishing in France a section of the ‘Christians and Jews.” On 30 October, he wrote, “On Tuesday, I met with Jewish leaders for the purposes of bailing out the centre d’information and its bulletin and the establishment of un groupement ‘Chrétiens et Juifs’ (that will be called, I think, l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne).\footnote{Payré, 139.} On 25 November 1947, a meeting, called on very short notice for the île Saint-Louis apartment (1 quai aux Fleurs) of Edmond Fleg, had been convened to formalize the decision to establish l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne.

Attendance was so sparse that the decision was deferred until a meeting on 26 February 1948 at Fleg’s apartment. The articles were filed in the prefecture on 13 August 1948 and published in the Journal Officiel on 22 August. Although the l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne was founded as the French section of the ICCJ, it was not long before the former disengaged from the latter, driven by a concern that the principles for which the ICCJ stood were becoming increasingly vague and inconsistent. In any event, according to Armand Lunel of Monaco, first president of l’Association des amis de Jules Isaac, l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne provincial sections were formed as follows: in Aix and
Marseilles in February 1948, in Nice at the end of 1948, in Montpellier and Nîmes in March 1949, in Lyon in May 1949 and in Florence in September 1949.

In the inaugural issue of its periodical, *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne*, first president Henri Marrou, wartime ami sûr of *l’Amitié chrétienne* and participant at Fribourg, wrote, “In choosing for this association the name of *Amitié judéo-chrétienne*, we wished to take up [the name] that *l’Amitié chrétienne*, founded in 1941, harboured in its intentions, but which the occupation prevented it from adopting.” Not so, attested Jean-Marie Soutou (1912-2003), a righteous among the nations and member of *Amitié chrétienne*, a Lyon-based group of Christians, founded by Pierre Chaillet and dedicated to manifesting their opposition to Pétain’s regime by helping its victims, in particular Jewish victims. Soutou would go on record in June 2003, shortly before his death.

There was no direct connection between *L’Amitié Chrétienne* and *l’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne*… *L’Amitié Chrétienne* was established in 1940/41 on the initiative of a Catholic [Chaillet] and a Protestant [Gilbert Beaujolin] of Lyon to assist foreigners in difficult circumstances in France, whether interned in camps or not, most Jews. The founders’ goals were to publicly affirm Christian solidarity with these victims of discrimination and treatment incompatible with Christian values. Having regard to its aims, *L’Amitié Chrétienne* was not a clandestine organization. On the contrary, it had to be a ‘pigeon on the street,’ engaging openly the Protestant and Catholic Churches. That is why to the knowledge of all, its two presidents were Cardinal Gerlier and Pastor Boegner.

…There was no board of directors, no meetings, no membership. The structure took the form of an ‘office’ in which were to be found the two founders, the Abbé Glasberg, together with his 4 or 5 collaborators, and Fr. Chaillet, who represented Cardinal Gerlier and in [Gerlier’s] name, ‘directed’ things in a most casual manner. On the periphery, and not officially, were Jewish personalities: André Weil, Dr. Joseph Weil, Samy Lattès, who funded the activities. The only other source of funding consisted of gifts received by Abbé Glasberg from wealthy Lyonnais…

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Circumstances dictated that there be a clandestine, illegal aspect to these activities: false papers, networks for passage into Spain and Switzerland.

Having no membership per se, L’Amitié Chrétienne would have occasion to call upon ‘amis sûrs’ when it needed to hide, nourish or secreting [out of France] its ‘protégés,’ namely foreign Jews threatened with deportation. Marrou was among these amis sûrs and he never failed to respond.

It is in this regard that there may be a virtual connection with l’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne: the reasons for Marrou’s involvement [L’Amitié Chrétienne] were no different, spiritually speaking, from those that impelled him to involve himself in l’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne, even if the objects of the latter were not those of the former…I think it is this connection, ontological one might say, that is reflected in [Marrou’s] two letters to Jules Isaac following the publication of his ‘Apostilles.’

As far as a connection, strictly speaking, there was none since after the arrest of those involved by the Gestapo, L’Amitié Chrétienne ceased to exist; thenceforth its illegal activities were carried on by Joseph Rovan who was the principal supplier of false identity cards to several resistance movements.

At no time in 1948 did any person formerly involved with l’Amitié Chrétienne inform me of the creation of l’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne, which would not have been expected in the circumstances.  

First vice-president was Pastor Jacques Martin (one of two Protestants, the other being Assistant-secretary Fadiey Lovsky, editor of Cahiers d’Études juives and representing Pastor Charles Westphal, editor of Foi et Vie), national director of Christianisme social and of its journal, served as the editor-in-chief of the l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne bulletin. “There was a real friendship between Jules Isaac and [Martin],” recalled Lovsky. “But he left Paris in 1950 [to become a librarian in Chambon], I think. Pastor Elie Lauriol replaced him at the Comité Central.” The first secretary of the l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne was Samy Lattès, chargé de cours en Italien à la Faculté des Lettres de Paris. His home address, 55, quai d’Orsay, served as the first address of the

\[^{436}^\text{Jean-Marie Soutou, "Note Indedite de Monsieur Jean-Marie Soutou," La revue Sens, organe de l'amitié judeo-chretienne de France, no. 11 (2003): 502-504.}\]
\[^{437}^\text{Lovsky, "Les Premières années de l’amitié judéo-chrétienne," 266.}\]
organization. “He was a charming man;” Lovsky recollected, “somewhat skeptical and lacking in organizational skills. He played an important role in the early stages in connection with our difficult relations with the ICCJ.”

Henri Bédarida, Sorbonne professor, was treasurer. Maurice Vanikoff, publicist and president of les associations d’anciens combattants volontaires juifs, oversaw public relations. “He was at ease with the legislation governing the press and knew how to negotiate with publishing houses,” remembers Lovsky. “Without him, we would never have published our bulletin.

Practically speaking, the offices of the l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne were really his own… Around 1950-52, he became embroiled in a conflict with Lattès, who gave up the struggle and resigned.”

In addition to Isaac, the first members-at-large were composer Léon Algazi, “Was he Fleg’s brother-in-law?” wondered Lovsky. “In any event, he was very close [to Fleg], discrete and contemplative and directed ‘La voix d’Israel’ on the radio, a beneficial undertaking for l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne;” Jesuit priest and Les Études editor Jean Daniélou, “…who played a pivotal role in kickstarting the AJCF,” according to Lovsky, “and knew how to listen to Jules Isaac, to understand what he was saying, to assist him with very good counsel and who transcended his historical and theological doubts in light of his appreciation of importance of Isaac’s interrogation;” Edmond Fleg, “…who received us as friend and poet with the simplicity of a great lord,” Lovsky remembers, “who ensured calm and courtesy, as was his own nature, who bore the tribulations of being Jewish with a noblesse and a tranquil bearing that spoke louder than his words, who supported Isaac…, made best efforts to preempt or resolve conflicts, and even before the Shoah, was engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue;” Grand Rabbi

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438 Ibid., 263.

439 Ibid., 264.
Kaplan, who lent determined support to Jules Isaac and the *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne*, not there for personal reasons or because he had been enlisted, but out of conviction,…listening to the Christians, understanding the circumstances, one of the most ardent of *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne* founding members; Jacques Madaule, who would assume the presidency of *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne* on Marrou’s resignation; Léon Zander, “who spoke rarely, but whose presence had a particularly calming influence on the Jewish members,”⁴⁴⁰ as Lovsky remembers it. Missing from the members-at-large in the first issue of *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne*, “no doubt at his request,”⁴⁴¹ according to Lovsky, was Père de Sion Fr. Paul Démann, editor of the *Cahiers sioniens*. “It was he, together with Father Jean de Menasce, who drafted the 10 Points of Seelisberg. His active intelligence, his theological competence, his capacity to elicit from the work of Jules Isaac an appropriate Christian response, his diplomacy, his authentic friendship with Isaac, all these combined to make the role he played [within the *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne*] a capital one.”⁴⁴²

The establishment of *l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne* in May 1948 was eclipsed by the publication one month earlier of a book that would have been stillborn if things had unfolded differently for Jules Isaac on that fateful morning of 7 October 1943. By this book, he would reemerge into the public sphere in France, not as author and editor of *le Malet-Isaac*, not as *Inspecteur général honoraire de l’Instruction publique*, but as crusador for evangelical truth. “I have had [the first copy off the press of *Jésus et Israël*] in my hands since 11:00 o’clock yesterday morning,” he wrote Payré on 14 April 1948. “I feel somewhat deflated, imagining how much of my past it embodies, even more so in

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 263-66.
⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 265.
⁴⁴² Ibid.
the present and the future." Deflated, yet, at peace, he wrote three days later,
“…having completed the task that I had set myself. The fruits may not be immediate; they will come sooner or later and other combattants, I hope, will take over from me.
What is said is said and cannot be erased."
CHAPTER FIVE

JESUS AND ISRAEL

Jésus et Israël opens with two Forewords. The first Foreword is dated 1943, the year in which Isaac began to write the manuscript while he and his wife were in hiding in the village of Saint-Agrève, Haute-Loire. The arrest and deportation of his wife Laure, daughter Juliette, son Jean-Claude and son-in-law Jacques Boudeville, had yet to happen. Embedded in this first Foreword is Isaac’s central thesis – that the taproot of antisemitism is religious in nature and one onto which is grafted other forms of antisemitism, including racial antisemitism, to draw their sustenance.

Jewish by birth, the author cautions the reader that it was in no way his intention to write an apology for, or a defense of, Jews and Judaism. But, convinced that antisemitism is a leprosy, that the taproot of this malady originates from afar, that this taproot is religious in nature, that a multitude of Christians – Protestants as well as Catholics – have been stricken more or less deeply, more or less consciously, with the after-effects of a secular tradition that has given rise to the most odious habits of mind and heart, and of language, his aim was to demonstrate that these habits are grounded in ignorance, in error and in iniquity, and that the cure is a rational reading of sacred texts, together with a precise knowledge of historical realities.

The second Foreword is dated 1946, the year in which Isaac completed the manuscript in the tranquility and security of his home in Aix-en-Provence, and by which time he had learned that his wife, daughter and son-in-law had perished in the death camps. In the

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445 The 1943 Foreword does not appear in the second edition (Fasquelle, 1959).
447 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 11.
second Foreword, the reference to Isaac’s Jewish origins is no longer explicit, perhaps out of concern that his denunciations of a certain Christian tradition regarding Jews might be perceived as driven by a hope based on revenge. The phrase, “a secular tradition,” in the 1943 Foreword has given way to “traditional opinion, current opinion in Christianity” in the 1946 Foreword. In this latter regard, however, Isaac was intending the same thing—traditions that were manmade as opposed to inspired.

Begun in 1943, in the course of a life already threatened and uprooted, soon to be ravaged and hunted, finished in 1946, in solitude and seclusion…

[The book] was born of persecution. Midway in its writing, a tragedy crossed it. How did the book survive? Who is to say? It is a miracle, from which derives the imperative of a sacred duty—commemoration.

It is not and could not be essentially a textbook, for a discipline like exegesis— the interpretation of Scripture—demands the preparation and consecration of a lifetime.

It is the cry of a conscience outraged, of a heart lacerated. It is addressed to the consciences and hearts of its readers. I sorrow over those who will refuse to hear it…

Yet if it is not a textbook in its essence, it is so in its framework, in its methods of investigation and discussion, and, I believe I can say, in its strict probity. I am the first to regret that it cites writers of negligible—and sometimes beggarly—learning more often than qualified exegetes, whether a Wellhausen or a Loisy; but this serves my chosen purpose, which is to emphasize not scholarly research but traditional opinion, current opinion in Christianity, and thus to confront the Christian world with its responsibilities, which are grave.

Even in the darkest hours, I found the most valued help on my path. I express my infinite gratitude to all those who aided and sustained me.

The reader may wonder to what religion the author belongs. This is easy for him to answer: none. But his
whole book is witness to the fervour that inspires and guides him.\textsuperscript{448}

Albin Michel proposed to recapitulate the book in a \textit{bande-annonce} this way:

\textit{NON, le peuple d’Israël n’a pas crucifié le Christ.} Isaac countered with \textit{NON, Israël n’a pas rejeté Jésus.} \textit{NON, il ne l’a pas crucifié.} The work for which the world was waiting was, in Isaac’s words, “…more a historian’s work than a work of history.”\textsuperscript{449} Although written by a scholar, it was not a scholarly work. It was unclassifiable, as was Isaac himself. Two years after the book’s publication, Isaac elaborated.

[H]aving returned to a normal life (or almost), with all the libraries accessible again, I was tempted, terribly tempted to undo my work and then redo it. But no, I resisted the urge. The essence of the work was not an extensive bibliographical, exegetical, and theological inquiry which, given where I was at that point, would have easily filled the years I had left to live. The essence was not scholarship, not science, nor was it courtesy, good manners, or academic weightiness. The essence was the Essence, the Text, Scripture, the Word. And with respect to the Text, the freshness and integrity of human attention, a certain openness of soul, a certain analysis, absolute sincerity, and the truth of the battle waged...

This explains why it has touched hearts, caused upset, or irritation sometimes: in its massive body lives an ardent soul, a flame.

This is not enough to define it: constrained by circumstances, an ever more burdensome constraint, it became something else along the way, more than a book: the life of a being, of flesh and blood, caught in torment, riveted to his task, his oar, his galley bench. And finally something else: an act, an initiated action which willy-nilly I had to pursue, a declaration of war against hate, that nameless hate which, after simmering and making headway for centuries, finally culminated in a cursed place: AUSCHWITZ.\textsuperscript{450}

The essence was God’s Word. The war was against hate. In response to Daniélou’s review of \textit{Jésus et Israël}, which was published in 1949, Isaac wrote, “If there

\textsuperscript{448} Ibid., 13-14.
\textsuperscript{449} Isaac, "Résonance de Jésus et Israël," 207.
\textsuperscript{450} Ibid., 201-2.
is a light that shines in [Jésus et Israël], it is the Word.\textsuperscript{451} The aim, he writes in Jésus et Israël, is to “…to extricate [evangelical truth] from all the dross, from all human impurities…”.\textsuperscript{452} Even God’s Word is mediated through human consciousness. “Man is the measure of all things,”\textsuperscript{453} Protagoras is reputed to have asserted. In correspondence to Fadiey Lovsky dated 28 December 1947, Isaac wrote, “Do you think that I claim infallibility for Judaism? The Old Testament, like the New Testament, is an inspired text, but nonetheless a human text; each bears the imprint of man, as well as the imprint of God.”\textsuperscript{454} In correspondence dated 19 June 1950, Isaac wrote to Lovsky, “God speaks in the Old Testament as in the New: here is the imperative – and something not to be hidden or suppressed by theology. When God speaks, man cannot but be silent.”\textsuperscript{455} Such a supposition is unclassifiable. It is more than mere humanism, but accords neither with normative Judaism (which does not consider the New Testament as God’s Word) nor with normative Catholicism (for which the inerrancy of the scriptures is a dogma).\textsuperscript{456}

\textsuperscript{451} La NEF (no. 48, November 1948: 158-160).
\textsuperscript{452} Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 562.
\textsuperscript{453} The use of the word χρήματα (chrēmata) instead of the general word ὄντα (onta, “entities”) would seem to imply that Protagoras was referring to things originating in the human mind, including religious traditions. If this is the correct interpretation of Protagoras, Krishnamurti said the same thing in different words more than 2,500 years later. “The world outside of me – not the trees, not the clouds, the bees and the beauty of the landscape – but human existence in relationship, which is called society, that is created by you and by me. So the world is me and I am the world…This is a fact, not a supposition, not an intellectual concept, but it is a fact that the world is me and I am the world. The world being the society in which I live, with its culture, morality, inequality, all the chaos that is going on in society, that is myself in action. And the culture is what I have created and what I am caught in. I think that is an irrevocable and absolute fact.” (J. Krishnamurti, The Awakening of Intelligence (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1973), 107-8.)
\textsuperscript{454} Ibid., Soixante-Dix-Neuf lettres de Jules Isaac à F. Lovsky,” 299-300.
\textsuperscript{455} Ibid., 331.
\textsuperscript{456} According to Gregory Baum, in correspondence with the author dated 11 November 2014, “Pius XII’s encyclical ‘Divino Afflante Spiritu’ of 1943 did accept with some hesitation the historical-critical method of interpretation (taking into account the historical context of the text as well as the intention of the biblical author in writing the text). He also accepted the literary criticism of the biblical text (identifying its literary genre, such as historical document, a sermon, a myth or meaningful story, a parable, a poem, etc.). Example: Is the beautiful story of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem an historical account or a meaningful story announcing a divine truth? These two approaches were fully confirmed by Vatican Council II in Dei Verbum, the document on divine revelation, and were subsequently inserted in the Catholic Catechism produced in Rome. New at Vatican II was the setting a limit on the inerrancy of the Scriptures: they are inerrant only in
Was Isaac, like Edmond Fleg, a spiritual descendant of the Jewish Christians?

“There were in the time of Christ some Jews who saw in Jesus the greatest of the prophets of Israel, and who thus were separated from their coreligionists,” according to Jean Daniélou, “but who did not recognize him as the Son of God, and who for this reason were separated from the Christians. They are called Judeo-Christians. Hans Joachim Schoeps has devoted a book to them. Fleg is one of their spiritual descendants.”

Was Isaac another? In a footnote to Jésus et Israël that was not carried forward into the English translation, Isaac mused, “Relations between Jews and Christians were not marked by as much hostility as originally thought. One wonders, therefore, in the absence of theologians of both faiths, in the absence of the bishops and the rabbis, if the Jews and the Christians would have gotten along fine and perhaps, who knows, ended up by merging into a single believing body.”

“Did he have in mind a Jewish Christian body? “There is no common measure between the Messiah and human greatness,” Isaac writes. “Lineage has no bearing.” This was the conviction of the apostolic period first generation of Torah-observant Christians, who had given their Messiah a name above every other name, but did not identify him with God. “This was not sufficient to create a schism,” according to historian Marcel Simon. “[The Jewish Christian] christology had not yet breached rigorous Israelite monotheism; for if [the first Christians] professed a veneration [for Jesus] that raised him above the human condition,

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458 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 358, footnote 1.
they were still far off from identifying him with God. Moreover, as far as the law was concerned, they comported themselves as exemplary Jews." Elsewhere in his book, Isaac had written, “That the one year, Jesus’ single year, was enough to kindle a flame I the world which would never be extinguished thereafter is a miracle; there are none more convincing.” Statements such as these were not lost on Isaac’s Catholic reviewers, Paul Démann wrote, “Nonetheless, the tone in which M. Isaac speaks of Jesus-Christ, of ‘Master,’ singularly transcends that of a veneration and a respect due to a great man.” Jacques Madaule wrote, “This severity, this passion [with which Isaac urged Christians to reexamine their traditions regarding Jews and Judaism] would have been undoubtedly far less impactful if for the author [of Jésus et Israël] Jesus’s name was not a name above all other names.” Gregory Baum wrote, “Jules Isaac tells us that he does not believe that Jesus Christ is the saviour of mankind, yet his book is a convincing testimony of his own love for the person of Jesus and his whole-hearted acceptance of the ethical and spiritual doctrine of the gospels.”

The first edition of the book was 585 pages long and included as an annex Isaac’s Eighteen Points. The book is divided into four parts: (i) “Jesus, the Christ, a Jew ‘According to the Flesh,’” (ii) “The Gospel in the Synagogue,” (iii) “Jesus and His People” and (iv) “The Crime of Deicide.” The first two address Jesus’ Jewishness and the Jewish matrix out of which he emerged. The third Part, in which exegesis played the largest role according to Isaac, deals with Jesus and Israel in their reciprocal relations.
The fourth Part deals with the allegation of deicide. The table of contents consists not of chapters, but of Propositions - twenty-one in all - each of which introduces what would typically be styled a chapter, each of which serves to point the reader to a particular scriptural truth. Each proposition addresses an aspect of Christian teaching corresponding neither to the New Testament nor to the data of history. “A first read of these Twenty-One Propositions summarizing this work is so distressing that one dares not remain silent while the Jewish people cry these out with such anguish,” wrote Julien Green in the *Revue de Paris*. The first edition bore a dedication giving witness to what Isaac would later recall in correspondence of 25 August 1954 to his younger son, Jean-Claude: “The final words of your mother gave this mission a sacred character. I will not let go for as long as I have life in me.”

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465 The use of Proposition in lieu of Chapter was not new; it had been employed by Isaac, and fellow historian Renouvin, in their elaboration of thirty-nine Propositions following the 1935 Leipzig conference, Propositions that were incorporated thereafter “...into the most widely read of [France’s] school books and into the instruction of the better of our teachers,” according to Isaac (Quoted in Kaspi, “Jules Isaac, historien et citoyen,” 17).


468 In the dedication of the second edition published in 1959 by Fasquelle (the same year in which Pope John XXIII would convok a ecumenical council), the words “les Allemands” were replaced with “Les Nazis d’Hitler.” Between editions, might it have crossed Isaac’s mind that to tar the entire German people with the crime of genocide could be a double-edged sword in efforts to rectify Christian teaching about the death of Jesus? It did occur to Augustin Cardinal Bea, a German, who in 1960 would be appointed by John XXIII to preside over the Secretariat for Christian Unity. In an interview granted to the Jewish Chronicle on 16 August 1962 during a visit to England, Bea would reject the imputation to himself and Germans at large of guilt for Nazi war crimes. in that interview, Bea remarked, "One of the tasks of the future Council will be to reject that mistake, fraught with consequences, that Jews are collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Even the then population of the city of Jerusalem was not responsible in its entirety for the condemnation of Jesus of Nazareth. Thousands of Jews built the young Church with Saint Peter; only a minority supported the political movement that, for reasons of state, demanded the death of the Messiah. To make the entire Jewish people responsible for it, is as unjust as condemning all Germans for Hitler. I myself am of German blood, but nobody can say I am responsible for Nazi crimes." (Quoted in G. M.-M. Cottier, O.P., "L’historique de la Déclaration," in *Les Relations d’église avec les Religions Non Chrétiennes. Déclaration Nostra Aetate. Texte Latin et Traduction Française*, ed. A.-M. Henry, Unam Sanctam 61 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1966), 41. The
Isaac opens with a reference to the Germans. He closes with a reference to the Germans.

But their responsibility, he concludes, is only derivative.

The German responsibility for these crimes, as overwhelming as it has been, is only a derivative responsibility, grafted like a most hideous parasite on a centuries-old tradition which is a Christian tradition. How can we forget that Christianity, especially from the eleventh century on, practised a policy of degradation and pogroms against the Jews which has extended – among certain Christian peoples – into the contemporary era, and whose survival is observable still in Poland, with its highly Catholic history, whose Hitlerian system was merely an atrociously perfected copy?

...[Latent antisemitism] exists everywhere, and the contrary would be surprising for the perennial source of this latent antisemitism is none other than Christian religious teaching in all its forms, the traditional and tendentious interpretation of Scripture, the interpretation which I am absolutely convinced is contrary to the truth and love of Him who was the Jew Jesus. 469

The central thesis that the perennial source of antisemitism is Christian religious teaching was not new. Anglican priest James Parkes had expressed a similar point of view in his interwar writings, notably in *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, published in 1934, a work that came to Isaac’s attention shortly before *Jésus et Israël* went to press.

Parkes’ thesis is adumbrated in the closing lines of *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*:

...the Christian public as a whole, the great and overwhelming majority of the hundreds of millions of nominal Christians in the world, still believe that ‘the Jews’ killed Jesus, that they are a people rejected by their God, that all the beauty of their Bible belongs to the Christian Church and not to those by whom it was written; and if on this ground, so carefully prepared, modern antisemites have reared a structure of racial and economic propaganda, the final responsibility still rests with those who prepared the

question of collective German guilt for the genocide of the Jews has been the subject of study by not a few philosophers and historians (see p. 267 n. 4 of *Jésus et Israël*).

soil, created the deformation of the people, and so made these ineptitudes credible.\footnote{Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, 376.}

Notwithstanding this convergence, Isaac parted company with Parkes in at least two respects. First, their respective research questions were different. Parkes inquired into the causes of antisemitism. His research question that gave rise to *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* is set out in its Preface: “That the roots of the present situation lie in the mediaeval past is generally agreed. The present work tries to go a stage further and to answer the question: why was there a medieval ghetto? In 1096 there were wild popular outbreaks against the Jews in all the cities of northern and central Europe. What made this possible?”\footnote{Ibid., vii.} In framing his question thus, as early as 1930, Parkes was able to dismiss in all of one page (as follows) the whole of Christian teaching regarding Jews and Judaism. What he did not address was the question whether such tradition was faithful to scripture.

There is a terrible mystical attractiveness in [this] supernatural explanation [for the Jews as a people apart]…The idea that there is ‘a divinity’ which shapes our ends’ is a healthy one. But in this case once stripped of the more than AESchylean grandeur of the idea of the hand of God pursuing relentlessly for centuries a whole people, it involves a conception of the character of God at variance with both Christian and Jewish religion. In the Law given upon Sinai punishment did not extend beyond the third or fourth generation, and Isaiah’s words that the Jews had ‘received at the Lord’s hands double for all their sins’ would need to be multiplied to infinity to account for all the suffering through which that people have passed in the centuries since they were written. And on the Christian side it breaks down in the single fact of the words from the Cross – the Cross which is supposed to be responsible for this martyrdom of a whole people – ‘Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.’\footnote{Parkes, *The Jew and His Neighbour*, 34-35.}

Isaac’s research question, on the other hand, was new. “What was my initial concern?” he later wrote, “To know, as current Christian thinking would have it, as a living tradition...
teaches, if Jesus truly rejected Israel - the Jewish people as a whole – if he declared its fall, condemned and even damned it; conversely, if it were true that Israel misjudged Jesus, refused to see in him the Messiah and Son of God, rejected, ridiculed and crucified him; if Israel deserved nearly two millennia of the heinous stain as the ‘deicide people’…” Isaac set out to discover whether the contemptuous traditions about Jews and Judaism were scripturally true. His method was rigorously scientific; it involved a comparison of the gospel texts with a certain secular teaching contemptuous of the Jew and Judaism – his méthode des deux points de vue. Isaac needed 572 pages, not one page, to effectively denounce Christian teaching regarding Jews and Judaism as overreaching the bounds of scriptural and historical accuracy. Moreover, Isaac parted company with Parkes in yet another respect. Although both agreed that Christian antisemitism was qualitatively different from Greco-Roman antisemitism, they diverged on how. In Parkes’ view, Christian antisemitism, in contrast with what had preceded it, is abnormal, unrelated to reality. For Isaac, on the other hand, Christian antisemitism is systematic and coherent, in contrast to what he described as an incoherent and preposterous antisemitism that had preceded it. Parkes’ view is set out most succintly in correspondence of his dated 19 August 1954 in the course of a shortlived debate with Jacques Maritain which was carried on through the intermediation of Sir Robert Mayer.  

…I am convinced …that antisemitism is a creation of the Christian Church, as I expounded in The Conflict between the Church and the Synagogue. There have been movements of dislike for Jews which were not normal and not ‘antisemitic’. Their common feature is that they are related to an actual Jewish situation or activity, however grossly misinterpreted. Ancient Egyptians disliked the Jewish version of the Exodus for normal nationalistic reasons. Medieval debtors disliked their Jewish creditors for normal human reasons. But neither fact can just be

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474 Jacques Maritain Center Archives, 430 Geddes Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.
extended to cover the agelong manifestations of antisemitism, based as it is on myth and not on reality. The story of the Exodus was wounding to Egyptian sensibilities. The debtor hates his indebtedness. Good. But the Jew never was [Parkes’ emphasis] in alliance with the Devil. The Divine attitude to him never did [Parkes’ emphasis] consist exclusively of condemnation and hatred. Yet the early and medieval Christians believed both these things. Likewise today ‘the Jews’ do not control all the nations of the world and their finance. Neither have they plotted against Gentile society. Yet some modern men believe both. And there is no break in the genealogical tree between these nonreligious beliefs of modern men and the religious beliefs of their ancestors. The religious root has still to be uprooted even if (to be magnificently obvious) it is not the most visible part of the tree.

Isaac’s view is set out in his notes in the aftermath of a papal audience.

I described the bookends of the Christian epoch. At one end a pagan antisemitism, incoherent and preposterous in its accusations and at the other end, racial antisemitism, Hitlerian, the most virulent of our day, though no less incoherent and preposterous. But between the two, the only variety [of antisemitism] that was coherent and upon which one could be taken in, is that which has engendered a certain Christian theology by force of circumstances, since the Jewish negation constituted the primary impediment to Christian proselytizing in the gentile world.475

Isaac had dedicated his work to the memory of his wife. But there was evidence of yet another memorial in the form of thirteen citations scattered about the book. Among the 190 authors, scholars and exegetes listed in an index of authors cited (including le Père Joseph Bonsirven, Louis-Claude Fillion, le Père Marie-Josèphe Lagrange, Maurice Goguel, Alfred Loisy, dom Guéranger and Edmond Stapfer) figured Charles Péguy, a name that would subtitle the first (and only) volume of Isaac’s published memoirs – Les Expériences de ma vie: Péguy. The same had been done by Péguy himself to memorialize a close friend of his, Marcel Baudouin, who had died on 25 July 1896 during his year of military service and whose sister, Charlotte-Françoise Baudouin, Péguy had married. Péguy’s first work, Jeanne d’Arc, a play in three acts, had been

signed *Marcel et Pierre Baudouin*; his second work, *Marcel, premier dialogue de la Cité harmonieuse*, had been signed *Pierre Baudouin* (alias Péguy) and the name, Marcel, had figured in the very title of the work. In his memoirs, Isaac speculates about such decisions in the following terms: “It seems that Péguy, by these two works published in 1897-98, by the signature and title,” wrote Isaac, “was intent on bearing witness to a friendship stronger than death; to the fact that he had 'made ... a secret vow to prolong in them the life of the deceased, and his thoughts.'”

Daniel-Rops described the phenomenon in somewhat different terms. “Marcel dead would remain present in his life [Péguy’s]. A never-ending dialogue would go on between the two, of which Péguy’s work bears many traces.”

Is it possible Isaac was giving witness to an internal dialogue that was stronger than death, to a wish to perpetuate the life and thought of his friend most dear, when he wrote in the Introduction (Preliminary Observations on the Old Testament) to *Jésus et Israël* that from the Christian point of view, the Old Testament is “...the prelude (albeit grandiose), the prologue, the first and necessary stage in humanity’s journey toward God; that it is a preview, a prediction, an annunciation, an advance toward the light?”

The passage from Péguy’s *Mystery of the Holy Innocents* that Isaac chose to reproduce in closing his Introduction seems consistent with Isaac’s presupposition, as disclosed to Fadiey Lovsky, that God speaks in the New Testament as well as the Old.

...the old testament is that arch which rises in a rib,
In a single ridge and the new testament
Is the same arch which falls,
Which descends in a single sweep.
And the rising rib begins from the earth and it is a carnal rib.
But that sweep which falls comes from the spirit

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And it is a spiritual sweep.
And the rib and the ridge that rises issues from time
        it is a temporal rib.
But the sweep that falls comes from eternity and it is
An eternal sweep.
And the key of that mystical arch.
The key itself
Carnal, spiritual,
Temporal, eternal,
Is Jesus,
Man,
God. 479

In *Jésus and Israël*, the historical is juxtaposed with the theological, the human
with the divine, the natural with the supernatural, the temporal with the spiritual. In the
confrontation of Jewish monotheism with the Christian dogma of the Trinity “...lies the
abyss that separates the Christian conscience from the Israelite conscience,” writes Isaac,
quoting Nicolas Berdyaev... “I think so too ... But an abyss to regard with respect. It will
not be filled by pouring cartloads of insult and calumny into it.” 480 And respect it Isaac
did. And elaborate it he would in the last of his books to be published.

The Christian faith, born of the Jewish faith, is based on the mystery of the
Incarnation, a mystery which is the object of infinite respect to all
religious people, even if they do not embrace it themselves. The Christian
Incarnation means that God was incarnate in the human person of the Jew,
Jesus of Nazareth... To proceed still further: Christian doctrine teaches
both that Jesus was wholly man during his human lifetime and is wholly
God. This dual nature, human and divine, has a momentous
implication... Jesus emerges from history during his human lifetime as
man and fully man. Assuming that the relevant texts exist, history alone
can illuminate for us the respective roles of the Jews and the Romans in
Jesus’ conviction and his crucifixion on Calvary. In this purely historical
inquiry we must work without any preconceptions. On the Christian level
– Jesus as Son of God and possessing the fullness of the divine nature – it
is theology that illuminates Jesus and gives full meaning to the Crucifixion.
The simplest and clearest statement of that meaning is to be found in Point
Seven of the Seelisberg program. 481

479 Ibid., 27-28.
480 Quoted in ibid., 77. Berdyaev was an exponent of an important strain in Eastern Orthodox spirituality.
The implication of Jesus’ humanity, a complete humanity, a Jewish humanity as Isaac reminded Christians, was that he is a legitimate object of historical inquiry. Isaac considered this Jesus of history to be *sui generis*. “If I am convinced of one thing, it is that Jesus does not lend himself to any scholastic category, any,” Isaac writes. “Exactly for this reason, when someone tries to persuade me that Jesus’ universalism was not only not Jewish but anti-Jewish, that it carried an exception and that this exception was addressed to his own people, the Jewish people, the only one he knew, the only one he wanted to know, I have doubts, I ask to examine the texts.”

However separate and distinct were the categories of the metaphysical and the historical, there was nonetheless a relationship between the two. History, according to Isaac, is silent on what theology teaches since it is beyond its depth and has nothing to add. It need not come to terms with theology and cannot be disowned by theology. But the converse is not true. Theology must take history into account, must come to terms with objective history, failing which it must be disowned by history. The challenge was to extricate the deposit of historic reality embedded in the texts of the gospels, a historic reality that is sometimes hidden or veiled. And where a particular theological tradition is disowned by history, according to Isaac, “…it becomes no more than a theological myth without the slightest foundation. Therefore respect for the truth demands that myth’s condemnation and

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483 Isaac was under no illusion that there was an objective history, a “what really happened,” schooled though he had been in the positivist method by Charles V. Langlois and Charles Seignobos, both of whom were on the faculty at the Sorbonne when Isaac was a student. Their *An Introduction to the Study of History*, published in France in 1898, was translated immediately into English and published in London in the same year. Scientific history presupposes the existence of objective history. “The historian works with documents. Documents are the traces which have been left by the thoughts and actions of men of former times.” The process of joining document to document with a view to joining fact to fact is exact and painstaking, that is ‘scientific’, and permits a reconstruction of how things really were. “The document is [the historian’s] starting-point, the fact his goal.” In sum… no documents, no history.
Theological traditions which depart from “historical truth,” which do not correspond to the “data of history,” are at best legend. This point of view is nowhere better expressed than in Isaac’s last book, *The Teaching of Contempt*.

As an historian, and one little given to theological speculation, I am well aware that theology by its very nature goes beyond history in a unique way. But it is also true that in all the great religions, theology has an intimate connection with history. So it is with those three religions which may be said to be members of the same family – the Jewish, the Christian and the Moslem – since the divine revelation, the mystery of faith which is fundamental to these three religions, becomes part of their history. Therefore, history has a right to hold theology accountable for the use the latter has made of the historical data at her disposal. History has a right to ask theology not to distort or misconstrue these data and to remain conscientiously faithful to historical truth, insofar as the latter can be fairly ascertained and determined. It is true that theology goes beyond history, but only provided that theology respects history as its point of departure; this is not only its duty but, I venture to say, its sacred duty…

Isaac was under no illusion that he could dredge up the life and times of the historical Jesus. “In dealing with the difficult problem of the relations between Jesus and Israel [the Jewish people], I did not presume, nor did I intend to presume, that there was an authentic, objective history in this regard, nor was it my goal to retrieve this history,” Isaac writes. “Most often, there were no documents but the gospels, and I was explicit in my doubts about their historical weight, their ‘testimonial’ weight, with all due respect to these venerable texts…I do not purport to tell historical truth, but *scriptural truth, evangelical truth,* such as can be discerned from the [new testament] texts, in the light of, to the extent possible (unfortunately infrequent), the weightiest of historical data.”

It is possible that the first two parts of *Jésus et Israël* draw upon two inferences made by Daniel Isaac from Luke 16:17 (“But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass

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485 Ibid., 40-41.
486 Isaac, “Résonance de Jésus et Israël,” 207.
away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped“) in a sixty-one page essay
written in 1941 and titled, “Jésus et le Judaïsme de son temps.” The essay was read and
Jesus is presented to us as faithful to the doctrine of the Torah’s eternity, it may be
inferred: 1) that Jesus, if he distanced himself from the Jewish religion, did not take
himself out of the matrix of this religion, which he practised until the last day of his life;
and 2) that his teaching was ipso facto addressed to the Jews.” Fifteen years later, in a
65 C.E.] as if the risen Jesus had not instructed his disciples: ‘Go unto the world and
proclaim the good news unto the whole of creation’ (Mark, XVI, 15; Matthew, XXVIII,
19), but rather had he reiterated his prior instructions, ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles
and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of
Israel.’ (Matthew, X, 5-6).” Whether Isaac was influenced by Daniel’s scholarship or
not, the principal theses of Jésus et Israël remain the same.

- Christian teaching ought not to suppress, but rather emphasize, that Jesus was
  Jewish, a circumcised Jew, born of a Jewish mother, that he exercised his ministry
  in synagogues and in the Jerusalem Temple, that his disciples were all Jewish and
  that Jesus himself, born under the Mosaic law was observant of the law until his
  final hour.

- Christian teaching ought to teach or remind Christians that Jesus‘ teaching was
  grounded solidly in Jewish roots.

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487 Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 182.
489 Isaac, Genèse de l’antisémitisme, 145.
Christian teaching ought to teach or remind Christians that although Jesus’ adversaries included the Jewish authorities, the priestly oligarchy, rightminded persons, respectable persons and certain pharisees and scribes, his supporters included a substantial portion of the Jews in the geography where he preached (Galilee and Judea), keeping in mind that the largest part of the Jewish population, already dispersed at this time, never encountered him.

Christians ought to be quick to discredit the view that the Jewish people are the object of a divine malediction and reprobation and that they are deserving of misfortune. “The degradation or the malediction of Israel that a certain theology sees everywhere in the gospels because it has decided to see it everywhere,” Isaac writes, “is nowhere to be found [in the gospels].”

It is a gross injustice to perceive the Jewish people as deicides, first because a substantial majority of the Jews living in the Roman Empire at the turn of the Common Era never encountered Jesus, and even those in Galilee and Judea who did encounter him knew him not as God, the Son of God, or even as the messiah, but rather revered him as a great prophet. Jesus crucified was the victim not of the Jewish people, but of the Roman authority and the Jewish priestly oligarchy, both detested by the Jewish people.

Isaac, "Résonance de Jésus et Israël," 204.
Augustin Cardinal Bea, in his commentary on Nostra aetate, 4, wrote in The Church and the Jewish People at 161, "Here lies the gravity and the tragedy of their action – the exercise of their authority in the condemnation and death of Christ. Yet how grievous was their guilt? Did those ‘rulers’ of the people in Jerusalem fully understand the divinity of Christ and so become formally guilty of deicide? Our Lord on the cross said in his prayer to the Father: ‘Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34). If this reason for forgiveness is no mere empty formula – God forbid – it surely shows that the Jews were far from full understanding of the crime they were committing. St Peter also, addressing the Jewish people on the crucifixion of Christ, repeated: ‘And now brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers’ (Acts 3:17). So St Peter finds an excuse even for the very rulers! So likewise does St Paul (Acts 13:27)."
In summary, according to Isaac, a secular, man-made teaching about Jews and Judaism had corrupted evangelical truth, giving rise to myths in which “…a few morcels of truth were intermixed with a number of untruths,” he wrote, transcending scripture in order to illuminate it. “Examples included the myth of a degenerate, ossified Judaism at the time of Jesus, the myth of Israel’s dispersion as punishment for the crucifixion, the myth of an underappreciated Jesus during his ministry, rejected (as the Messiah and Son of God) and finally crucified by a refractory and blind Jewish people, and from which arose the insidious myth - more murderous than all of the others - of the ‘deicide’ crime allegedly perpetrated on the person of Christ, God’s Son, committed by the entirety of the Jewish people, and conversely, the myth of the reprobation, rejection and malediction of the Jewish people, uttered from the lips of the Lord himself, Jesus Christ.” 492 “Almost every church father has thrown his stone in this moral lapidation of the Jewish people, (and not without practical repercussions),” Isaac argued. “Saint Hilary of Poitiers as well as Saint Jerome, Saint Ephrem as well as Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Ambrose and Saint Epiphanius – this latter Jewish by birth – and Saint Cyril of Jerusalem. But among this illustrious cohort, venerable in other respects, two names merit special mention: the great Greek orator, Saint John Chrysostom…for the abundance and the truculence of his invective, bordering on the outrageous, and the great doctor of Latin Christianity, Saint Augustine, on account of his marvelous (and dangerous) ingenuity in the elaboration of a coherent doctrine [the Jews as a witness people and the consequential system of degradation and debasement].” 493

492 Isaac, Genèse de l’antisémitisme, 160.  
493 Ibid., 161.
According to Proposition 11, “Christian writers deliberately omit the fact that at the time of Christ, the dispersion of the Jews had been a fait accompli for several centuries. The majority of the Jewish people no longer lived in Palestine.” What was the mischief at which Proposition 11 was directed? Wrote Augustine in *The City of God*, “But the Jews who rejected him, and slew him, . . . after that were . . . dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” Wrote Pope Gregory the Great (590-604), “The apostles had scarcely set foot on the land of exile when Judea fell to Titus; her people, driven forth, were scattered all over the earth.” Wrote Father Ferdinand Prat, S.J. whose translated two-volume work, *Jésus Christ*, according to Isaac, was recommended reading for priests and seminarians in many countries, “The vengeance of God will descend without mercy on this deicide people . . . The miserable remnants of Israel will be scattered throughout the vastness of the world, where they must bear until the end of time the weight of this mysterious malediction.” Wrote Protestant Reverend Jean Bosc, “The Jews refused to acknowledge their king; they mocked him, condemned him to death, crucified him . . . They denied God to His face . . . And God [punished] them. He took away the land he had given them as the sighn of his promise . . . They are scattered over the surface of the earth, without a land of their own . . . with a religion robbed of its substance.” Not historical, contended Isaac. “Christian Writers deliberately omit the fact that at the time of Christ the dispersion of the Jews had been a fait accompli for several centuries. The majority of the Jewish people no longer lived in Palestine,” he writes. “ . . . [T]he great Dispersion of the Jewish people, that dispersion perennially offered to Christian thinking

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495 Quoted in Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 45.
496 Quoted in ibid.
497 Quoted in ibid., 46-7.
498 Quoted in ibid., 47.
– often from the height of the pulpit – as punishment for the crime, took place several centuries before Jesus’ time, before the crime.”499 And thus was this tradition demoted to the status of legend. But some legends die hard. In later life, Isaac would have to defend this position.

How deeply rooted such convictions can be [the dispersion of Israel as a divine punishment] is further illustrated by a barb recently aimed at me by one of the Catholic critics of Jésus et Israël: ‘To confuse the Diaspora with the final dispersion foretold in Luke 21:24 is frankly laying it on a bit thick… [Abbé Tissier, mimeographed lessons (No. 220, p. 5).]’ This good Father is so shocked by my bad faith that he stoops to vulgarity.

So we must teach him another lesson in exegesis and history. For is it not ‘laying it on even thicker’ to force Scripture and history to say things they do not say, and to continue to force the Christian public to believe them?

First, the exegesis: What does Jesus foretell in Luke 21:24? (He is referring specifically to Jerusalem: ‘But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies…’) ‘For…they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led away captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.’ Not a word of this passage implies total or final dispersion. Jerusalem and Judea devastated, Jews killed and taken prisoner, the seizure of Jerusalem by the Gentiles: such are Jesus’ prophecies and nothing more.

And such also is the evidence of history.500

Isaac presupposed that the drafters of the Gospels intended to serve religion and not history.

The Gospels are not “pure historiographical works but teaching works,” says Aimé Puech. “The evangelists wanted not to compose a rigorous history, as we understand the term today, but to mount a demonstration,” observes Joseph Bonsirven. “The Gospels are not history books…The evangelists were primarily concerned with throwing light on the religious value of Jesus’ life through a selection of scenes which brought their teaching with them,” writes Daniel-Rops. That is indeed their purpose: teaching, ‘catechesis,’ not history. It certainly does not follow that the Gospels are denuded of historic value. But it necessarily follows that

499 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 158.
religious concerns, concerns of ‘demonstration,’ prevailed over strictly historic concerns in the minds of the evangelists.\textsuperscript{501}

He presupposed that that the canonical Gospels, once reduced to writing, were not secure from alterations, additions or suppressions.

We might recall in this connection, as painful as the words are, the accusation made by the pagan polemicist Celsus in the second century in \textit{The True Account}, which we know through Origen’s refutation of it in Against Celsus, 2:27: ‘…certain of the Christian believers, like persons who in a fit of drunkenness lay violent hands upon themselves, have corrupted the Gospel from its original integrity, to a threefold, and fourfold, and many-fold degree, and have remodelled it, so that they might be able to answer objections.’ And Celsus was not alone in saying this: among the Christian writers contemporary with him, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Dionysius of Corinth recognized that “the writings of the Lord’ had been unscrupulously falsified.”\textsuperscript{502}

Finally, he kept in mind the historical fact that during the period that the Gospel tradition was being reduced to writing, a gulf was opening up between synagogue and church.

Then took place the divorce between Judaism and Christianity – a wholly deplorable divorce. Church and Synagogue became moral enemies, each anathematising the other, each claiming to be the true Israel of God. Learned Jews and Christians engaged in furious polemics. From both sides, such polemics have exceeded all measure, all charity, all respect for God or men. There was bitter competition between the two missionary activities. But it is just here that we discover a fact of great importance for our subject: in pagan eyes the Jewish rejection was the greatest argument against Christian claims, and therefore the principal obstacle to the success of the Christian apostolate. Said the pagans: ‘you tell us that Jesus is the Messiah, the Saviour announced by the Jewish prophets; how is it, then, that Jews are not the first to recognize him?’ Here was an obstacle that had to be removed. And so began the efforts of the Christian apologist to discredit his Jewish adversary, to spread distrust of him, to make him appear contemptible, hateful, odious. In short, here is the reason for the growth, the persistence, the violence of Christian anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{503}

\textsuperscript{502} Ibid., 427.
Shortly before *Jésus et Israël* went to press, a doctoral thesis came to Isaac’s attention. It had been completed on the eve of the Second World War but its defense and publication was deferred until the war had ended. The doctoral candidate was Catholic Marcel Simon. The title of his thesis was *Verus Israël, Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l’Empire romain (135-425)*. The thesis was defended before a Sorbonne jury that included Henri Marrou, who would himself refer to the study as “…a first class work,” but whose relationship with Isaac was to rupture following Marrou’s less than favourable review of *Jésus et Israël*. Simon’s uncontested thesis, in his own words in a post-scriptum to the 1964 edition of *Verus Israël*, was this: “Judaism, far from having withdrawn into itself, was for Christianity, throughout the period in question (135 C.E. - 425 C.E.), a real, active and often effective, competitor.” Simon closes his Foreward dated January 1947, by which time he was chargé de cours at the University of Strasbourg, with appreciation to his mentor, Charles Guignebert (by then deceased), “…whose lucid counsel and untiring generosity sustained me throughout my years of study and research.” The following passage in *Verus Israël* was sufficient to qualify Simon for footnote reference in *Jésus et Israël*.

Justin [Martyr], let us not forget, anti-Jewish polemicist, was also Christianity’s apologist with a view to influencing Roman opinion and authority…In effect, the thesis that informed his entire plea is that Rome’s naissant hostility vis-à-vis Christianity was the result of a misunderstanding. That Christianity was treated as an enemy [by Rome] resulted from an absence of exact information, since [Rome] knew the religion only through malevolent reports. The apologist’s intent was to reveal to [Rome] the true face of Christianity. Roman rulers and ruled transgressed through ignorance only. One had to look elsewhere for those

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505 Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel*, 2d ed. (Paris: Boccard, 1964), 477. In effect, Simon inferred from the vehemence of church father polemic in the period under study a Judaism that had not withdrawn into itself.

506 Ibid., 6.
responsible for this state of affairs. Why not in Israel? The tactic was not original. Its provenance was primitive Christian preaching, and appears clearly in the gospels. Their authors, anxious to cultivate Rome, set themselves to developing a version of the Passion account such that the Roman authority, represented by Pilate, comes out with almost clean hands, while the Jews are demolished by a freely admitted guilt: ‘That his blood be on us and on our children!’ Demands of a theological nature, the presenting of the Jews as resistant to the divine message, thus coalesce with preoccupations of political opportunism.”

The tactic [of reducing the responsibility of the Romans to a minimum in order to increase the responsibility of the Jews proportionately] is not recent. It dates to the origins of Christian preaching and appears clearly in the gospels. Their authors, eager to court Rome, patently applied themselves to presenting a version of the Passion such that Roman authority, represented by Pilate, would emerge from the affair with almost clean hands, while a freely accepted responsibility would crush the Jews: ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’ The exigencies of theology, which shows the Jewish people rebellious against the divine message, thus joined with the interests of political opportunism.

In proferring this hypothesis, Simon was but drawing upon his own mentor, Guignebert.

Twenty years earlier, in 1927, Guignebert had written in his Christianity Past and Present,

According to all appearances, the efforts of our evangelists to absolve the Roman from guilt, and lay upon the Jews the entire responsibility for the crime, are not inspired by a desire to be true to the facts, but by a desire to humor the Roman authorities, for they were writing it at a time when these authorities were the sole support of the Christians against the animosity displayed toward them by the synagogue.

Within a century following the death of Jesus, the exoneration of Pilate from blame in the execution of Jesus was complete. Tacitus’s “Christus, the founder of that [Christian] name, was put to death as a criminal by [per] Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the

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507 Ibid., 146-47.
508 Marcel Simon, Verus Israel (Paris: Boccard, 1948), 147.
509 Quoted in Moehlman, 235.
Isaac was not the first to note that the term “Jews” in the gospel of John sometimes designates the Jewish people as a whole, sometimes the inhabitants of Judea and sometimes the clique of Jesus’ enemies (those the synoptics designate as “the chief priests, the scribes and the Pharisees). But he appears to have been the first to hypothesize that the near impossibility for the unalerted reader of the fourth gospel to distinguish “…between ‘Jews’ and ‘Jews,’ between the ‘Jews’ who were Jesus’ relentless enemies and the rest,” was intended by the evangelist. To make his point, Isaac cites numerous passages from the gospel of John. Here is one of them.

The Jews were looking for him [Jesus] at the feast, and saying, ‘Where is he?’ And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, ‘He is a good man,’ others said, ‘No, he is leading the people astray.’ Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him [Jn 7:11-13]

Isaac asks his reader to re-read the passage rapidly. What is the dominant note? What unalerted reader would think of distinguishing between and among the ways in which the author uses the word, “Jews?” Isaac reproduces the passage inserting the implied ‘the Jews’ in the phrasing – ‘the [Jewish] people,’ and farther on, ‘some [of the Jews]’ and ‘no one [among the Jews].’

The Jews were looking for him [Jesus] at the feast and saying, ‘Where is he?’ And there was much muttering about him among the [Jewish] people. While some [of the Jews] said, ‘He is a good man,’ others [of the Jews] said, ‘No, he is leading the [Jewish] people astray.’ Yet for fear of the Jews no one [among the Jews] spoke openly of him.\(^5\)

Continues Isaac,

\(^5\) Quoted in ibid., 64.
\(^5\) Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 195.
Father de Grandmaison and Father Lagrange consider that the use of the words ‘Jews’ in this special sense is ‘quite natural,’ according to one, and ‘rather natural,’ according to the other; perfectly explainable, they both assure us. I readily agree: explainable, but in a completely different way; explainable, but on one condition and one only: explainable, if it was intentional. But what a polemical find, and how far-reaching! Given that it is nearly impossible for the reader of the fourth Gospel to distinguish between ‘Jews’ and ‘Jews,’ between the ‘Jews’ who were Jesus’ relentless enemies and the rest, it is likewise nearly impossible for him to read this Gospel, unless he is forewarned against such a stylistic procedure…

And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus… [5:16]. Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life…’ The Jews then murmured at him… [6:35, 41]. Jesus then [spoke] to the Jews who had believed in him…They answered him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ ‘…we have one Father, even God.’ Jesus said to them, ‘…You are of your father the devil…’ [8:31, 39, 41-42, 44]. The Jews said to him, ‘Now we know that you have a demon…’ So they took up stones to throw at him… [8:52, 59]. The Jews took up stones to stone him [10:31] …the Jews sought all the more to kill him… [5:18; see also 7:1; 8:40; etc].

What Christian heart would not be revolted by this infernal hatred?512

A measure of the temperature of first reactions elicited by the book is the 10 June 1948 debate that was radio-broadcast by the Paris Tribute and chaired by Paul Perronet. Participants were Jules Isaac, R.P. Jean Daniélou, Pastor Charles Westphal, Russian theologian Léon Zander, professor at the Orthodox Institute of Theology of the Russian Emigration Church, and Isaac supporters Jacques Madaule and Samy Lattès. Isaac led off by adumbrating his conclusions. “A reading and rereading of the Gospels in ’43-’44, the hardest years of my life,” Isaac recounted, “led to me conclude that the received tradition regarding Jesus in relation to Israel and Israel in relation to Jesus, a tradition that in no way impacts upon Christian faith and doctrine, overreaches in many respects the New Testament text, and that this received tradition, taught for hundreds and hundreds of years by thousands and thousands of voices, was, in Christendom, the primal and permanent

512 Ibid., 195-96.
source of antisemitism, the powerful, secular taproot upon which all the other varieties of antisemitism grafted themselves. It follows that only Christian teaching can seek to undo that which Christian teaching has done; and it seems to me that if it can, it should.\textsuperscript{513} It seemed inconceivable to Isaac that the identification of strands of secular tradition, even those embedded within the gospel texts themselves, could in any way impact upon Christian faith and doctrine since they were not God’s Word. What he failed to appreciate is that to discredit the credibility of certain gospel texts was to discredit these texts as biblically inspired unities according to normative Catholic doctrine.

Pastor Westphal weighed in by acknowledging the correctness of certain historically evident truths about Jesus and Temple Judaism. However, he argued, implicit in \textit{Jésus et Israël} is the supposition that if Jewish Christianity had won the day over Paul, everything would have been different, in which case, Westphal said, “…we would have been the dupes of an immense error that would have corrupted Christian thought, compelling us today to reject the epistles of Saint Paul and the gospel of John in order to retrieve the meaning of the revelation of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{514} Isaac refused to be drawn into post-Easter theological reflection. “I stopped at the crucifixion,” he retorted, “and the question, the problem of how it came to be that Christianity broke forth from Judaism in the period that followed the crucifixion is a problem of great magnitude that cannot be addressed here…”\textsuperscript{515} P. Daniélou acknowledged that Christ was “\textit{Juif de race},” that the dispersion of the Jews was not a consequence of Christ’s death but a \textit{fait accompli} centuries before his birth, that the milieu into which Christ was born was a richly pious

\textsuperscript{514} Ibid., 2. In the 14 July 1948 issue of \textit{Le Monde}, Westphal referred to the book as an “ouvrage accusateur” which exposed “une théologie implicite” with which the Gospel of John, the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul cannot be made to conform
\textsuperscript{515} Ibid., 3.
milieu. However, he submitted, “...it is undisputable, however – and this you downplay – that Christ desired to break with this milieu and inaugurate into history a different epoch. This you minimize, and as a result, by doing so, you diminish for a Christian the transcendence of Christianity over Judaism... Christ was put to death because he presented himself as God and as the Son of God, and thus the term ‘deicide’ is accurate.” In effect, Isaac had shrunk Jesus from the Son of God to a mere prophet and called into question Jesus’ divinity and divine sonship with his demonstration that according to the gospels, the Jews were ignorant of Jesus’ status as Messiah and Son of God. “I think this critique can be turned around,” Isaac responded, “and if I have minimized [certain aspects of the gospels], Christian teaching, Catholic teaching has infinitely more dejudaized Jesus...I also never said that Jesus was put to death as a prophet. What I said was that the people, the great masses, never knew him as God, that they revered him as a prophet - my exact terms – and that Jesus was crucified, a victim of the Roman authority and the priestly oligarchy.” It was then the turn of Isaac’s supporters to speak. Jacques Madaule, reminding the participants and listeners that on an unbiased reading of the New Testament, Jesus was born Jewish, of a Jewish mother, lived according to Jewish law, his apostles were Jewish, as were the first Christian martyrs, and that “…it is impossible to make [the gospels] say truthfully that which they do not say, that is, the Jewish people in its entirety is responsible for the death of Christ. And yet that is what we have incessantly heard for nineteen centuries.”

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516 Ibid.
517 Ibid.
518 Ibid.
Isaac’s apparent living contact with, and discernment of, God’s Word in the New Testament texts was not lost on his Catholic reviewers. Jacques Madaule, in a review published in *Témoignage chrétien* (4-6-1948), wrote,

The infinite respect with which [Isaac] has dealt with these venerable [gospel] texts is not lost on us...He asks us to face up to our responsibilities...Is it not correct that a certain tradition, a certain manner of reading and interpreting the gospel texts, that has made its way into our liturgy and to the most basic of catechesis, could have contributed, likely did contribute to promote hostility toward Israel? Are not the ghettos and the pogroms, the ovens of Auschwitz and other [death camps], in large part, the repercussions? These are the ‘Christian’ responsibilities with which Isaac confronts us … respectfully, but I repeat, severely, with honesty and with passion...a severity and passion that would be surely less compelling if for the author the name of Jesus were not a name above all other names.\(^{519}\)

Father of Sion Paul Démann, in a review of *Jésus et Israël* published in January 1949, wrote,

It is to be regretted that M. Isaac avoids the question of Christ’s divinity and by implication, denies this...Yet the tone in which M. Isaac speaks of Jesus-Christ, referring to him as ‘Master’ surpasses that of mere veneration and respect for a great man. Without purporting to read into his work what is not there, did not the author himself and for himself draw from Mark, XII, 35-37, the ‘...lesson that seems clear and can be formulated thus: There is no common measure between the Messiah and human greatness. Lineage has no bearing...’ (p. 61), and did not he write regarding the duration of Jesus’s ministry, ‘That the one year, Jesus’ single year, was enough to kindle a flame in the world which would never be extinguished thereafter, is a miracle; there are none more convincing.’ (p.170) … It behooves us not to scrutinize the spiritual underpinnings, conscious or subconscious, of *Jésus et Israël*. However, it did appear to us that the Christian reader will be unable to truly appreciate this book without taking into account its ‘soul.’\(^{520}\)

Isaac’s venture into exegetical territory was also the subject of note. For example, in relation to Matt. 5:17 (“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill”) Isaac comments,

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\(^{519}\) Reproduced in Madaule, "La Tragédie juive et le mystère d'Israël," 14.

\(^{520}\) Démann: 22.
We do not know the Aramaic word Jesus used... For to express Jesus’ thought and will, the evangelist, his interpreter, seems deliberately to have chosen the most concrete and clearest words: plerosai, to fill or fecundate, is opposed to katalusai, to dissolve, destroy, overthrow. Some Catholic translators, like Canon Crampon and Father Lagrange, have made an effort in this direction by substituting ‘to perfect’ for the usual translation ‘to fulfill.’ ‘To give fullness’ seems to me to express the exact meaning of plerosai even more forcefully. ‘The context does not make interpretation easy,’ says Pierre Letringant. But what do you want, then? All you need do is give up the tendentious ‘to fulfill’ for it all to become clear: not only do I not overthrow the Law, said Jesus, or empty it of its content, but on the contrary I increase that content, so as to fill the Law full to the brim.521

Writing to Charles Journet on 28 September 1948, Maritain asked, “Have you read Jules Isaac’s book? Notwithstanding the nonsense as ‘historian,’ his purported critical exegesis of the Gospels and the silly coups de griffe to you en passant, in my opinion, this book merits serious reflection and is often well-founded against a curiously unthought-through manner of speaking (for example, Père Lagrange).”522 Much later, Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas would level a similar critique when addressing a Sorbonne symposium on 15 February 1967 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Ten Points of Seelisberg and the establishment of l’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France. “Many among us do not agree with the language of Jules Isaac in which too much theology is intermixed with too much history,” said Levinas, “But for all the essence of his thesis remains - the refusal of the mephistophelian guilt of he who does good while wishing harm, or he who is said to have brought about the salvation of the world because he alone, in all of humanity, is thought to have the soul of an executioner.”523

Most disappointing were the two reviews of Jésus et Israël authored by Jean Daniélou (titled “Jésus et Israël,” La NEF, no. 47, October 1948: 117-120) and Henri

521 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 118-19.
523 Levinas: 372-73.
Marrou (titled “Trois Apostilles,” *Esprit*, June 1949), the latter of which was to rupture relations between Isaac and Marrou. 524 Daniélou was a Jesuit priest and *Les É* editor. Since 1945, Marrou had held the chair of ancient Christian history at the Sorbonne. 525 Both reviews were reflective of a longstanding tradition that the Jewish transgression was not the crucifixion, but the post-Easter unbelief, the refusal to believe after the resurrection. “I am accused by [authors such as these] of losing my way, that I break down open doors, that ‘it must be understood’ that these scriptural discussions are futile,” Isaac wrote, “that ‘deicide does not consist…in putting Jesus to death,’ but in the *ex post facto* refusal to believe in Jesus-Christ, in what the church calls the *Perfidia judaica*, a refusal by which the Jewish people makes itself complicit with Caiaphas, in effect manifests its solidarity with him, as if such a refusal, however serious in the eyes of Christians, justifies or excuses such an accusation repeated thousands upon thousands of times, and which accusation one might say is dripping in blood, the blood of Jews…as if we have not here the most unjustifiable abuse of rhetoric and of thinking, the most contrary to the principal teachings of Christ, and in spite of my denunciation of this murderous obfuscation, that is more or less wished for [in Christian circles].” 526 These reviews were also reflective of a longstanding tradition that Jewish refusal of Jesus as the Christ was the explanation for the evolution of Christianity in the last third of the first century from a Jewish sectarian movement to an autonomous religion. Not so, Isaac contended.

I can find this tradition and its expression, it is true, in the most aggressive of critiques of my book, *Jésus et Israël*, and by good Catholic authors at that... As a matter of history, and on the basis of accounts, even those of

524 Marrou was using the word "apostille" to mean a marginal annotation or added recommendation.
526 Isaac, "Résonance de Jésus et Israël," 207; see *Jésus et Israël*, pp. 292, 358-359, 570-571.
Scripture (Acts of the Apostles), it is less straightforward, must less straightforward…The ‘Christian rejection’ [of the law] and the ‘Jewish rejection’ [of Jesus as the Christ] are inseparable one from the other, and in the last analysis, one, ‘the Jewish refusal’ (of Christ) was conditioned by the other, the ‘Christian rejection’ (of the law). Undoubtedly, the reality is more complicated; other causes operated, doctrinal causes – the evolution of Christology –, circumstancial causes – events within Judea, the flight (of the Jerusalem church) to Pella, the destruction of the Temple. But the law’s rejection itself is sufficient; to demand such of the Jewish people, and not just of the Gentiles, would be tantamount to demanding that they rip out their hearts. There is no precedent in History for such a collective suicide.527

Daniélou opened by noting that “M. Isaac does a profound injustice to Christian commentators, Catholic [PP. de Grandmaison, Lebreton, Bonsirven] or Protestant, in accusing them of misrepresenting [the Jewish people]” and that “M. Isaac did not confine himself to the relation of Jesus with Judaism, leaving untouched the gospel accounts. It is against these very accounts that he raises his hand, taking issue not only with the manner in which tradition deformed [the gospels] in their transmission, but with the [historicity of] the gospel accounts themselves….Christianity itself is in question, suspected of a secular deviation.”528 Daniélou then administered the coup de grâce. “If the initiative for Christ’s death was primarily that of the Sanhedrin, the [Jewish] people, in refusing to confess Christ’s divinity, in effect ratified the judgement of the high priests…If the Jews rejected Christianity, as their leaders rejected Christ, it is because they refused to believe in his divinity, and not because they were asked to abandon some customs.”529 Isaac rebuttal appeared in the following issue of La NEF (no. 48, November 1948: 158-160). Regarding

527 Isaac, Genèse de l’antisémitisme, 144-145, 147.
529 In a book published by Daniélou in 1963 and titled Dialogue avec Israël (of which an English translation would follow in 1968), Daniélou would add that Isaac “…goes too far when, in his desire to declare the Jewish people innocent, he wants to put the responsibility for it on the Romans and thus to reduce it to an episode in the political history of Judaism. The texts of the Gospel make this argument difficult. Isaac then becomes suspicious of its authenticity. Let us simply say that this is a bad method, dependent on outdated exegesis.” (p. 70)
the unjust attack on Catholic commentators, Isaac responded, “…this accusation is unjust and without merit. I spoke of such respectable authors, of all respectable authors, with the greatest of esteem. If I chose to refer to their works rather than all and sundry, it was to demonstrate by typical excerpts, uncontestable, that even among the best of the commentators, certain unjustifiable traditions are still too easily accepted, by force of habit.”

Regarding critique of the gospels themselves, Isaac retorted, “…it is by [the gospels], especially by them, that my book has value, from [the gospels] that my book acquires its shining virtue. If there is a light that shines in this book, it is the Word.”

Regarding the Jewish unbelief in the divinity of Jesus after the resurrection, wrote Isaac, “[i]t is the P. Daniélou who confuses two problems, that of the alleged rupture between Jesus and Israel, and that of the (subsequent) rupture between the Synagogue and the Church…I will not allow you to drag me onto dogmatic terrain that is not my own, that I am not evading but refuse to address, and that is entirely unnecessary to address in the present debate.” Isaac added, “I admire the ingenious euphemism by which you describe the rejection of the Mosaic Law and strict monotheism. In the last analysis, I posed before the Christian conscience a capital question: do the gospels entitle us to affirm, as does too often Christian teaching, that Jesus rejected the Jewish people, pronounced its decline, or even cursed it, and on the other hand, that the Jewish people did not appreciate Jesus, that the people rejected and crucified him? To this capital question, I have responded in the negative, further to a rigorous examination of the texts.”


531 Some eighteen years later, in 1966, the young rabbinical student who had directed the network of resistance in the Haute-Loire, who had been charged with procuring false papers for the Isaacs, who had become a disciple of Isaac, would confront Father Daniélou in a dialogue. Jean Daniélou was by that time dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic Institute of Paris. André Chouraqui was by that time a doctor of law and laureate of the Faculty of Law in Paris and former personal adviser to Ben-Gurion. Like a
Marrou’s review was really an addendum to the putative review of *Jésus et Israël* by Rabi,\(^532\) which was published as, “*Méditations aux sortir des ténèbres.*” Mounier’s *Esprit* was in obstructionist mode; Mounier and his Catholic circle evidently wanted this work to be stillborn. In advance of the book’s publication, Isaac had offered *Esprit* extracts from *Jésus et Israël*, an offer that was declined. “This [omission] cast a shadow on relations between Isaac and Marrou, whose proximity to the journal *Esprit* was known to all,”\(^533\) according to Lovsky, who added that the review by Rabi was no review at all. Recalled Lovsky,

> If he spoke of *Jésus et Israël*, or referred to it (I counted 241 lines), in 487 lines (double) Rabi alternated between his personal opinions, those of Simone Weil, of Klausner, of Salvador in the prior century, of Sartre, of Trotsky-ite Léon, of Zionist Kadmi-Cohen, of Freud. It was not at all a review, but an essay in which, if Jules Isaac received a few plaudits, his book was buried under the weight of discussion of a more general nature…was but the point of departure for a meditation impugning the work. Apart from the fact that *Esprit* had juxtaposed two Jews, what was intended by Isaac as an interpellation addressed to Christians became a debate, moreover one which impugned, between two Jews… [Marrou] must have been aware that Rabi’s piece was not really a review.\(^534\)

By the time review was published, Marrou had resigned as first president of *L’Amitié judeo-chrétienne*. A draft of the review was sent to Isaac under cover of correspondence, dated 5 April 1949, in which Marrou wrote,

> I know and am deeply saddened that what I have written will wound you profoundly… I hesitated (more than one year)…You are aware of my

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\(^532\) Wladimir Rabinovitch was writer, journalist and magistrat au tribunal de Briançon.


\(^534\) Ibid., 267-8.
sentiments, my longstanding desire to strive my best to eradicate antisemitism… but what I must say is this: if it be true that Jesus did not declare himself God, did not transmit to his apostles a message containing in essence the transcendence of the old covenant, all our faith is in vain.\textsuperscript{535} it is not only antisemitism that must be renounced; it is all that is our Christianity… I want as much as you do to purify Christian teaching and vocabulary of all the residue of an unacceptable antisemitism (which [antisemitism] I interpret as a regrettable and erroneous implementation of a true principle: that the Church of Christ is henceforth the True Israel and that the Old Covenant has given way to the New, according to the eternal and inscrutable designs of God).\textsuperscript{536}

That fact that Marrou by his own admission hesitated almost one year before expressing his views implies his views were in gestation during this year and explains that by 5 November 1948, Isaac was aware that Marrou wished to resign from his shortlived office as president of \textit{L’Amitié judéo-chrétienne}.\textsuperscript{537} Isaac was not pleased when he read the draft of Marrou’s review, Lovsky recollects.

There was an uncomfortable meeting at Fleg’s home. Isaac was in Aix, but he had gone down in writing [probably with the draft of a rebuttal, also destined for publication]. Marrou had the courage to attend. He was visibly shaken. The [June 1949] issue of \textit{Esprit} had been printed, but not yet mailed. Marrou was most dignified. He admitted that he had erred; he would have withdrawn his review were it possible… Marrou had taken umbrage at Isaac’s positivist historical method, having failed to discern the spiritual message in \textit{Jésus et Israël}… Neither Rabi nor Marrou were dialogue partners in Christian-Jewish dialogue; … their reactions were academic. Jules Isaac - and this is the paradox – was also an intellectual; however, misfortune had driven him to penetrate a transformative spiritual reality into which he wanted to drag Christians. That was the message of \textit{Jésus et Israël}; that was the backbone of the AJCF: antisemitism addresses us on a spiritual plane; \textit{Jésus et Israël}, despite its imprecision, addresses us on a spiritual plane.\textsuperscript{538}

Marrou followed up with a letter of apology dated 18 June 1949, writing.

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\textsuperscript{535} Echoes of Galatians 2:21 "…for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing."
\textsuperscript{537} Isaac, "Lettres de Jules Isaac à Jacques Madaule," Isaac closes a letter to Madaule dated 5 November 1948 with "I vote for Jacques Madaule as president and shake his hand très amicalement (p. 619)."
\end{flushright}
...I regret again that you did not communicate these remarks in advance of the publication of my review. They would have induced me not to renounce, of course, the essence of my critique, but to rectify certain inept expressions, doubly regrettable since they amounted to factual errors and caused you offence. Had I been able to read [your rebuttal] in time, I would not have written that your book murders the Christian reader at practically every page; I would have said, more aligned to my thinking, that at a certain number of pages, it murders me, in that which I consider to be the essentials of my Christian Faith. By the same token, I would say that...in wishing to exculpate to the extent possible the Jewish people as a whole, you impute so much blame to Pilate that you do not do justice to the religious significance of the opposition to Jesus of the Jewish authorities.”

To do justice to this religious significance, did Marrou have in mind the rhetoric of Saint Augustine? “The end of the Lord is imminent,” Augustine had written. “They arrest him, the Jews; they insult him, the Jews; they bind him, the Jews; they crown him with thorns; they soil him with their spittle; they heap insults upon him; they hang him on a cross; they pierce his body with a lance.\(^{540}\)

Marrou opened his review by observing that “…M. Isaac, who wishes simply to persuade, murders [the Christian reader], and at almost every page, in regard to that which is held most dear – his Faith...Of course, M. Isaac does not see this, and this derives no doubt from his personal position when he wrote his book...he declares at the end of the preface that, not belonging to any confession, ‘His book throughout attests to the favour that inspires and guides him.’ It is with this sentence, intentionally ambiguous, that he abandons his reader.”\(^{541}\) (In the second edition, published by Fasquelle in 1959, Isaac would clarify, “I have been accused of abandoning my reader with this deliberately “ambiguous” sentence. So I am going to clarify: fervour regarding Israel, fervour regarding Jesus, son of Israel). Marrou continued by critiquing Isaac in his method, that

\(^{539}\) Reproduced in Marrou: 628.

\(^{540}\) Quoted in Isaac, *Genèse de l'antisémitisme*, 167.

\(^{541}\) Reproduced in Marrou, "Trois Apostilles," 629.
in apparent obliviousness of *Formgeschichte*, Isaac had read the gospel exchanges between Jesus and the Jewish authorities as if these exchanges were a judicially stenographed transcription. But the nub of Marrou’s critique is to be found in the second of his three *apostilles*: “The solution to the problem is not to be found where Isaac has searched,” wrote Marrou. “If there is a Christian, religious taproot to modern antisemitism, it is not to be found in the [Catholic] hierarchy’s confusion regarding the causes of the crucifixion [the *principal* cause of which Marrou acknowledged to be the sins of all men], but (and it is this upon which Rabi has shed light) in the *Perfidia Judaica*, in the unfaithfulness of Israel, in its persistant, obstinate refusal to recognize in the Jew, Yeschoua, the Messiah, only Son of God, who was incarnated for us and for our salvation.”

Isaac’s response appeared in the August 1949 issue of *Esprit*, with the angrier *ad hominem* portions excised. Regarding the murder of Christian readers in their faith at each page, Isaac wrote,

> Are not ‘Christian readers’ the men of faith and of goodwill who have lauded me publicly, men such as André Rousseaux, Jacques Madaule, Bernard Voyenne, Fr. [Paul] Démann, Jean-Jacques Bernard, Julien Green, Albert Finet, James W. Parkes, the pastors Duclos, Bruston, and what about all those [Christians] who have paid me visits and sent me letters, among whom I have the honor of counting eminent members of the Catholic clergy, leading off with Fr. de Lubac? Or is it contrary to Christian Faith, or injurious for it, to have accepted as a fundamental principle and grounding of my contentions the repeated return to Scripture, to the gospel texts? Tell me, Marrou, who gave you the right to speak for ‘Christian readers?’ Which tribunal? We are no longer in the XVth century at a time when the Sorbonne regulated Catholicity – and sent Joan of Arc to the stake….My religious position is in no way relevant. I write as a free man, alone – before God. Nobody has the right to call into

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542 *Formgeschichte* means “history of form.” Its English correlate is called "form criticism," the method of analyzing a text and dividing it into its “original” subunits based on literary pattern. In this sense it is related to what is called “source criticism” in the study of the Hebrew Bible.

543 Reproduced in Marrou, "Trois Apostilles," 634.
question the respect that I hold, and which I have unambiguously expressed, for the Christian Faith, as well as for the Jewish Faith, even if I find it impossible to give my support exclusively to one or the other.⁵⁴⁴

In response to the first of Marrou’s apostille (“M. Isaac is an apologist, and like all apologists, makes an unreasonable case;…with a view to absolving from the accusation of ‘deicide’ the Jewish people in its entirety, he seeks to shift all responsibility for [Jesus’] death upon Pontius Pilate and the Romans. It is not Pontius Pilate who took the initiative of arresting Jesus in the first place!”), Isaac replied,

It is false, absolutely false, that I sought to shift the entire responsibility upon Pontius Pilate and the Romans. The Jewish responsibility is evident, set out, defined at each step. One need only peruse [Jésus et Israël] to recognize it, but Marrou, have you read me? I have reason to doubt it…The conclusion of Proposition XVII, p. 414: ‘As a matter of history, within Jerusalem and the Sanhedrin, there was a sacerdotal, lay oligarchy consisting of a handful of powerful families, of which the most powerful was that of Hanan, father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. This oligarchy, sadderuccean by belief, cruel and tyrannical in its ways, was Rome’s puppet and detested by the people. It is this oligarchy, by all accounts, that played the [Jewish] role…What remains, then, Marrou, of your first ‘addendum?’”

Regarding the matter of method (“…it is naïve to expect the [synoptic] gospels to relate word for word the exchanges between Jesus and the Sanhedrin”), as if these accounts of Jesus’ trial are word-for-word stenographic transcripts of the hearing in disregard of the fact that what we know we know only as related by the community out of which the gospels emerged (Formgeschichte hermeneutic), Isaac, noting that the probative value of the passion accounts is most difficult to ascertain, wrote the following rebuttal.

If [as Marrou argues], we cannot consider the gospels as first-hand accounts, if, as Bultmann affirms, ‘There is not a single word uttered by Jesus the authenticity of which can be verified,’ if, as Marrou himself writes, ‘It is naïve to expect [the Gospels] to relate word for word the questions and responses exchanged’ before the Sanhedrin, on what basis

does Marrou conclude it is ‘certain’ that Caiaphas posed the question [to Jesus], ‘Are you the [true] Son of God?’ and that Jesus replied in the affirmative? Marrou himself demolishes the foundations of his own position; and not just his, that of Catholic exegesis in general.\textsuperscript{545}

Isaac’s heated exchanges with his reviewers faded in 1949 when the opportunity arose for Isaac to plead his cause to a higher authority. In October of that year, when on vacation in Rome, he met with certain Catholic clergy, including P. Marie-Benoît, then spiritual director of the \textit{Grand Institut des Capucins} in Rome. Isaac was encouraged to request a \textit{billet de l’audience publique} with Pius XII at the latter’s Castel-Gandolfo. Isaac’s first reaction was to resist; as a Jew, he had nothing to do with the Pope. P. Marie-Benoît persisted and Isaac relented. He decided the time was right to tell Pius XII that the decision of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites on 10 June 1948 to authorize the translation of \textit{perfidis} with expressions signifying a lack of faith in Christian revelation in the Good Friday prayer for the Jews had been necessary, but was not sufficient.\textsuperscript{546} The Good Friday prayer for the Jews had not always been the only prayer for the Jews in the Roman liturgical cycle. “The Church does indeed know its duty; it has never failed to join mercy to reprobation,” Isaac wrote. “‘We must have pity on them [the Jews], fast and pray for them,’ we read in the Didascalia, a liturgical breviary dating to the third century… One must ‘pray for them,’ Saint Justin said, Saint Augustine repeated. But there is prayer and there is prayer.”\textsuperscript{547} The prayers for the Jews would be reduced ultimately to one (already known to Gregory of Tours in the sixth century) - the \textit{oremus}

\textsuperscript{545} In correspondence to the author dated 14 January 2008, Gregory Baum wrote, “Most exegetes think that the divine status of the man Jesus was recognised by the disciples only after the resurrection. The recorded events in the life of Jesus are to a large extent what we call post-Easter projections, that is to say - the disciples, telling the life of Jesus after Easter, did not produce a biography of Jesus in the modern sense, but presented his life as already revealing his divine sonship. Hence they do not hold that the Jewish court condemned him because his claim contradicted their monotheistic belief.”

\textsuperscript{546} Promulgated on 16 August 1948 in the \textit{Acta Apostolicae Sedis} (vol. IX, no. 8, p. 342).

\textsuperscript{547} Isaac, \textit{Jésus et Israël}, 364.
on Good Friday – the day of universal redemption when Catholics are called to pray for the various states and sections of humanity. In this prayer, Catholics prayed pro perfidis Judaei (for the perfidious Jews) and petitioned God to have mercy on the Judaica perfidia (Jewish perfidy). Since the ninth century, the silent prayer on bended knee between the solemn exhortation and the official prayer, as well as the Amen in response, had been omitted in the intercession for the Jews, (no doubt, suggested Maritain in his 1921 a lecture at the Semaine des Écrivains Catholiques, out of a “…sacred horror that [the Church] reserves for the perfidy of the Synagogue”].

“Better no prayer than a prayer like this,” lamented Isaac. Certain Catholic authors felt the accusation overreached. “In fact, in the Latin of late antiquity, (the time of Gregory the Great) when many of the prayers of our liturgy were composed,” according to then Augustinian priest Gregory Baum, “perfidia simply meant unbelief or disbelief, and thus the prayer was not meant to accuse the Jews of the despicable moral quality called perfidy in modern language, but merely to attribute to them a lack of faith in Jesus Christ. They are unbelievers; and their unbelief has a peculiar quality distinct from the unbelief of heretics and heathens.” Writing in 1964 on the occasion of the publication of the second edition of his Verus Israël, Marcel Simon would put it this way: “It seems difficult to see in the Catholic liturgy an essential medium for this ‘teaching of contempt,’ [for Jews and

548 There is much in Maritain’s first public utterance on the Jewish Question in 1921, delivered in the form of a lecture at the Semaine des Écrivains Catholiques, about which he would be sensitive in later career. Moreover, in 1921, he had yet to formulate the vocabulary that was to be original to him. The lecture was published in both the quasi-official Documentation Catholique (30 July-6 August 1921) and the Dominican review, La Vie spirituelle. Unlike Maritain’s later pronouncements on the Jewish Question, this first lecture was never to see the light of day in an English translation nor was it to be included in his collection of essays published in 1965 and again in 1990 under the title, Le mystère d’Israël. Most likely, it was to this first public utterance on the Jewish Question that Maritain was alluding when he wrote in a footnote in the Avant-Propos of Le mystère d’Israël, “J’ai, en particulier, supprimé un certain nombre de redites (il en reste encore trop, hélas; comment faire autrement avec des textes traitant du même sujet et écrits à des moments forts divers, pour des lecteurs ou des auditoires différents?)”

549 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 364-65.

Judaism] for Good Friday scarcely concerns itself with the Jews: it seems to presuppose a sensibility on the part of the mass of christians to these texts, prayer and ‘impropères,’ assembled at one moment in the liturgical year and, what’s more, recited in latin, an impenetrable language to the vast majority of the faithful.”\textsuperscript{551} But surely this is naïve. What about the missal instructions, in the vernacular, to refrain from saying Amen and to refrain from kneeling in connection with, and only in connection with, the prayer for the Jews? These are instructions the mass of Christians would have understood. How could such instructions not but propagate contempt for Jews and Judaism?

A \textit{billet de l’audience publique} was secured for Sunday 16 October 1949. The audience was one of a sequence of audiences and it would last no more than six or seven minutes. In Isaac’s own account of it, one gets a sense of him as a man with a mission – as a missionary to Christians.

An embassy car took me there. Once inside the audience room, I saw a motley crowd, cardinals and chamberlains coming and going. Interesting show, but, I thought, well, what could I say in these conditions?

A surprise was awaiting me. A chamberlain called someone. Nobody got up. As I was already deaf, I said to myself: maybe it’s me? It was indeed me. I was seated in a small room. After a moment, a chamberlain introduced himself, a curtain parted, the Pope in white appeared. We were standing, facing each other, roughly the same height and age. I introduced myself as what I am, a non-Christian. “Welcome,” said the Holy Father, “I’m listening.”\textsuperscript{552}

I opened by relating how I had been led to devote myself to the study of Christian-Jewish relations, on a spiritual plane, which is fundamental, notwithstanding the current significance of the temporal issue of Palestine…I then articulated the goal toward which were directed all my efforts, that is, a rectification of Christian teaching concerning Israel [i.e. the Jewish people] with a view to diminishing a principal obstacle interposed between Christians and Jews. I told him that in this regard, together with several good Catholic companions, we had already made

\textsuperscript{551} Simon, \textit{Verus Israel}, post-scriptum at 489.

\textsuperscript{552} Quoted in Toulat, 140-41.
good progress and had secured a favourable result at the Congress of Seelisberg in the form of the redaction (entirely christian) of the ten points the text of which I showed him, as it was published in issue No 1 of the Amitié Judeo-chrétienne.

I emphasized the extreme importance of [the ten points], provided it was implemented. I told the Holy Father of my deep, sincere conviction that if he agreed to examine the ten points, to have them examined, to disseminate them in all countries following their scrutiny by the ecclesiastical authorities, a very large step would have been taken on a path assuredly agreeable to God, and that this could prove of capital importance for christian-jewish relations.

…I handed him along with the Congress of Seelisberg brochure the first two issues of l’Amitié judeo-chrétienne, showing him in issue No. 2 the text – which he recognized – of the apostolic act respecting the prayer pro perfidis Judaeis. On this subject, I took the liberty of pointing out that the suppression of the genuflexion for this Oremus alone - a suppression the cause and timing for which is difficult to know with certainty as a matter of history – was a greater cause for concern than the translation of ‘perfide’: a decision to reverse could, this also, have a profound resonance in within Jewish hearts.553

Pius XII gave me a medal, and left in a rather moving way; before disappearing to give the public audience, he turned around three times, repeating: “I bless you ...” I felt he was quite moved. He was perhaps not accustomed to the at once friendly and direct tone. I do not claim that my request was the cause of the decision taken in 1955 to restore the genuflection [in the prayer for the Jews]. However, the Pope must have retained a memory of it, because shortly after my audience, he made a speech in which he spoke of Israel in uncharacteristic terms.554

In correspondence dated 3 November 1949, Isaac wrote Sr Geneviève Gendron,

“However previous this audience, my hopes are not high. It is my fervent wish that a positive result will be forthcoming, but it is no longer in my hands. Would that others would take over from me! And would that they bring to bear all their influence! Perhaps these others can be found. Fathers Marie-Benoît and Callixte were very pleased at my

554 Quoted in Toulat, 140-41.
initiative, and their satisfaction is my first recompense.” The papal allocution to which Isaac referred in his account of the audience was given on Christmas Eve 1949. The allocution was described thus by John Oesterreicher writing twenty years later:

On the occasion of the Holy Year, 1950, more precisely at its opening on Christmas Eve 1949, Pius XII invited all men to Rome. In particular he gave a welcome to Christians separated from Rome and together with them, to the Jews. ‘We open the sacred gates to all who worship Christ – which is not to exclude those who await his coming in good faith, though in vain, and honour him as the one who is proclaimed by the Prophets though not yet come – and offer them a fatherly greeting and welcome.’ There is a new spirit at work here, even though the ‘old’ language is still being used. Today we give a more positive value than this to the Jewish expectation; we no longer venture to speak of a vain, and therefore senseless and fruitless waiting. We prefer to see the Jewish hope in its inner relation to that of the Christians. But the Pope’s invitation, despite its defective wording, is a great advance. It is the first ecclesiastical text that places the ‘Jewish question’ in an ecumenical framework. The Jews are mentioned here in the same breath as non-Christians – the sub-title of the printed text speaks of ‘dissident Christians.’

Six years later, in 1955, the Sacred Congregation of Rites, overthrowing a millennium-old tradition, would decree that the genuflexion and silent prayer should be inserted in the intercession for the Jews in the reformed liturgy of Holy Week. In 1959, on Good Friday, Pope John XXIII, in a decision more spontaneous than planned, would omit the words perfidia and perfidis in the liturgy and on 5 July 1959, the Sacred Congregation of Rites would announce that this change, initiated by the pope, was to be followed by the priests in the Church universal.

In 1951, after Isaac had made known his discontent that his book had yet to be reviewed in la Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses, a thoughtful and nuanced review of Jésus et Israël appeared in the journal. It was written by Marcel Simon, the

555 Quoted in Marx, 153.
very same historian whose doctoral thesis had been cited by Isaac in support of the latter’s contention that the gospel redactors in the last third of the first century had compelling reason to shift the blame for the crucifixion from Roman shoulders to Jewish ones. Simon opened his review by noting that it was very late to be commenting on a work that was already three years old and which had spilled so much ink, not all of it for the better and that such a book should be treated with the utmost of tact. Although he took no issue with Isaac’s situating of Jesus in his Jewish milieu, in his view, Isaac’s book minimized the differences between Jesus and his Jewish milieu by emphasizing what they had in common. This emphasis, argued Simon, served to diminish Jesus’s originality and made difficult an explanation for why Jesus was the object of attack by all within official Judaism who played a religiously authoritative role.

I am persuaded in particular that the friction between Jesus and the pharisaic Judaism that Isaac justifiably seeks to rehabilitate, and which represented at that time the richest element [within Judaism] was deeper than he admits. What the Pharisees opposed was not Jesus’s messianic pretensions: even if proclaimed with overwhelming evidence, which is far from established; this does not serve to explain the pharisaic hostility; two irreconcilable views of religious life, and of the significance of the Law and its halachic expansion. In this regard, I can do no better than refer the reader to the incisive pages on point of James Parkes in his Judaism and Christianity (London: 1948, pp. 57 et seq). and to H. J. Schoeps’ “Jesus und das jüdische Gesetz” in Aus frühchristlicher Zeit (Tübingen, 1950, pp. 212 et seq). This opposition, embracing in embryo all subsequent Judaism,

558 Parkes’ commentary to which Simon alludes on the two seemingly irreconcilable points of view on the significance of the law, as expanded by the rabbis, can be adumbrated as follows. There are two explanations for the mutual hostility between the Pharisees and Jesus. In the first place, neither Jesus’ discipleship nor Pharisaism was a closed order. The Pharisees desired to enhance observance within Israel. Jesus’s mission was aimed at the same constituency. Secondly, each of Jesus and the Pharisees “…paid the other the compliment of considering them the most important alternative teachers to themselves… [Jesus] concerned Himself with the Pharisees because in His view, they were so nearly right. The Pharisees concerned themselves with Him because he was so obviously being successful in bringing a new reality of God and a new fellowship between men into the lives of ordinary people (p.59).” Parkes contends that nowhere do the Pharisees charge Jesus with making new law (and therefore founding a new religion) although he concedes that Jesus’ prohibition of divorce was the unique instance of exactly that. His proscription of divorce aside, however, “It was not more or different Halachah that Jesus desired, but deeper spiritual insight…The conflict was not over two schools of Halachah. It was concerned with two methods of bringing men into contact with the living God (p.60).”
identified after 70 with pharisaism, explains the final failure of Jesus in Israel."

Even if one concedes that the enthusiasm of the crowds for Jesus was as widespread and deep as the gospels portray (and Isaac contends), argued Simon,

…it must be recognized that [this enthusiasm] was shortlived. What remained of these crowds after the crucifixion? Of course, small as it was, the first [Christian] community was Jewish; Jewish were the twelve, Jewish the first missionaries, Jewish was Saint Paul…but the substantial majority of diaspora Jews would have come to hear of [Jesus] ex post facto and rejected him nonetheless. It seems to me difficult to distinguish (as does M. Isaac (Résonance, p. 203) between an alleged ‘Jewish resistance to Jesus’ teaching’ and ‘afterword, principally, the intractable Jewish loyalty to the Mosaic law and to monotheism, as most strictly conceived.’ For what is the latter if not the consequence of the former? And if not, at what point the schism? \[560\]

Was there not a bit of sleight of hand in such a contention? As Simon himself would argue in a later publication, a monograph entitled, *Les Premiers Chrétiens*, Jewish loyalty to Torah precepts did not follow upon Jewish resistance to Jesus’ teaching *per se*, but upon Jewish resistance to Jesus’ teaching, *as subsequently interpreted by Paul*.

Simon closes his review by addressing Isaac’s contention on the final page of *Jésus et Israël* that “…the perennial source of…latent antisemitism is none other than Christian religious teaching in all its forms, the traditional and tendentious interpretation of Scripture, an interpretation that I am absolutely convinced is contrary to the truth and love of him who was the Jew Jesus.” \[562\] Simon was not persuaded, having not “…preserved the memory of such intoxication from the catechism of my childhood,” he wrote “…Moreover, I have my doubts that in an era as entirely secular as ours, the key driver of such a state of mind and antisemitic measures is to be found in

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theology…Christian antisemitism is not ‘eternal’ antisemitism, but [the successor] to Greco-Roman…”563 The implication is that Jew hatred is perennial; it is not an invention of the Christian church. Such a hypothesis was not new. Bernard Lazare had argued the same in 1984 in his L’Antisémitisme, son histoire et ses causes.564 “Inasmuch as the enemies of the Jews belonged to diverse races, as they dwelled far apart from one another, were ruled by different laws and governed by opposite principles; as they had not the same customs and differed in spirit from one another,” Lazare wrote, “so that they could not possibly judge alike of any subject, it must needs be that the general causes of antisemitism have always resided in Israel itself, and not in those who antagonized it.”565

564 Lazare’s thesis, “…however awkwardly framed and exaggerated,” according to Lovsky was endorsed by the latter. However, he argued that antisemitism was a sui generis antipathy, related not to the temporal, but to the spiritual. “Antisemitism is not the hatred of just any minority, national or religious, but of Israel,” wrote Lovsky. “There is a connection between Israel’s mission in the world, taken so seriously by so many generations of Jews, and the world’s perception of the people who incarnate this precise vocation…For the virulent antisemite discerns in the Jews not psychological traits or the customs of a minority, but Israel’s vocation. How surprising it is, then, that those among [antisemites] who are most acutely aware of Israel’s mission are as vulnerable to the antisemitic impulse as the crowds ignorant of Israel’s destiny — lunacy for the atheists and scandalous for Christians themselves.” (Lovsky, Antisémitisme et mystère d’Israël, 12-13.)
Despite the decade-long hiatus between the publication of the first edition and the new revised edition of *Jésus et Israël*, the book continued to reverberate throughout the 1950s, as did the Ten Points of Seelisberg. In 1952, Fr. Paul Démann published *La Catéchès chrétienne et le Peuple de la Bible*, an inquiry into two thousand Catholic school manuals in the French language. The study was prefaced by Cardinal Saliège. The following are some examples of Catholic teaching regarding the Jews that were unearthed by Fr. Démann in his examination of the school manuals.

*On the themes of a degenerate Judaism and a sensual people:*

The religious life of the Jews was reduced in the time of Jesus to pure exterior formalism.

The Jews had neither the fear nor the love of God.

Imagine the mentality of the people to whom Jesus was speaking; they look for happiness in gold and silver, in filthy lust, in quarrelling and revenge.

*On the themes of an accursed people, a deicide people, on the Dispersion as divine punishment:*

That his blood be upon us and upon our children! And God, my children, has granted this terrible prayer of the Jews. For more than nineteen centuries, the Jewish people have been dispersed throughout the world, and have kept the stain of their deicide – that is to say, of the abominable crime of which they were guilty in putting to death their God…

Until the end of time, children of Israel in dispersion will carry the curses which their fathers have called down upon them.566

In early 1954, Isaac was invited to address the North African branch of the World Jewish Congress. He gave the conference sponsors seven or eight choices of subject-matter. The

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response was uniformly the same. “They asked for *La Dispersion d’Israël*,” he recalled, “and it was my preference since it most aptly typifies the evil a traditional teaching in conflict with the historical truth can wreak. A tradition so enduring that it ultimately suppressed, overshadowed the historical truth and took hold among all as if it were true…”567 Everywhere Isaac spoke, in Algiers, in Morocco, in Casablanca, in Marrakesh, the crowds were large and deeply moved. On his return to France, he published his lecture as a monograph, *La Dispersion d’Israël. Fait historique et mythe théologique*, to which were appended his Twenty-One Propositions (Paris, 1954). The Foreword adumbrates Isaac’s thinking as the decade was nearing its halfway mark.

1943-54. It has already been more than ten years.

It has already been more than ten years that I have dedicated myself to one task: to expose and eradicate if possible what appears to be, in the view of History, the deepest root of antisemitism, its Christian roots, a specific traditional Christian teaching.

But so there can be no doubt, no misunderstanding in this respect: in accomplishing my task I am and I remain a man of “Jewish-Christian Friendship”.

Christianity has everything to gain – that is my belief – by freeing itself from a pernicious tradition, which does not touch on faith and dogma.

What is a religious life, whatever it may be, without an incessant effort to purify? What is a religious life that is not out of love, brotherhood, charity?

Substituting a climate of friendship for the former climate of mistrust, hostility and hatred, establishing spiritual peace based on understanding and mutual respect of beliefs, that is my goal.

But friendship does not exclude candour. Spiritual peace is only achieved through a stubborn struggle against prejudice and error, and respecting historical truth.

That is why I felt it necessary to say and write what follows.

567 Quoted in Kaspi, *Jules Isaac*, 220.
This “pernicious tradition which does not touch on faith and dogma” was a man-made tradition, in Isaac’s view. How could Christian faith and dogma be impacted by strands of tradition that were secular? But if the gospel traditions themselves had been corrupted in the course of their redaction, the credibility of the Christian message seemed at risk.

In 1956, Isaac’s *Genèse de l’antisémitisme* was published by Calmann-Lévy. This self-styled “essai historique” was 330 pages in length. Appended was an annex entitled “Brève Défense de Jésus et Israël,” which consisted of Julien Green’s review of *Jésus et Israël,* Isaac’s Twenty-One Propositions and a partial transcription of the *Tribune de Paris* radio debate broadcast on 10 June 1948. *Genèse de l’antisémitisme* is essentially a rebuttal to longheld notions within Christian circles that antisemitism had existed at all times and in all places long before the Christian era. According to this viewpoint, it is Jewish intransigence, Jewish separatism and Jewish non-assimilation that are the perennial causes of antisemitism. “Not only today, but from the beginning of their existence, the Jews have been looked upon as an alien group, a thorn in the flesh of humanity,” contended the Theological Committee of the Swiss Evangelical Society.

“Anti-Semitism is as old as Judaism itself, the very essence of which is to refuse to accommodate itself to the mind and manners of other peoples and to provoke universal antipathy,” wrote Hermann Gunkel, as quoted by W. Vischer, in *Esther.* Isaac was not so naïve to deny that Christian antisemitism had not been preceded by a Greco-Roman antisemitism. “All historians know that [Christian antisemitism] was preceded by a pagan antisemitism – more proximate in time and of less scale than is generally thought,” he conceded, but continued, “…That which seems to me historically demonstrable…is that

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568 This review was published in the June 1949 issue of *Revue de Paris.*
569 Quoted in Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt,* 27.
570 Ibid., as quoted at 27.
Christian antisemitism by far transcends [pagan antisemitism] in its continuity, its 
systematic approach, its malignancy, its scope and its depth."^{571} Not all scholars were 
persuaded. Addressing Isaac’s *Genèse de l’antisémitisme*, historian Marcel Simon wrote 
in a post-scriptum to the 1964 edition of his *Verus Israël*,

Isaac has a tendency to downplay prechristian antisemitism in the Greco-
Roman world. The [antisemitic] texts that he cites in this regard seem to 
him ‘mere trifles, in total, drops in a vast sea of literary production.’ The 
indispensable corrective to the views [expressed by Isaac] may be found in 
the very dense chapter devoted to pagan antisemitism by F. Lovsky, 
*Antisémitisme et mystère d’Israël*, Paris, 1955...As the author judiciously 
notes, ‘It should be noted that a scholarly text is never negligible; after all, 
Tacitus and Martial had more readers, and for longer, than the church 
fathers, the latter confined in a rather narrow circle’ (op. cit, p. 7, n. 1).^{572}

If pre-Christian antisemitism should not be downplayed, argued Anglican 
Reverend James Parkes, it should be recognized as qualitatively different in essence from 
Christian antisemitism. Unlike Greco-Roman antisemitism, Christian antisemitism, 
contended Parkes, is dislike of the Jews for reasons that relate more to projection than to 
reality. In the course of a debate between Parkes and Catholic philosopher Jacques 
Maritain through the intermediation of Sir Robert Mayer,^{573} Parkes rejected Maritain’s 
view, expressed in correspondence dated 9 November 1954, that Christianity “…is not 
and cannot be, antisemitic, for any antisemitic utterance is an insult to Christ and His 
Mother, to the Apostles, and to the Church (‘Spiritually we are Semites,’ Pius XI has said) 
in which the Gentiles are grafted on the olive tree of Israel.” He also rejected Maritain’s 
description of medieval antisemitism, “…nefarious as it may have been, (especially when 
allied with the greed of princes for money) [as] essentially impatience against those who

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^{571} Isaac, *Genèse de l’antisémitisme*, 19.
^{572} Simon, *Verus Israël*, 32 of the post-scriptum
^{573} Jacques Maritain Center Archives, 430 Geddes Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.
prevented by their spiritual obstinacy the advent of Christ’s Kingdom on earth.” Parkes’ rebuttal was forwarded to Maritain on 21 December 1954.

[Maritain] cannot meet my point by citing the medieval Church. Before that there was the early Church! It was in the patristic period that the foundations of antisemitism were laid. Of course there were places where Jews were disliked before that. That I have never denied. But such dislikes were normal human xenophobia, linked, however erroneously, with the actual situation or behaviour of the Jews disliked. What is peculiar to ‘antisemitism’, and the phenomenon to which that word should be exclusively applied, is dislike of the Jews for reasons which bear no genuine relation to the Jewish situation at that time. And of this phenomenon, the Church is the originator. I have dealt with it at length in The conflict of Church and the Synagogue and my facts have never been effectively controverted.

Jews were hated in Alexandria for despising the Egyptians. Jews did celebrate annually, as one of their main festivals, the Passover which presented a very unpleasant picture of the Egyptians. The resulting dislike of Jews was normal.

Jews were killed in the Middle Ages for being in league with the Devil. They never were in league with the Devil. They were killed for poisoning wells. They never did poison wells. In our own time they have been killed for controlling world finance. They never did control world finance. The resulting dislike of Jews is not normal, i.e. it is “antisemitism.”

In Genèse de l’antisémitisme, Isaac examined the middle third of the first century comprising the first thirty-five year following the crucifixion, the apostolic period. His research led him to conclude that in that period, the good news was proclaimed within a Jewish matrix. What is most remarkable,” Isaac continued,

is not that there was resistance [to this kerygma], but that there were a growing number of Jewish Christians; thus was born the church, born Jewish, of an exemplary Jewish piety, entirely observant of the Law…In the initial period that extended to the [first] Jewish War, from 30 to 66, the Jerusalem church co existed [with other Jewish sectaries] mostly in peace…The first persecution – Stephen martyr – seems to have been restricted to the ‘Hellenists’ since the apostles were exempted (Acts, VIII, 1); its cause was a charge of blasphemy ‘…against this holy place and the law.’ (Acts, VI, 13). A second more widespread persecution occurred in 44 – James, son of Zebedee, martyr -: ordered by Herod Agrippa I, it
ended almost immediately with [Agrippa I’s] sudden death, perhaps even prior thereto. As for the martyrdom in 62 of James the Just, brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem Church, Josephus recounts that it was an isolated incident, a show of power by the high priest, Hanan, who was repudiated by the people at large and deposed shortly thereafter. This, then, is the sum total of the persecution of [Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians] during the thirty-five or so years of Jewish autonomy.

Simon’s conclusions match those of Isaac. In a study that was limited to the apostolic period (30 C.E. – 70 C.E.), Simon wrote, “The [Jewish] persecution [of Christians] consequential on the stoning of Stephen was restricted to his followers, the Hellenists [Greek-speaking Jews]. When we are told in Acts that the entire Jerusalem church was [following the stoning of Stephen] dispersed except for the apostles (Acts, 8, 1) it is impossible to give credence to this testimony.” “By what strange logic,” he asks, “would the Jews leave untouched the leaders of a community they wished to attack? In fact, the continuation of the [Acts] account implies that only the Hellenists were the object of attack: not the church, but a part of the church that had not expressed unconditional solidarity [with Jewish law].” Like Isaac, Simon notes that the only instance of persecution of the Jerusalem church as a whole was that conducted by Herod Agrippa (44 C.E.) in which James the apostle and possibly his brother, John, were killed, and Peter temporarily imprisoned. Simon hypothesizes that the cause of this persecution might have been the decision of the first apostolic council that gentile converts to Christianity need not be circumcised. According scholarly consensus, this council took place circa 48 C.E.

574 Isaac, Genèse de l’antisémitisme, 145-146.
576 Herod Agrippa was a grandson of Herod I who in 37 C.E. was appointed tetrarch of the dominions of Philip and Lysanias (Upper Galilee, Abilene and parts of Lebanon). In 41 C.E., his territories were enlarged to include Jerusalem and Judea and he had been granted the title of king. Jerusalem became his capital and the Sadducean high priesthood, his allies. (W.H.C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity, 90).
to invert their order,” Simon writes, “and hypothesize that the persecution followed, rather than preceded, the council, and was driven by the very substantial concessions… made on this occasion by the Jerusalemites, as argued for by Paul, who refused to impose on gentile converts the burden of Jewish observance.”

What, then, provoked an intra-family mission to come to an end in the last third of the first century? In the absence of documents, Isaac could only speculate. He hypothesized that the intra-family mission was destined to run dry from the moment Christianity, reoriented toward the Gentiles, rejected observance of the Law. The Jewish refusal to see in Jesus the Messiah or the Christ is all of a piece with the Christian refusal of the Law, and with such refusal, Christian rejection of Jewish Christianity. By the time of Justin’s dialogue with Trypho shortly after the end of the second Jew War (c. 135 C.E.), the marginalization of Jewish Christians within the nascent church was complete. In response to Trypho’s question whether one who believes Jesus to be the Christ and also observes the commandments of Mosaic law shall be saved, Justin replies that “…in [his] opinion” such a man would be saved provided they did not actively persuade non-observant Christians to do the same. However, he acknowledged that “…there are some Christians who boldly refuse to have conversation or meals with [Jewish Christians].”

On 9 October 1958, Pope Pius XII passed away. The man who succeeded him was then the Patriarch of Venice. This man had been apostolic nuncio to Turkey and Bulgaria from 1925 to 1937, to Greece from 1938 to December 1944 and to France from 1945 to 1953. During World War II, this man had quietly collaborated with the Jewish Agency to provide thousands of Jews in Bulgaria and Hungary with false baptismal

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578 Simon, Les Premiers Chrétiens, 42.
certificates and false travelling visas to enable them to flee Europe for Palestine. It was this man, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, who was elected Bishop of Rome on 28 October 1958, taking the name of John XXIII. Within the first three months of his papacy, he convoked an ecumenical council, in an almost confidential fashion, with his announcement on 25 January 1959 in the Roman monastery of Saint Paul’s-Without-the-Walls. At this announcement, John XXIII would eludicate that one of the chief ends of the ecumenical council would be to work for a reconciliation of separated brethren. In his Encyclical of 3 July 1959, Ad Petri Cathedram, he declared, “The chief end of the council is to advance the development of the Catholic Faith, the renewal of Christian life among the people, the adaption of ecclesiastical discipline to contemporary conditions. Assuredly, this will afford a wonderful spectacle of truth, of unity, of charity, and we are confident that in seeing it those who are separated from this Apostolic See will see in it a warm invitation to seek and find unity.” On 21 March 1959, this man would with one stroke of his pen delete from the Prayer for the Jews the word perfidis [perfidy] and the expression perfidia Iudaica [perfidious Jews]. At first, these suppressions seemed to extend only to the churches of Rome itself. But on 5 July 1959, the Sacred Congregation of Rites formally extended the papal decision (as had been the Pope’s intention) to the liturgy of the whole Church. This man would also do away with two other prejudicial sentences, one in the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart, recited every First Friday, the other in the ritual of baptism of converts.

580 The previous council had been summoned by Pius IX in June 1867 in solemn and grand fashion in the presence of 500 bishops who had assembled in Rome from all over the world to assist in the celebrations in commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Peter.
582 Paul VI removed mention of conversion and the assertion that the Jews require deliverance "from their darkness" and introduced a reference to the Jews as "the people of Abraham beloved by God."
The appearance of the new revised edition of *Jésus et Israël*, published by Fasquelle, happened to coincide with the solicitation in mid-June 1959 of the wishes and desires (*consilia et vota*) for the Council agenda. The solicitation was carried out by the Vatican II pre-preparatory commission, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Dominico Tardini (the very same Tardini who had declared earlier that year in conversation with Cardinal Tisserant, “…there is no possibility of contact or negotiations with the killers of God”). Over 2,400 bishops, 156 superiors-general of male religious communities, sixty-nine pontifical faculties of theology and canon law, and the Roman curial departments were canvassed. The responses were printed by the Vatican Press *sub secreto* in fifteen volumes totaling 9,520 pages. Recalls Fr Thomas Stransky, a first staff member of the Secretariat for Christian Unity who perused these responses in preparation for the first plenary meeting of the unity secretariat,

To my surprise I discovered no mention of a theological clarification of Catholic-Jewish relations, no pastoral concern of anti-Semitism within the Church – apart from a few exceptions, such as an Italian prelate who complained about “the insidious coalition of Communists, Jews and Freemasons”; and nineteen Jesuits on the faculty of Rome’s Pontifical Biblical Institute who submitted a carefully worded contribution on the avoidance of anti-Semitism…Many wanted a discussion on Christian unity and Catholic-Orthodox-Anglican-Protestant relations, and even relations with neighbours who are ‘unbelievers’ or atheists. Nothing on Catholic-Jewish relations. Many bishops pressed for confrontation with a long list of corrosive-isms: secularism and indifferentism, neo-Gnosticism and spiritualism, illuminism and relativism, above all, communism…But anti-Semitism within the Church and in society? Not on anyone’s list. I asked myself: Was such indifference an unintentional collective oversight? Was the genocide experience of the Jews in *Christian Europe* [emphasis added], the ‘final solution’ for the world’s Jewish people, already forgotten or so marginalized? Were the heavily publicized

Nuremberg War Trials in 1947 a quickly extinguished blimp? Did no bishop read Anne Frank’s Diary or see the film?  

The brief of the Pontifical Biblical Institute to which Stransky refers, reflective of a purifying tendency within the Catholic Church, was dated 24 April 1960 and signed by then Rector Ernst Vogt, S.J., on behalf of himself and eighteen other teachers at the Institute, all Jesuits from various countries. A petition of the Council fathers titled, “On the Avoidance of Anti-Semitism” (*De antisemitismo vitando*) and set out in the last paragraph of the dogmatics section, requested that the Council include the problem of the people of Israel in its considerations of questions concerning ecumenism. It is thought to have been authored by Stanislaus Lyonnet, S.J.  

The petition reverberates with Isaac’s thinking. The urgency of the petition arose from sermons and instructions which, on account of defective exegesis, taught the ‘accursedness’, ‘rejection’ and also the ‘collective guilt’ of the Jewish people. For the true proclamation of the mystery of the Passion, the Biblical Institute also rightly pointed to the catechism of the Council of Trent with its emphasis that all sinners – all persons – are to be reckoned as Jesus’ crucifiers. A special reason brought forward for the petition was the “error of the ultimate rejection of the ‘chosen people’” which rested on a false interpretation of such passages of the New Testament as Mt 27:25; 24:2; 1 Thess 2:16; Rom 9:22. Finally, the signatories of the petition saw in the Pauline teaching that a time would come when ‘the full number of the Gentiles come in’ and ‘all Israel will be saved’ (Rom 11:25, 26), a prediction thought to be the best weapon with which to put a stop to any theologically embellished anti-Semitism, or to make its revival impossible.  

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584 Stransky, 34-5.  
585 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 8.  
586 Ibid., 9.
tendency is reflected in a letter, dated 26 April 1960, received by the pre-preparatory commission from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. In this letter, the university declared three propositions to be unacceptable: (i) “the Jews rejected and crucified Jesus,” (ii) “the believers from the Gentiles have been elected instead of the people of Israel,” and (iii) “the People of Israel have been rejected by God forever.” The university also recommended that Christians should pray “…that the prophecy in Rom 11:25-26 be fulfilled and the People of Israel be placed in the elect locus reserved for it in the Church of Christ.”

In October 1959, a meeting took place at the Hôtel Terminus in Paris regarding the agenda of Vatican II. None of the members of the pre-preparatory commission was in attendance. But the meeting would set the wheels in motion for an unprecedented addition to the agenda of Vatican II. The initiative for the meeting was Cletta Mayer, wife of Daniel Mayer, grand “patron” de la Résistance, socialist and postwar minister of labour, and Jean Pierre Bloch. At this meeting, Jules Isaac was importuned to solicit an audience with Pope John XXIII, through the intermediation of Vincent Auriol, former president of the Republic, who had come to know the new Pope when he was papal nuncio in Paris. “Our friend Vincent Auriol wholeheartedly accepts the idea of serving as intermediary with the Roman Authorities,” the Mayers assured him. Isaac thought the time was ripe. “When favourable circumstances present themselves, they must be seized,” he recalled after the fact. “These circumstances were created by the accession of

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587 Tavard, as quoted (as an English translation from Acta et documenta concilio aecumenico vaticano II apparando, Series I, Vol. IV, Pars II) at 22.
588 Marx, 434. In 1955, Mayer and Bloch founded the Centre d’Études des Problèmes Actuels (C.E.P.A.), an organization in close touch with the Anti-Defamation League of Bnai Brith.
589 Ibid., 434.
590 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 232.
John XXIII. His first decisions were very favourable to Israel, especially the removal of the radical word *perfidia* in the liturgy. He showed Catholicism he was decisive and a man of the future, yes, future-oriented, which is remarkable for a man of his age - true he is younger than me! I felt this was an opportunity to ask the question in all its magnitude. One does not find a Pope John every day.”

Returning to France, Isaac solicited input from Catholic dialogue partners, including he recounted, “…from P. Marie-Benoît, from François Mauriac (who was rather pessimistic), from Wladimir d’Ormesson, former French ambassador to the Vatican, from André Chouraqui (who was rather optimistic), from Fr Démann, from Sr Geneviève G[endron] (of the Salesiennes de Don Bosco) at Padoue, from Mgr de Provenchères, Archbishop of Aix…”

Two months later, on 15 December 15 1959, Isaac delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne entitled “Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?” Hundreds of eminent ecclesiastics, theologians, scholars and writers were informed of the lecture in advance through an advertising campaign conducted by Fasquelle. This lecture compressed Isaac’s thinking into a form suitable for a one-hour delivery and would be translated by James and Dorothy Parkes and published as a monograph in 1960 in the U.K. by W.G. Kingham (Printers) Ltd. and in 1961 in America by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Most importantly, it was to be compressed further into a *mémoire* to be hand-delivered by Isaac to John XXIII at their historic meeting. “The lecture at the Sorbonne of December 1959 which culminated in a call to Pope John XXIII, published by Fasquelle with annexed documents, was in my

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591 Toulat, 141.
592 Isaac, “Note sur huit jours à Rome (juin 1960),” 18.
view the prelude to this, my final initiative," noted Isaac. By letter of 8 April 1960, Vincent Auriol wrote France’s ambassador to the Holy See, Baron Guy de la Tournelle:

Professor Jules Isaac is a historian, author of le Malet-Isaac history manuals. He was a companion of Charles Péguy, is the President of l’Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne, and author of Genève de l’antisémitisme and Jésus et Israël. I am attaching a copy of his address given on 15 December 1959 and also a text of what Isaac hopes to accomplish in Rome. He has already been honoured with an audience with His Holiness Pius XII, a meeting that produced beneficial results. M. Jules Isaac is fulfilling a mission most high which, I am persuaded, will touch and be of interest to His Holiness John XXIII. It is in everyone’s interest that [Isaac] be received. I implore you to plead [Isaac’s] cause with the Holy Father.

Ambassador de la Tournelle addressed a formal request on Isaac’s behalf to Secretary of State Cardinal Tardini and replied to Auriol by letter dated 3 May 1960. “The Pope during this festival period is unable to grant private audiences…nonetheless, the Secretary of State has informed me that [the Pope] is inclined to grant [an audience] for this eminent historian.”

On 5 June 1960, in Rome, John XXIII brought to a close the pre-preparatory phase of Vatican II with his signature on a document issued under the title of Superno Dei nutu. This document catalyzed loci of theological research in the form of twelve organisms, ten commissions and two secretariats each of which was assigned a particular

593 Ibid.
594 Isaac’s was not the first attempt to add the Jews to the agenda of a Vatican council. In the closing months of 1869 at the first Vatican Council, the Lémann brothers, Jewish converts to Catholicism, had made“…an audacious attempt in appearance, yet nonetheless infinitely touching and noble, to provoke a solemn declaration of sympathy on the part of the Holy Church of Jesus Christ in favour of the rest of Israel, and to call forth prayers everywhere for their return to the integral truth," in the words of Jacques Maritain. "Tenderly encouraged by Pius IX, they drew up a Postulatum pro Hebrais which, presented to the Council Fathers, garnered 510 episcopal signatures. All the Council Fathers, adds Mgr Elie Blanc, would have signed without exception if the two brothers, in obedience to a delicate deference, had not desired to cede the honour of the great majority of signatures to the Postulatum pro Infallibilitate that had garnered 533 signatures. Only the Council’s interruption by the war prevented this postulatum from being discussed and sanctioned by a papal allocution.” (Jacques Maritain, "A Propos de la question juive," La Vie spirituelle 4, no. 22 (1924))
group of matters. Both commissions and secretariats had the same structural formation: a chair, a secretary, and some thirty members and consultors. With one exception, all the chairs were to be cardinals. All the secretaries were selected apart from the curia. One of the two secretariats, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), was created with the vague ecumenical mandate to help other Christians “follow the work of the Council” during its preparations. Augustin Cardinal Bea was appointed president and Mgr Johannes Willebrands, as he then was, secretary, of the SPCU, which had been constituted a “secretariat” rather than a “commission.” In Stranksy’s account, the reason given by John XXIII was that the low-key title offered “…more freedom of movement in a rather new and unique field.” Fr Thomas Stransky heard rumours, as he later recalled, “…that some in the Curia, especially in the Holy Office (Cardinal Ottaviani, also president of the Theological Commission), in the secretariat of state (Cardinal Tardini), and on the Central Commission’s staff (Archbishop Felici) preferred the SPCU to be only a public relations and quasi-press office for the needs of the ‘separated brethren’; leave schemata to the more competent – the Commissions.”

597 Stransky, 30.
598 On 8 June 1960, shortly after Bea’s appointment as president of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, Fr John Oesterreicher, then Director of the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies, Seton Hall University, New Jersey, on behalf of himself and thirteen priestly colleagues scattered throughout the United States, submitted in English to Bea “…an appeal…the first advance into an area that had lain neglected for so long, and indeed seemed to be unknown territory for most people.” A Latin version was to follow on 24 June 1960. The signatories of the petition asked that “the Council proclaim that the call of Abraham and the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt were part of the genesis of the Church, so that she can fittingly and rightly be called ‘the Israel of God’ (Gal 6:16), the Israel renewed and exalted by Christ’s word and blood… the Council give further liturgical expression to the unity of salvation history…[and] finally…that misleading phrases, above all in the lessons of the Office, which distort the true teaching of the Church and her real attitude towards the Jews, should be changed.” (Oesterreicher, Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 10-11.)
599 Stransky, 30, n. 2.
On 5 June 1960, in Aix-en-Provence, Isaac was putting the finishing touches on a dossier under cover of a mémoire adumbrating his Sorbonne lecture, the whole in preparation for his audience with John XXIII. The dossier included his Eighteen Points, the Ten Points of Seelisberg and subsequent variations, Isaac’s published monograph entitled La Dispersion d’Israël, fait historique et mythe théologique (Paris, 1954) and relevant extracts from the Catechism of the Council of Trent published by l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne (Paris, 1950). The mémoire and attached dossier were prepared in both French and Italian. The mémoire listed the capacities in which Jules Isaac would present himself at the papal audience:

- Président d’honneur de l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne de France
- Inspecteur général honoraire de l’Instruction publique
- Historien
- (famille décimée à Auschwitz et Bergen-Belsen)

In advance of his departure, Isaac received a letter of 3 June from Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan in response to Isaac’s correspondence of 27 May.

I have received your letter of 27 May and I am delighted to learn that you have secured the promise of a papal audience…I would not be surprised if the current eminent Pope, who has already taken steps to dissociate the Church from the propogation of antisemitism in the liturgy, agrees to undertake measures of a similar kind in the sphere of Catholic teaching. In any event, you are the person most qualified for an initiative that is as sensitive as it is important. May the Almighty bless your indefatigable efforts to give Christianity a better understanding of Israel and grant you the joy of seeing to fruition these efforts in conformity with the exigencies of truth and of justice.601

At last, it was time for Isaac to board the train to Nice and thence, to Rome, where he arrived on 9 June 1960. He was in his eighty-third year. “I am mindful that I am speaking on behalf of the martyrs of all time,” he noted. “My trials, my bereavements, the

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commendations of the highest order I’ve received have confirmed to me that it was really a sacred mission. I have survived to accomplish it.”

Upon his arrival in Rome on 9 June, Isaac received a visit from Israeli embassy staffer Hagai Dikan (whom Isaac came to know when Dikan had been the Israeli consul-general in Marseilles), preparatory to a meeting on the following day with Israeli ambassador Eliyahu Sasson. Isaac then paid a visit to de la Tournelle to talk about the personalities with whom he ought to meet preliminary to his audience with the Pope. “Mgr de Provenchères told me,” Isaac related to de la Tournelle, “to meet with his friend, Mgr Baron, Rector of Saint-Louis des Français, in whom I would find the most knowledgeable of advisers. [de Provenchères] has alerted him of my arrival in Rome.” The French ambassador nodded his head, but cautioned, “He has the temperament of a mystic; you must meet him at Saint-Louis des Français together with Mgr Arrighi, who is more grounded practically and has a greater network among the Italian clergy (he himself is Corsican).” De la Tournelle thought it unlikely Isaac would be able to meet with Cardinal Tardini, whose secretariat responsibilities left little time. Rather, de la Tournelle counselled Isaac to connect with Ottaviani and among the French cardinals, with Tisserant and Julien. Unbeknownst to both de la Tournelle and

602 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 233.
603 Mgr Charles de Provenchères (1904-1984) was archbishop of Aix-en-Provence from 1946 to 1979. He was a close friend and ardent supporter of Jules Isaac. In the 1950s, de Provenchères was President of the Commission épiscopale du Catéchisme and collaborated with Fr Paul Demann in the publication of the pamphlet titled, Les Juifs dans la catéchèse chrétienne (Editions des Cahiers sioniens, 1952) and was a participant at Vatican II.
604 After graduating from L’Ecole de Commerce de Narbonne, Mgr André Baron (1893-1981) became a wine broker. In 1910, however, he discovered Léon Bloy whom he befriended. In 1917, he came to know Maritain. In 1920, Baron entered the Séminaire de Fontgombault as a mature novitate, was ordained in 1930 and became a professeur de lettres there. On the seminary’s closure, he became a pastor out of Notre-Dame de Lorette in Italy. From 1949 to 1962, he was rector of the parish of Saint-Louis des Français in Rome. He passed away on 11 March 1981 and is buried in the abbey of Fontgombault cemetery.
606 Ibid.
Isaac, Tardini, who had declared in 1959 in conversation with Cardinal Tisserant, “...there is no possibility of contact or negotiations with the killers of God”\textsuperscript{607} was doing his utmost to prevent from happening what was to be a private, unpublicized encounter between Isaac and John XXIII.

That evening, Isaac met with Mgr Baron and Mgr Arrighi. “Mgr Baron’s first reaction was rather disappointing: ‘The Holy Father will be wholeheartedly behind you, of the same mind, but...he will be unable to do anything,’” Isaac noted. “The fact was, and this had been told to me many times, that such power was in the hands of two men, Cardinals Tardini and Ottaviani. The man generally recognized as the most eminent of all the Italian prelates, Cardinal Montini, was entirely out of the picture, in Milan, as archbishop.”\textsuperscript{608} Offput but not put off, Isaac argued that there was a pressing need for rectification and purification of Catholic teaching regarding Jews. Baron reflected for a time and replied, “You must arrive at your papal audience with positive recommendations that would have to be the object of study. The simplest solution seemed to him to be the creation of an annexed subcommission with the assigned mandate of examining the question of Christian teaching concerning Israel and which would be attached to one of the council commissions... I came round immediately, at the same moment as Mgr Arrighi did,” Isaac recalled. “For the creation [of such a subcommission] was \textit{ipso facto} a neutral act, without presupposing a conclusion.”\textsuperscript{609} But Isaac was impatient. He wanted the official church to take a position. “The three of us discussed at length different ways forward (for example, Mgr Baron suggested a papal address before delegations of \textit{l’Amitié judéo-chrétiennes}),” recounted Isaac. “Out of this meeting was

\textsuperscript{607} Quoted in Bialer, 69.
\textsuperscript{608} Isaac, “Note sur huit jours à Rome (juin 1960),” 20.
\textsuperscript{609} Ibid.
born the concept of a *Note Complémentaire et Conclusive* that I would hand deliver to the Pope, along with the *Mémoire* and the *dossier*, and which proved to be indispensable.*610

On Friday 10 June, Isaac paid a visit to the Israeli embassy. Ambassador Sasson counselled Isaac to meet with Cardinal Ottaviani in particular. In the late afternoon, Isaac visited French Cardinal Julien. “From his appearance, a very old man, quite tall, his face somewhat wizened with age, eyes half closed,” Isaac remembered.

He listened, hardly responded, and as I talked on, I had the impression of having landed from another planet. His eminence put to me only one question, a question having no relationship to what I was saying, but which reflected a dominant preoccupation: ‘Do you not think that communism has been an important factor in the resurgence of antisemitism?’ I responded, and then picked up from where I had left off, impressing him with the gravity of these initiatives. He nodded his head and when I asked him for his support, promised me his prayers. I steeled myself all the same – as he seemed more inclined toward the end – and put to him a question, ‘Eminence, in all initiatives of this kind, there must be one or two good doors upon which to knock. Whose doors would you say these are?’ He reflected for a moment then murmured, ‘Cardinal Ottaviani.’ ‘And who else besides Cardinal Ottaviani?’ I pressed. He reflected further and whispered, ‘Cardinal Bea.’*611

On the morning of Saturday 11 June, Isaac met with Jean Bayet, Director of *L’Ecole de Rome*, whom Isaac had come to know in post-liberation Paris at the ministry of education and with French Ambassador to Italy Palewsky. The latter was of the opinion that if Isaac was unable to make a sidetrip to Milan to meet with Cardinal Montini, he should keep him abreast through the intermediation of a French prelate, perhaps Cardinal Liénart.

Saturday afternoon, Isaac and his Rome hosts, M. and Mme. Gaston Kahn, were guests at a lunch hosted by de la Tournelle at which Isaac updated the latter and learned that Cardinal Bea was a German Jesuit, former confessor of Pius XII, influential, important, the highest authority in Rome in all that touched upon sacred scripture. De la Tournelle

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610 Ibid.
611 Ibid., 21.
and Isaac were in agreement that Isaac should target Bea, the recently appointed president of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. “The lead given by Cardinal Julien had proven to be precious indeed,” Isaac noted. On the afternoon of Sunday 12 June, Isaac attempted in vain to contact Mgrs Baron and Arrighi. At the end of the day, a letter was received from the French embassy to the Vatican advising that the papal audience was scheduled for the following day, 13 June 1960 at 13h. The number “13,” which figured in both the date and the time, happens to be a lucky number in the Jewish tradition. M. de Warren, French embassy secretary, would drive Isaac to the Vatican and be in attendance given Isaac’s hardness of hearing. “I slept little on the nights of the 12th and the 13th;” Isaac later recounted. “I handwrote a Note Complémentaire et Conclusif with a view to making it as concise, yet as efficacious, as possible, emphasizing the principal themes to be emphasized. Taking into account the fact, of which I had been forewarned, that the good John XXIII was inclined to chatter, that the conversation could be informal and personal and take unforeseen detours; an obstacle to be surmounted.”

On the morning of Monday 13 June 1960, Isaac recounts,

M. de Warren came to pick me up at the hotel with an embassy car. He was in uniform, bearing a row of decorations. I wore a black suit….We were told that His Holiness was tired, that he had been up since midnight, that he had a number of scheduled audiences, which meant that time was going to be of the essence….

Finally, around 13h 15, my turn arrived. The Pope greeted us standing at the entrance to his library/study. M. de Warren genuflected, I bowed my head and John XXIII extended his hand. I announced myself as non-Christian, promotor of l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne de France, and as an old man, very hard of hearing. We were seated adjacent to his study in three

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612 Ibid., 22.
613 For example, according to tradition it was on the thirteenth of the Jewish month of Adar that Haman’s plans to annihilate the Jewish people were foiled. The observance of the festival of Purim is one of seven rabbinic commandments in addition to the 613 in the Torah.
614 Isaac, “Note sur huit jours à Rome (juin 1960),” 22.
chairs side by side. I was next to the Pope who was truly the essence of simplicity, a simplicity which contrasted starkly with the pomp and circumstance since our arrival.

He did not seem overly fatigued. He was a heavyset bonhomme, with strong and rustic features – a large nose – smiling, easily prone to laughter, with a clear regard, a touch devilish, but from which there was evident goodwill that inspired confidence.

As expected, he started off the conversation, in a lively manner, speaking about his faith in the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Book of Wisdom. He spoke of his name which he had chosen in thinking about France; he inquired where I was born, in which region of France. All the while, I was waiting for an opportunity to switch the tenour of the conversation to engage him in the desired subject-matter; I told him of the great hope aroused as a result of the measures he had taken, so spontaneously, in the hearts of the people of the Old Testament; if we could we expect more from him, would it not be he himself who could be credited with such great bounty? That caused him to laugh.

I then explained my request regarding [Christian] teaching and its historical grounding. But how, in a few minutes, could I paint describe this spiritual ghetto in which the Church had ultimately confined old Israel along with the physical ghetto? I described the bookends which sandwiched the Christian epoch, at one end a pagan antisemitism, incoherent and preposterous in its accusations and at the other end, racial antisemitism, Hitlerian, the most virulent of our day, though no less incoherent and preposterous. But between the two, the only variety [of antisemitism] that was coherent and upon which one could be taken in, is that which has engendered a certain Christian theology, by force of circumstances, since the Jewish negation constituted the primary impediment to christian proselytizing in the gentile world. Thus was developed that which I have called ‘the teaching of contempt’ and, since it has subsisted for centuries upon centuries, the Christian psyche has been deeply affected.

Happily, a countercurrent exists today, a purifying countertendency that is growing day by day. Nonetheless, recent studies have shown that a ‘contemptuous teaching’ still exists. Between these two contrary tendencies, Catholic opinion oscillates, divided. That is why it is critical that a voice proclaim from on high, from the ‘summit’ – the voice of the leader of the Church – to tell all what is the right way and solemnly condemn as in essence anti-Christian this ‘teaching of contempt.’  

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\(^{615}\) The previous Pope John [XXII] was a Frenchman, son of a savetier de cahors.
As a practical matter, how to proceed? I then tabled my Note conclusive and the recommendation that a subcommission be created to study the question. The Pope reacted immediately, saying: “That is what I have been thinking from the beginning of this meeting.” On several occasions, during my brief presentation, he had shown his understanding and sympathy. I did mention at the beginning the circumstances, the trials, surrounding my devotion to this mission since 1943.

No more than twenty minutes had elapsed and it was over. Fortunately there was the mémoire, the dossier, the Note conclusive, which I handed over, and which the Pope promised to read. Expressing my gratitude for the welcome received, I wondered if there was a glimmer of hope I could take away. He exclaimed: ‘You are entitled to more than a hope!’ and added with a smile, ‘I am the leader, but I must also consult, to have the relevant offices study these questions raised, this is not an absolute monarchy.’ And we parted on a new and good handshake.

M. de Warren was very pleased with the way the audience had unfolded. It had lasted approximately twenty-five minutes.

In addition to the printed mémoire, the handwritten Note conclusive, I had the ambassador deliver to the Pope a copy of P. Démann’s study, *La catéchèse chrétienne et le people de la Bible*, préface by Cardinal Saliège (1952).

John XXIII spoke candidly when he told Isaac that the papacy is not an absolute monarchy. The papacy is enmeshed within the Roman curia, a creation of the fourth century that seeks to defend itself. Before day’s end, Isaac would spend two hours at the French Embassy debriefing de la Tournelle, having his Note conclusive typed up, putting together with M. Warren the minutes of the papal audience and scheduling meetings with curial members for later that week. Tuesday 14 June Isaac was to meet with undersecretary of state Mgr Scapinelli (though he would in fact meet with Mgr Angelo Felici) as it was vital to keep Cardinal Tardini in the loop. On Wednesday 15 June, four meetings were scheduled - one with Cardinal Tisserant, one with Cardinal Ottaviani, one

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616 Isaac, "Note sur huit jours à Rome (juin 1960)," 23-4.
with Cardinal Bea and one with R. P. Paul-Philippe. The minutes of the meeting documenting Isaac’s papal audience read in part as follows:

The Sovereign Pontiff opened the conversation in most cordial manner with remarks of a general nature concerning the Old Testament. M. Isaac then raised the purpose of his visit, referring to the Holy Father’s magnanimous decisions regarding the Good Friday liturgy, raising the hopes of many Jews and Christians by his just and comprehensive attitude…The resolution of so complex a problem necessitated a comprehensive study and to this end, M. Isaac suggested the formation of a sub-commission attached to the preparatory commissions of the upcoming Ecumenical Council. The Holy Father, who had interrupted Isaac from time to time during the latter’s exposé with remarks that reflected his benevolent interest and understanding, declared frankly that this suggestion corresponded to an idea that had come to his mind from the beginning of the audience. He declared himself in agreement in principle without being able to give M. Isaac a formal assurance at the moment since the suggestion would have to be vetted by the Vatican offices. M. Isaac graciously thanked the Holy Father for the audience and inquired whether he could depart with any hope that his wish might be realized. To which the Pope retorted that [M. Isaac] was entitled to espouse better than mere hopes.617

On the evening of Tuesday 14 June, Israeli ambassador Sasson was briefed at the Israeli embassy in Rome. Before day’s end, the Holy Father made a five-word entry in his diary:

“Interessante l’ebreo prof. Jules Isaac [An interesting fellow, the Jewish professor Jules Isaac].”618 According to Stransky, the pope read neither Isaac’s mémoire nor any of its attachments.619 On Wednesday 15 June, Isaac was chauffeured from one meeting to the next by a cousin of Samy Lattès, Giorgio Bloch. As Isaac remembered it,

[t]he day would start off badly. My first meeting was at the Vatican Library with Cardinal Tisserant [dean of the College of Cardinals]. In fact, this visit was a courtesy, since he was the most senior of the French cardinals in Rome, although I understood that he was not at all influential. Therefore it was no loss that the welcome I received was devoid of any

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619 Related to the author at a meeting with Fr Thomas Stransky in New York City on (Good) Friday 3 April 2015.
cordiality.\textsuperscript{620} This meeting was the only false note in my visit to Rome. There seems no point to saying anything more in this regard. I abstained for all polemic, adumbrated the background to my initiative, and left a copy of my \textit{mémoire} and my Note before leaving.

From the Vatican Library, I travelled to the Holy Office directed by Cardinal Ottaviani. . . .I was surprised by his appearance; this so powerful man was not fine looking. He was rather small, scrawny, wore the red hat badly, and had a wrinkled, almost deformed visage since he had but one eye, the other was damaged. . . .Nonetheless, he was simple, courteous and attentive. . . .He had no objection to the formation of a subcommission mandated to study the problem of teaching concerning Israel. . . .He could think of two possible [preparatory commissions to which the subcommission would be attached], one chaired by Cardinal Aganadjian, the other by Cardinal Bea. I left him copies of the \textit{mémoire} and \textit{Note conclusive}, emphasizing as always, the gravity of this initiative from both the Christian and the Jewish points of view, and before taking leave, offered to give him a copy of my book \textit{Jésus et Israël}, which I inscribed in his presence, thanking him for his welcome. He responded that he was ‘very touched.’ . . .

The afternoon, from 17 h, was devoted to Cardinal Bea and to P. Paul-Philippe. These last two meetings were the longest and were to be the most fruitful.\textsuperscript{621}

Born and raised in Germany, but domiciled in Rome since 1929, Augustin Bea had graduated from the University of Freiburg in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, in philosophy and theology. He became a Jesuit in 1912 and had pursued postgraduate studies in biblical exegesis in Berlin and the Netherlands. At the time of his appointment as confessor to Pius XII, Bea was rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute and editor of the journal, \textit{Biblica}. In addition to his native German, Bea was fluent in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Italian and French. He lived almost on the outskirts of Rome, on the Via Aurelia at the Brazilian College and received Isaac immediately upon the latter’s arrival.

\textsuperscript{620} Cardinal Tisserant is reported to have reacted to Rolf Hochhuth’s play, ”The Deputy” in which Pius XII is pilloried for not having done more to assist European Jews, by remarking to William F. Rosenblum, rabbi of Manhattan’s Temple Israel, ”I do not like it when the truth is not told and you know that it [the play] is not the truth.” (reported by Milton Bracker, New York Times Rome bureau chief, 17 October 1963).

\textsuperscript{621} Isaac, ”Note sur huit jours à Rome (juin 1960),” 26.
If Cardinal Bea was taken aback by the fact that the Pope had sent an octogenarian Jewish messenger to transmit the Pope’s wishes, such surprise would have dissipated within the first minutes. These are Isaac’s impressions of his encounter with Bea.

[Bea] was middle-aged - in his fifties - with a simple, open and intelligent demeanour. He was German but entirely fluent in French. What struck me from the very beginning was that he was entirely au courant about the question, already in dialogue with German Catholics who were doing in Germany what we were doing in France in our sections of l’Amitié judéo-chrétienne – Mgr Oesterreicher, Karl Thieme. He had met recently Mme Gertrude von Luckner, whose review I receive. He indicated that he was entirely disposed to aim in the same direction.

The idea of the subcommission seemed to him an excellent one, and if it were created, he told me, it would be attached to the commission over which he presided. He would raise it with the Holy Father. With [Bea], I was able to advance further and raise the prospect of a papal declaration concurrent with the announcement of the subcommission’s creation, such declaration in the form of a letter or an address and taking a stand in the most general of terms against the ‘teaching of contempt.’

The meeting lasted about one hour. I expressed to Cardinal Bea my joy at having found in him so powerful an ally and such an authority - I had been told there was no higher an expert in Holy Scripture. He gave me his card with his address and told me not to hesitate to write him should the need arise. This opened an important line of communication [with the Roman curia].

Gertrude von Luckner, whose name was raised and whose journal, the Freiburger Rundbrief, Isaac received, was born Jane Hartmann of German parents in Liverpool, England. She was a Protestant (Quaker) convert to Catholicism and remained a British citizen to the end of her life. During the war, Luckner assisted German Jews to escape to Switzerland with funds from Archbishop Conrad Gröber. “Just as she was about to distribute 5,000 marks to the last Jews of Berlin in November 1943,” writes historian John Connelly, “she was hauled off a train and arrested by the Gestapo, ending up at

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622 Ibid., 27.
Ravensbrück. From her liberation until her death in 1995, Luckner worked indefatigably to improve relations between Christians and Jews. “She was the sole German present at the 1947 Seelisberg meeting,” according to Connelly, “and she was the first German officially invited to Israel in 1951.” One year after Seelisberg, Luckner founded the journal Freiburger Rundbrief, “a German counterpart to Cahiers [sioniens] with a more theological bent and wider readership,” writes Connelly. “As advisor, she took on Karl Thieme, like her a convert from Protestantism.”

John Oesterreicher and Karl Thieme, whose names were also raised and who encountered each other as early as 1934, were border crossers to Catholicism, Oesterreicher, from Judaism and Thieme, from Protestantism. Both would play a pivotal role in developing the theological vocabulary upon which the official Church could reorient its attitudes to Jews and Judaism. Bea had first encountered Thieme in the early 1950s when the Vatican issued a monitum (warning) against the indifferentism of Catholics who participated in

623 Connelly, 192.
624 Luckner’s name is nowhere to be found in the official list of Seelisberg participants, a list published by le Conseil des Juifs et des Chrétiens? Genève, 1947.
625 Connelly, 192. Luckner is a Yad Vashem righteous among the nations.
626 Ibid., 179.
627 Johannes Oesterreicher was born in 1904 of Jewish parents, veterinarian Nathan and wife Ida, in Stadt Liebau in northern Moravia. He had been raised with some modicum of Jewish tradition, including instruction in the Hebrew language, in proximity to nine other Jewish families. In 1924, he was baptized by peace activist and priest Max Josef Metzger (arrested repeatedly and finally executed by the Nazis in 1944) in the sacristy of the Graz Cathedral after which he abandoned his medical studies (which he had been pursuing in Vienna) and entered the seminary. Oesterreicher graduated and was ordained a priest in Vienna on 17 July 1927.
628 A descendant of Protestant theologians, Karl Thieme was born in Dresden. After graduating from Leipzig University in history, theology and philosophy, Thieme (by then a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany) followed his teacher, Jewish legal scholar Hermann Heller, to Berlin’s Deutsche Hochschule fur Politik. Following his post-graduate studies, he joined the faculty of the Pedagogical Academy in East Prussian Elbing, where he taught until March 1933, after which Social Democrats were banned from public service. On 30 January 1934 in the Liebfrauenkirche in Leipzig-Lindau, Karl Thieme converted to Catholicism. In the same year, he became a coeditor with Johannes Maassen and Waldemar Gurian of the weekly, Junge Front, an anti-nazi Catholic review founded in 1932 and placed into liquidation in January 1936. In August 1935, facing imminent arrest, Thieme took flight across the German-Swiss frontier and moved into his mother's home at Laufelfingen, near Basel, where he would reside for the next decade. In 1953, Thieme joined the faculty of the University of Mainz where he taught European history, philosophy and German studies.
meetings of the International Council of Christians and Jews. Bea, together with fellow Rome-based Jesuit priests and specialists in ecumenism, Robert Leiber and Charles Boyer.629 had been dispatched to investigate the Freiburger Rundbrief. Just as Isaac, born a Jew, was the first in modern times to remind Christians that Christ the Jew never stopped loving the Jewish people of the pre-Talmudic era, so Thieme, a Protestant convert to Catholicism, “…was probably the first Christian theologian in modern times,” according to Connelly, “to state that Christ the Jew loved the Jewish people of the post-biblical era.” This he did in a letter to Pius XII of 31 October 1933, a letter to which the pope did not respond.630

Isaac spent Thursday 16 June in bed in his hotel room. On the morning of the next day, he met again with Mgr Baron (Mgr Arrighi was away). “The outcome had exceeded what Mgr Baron had dared hoped for, but the results were still provisional. One had to make them definitive…,” Isaac noted. “He gave me the news that [Lille] Cardinal Liénart had just been named a member of the council’s Central [Preparatory] Commission – a sort of supercommission whose members examine the reports of the other commissions. He is the sole French bishop to be included as a member – not counting the [French] cardinals of the Roman curia. Cardinal Liénart is the French prelate who is most inclined as far as the Jewish Question is concerned (on which he has published a [Lenten] pastoral letter [of 21 February 1960]).”631 In the pastoral letter to which Isaac referred, Liénart asserted, “It is simply untrue that Israel, the chosen people of the Old Covenant, became

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629 The very same Fr Charles Boyer about whom the Rome correspondent of the Jewish Chronicle would report on 11 November 1960, "Father Boyer described as 'exaggerated and false' the theory, propounded by Jules Isaac, that antisemitism derived from the Christian teaching which attributed the death of Jesus to the entire Jewish people. He stated that Christians did not object to Jews because of Jesus's death, but because they refused the New Testament."

630 Quoted in Connelly, 123.

631 Isaac, "Note sur huit jours à Rome (juin 1960)," 28.
an accursed people under the New. In reality, the religious destiny of Israel is a mystery of grace, which Christians must ponder with respect and affection.” At 2200h on Friday 17 June 1960, Isaac boarded a train for his return trip to France. The apparent outcome of the trip had exceeded his wildest expectations. “The train was on track; without my boarding it,” he later recalled. “I was positioned to follow its journey – from a discrete distance…My task was completed, the time had come to pass the torch.”

The record is silent from mid-June 1960 until mid-September 1960. Bea took his annual summer retreat to reflect upon Isaac’s concerns, the same Augustin Bea who forty years earlier, before Hitler’s rise to power, before the sea change of the intervening years in Catholic attitudes about Jews and Judaism, had unselfconsciously summed up his understanding of the Jews and Judaism in an article published in *Stimmen der Zeit*.

May the Jews of today be how they always want to be; it is and remains true: God has chosen Old Israel in order to make it the bearer of His revelation; and he wanted that from among this nation, His only-begotten Son would take flesh. That this nation has rejected its Messiah became its curse and deprived it of the grace of the special divine guidance. That [Israel] has preserved itself as a nation and religious community until today despite all troubles and persecutions of almost two millennia, it does not owe in the first place to a racially hygienic selection, even though this certainly may have contributed to the preservation or enhancement of some specifically “Jewish” characteristics. In reality, the reason lies deeper; [it lies] in God’s salvific providence which, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets and the teachings of the apostle to the Gentiles, also comprises this nation as a people [viz. Israel] despite all its disloyalty. The gate to salvation is open to this nation as well. As St Paul says in a highly significant passage of his Letter to the Romans: ‘Only partially has the hardening come over Israel until, namely, the full number of Gentiles will have come in; thus, then, will the whole of Israel be saved’ (Rom 11:25f). This is the Christian understanding of the Jews and Judaism. It [viz. the Christian understanding] is, as the very same St Paul says, a ‘mystery,’ one of the great secrets of divine world sovereignty and the disposition of salvation, in front of which Paul falls down in worship and confesses: ‘O depth of richness, the wisdom and the

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632 Quoted in Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 26.
knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are Your judgments and how unfathomable Your resolutions!’ (Rom 11:33)

One can only speculate whether Bea read Jésus et Israël; there is but one allusion to Isaac’s concerns in a note scribbled by Bea during that summer retreat. On 14 September 1960, Bea requested an audience with Pope John XXIII, writing “I would particularly like to bring up the question of responsibility concerning relations between Jews and Catholics, on which I am frequently consulted.” Four days later, on 18 September, the Pope received the advice of Cardinal Bea the question of responsibility concerning relations between Jews and Catholics. “Upon Bea’s initiative and recommendation [Stransky’s emphasis],” writes Stransky, “John XXIII mandated that the SPCU facilitate ‘the Jewish Question’ during the Council preparations.”

By letter dated 10 October 1960, Isaac briefed Archbishop de Provenchères.

Here is the most up to date news from Rome that I am able to impart to your excellence, news transmitted by the ambassador [de la Tournelle] following a visit of Mgr Baron to S.E. Cardinal Bea. The Holy Father, in the interest of the very cause for which I advocate, thought it would be better to avoid all publicity, ‘the tumult that would arise in response to [news of] the creation of a special commission could be more prejudicial than beneficial.’ Accordingly, he has commissioned S.E. Cardinal Bea to fold into his Secretariat my request and my dossier and to subject them to study. Thus, a first goal is achieved. The question of [Christian] teaching concerning Israel will be examined, under the auspices of the Secretariat chaired by Cardinal Bea, whose favourable inclination appears to be assured. It will be necessary to form a sort of sub-commission to conduct this study and examination. I can only rejoice at this first very positive result and hope that there will be others, in the knowledge that as just a cause as this will find its vigorous defenders within the very highest reaches of the French Church.

636 Ibid.
The first plenary session of the Secretariat for Christian Unity took place on 14-15 November 1960. At this first meeting, Bea broke the news to the members and consultors that the pope had entrusted the unity secretariat with the formation of a *De Questione Hebraica* subcommission. A young Augustinian priest in attendance as an adviser recalls that Bea’s announcement took those around the table by surprise.\(^638\) Fr Gregory Baum waited until the end of the meeting before discretely approaching Bea to alert him of his interest in ecumenism and of the imminent publication of Baum’s defense of the New Testament,\(^639\) written in academic 1957-58 in partial rebuttal to Isaac’s *Jésus et Israël*, and offered his assistance.\(^640\) “Cardinal Bea accepted this offer,” recounts Oesterreicher, “and commissioned Fr. Baum to produce a short survey, which was laid before the second meeting.”\(^641\) Thus, it would seem, did Baum become the first member of the subcommission on the Jewish Question. “At the beginning of February 1961 [the second meeting of the SPCU],” according to Oesterreicher, “Abbot Leo Rudloff…was appointed a member [of the *De Questione Hebraica* subcommission],\(^642\) and the present writer an adviser, of the Secretariat. Together with Fr Baum, [we] formed the core of the ‘Sub-Commission for Jewish Questions’, which was extended to include other members as occasion arose.”\(^643\) Rudloff was abbot of the Dormition Abby in Jerusalem and the Benedictine Priory in Weston, Vermont. Stransky has a slightly different recollection of the genesis of the subcommission on the Jewish Question. The way he remembers it, George Tavard (then on the faculty of Mount Mercy College, Pittsburgh) and Gregory

\(^{638}\) As recounted by Baum to the author.

\(^{639}\) Baum, *The Jews and the Gospel*.

\(^{640}\) As recounted by Baum to the author.

\(^{641}\) Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 18.

\(^{642}\) Cardinal Bea wanted Council Father representation on the sub-commission, according to testimony of Fr Thomas Stransky, as recounted to the author at a meeting in New York City on (Good) Friday 3 April 2015.

\(^{643}\) Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 18.
Baum were the first two consultors tapped for the *De Questione Hebraica* sub-
commission.

We designated nine ecumenical themes and assigned members of a sub-
commission to each, but for the tenth theme, *De Questione Hebraica*,
nominated only two consultors who were not yet noted for expertise in
Catholic-Jewish relations – George Tavard and Gregory Baum.
Afterwards, Bea had to recruit others for the specific inter-religious task.
To add to this exceptional situation, Bea told the plenary that unlike the
other topics, even the fact of the special papal mandate had to be *sub secreto*, at Pope John’s explicit request. Only a few saw the reason: not to
stir up further the already turbulent political waters in the Middle East.
Even though four weeks earlier Bea and Willebrands had given me, as a
staff-member, the “Jewish Portfolio” (among others) for the collection of
materials, I was still quite naïve on this political dimension, until mid-
December.\footnote{644} On the desks of each sub-commission member tasked with the Jewish Question
Stransky placed a copy of the Ten Points of Seelisberg,\footnote{645} theses that now had to pass
theological muster. In this regard, much of the groundwork had already been laid by
small groups of Catholics, in the main Protestant and Jewish converts. “This testing [had]
occurring in tiny groups of theologians who wrote and debated out of offices in France,
Germany, and the Netherlands between the end of the war and the opening of the Second
Vatican Council seventeen years later,” writes Connelly. “Beyond these small groups,
few Catholics wrote about Jews in the years leading up to the Vatican Council. Through
the 1950s, the Catholic press – whether the French *Études*, the American *Commonweal*
and *America*, the British *The Month*, the Polish *Tygodnik Powszechny*, or the German
*Stimmen der Zeit* and *Hochland* – featured next to nothing on the Shoah, let alone
suggested that this event should unleash soul-searching within the church about its

\footnote{645} As recounted to the author.
The second meeting of the unity secretariat was held from 6 to 9 February 1961 in Ariccia, nestled in the Alban hills. At this meeting, Baum presented his short survey and proposed that the teaching of recent popes had made it clear that the Christian approach to the Jewish question was theological and that anti-Jewish patristic and medieval perceptions were no longer to be defended. He recommended that the Council issue authoritative declarations on the following three points:

1. In the treatment of the origin and nature of Christ’s Church, her close connection with the Old Israel should be made unmistakably clear. Thus it should be shown how the New Covenant confirmed, renewed and transcended the Old, and how the New Testament fulfilled and superseded the Old, but nevertheless did not render it invalid.

2. In order to correct the widespread notion that the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Christ, it should be made clear that the holy remnant of the Jewish people acclaimed and accepted the Saviour of mankind. It would therefore be unjust to regard the Jews as an accursed race or a people who had been rejected.

3. The Church’s unceasing hope of Israel’s final reconciliation with herself should be solemnly proclaimed and, no less important, until that day came the Christian’s attitude to his Jewish neighbour should be one of love and respect. Anti-Semitism should be condemned.

It was at this meeting that Oesterreicher was requested, as he himself recalls, “…to prepare a study of the whole matter, on behalf of the sub-commission, for the forthcoming meeting.” At the third meeting, also in Arricia from 6 to 21 April 1961, “…Gregory Baum read out the preliminary study worked out by [John Oesterreicher] and discussed by the whole sub-commission [on the Jewish Question],” Oesterreicher writes. “At this stage, Fr. George Tavard, AA, was also a member of the sub-commission. The study had been drafted in English but was also available to the Secretariat’s members in

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646 Connelly, 178-180.
647 Quoted in Oesterreicher, “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,” 18.
648 Ibid.
Latin and French translations...if my memory does not deceive me, the spontaneous clapping that greeted the preliminary study on 20 April 1961 was the only example of such a reception for a preparatory document."

Unity secretariat members were to reconvene in Bühl, Germany in August 1961. Between the third and fourth meetings, Baum’s *The Jews and the Gospel* appeared in print. Apparently unaware that a new revised edition of *Jésus et Israël* had been published in 1959 by Fasquelle, Baum took the liberty of forwarding to Isaac a copy of this partial rebuttal to *Jésus et Israël* via Albin Michel, Isaac’s original publisher. In correspondence to Claire Huchet Bishop dated 8 July 1961, Isaac writes in a postscriptum, “I have just received an English book that I draw to your attention: *The Jews and the Gospel* by Greg [ory] Baum OSA, Bloomsbury Publ. Co. 34 Bloomsbury Str. London WC1 (Publisher). To my great surprise, I am front and center stage from the very first page, but in a most sympathetic light; it was the reading of *Jésus et Israël* that is the impetus of this Catholic work.” Isaac sent a thank you note to Baum who replied by letter of 26 July 1961. Baum’s letter is reproduced in full below as it speaks volumes about the views and inclinations of one member of the subcommission tasked with working up a statement on the Jews and Judaism in the light of sections of scripture implicating the Jews in Christ’s death (Acts 3:15), suggesting the Jews lived under a curse (Matt. 27:25) and asserting the obsolescence of God’s covenant with the Jews (Heb. 8:13).

Very dear Sir,

[End of letter]

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649 Ibid., 22.
650 Tavard, At p. 23 , Tavard remembers this fouth meeting as having taken place in Roca di Papa, near Rome.
I have just received your letter and I am deeply moved. I am grateful to you for having given my essay so much thought and careful consideration.

In my Introduction, I mention that I wrote “in partial criticism” of your book, *Jésus et Israël*, but the only point I actually criticize is that the gospels are supposed to contain seeds of anti-semitism. I wanted to show that another interpretation of the apparently anti-Jewish passages is, at least, reasonable. Our disagreement, therefore, is not great.

The origin of anti-semitism I mention only in passing, as you have noted, in note 42, page 282. I have been profoundly influenced by your books on this question and a good number of other studies. I believe that the preaching of the Church has created an image of the Jew, which, much later, has been exploited by a diabolical hatred. The pagan, biological inspiration of modern anti-semitism is not derived from Christianity, even if it should be derived from Christians. I admit, however, and have stated implicitly in my book, that the Church has a grave responsibility in this matter! We should have recognized that painting the picture of the Jew as we did, we were preparing the ground for demons. We should have known, on the basis of man’s fallen nature that a constant preaching of contempt will conjure up the most evil forces in man. Even if modern anti-semitism is not derived from Christian sources, the Church is thereby not free of guilt.

You remember that in my Introduction I mention another intention for writing the book: to purify Christian preaching of our day of the legends of the past. In this endeavour I am your pupil and follower. I have made it clear that it was your book which opened my eyes. Since that day I have never ceased to work in this direction. Perhaps I should have stressed this aspect more in my book; though throughout the text I constantly mention the distortions and untrue accounts regarding Israel found in Christian literature.

You do not fully realize the difficulty in gaining influence among Catholics, especially in the English-speaking world. We are so much on the defensive that any criticism of things Catholic is taken as a personal insult and rejected. This is childish, of course. But one must be realistic. For this reason I have combined two purposes in my book. I get the reader on my side because I defend a Catholic position, which allows me to say all kinds of things against Catholic positions. If I only criticize the Christian legends about Jews, I will not be listened to, at least in English-speaking Catholic environments.
I hope that my book will do some good. People may read it as a defense of the gospel, but be impressed by the indictment against the preaching of the past.

John Oesterreicher, editor of the Bridge, has done more than anyone else in the English-speaking Catholic world to make people sensitive to this problem. But as far as I know, there exists no detailed study of catechisms and religious instruction in English, such as Father Démann has done for France.

May I also mention that I am a consultant of the Roman Secretariat of Christian Unity. I was appointed because of my interest in Protestant ecumenism and my book translated into French under the title of L’Unité Chrétienne d’après la doctrine des papes.

Many thanks again for your kind and thoughtful letter! Sending you my best regards and good wishes, I am

Yours Sincerely,

Gregory Baum
(augustin)652

In undated correspondence to Huchet-Bishop, probably of October or November 1961, Isaac writes, “I bring to your attention…a new Canadian friend, Catholic religious OSA (augustinian), Gregory Baum, Jewish by birth and I think also German. He has published in London, in English, through Bloom[sbury] a book, The Jews and the Gospel that he sent to me via my old publisher, Albin Michel; a book with an Imprimeur, in which I have found that I hold a special place. We have exchanged two letters: he declares himself ‘my disciple and successor’…His letters are most sympathetic, and I think you two would get along quite well. We might soon form across the Atlantic a small group of ‘friends of Jules Isaac.’”653

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Gregory Baum was born in Berlin in 1923 of Jewish parents, “…at least according to the laws of Nuremberg,” he wrote. His father, a Protestant of Jewish origin, engineer and German army officer in the First World War, died when Gregory was no more than an infant. Gregory’s childhood was spent in Berlin. “I came from a German Jewish family (from Berlin, to be exact) that, following the nineteenth-century trend of assimilation, had abandoned Jewish practices and lost all interest in religion,” he recounts. “The values to which I was initiated as a child were the secular ideals of culture, meaning, and beauty, typical of the German bourgeoisie.” In 1939, he was kindertransported to England. In his first year in England, Baum was put to work on a farm, then arrested as a German citizen and sent to an internment camp in Canada. In 1942, Baum secured permission to leave the camp in order to pursue undergraduate studies in physics and mathematics at McMaster University, Hamilton, thanks to the efforts and sponsorship of Emma Kaufman, a leader in the YWCA movement and distinguished missionary. While an undergraduate, Baum found himself drawn to Christian texts, and above all, by the Pauline, Augustinian and Thomistic emphasis on the unsolicited divine initiative. A reading of Augustine’s Confessions was apparently the catalyst that provoked his conversion to Catholicism. Baum was baptized in 1946 at the

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655 Coincidentally, three Vatican II figures had attended the same Kaiser-Friedrich Gymnasium in Berlin: Gregory Baum, Carl Riegner, general secretary of the Geneva-based World Jewish Congress and a WJC representative at the Council and Ernst Ludwig Erlich, a colleague of Jules Isaac and a founder of the German Christian-Jewish Understanding Association, who attended the Council as a representative of the International B’nai Brith for Western Europe.
656 Quoted in Rebecca McKenna, “The Mission of the Church in the Writings of Gregory Baum from 1957-1987” (University of St. Michael's College, 1996), 22.
657 On 15 November 1938, five days after Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, a delegation of British Jewish and Quaker leaders appealed in person to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Neville Chamberlain, requesting, inter alia, that the British government permit the temporary admission of unaccompanied Jewish children, without their parents. The British Cabinet debated the issue the next day and subsequently introduced a bill providing that the government would waive certain immigration requirements with a view to admitting into Great Britain unaccompanied children ranging from infants up to the age of 17, under certain conditions.
age of twenty-three and shortly thereafter entered the formation program of the order of St. Augustine. He was ordained a priest in April 1954 and in 1956, received his doctorate in theology from the Seminary in Fribourg. His dissertation, which addressed ecumenism and was published in 1958 by Newman Press under the title, *That They May be One*, was brought to the attention of the future Paul VI, then Bishop of Milan, who made it a point to read it carefully. In 1960, Baum joined the faculty of theology at the University of St. Michael’s College in Toronto.

*Jésus et Israël* had come to Baum’s attention while he was preparing to deliver a short series of talks on the relationship of the Catholic Church and the Jews. “But whatever I read, I understood in the light I had acquired from the traditional Christian attitude and my own theological upbringing,” he writes in his Introduction to *The Jews and the Gospel*. “Thus I repeated, without the slightest hesitation, the ancient stories that the Jews have been rejected and the Gentiles chosen, that the younger brother has been preferred to the older, Isaac to Ishmael, Jacob to Esau, yes, and even Abel to Cain. The Jews, I then thought – and said, in the talks which I gave – are in the likeness of Cain, a people condemned for murder. There exists a whole procession of authors who defend such a statement. Without realising the implications of remarks of this kind, and the impact they make on human relations, I repeated the long litany of theological legends with which the mystery of Israel has been surrounded in the literature of the centuries.” Then he came upon Isaac’s book, a book that “shattered” him, a book that “…raised the frightful question whether the Christian Church could ever separate itself from its

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658 As recollected by Fr Thomas Stransky.
660 Ibid.
anti-Semitic heritage, a book that provoked Baum to (i) clarify Israel’s role in salvation history, building upon Bloy and Maritain, (and thereby unwittingly prepare himself for the most important role he was destined to play in the first-ever (by Pope or Council) formulation of a “…systematic, positive, comprehensive, careful and daring presentation of Jews and Judaism)” and (ii) write an apologia for the New Testament.

A study of Paul’s letters as a whole led Baum to conclude that Romans 9-11 constituted “…a little treatise on Israel’s role in the history of salvation,” and therefore he made these chapters the centre of his investigation. Israel’s role in salvation history, as Baum discerned it (standing on the shoulders of Bloy and Maritain) is this:

…the privileges which rested on the people of Israel were fulfilled in, and remained with, one section of the people, the Israel of the spirit, which, transformed and extended, became the universal Church of Christ…This schism between the ‘holy remnant’ and ‘unfaithful Israel’ is the bracket in which the Gentiles are inserted into the history of salvation. God wished to let all mankind fall into unbelief that he may include them all in the promises of mercy…Paul who grieved at the incredulity of his people is comforted by the contemplation of the divine plan for the history of mankind: God is faithful.

Not theology, but kerygma – God is trustworthy. Paul’s theology, as properly understood, does not presuppose a new Israel, but a true Israel. One covenant, not two. What has been superseded is not God’s covenant with Israel, but rather the Torah. It is a theology, noted Baum, that while not found in the gospels, is not inconsistent with them. “In the Vulgate, it is true, Matthew (and Mark) speak of the ‘new’ covenant;” wrote Baum, “but this is not in conformity with the original.” Luke does so (Luke 22:20), “…yet even

661 Ruether, 2.
664 Ibid., 217-18 and 226.
665 Ibid., note 15 at p.271.
666 Ibid., note 14 at p.271.
there, the ‘new’ covenant does not invalidate the old one but confirms it." Citing Romans 9, 6-14, Baum reminded his readers that this was not the first time God had gratuitously elected only a part of Abraham’s stock.

Baum’s defense of the New Testament addressed Isaac’s contention that Christian antisemitism was the taproot to which racial forms of antisemitism attached themselves and by which they were sustained and nourished. “It is unthinkable,” writes Baum in his Introduction, “for anyone who accepts the gospel as the ultimate revelation of divine love that part of the New Testament was designed to encourage contempt for any people and contribute, in a direct way, to the growth of misunderstanding and hatred in the world.”

For Baum, God’s very Word was at stake; if the New Testament contained passages of anti-Jewish rhetoric, it could not be received as God’s Word. His defense was based on the presupposition that the recorded events of the life of Jesus are to a large extent post-Easter projections. The disciples, recounting the life of Jesus after his resurrection, did not set out to produce a biography of Jesus in the modern sense, but to present his life as already revealing his divine sonship. “Certain texts, in fact quite a few of them,” Baum concedes, “do sound as if the author wishes to make the Jews appear as a castaway people to be despised, but this is only so because we read them in the light of a later historical development; we tend to project into the texts what is not contained in them.” The par excellence example of a post-Easter projection is the very notion of Jesus’s sonship. “The idea that Jesus was condemned by a Jewish court because he claimed to be God’s son – which was regarded as blasphemous – is no longer widely held by biblical scholars,” according to Baum, “even though Benedict XVI still defends this in

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667 Ibid., 63.  
668 Ibid., 4.  
669 Ibid., 5.
his book ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Most exegetes think that the divine status of the man Jesus was recognized by the disciples only after the resurrection.”

By the fourth plenary meeting in Bühl, Germany in August 1961, Baum was a correspondence partner with Jules Isaac. At this fourth plenary session, “…discussion of the Declaration [on the Jews] was resumed,” according to Oesterreicher. “The first comment concerned the origin of the Church. She was not simply rooted in Israel, for Christ was not only the son of Abraham, but also the only-begotten of the Father. Thus the deepest roots of the Church lay in the triune God.” At a plenary session of the unity secretariat in Ariccia from 27 November to 2 December 1961, a first draft of the *Decretum de Iudaeis* (Decree on the Jews) was tabled. Mgr Johannes Willebrands, Secretary of the SPCU, and Mgr Francis Davis, Birmingham, England, were added to the subcommission.

The Church, the Bride of Christ, acknowledges with a heart full of gratitude that, according to God’s mysterious saving decree, the beginnings of her faith and election are already to be found in the Israel of the patriarchs and prophets. Thus she acknowledges that all Christian believers – Sons of Abraham by faith (cf. Gal 3:7) – are included in his call and, likewise, that her salvation is prefigured in the deliverance of the chosen people out of Egypt, as in a sacramental sign (Liturgy of the Easter Vigil.) And the Church, new creation in Christ as she is (cf. Eph 2:15), can

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670 Correspondence to the author dated 14 January 2008.
671 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 33.
672 In correspondence with the author dated 26 February 2011, Gregory Baum has written that the document appended to Jews and Catholics Together (ed. Michael Attridge, Ottawa: Novalis, 2007) is "...in my opinion,...not a proposal produced by the Secretariat. This must have been a proposal which a learned theologian produced and then sent to the Secretariat as a supporting document. According to my memory, the proposal we produced was shorter. It had a three-point structure - the Jews prior to the coming of Jesus, the Jews at the time of Jesus, and the Jews after the time of Jesus. As I remember, we did not quote the church fathers, nor did we come up with recommendations. I am convinced that this is not a proposal produced by the Secretariat. Michael Attridge found it in the Oesterreicher archives, but it was likely a proposal sent to the Secretariat and kept in Oesterreicher’s files. Tom Stransky had to deal with the documents of the entire Secretariat, so he may not remember the early submission de Judaes. But the series of recommendations in the proposal is likely to suggest to him that this is not a document produced by the Secretariat."
never forget that she is the spiritual continuation of that people with whom, in his mercy and gracious condescension, God made the Old Covenant.

The Church in fact believes that Christ, who ‘is our peace’, embraces Jews and Gentiles with one and the same love and that he made the two one (cf. Eph 2:14). She rejoices that the union of these two ‘in one body’ (Eph 2:16) proclaims the whole world’s reconciliation in Christ. Even though the greater part of the Jewish people remained separated from Christ, it would nevertheless be an injustice to call this people accursed, since they are beloved for the sake of their fathers and the promises made to them (cf. Rom 11:28). The Church loves this people. From them sprang Christ the Lord, who reigns in glory in heaven; from them sprang the Virgin Mary, mother of all Christians; from them came the apostles, the pillars and bulwark of the Church (1 Tim 3:15).

Furthermore, the Church believes in the union of the Jewish people with herself as an integral part of Christian hope. The Church awaits the return of this people with unshaken faith and deep longing. At the time of Christ’s coming only ‘a remnant chosen by grace’ (Rom 11:5), the first-born of the Church, accepted the (eternal) word. The Church believes, however, with the Apostle that at the time chosen by God, the fullness of the sons of Abraham according to the flesh will finally attain salvation (cf. Rom 11:12, 26). Their reception will be life from the dead (cf. Rom 11:15).

As the Church, like a mother, condemns most severely injustices committed against innocent people everywhere, so she raises her voice in loud protest against everything done to the Jews, whether in the past or in our time. Whoever despises or persecutes this people does injury to the Catholic Church.

Oesterreicher writes, “With the completion of the schema on the Jews the preliminary work was concluded. There seemed to be no obstacle to discussion of this draft by the Council fathers during the first session. Accordingly, at the appropriate time, the Secretariat submitted the draft to the Central Preparatory Commission, whose task it was to see all documents destined for the Council fathers.” As Baum recalls, “Seelisberg, together with the writings of Jules Isaac and other texts, produced a critical movement in the Church that mediated a certain critical culture. Belonging to this culture,

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673 Quoted in Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 40.
674 Ibid., 41.
Oesterreicher, Tavard and I drew up the first draft of the statement on Christian-Jewish relations. We were heirs of the excellent work done by a small group of scholars, writers and activists, but in our formulations, we did not draw upon any one document in particular. The 10 Points of Seelisberg and Jules Isaac’s work thus had an indirect influence on us.”

On 2 February 1962, John XXIII declared closed the preparatory phase and announced that the Council would convene on 11 October 1962. Five weeks earlier, on 31 December 1961, Isaac had written the pope to thank him for a silver medal and a photo of the papal audience that had been delivered to Isaac by R.P. Perrin on Christmas Day 1961.

[The medal and photo were]...a reminder of that day in June 1960 – a date in my life – on which your Holiness received me with so touching a simplicity...How was it that among the host of visitors granted the privilege of a papal audience, I, a son of Israel, was not forgotten? I am well aware that on that occasion, my person, in itself of no consequence, captured your Holiness’ attention by that which it represented - millions of martyrs – and by the force of convictions expressed....It is easier for an old historian to predict the past than the future. However, I shall hazard a prediction in any event: it is my strong belief that the Pontificat of H.H. John XXIII will figure as a pivotal moment in History, a moment of profound renewal in the sense of Brotherhood, of Truth, of Hope. That is why I, unworthy but persuaded, pray to God that he watches over whom His Providence has assigned for this noteworthy role.

The Central Preparatory Commission (CPC), whose 110 members included Bea, scheduled its seventh and last meeting for mid-June 1962. “The nervous CPC kept whittling down the original hundred and seventeen submitted schemata to a manageable number, eventually reaching twenty,” Stransky recalls. “For Belgian Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens, the original group was ‘too many, too trivial, and too detailed’ – ‘an

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675 Correspondence with the author dated 29 March 2010.
encyclopaedia of sacred things,’ pronounced the CPC general secretary, Archbishop Pericle Felici. Since De Judaeis had only forty two lines, perhaps it was too short and too limited in scope. As such it could too disappear.”677 Meanwhile, the creative output of Jules Isaac continued, resulting in the publication in 1962 of his last work, L’Enseignement du Mépris (Fasquelle). An English translation (Holt, Rinehart) followed in1964 under the title, The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism. Pope John XXIII and Charles Péguy are quoted by Isaac at the beginning of the book.

“There is something worse than having an evil mind, and that is having a closed one.”
-Charles Péguy

“It is a fundamental rule of life never to distort the truth.”
-Pope John XXIII

One week before the CPC was to convene, Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, announced in Rome that Dr. Chaim Wardi, director of Christian affairs for the Israeli ministry of religion, would attend the Ecumenical Council as an unofficial observer representing the Congress. The announcement and endorsement provoked vigorous protests from nine Arab states having diplomatic relations with the Holy See. On 20 June 1962, without presentation or discussion, Secretary of State Cardinal Amleto Cicognani (with Bea’s concurrence) withdrew De Judaeis from the agenda of last session of the CPC. The text of De Judaeis is not even included in the Acta of the preparatory coordinating commission minutes. On 28 July, Goldmann cancelled plans for Wardi to travel to Rome and attend the council as an unofficial observer, citing objections not from Arab states, but from orthodox Jewish groups which were uncomfortable with Jewish representation on any terms.

Isaac, watching from a distance and in ill health, feared the worst. On 6 October 1962, he wrote again to the Pope.

Holy Father

Ill, and confined to bed for 6 months, may it be permitted for me, with what remains of my strength, to plead before Your Holiness, the cause of Judaism, of the justice and respect due to it (...)

It is unthinkable that an undertaking of purification so necessary, to which subscribe a Christian elite who are still engaged in a difficult struggle against obscure powers originating from an obsolete past, it is not thinkable that this exercise of purification be adjourned, or even discarded, deprived of the support from on high so indispensable to it to finally prevail. It is unthinkable that the people of the Old Testament, the people of Jesus and his apostles and the first Christians, be absent from this formidable examination of conscience embodied by the upcoming Council. It is unthinkable that such very high hopes will be so very profoundly disappointed.

Referring to my note conclusive of June 1960, I can only restate in closing that which I said then and remains as valid today as it was yesterday. If the issue of the teaching about ancient Israel, considered in all its detail, is very complex, nonetheless there is a general principle which dominates it, and about which there should be unanimous agreement. This principle can be formulated as follows:

That in no case, in no form, may an authentically Christian teaching give rise to feelings of contempt, revulsion and hatred towards the people of the Old Testament. As a result, slanderous imputations of the deicide people or race, the cursed people, the satanic people of the flesh, the people scattered as punishment for the crucifixion, should be definitively proscribed.

Having so spoken and appealed, I repeat that I firmly believe myself to be, in the eyes of God, on the straight path, and I incline, with all the respect due before your Holiness. ⁶⁷⁸

During the first session (11 October to 8 December 1962), the Council fathers managed to avoid the topic of the Jews, except on 27 November when Bishop Méndez Arceo (Cuernavaca, Mexico) is recorded to have asked, “…where are the Jews on the

⁶⁷⁸ Le Fonds Jules Isaac, Bibliothèques Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence.
following the close of the first session, Bea petitioned John XXIII to keep
De Judaeis on the Council agenda, assuring the Pope that the text would remain
“…purely religious, nothing to do with the question of recognizing the State of Israel.”
On 13 December 1962, Bea received the Pope’s response: the mandate was to remain in
effect.

Neither Jules Isaac nor John XXIII would live to see the fruits of their
collaboration. On 3 June 1963, John XXIII passed away at the age of 81. Three days and
a million mourners later, he was buried in the grottos underneath Saint Peter’s Basilica.
On 21 June, Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini, archbishop of Milan, was elected pope.
In August 1963, as Pope Paul VI, he renewed the De Judaeis mandate and scheduled the
second session of the Council to begin on the following 29 September. On 5 September
1963, Isaac’s own life would come to an end, 49 years to the day after Charles Péguy was
killed, “…an unexemplary life,” in Isaac’s words, “like all human lives, not without its
mistakes, its foibles, its failures.”
Masses were celebrated in churches across the
dioece of Aix-en-Provence in gratitude for this “unexemplary life,” in gratitude to this
layman, in gratitude to this Juif d’origine. In his last Will, Isaac declared, “I have adhered
to no religious confession, no Church, but neither to any negation. The struggle against
antisemitism brought me closer to Israel’s rigorous monotheism… Meditation and prayer
are suited to this hour of final separation. As far as prayer is concerned, you should ask
Rabbi Zaoui; my wish is that it be recited in French; otherwise, translated from the
Hebrew…I do not wish to be cremated. If there is place for me next to my parents, in the

679 Stransky, “The Genesis of Nostra Aetate: An Insider’s Story,” as quoted at 42.
680 Ibid., 43.
681 For Bea’s memorandum and John XXIII’s response, see Acta Synod., II, pars V, 485.
Montparnasse Cemetery, bury me there.” At the levée du corps on 7 September, the following lines were read, written by Isaac on 28 November 1931 when he was but 54 years of age.

To be read on the day of my death: The most simple of funerals...No procession...no eulogies...no strangers...Only those who loved me a little...Before the carnal separation, my friends, it is I who address you, who was Jules Isaac, and request of you: no futile grief, with accepting hearts, forgiveness, recollection, the memories that survive in you soothing…Adieu, return to life without me, yet with me.

Fr Duployé, author of a thesis on Péguy and who was present at Isaac’s burial, was struck by the extraordinary intensity of the crowd. He reported in the 19.XI.63 issue of Témoignage chrétien, “It was at that moment only that we understood. He whom we had just carried to his final resting place had been neither diplomat nor national historian, but an authentic prophet of Israel.”

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683 Quoted in Ruff: 4.
684 Ibid.
685 Quoted in ibid., 5.
The quietly stubborn German Jesuit, Augustin Bea, would see to completion Isaac’s sacred mission. Bea’s most important Jewish interface would be Rabbi Dr. Abraham Joshua Heschel, professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. Heschel was principal theological adviser to the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

Bea and Heschel had first met in Rome on 26 November 1961. Heschel had been accompanied by Zachariah Shuster, the Paris-based AJC European director and Professor Max Horkheimer, AJC German consultant and codirector with Theodore Adorno of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. Bea had been accompanied by his personal secretary, German-speaking Croatian Fr. Stepfan Schmidt, SPCU secretary Johannes Willebrands and Fr. Felix Morlion. “Both Heschel and Bea had prepared carefully for this formal encounter,” writes historian Edward Kaplan. “Heschel had studied Bea’s introduction to a critical edition in Hebrew of the Song of Songs. Bea, who admired Heschel’s Berlin dissertation on the prophets, reviewed references to Heschel’s writings in Catholic academic sources.”

Heschel gave Bea two volumes of Midrash Rabba, with book markers indicating commentaries on the Song of Songs, expressing admiration “…for the cardinal’s scholarly edition of the Song of Songs, ‘even including subtle points of punctuation.’” Two AJC memoranda with recommendations for changes to Catholic liturgy and catechesis were raised by Heschel. On 22 May 1962, after much internal vetting, Heschel sent Bea a third AJC memorandum titled, “On Improving Catholic-

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687 The Midrash Rabba is a compilation of aggadot (stories) on the Pentateuch and on the five megillot (scrolls) - Song of Songs, Book of Ruth, Book of Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Book of Esther.
688 Kaplan, 242.
Jewish Relations.” According to this memorandum, the foremost cause of antisemitism was adjudged to be “…the slanderous claims that ‘the Jews’ are collectively responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus, that because of this the Jews were accursed and condemned to suffer dispersion and deprivation throughout the ages. This charge has been used by anti-Semites for centuries, to justify the most cruel and inhuman treatment of Jews; it has even been advanced to justify the fate of six million Jews during the Nazi Holocaust.”

Said the Jews, the murder of six million of their brethren had not been carried out by God, but in defiance of God. On 31 March 1962, at the AJC headquarters on East 56th Street in New York City, Bea met privately with prominent, qualified representatives of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism at a meeting chaired by Heschel. At Heschel’s specific request, no Jewish converts to Catholicism were in attendance, a demand that ruled out Baum and Oesterreicher. Speaking unofficially and in English, Bea adumbrated in round terms the problem: the Jews are accused of being guilty of deicide and on them is supposed to lie a curse. Both charges were rebuttable on scriptural grounds, he continued, based on scriptural truth, the same scriptural truth that Isaac had retrieved.

The second session of the Council (29 September to 4 December 1963) was already under way when Milton Bracker, New York Times bureau chief, using his own sources, published an article on 4 October 1963 disclosing as “ready for distribution” a revised declaration on the Jews. On 17 October, Bracker summarized the proposed text in

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689 Quoted in ibid., 244.
690 As recounted to the author by David Novak and confirmed to the author by Susannah Heschel in response to a question posed following her lecture at the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, Montreal, Quebec.
691 Toward the end of the Council’s first session in 1962, a 900-page anonymously-authored antisemitic tract entitled, Il complotto contro la Chiesa (The plot against the Church) was disseminated. The tract claimed a worldwide Jewish conspiracy to undermine the Church by Vatican Jews, such as Gregory Baum and John Oesterreicher.
a front-page piece titled, “Vatican Council Paper Decries Blaming of Jews in Jesus’

Death.” Reported Bracker,

A declaration that it is wrong and harmful to blame the Jews for the death of Jesus is ready for distribution as an official document to the Roman Catholic churchmen attending the Ecumenical Council.

The declaration goes on to assert that hatred of and persecution of Jews is abhorrent to the Roman Catholic Church, and that those guilty of either merit the strongest possible repudiation by ecclesiastical authority. The document, barely a page long…is the fourth chapter of a schema, or theme, on ecumenism…Ecumenism is a fairly recent usage describing a movement toward unity among Roman Catholics, Protestants and other Christians. The inclusion of a section on relations between Roman Catholics and Jews in the schema on ecumenism is in itself unusual…

An explanation that has been advanced, without confirmation, for the possibility of open discussion of the document fairly soon is the Vatican’s concern over the play ‘The Deputy,’ of ‘The Representative,’ both English versions of Rolf Hochhuth’s play ‘Der Stellvertreter.’ The work assails the late Pope Pius XII for failure to denounce Hitler’s destruction of 6 million European Jews. 692

When it came to Pius XII’s conduct during the war, opinions were divided. In a letter to

Jules Isaac dated 6 February 1961, Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, writing on

Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale stationery, expressed his own privately-held view as follows.

And in the very same issue of Evidences in which appeared your article [No 87, Jan-Feb 1961], a man of the value of Père Riquet wrote most seriously: ‘…on 18 March 1945 when [the forces that had been amassed against them], Pope Pius XII did not hesitate in saying to the people: [‘To those who have allowed themselves to be seduced by the advocates of violence, and who, after having subconsciously followed them, begin finally to awake from their delusions, horrified in seeing to what point their docile servility has led them, for these persons there is no other way to salvation than to repudiate definitively the idolatry of absolute nationalisms, pride based on race and blood, hegemonic desires in the possession of material goods and to resolutely turn toward a the spirit of sincere brotherhood.’] 692

As if on 18 March 1945 Pope Pius XII – whose great courage between 1939 and 1945 we all know, hélas! – could have had the least doubt about the outcome of the war.693

Nothing good could come of the untimely disclosures reported in the New York Times. Heschel received a letter dated 22 October, probably from Malachi Martin, an Irish Jesuit mole within the unity secretariat who was sympathetic to the Jewish position. The New York Times article by Milton Bracker went too far and was premature. But we hope and are confident that nothing pejorative will result from this story,” the letter read. “It would take a lot, a mighty lot, to stop the march of events during the next ten days or so…”694 When it was announced that Cardinal Bea would present chapter IV (the declaration on ecumenism and the Jews), the prelates applauded and Heschel flew to Rome. But the ever-cautious Bea judged it unwise to receive a Jewish representative at that sensitive moment. At a meeting among Heschel, president of Hunter College Shuster and Cardinal Willebrands, Heschel “made a very forceful and effective plea,” writes Kaplan, “for the alteration of…two passages”695 susceptible of an interpretation that the entire Jewish people were to blame for the death of Jesus. Meanwhile, another anonymous antisemitic tract arguing for retention of the deicide charge and conversion of the Jews was making the rounds among the Council fathers. In the end, Vatican conservatives got what they wanted – the second session ended on 4 December without the schema on ecumenism having been put a vote whether to accept the draft as a basis for discussion, but not before Bea would have occasion to introduce chapter IV of the schema.

693 Le Fonds Jules Isaac, Bibliothèque Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence.
694 Quoted in Kaplan, 253.
695 Ibid.
The first CPC approved draft of the conciliar statement on the Jews, as chapter IV of the *schema* on ecumenism, was distributed to the Council fathers on 19 November 1963, prior to the close of the second session. When Bea rose to address the Council Fathers, “…the possibility of such a failure [to put to a procedural vote whether to accept the draft of the *schema* on ecumenism as a basis for discussion and thereby remove it from the competence of the Co-ordinating Commission] had already to be taken into account,” notes Oesterreicher in his account of the proceedings. “But why,” Bea asked in his address, “is it so necessary today to recall these things?”

The reason is this. Some decades ago, anti-Semitism, as it is called, was prevalent in various regions and in a particularly violent and criminal form, especially in Germany under the rule of National Socialism, which through hatred for the Jews, committed frightful crimes, extirpating several million of Jewish people – we need not at the moment seek the exact number. Moreover, accompanying and assisting this whole activity was a most powerful and effective ‘propaganda’ as it is called, against the Jews.

Now, it would have been almost impossible that some of the claims of that propaganda did not have an unfortunate effect even on faithful Catholics, the more so since the arguments advanced by that propaganda often bore an appearance of truth, especially when they were drawn from the New Testament and from the history of the Church. Thus, since the Church in this Council is striving to renew itself by ‘seeking again the features of its most fervent youth’ as John XXIII of venerable memory said (cf. Discourse of 14 November 1960, AAS, 52 (1960), p. 960), it seems imperative to take up this question.

Not that anti-semitism, especially that of National Socialism, drew its inspiration from Christian doctrine, a quite false allegation. Rather it is a question of rooting out from the minds of Catholics any ideas which perhaps remain fixed there through the influence of that propaganda.

One has to dig deeply to find traces of Isaac’s influence in Bea’s address to the Council members. Isaac had contended that the taproot of antisemitism is religious in nature and

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696 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 54.
697 Bea, 157.
and is one that nourishes and sustains other varieties of antisemitism, including those as anti-Christian as Nazi racialism. Bea was not persuaded. After the promulgation of *Nostra aetate*, he would express the view in *The Church and the Jewish People*, “As I have already had occasion to remark in the Council chamber itself, the painful phenomenon of anti-semitism draws its sustenance neither principally nor exclusively from religious sources. Many other factors, political, national, psychological, social and economic, enter into it.”\(^{698}\) This view is consistent with that Bea had expressed at a meeting on 31 March 1962 with American Jewish Congress officials. During that private meeting, Bea had put it this way: “Actually, it is wrong to seek the chief cause of anti-semitism in purely religious sources – in the Gospel accounts, for example. These religious causes, in so far as they are adduced (often they are not), are often merely an excuse and and a veil to cover over other more operative reasons for enmity.”\(^{699}\) What is remarkable is that Jules Isaac had offered a not dissimilar point of view. “Nothing is more dreadful than hatreds driven by ideology, if not hatreds driven by religion, a close relative,” Isaac had written in *Les Oligarques*. “The truth is, ideology is often but a mask behind which hides the grimace of material interests, injured or at risk. The fanaticism of the believer is the equivalent of that of the owner. Both are merciless.”\(^{700}\) Why ever would the official Church wish to be complicit with those seeking religious cover for enmity arising from other sources? The oriential patriarchs demanded the withdrawal of the fourth chapter as framed, “…not because of any doctrinal concerns,” recalled Archbishop Charles de Provenchère, “but because of concerns that no matter how [the

\(^{698}\) Ibid., 8-9.


declaration on the Jews] was presented, Arabs and Jews would give it a political interpretation…and they feared that its promulgation as drafted might expose to risk Christian communities in Arab countries. The patriarchs were to maintain their position right through the discussion, all the while affirming their agreement with the text’s substance.”

After the close of the second session on 2 January 1964, a discouraged Heschel met in his Jewish Theological Seminary office with an equally discouraged Jesuit priest and church liberal Gustave Weigel, professor of ecclesiology at Woodstock College and Council consultant. The two decided to lobby American cardinals Spellman, Meyer and Ritter to urge Bea not to falter. Weigel passed away of a heart attack the next day. One month later, the London Jewish Chronicle reported that Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (who had thus far been a participant on the Jewish side in the Catholic Jewish dialogue) argued forcefully against theological dialogue with Christians at the midwinter conference of the Rabbinical Council of America. His “…sharpest words were reserved for Jewish efforts to have Christian texts changed,” according to Kaplan. Further to a recommendation made on 16/17 April 1964 by Cardinal Carlo Confalonieri, member of the Coordinating Commission, the text on Jews and Judaism became a separate document and was downgraded to the status of “declaration.” On 12 June, Milton Bracker’s replacement, Robert C. Doty, reported in The New York Times that the draft declaration “…has been drastically watered down…In its original form the draft contained a clear-cut statement that the Jews as a people bore no responsibility in the Crucifixion of Jesus. Now all reference to the issue has been deleted…A declaration lacking reference to the issue.

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702 Kaplan, 254.
would amount to no more than another official condemnation of anti-Semitism, according to Jewish leaders." Further to meetings between Heschel and Thomas Merton on 13 July at the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani, Merton wrote Bea, “I am personally convinced that the grace to truly see the Church as she is in her humility and in her splendor may perhaps not be granted to the Council Fathers if they fail to take account of her relations to the anguished synagogue.” On 4 September 1964, an unauthorized draft of the conciliar statement on the Jews was published in *The New York Herald Tribune*, and one day later, in *The New York Times*. Aside from the suppression of the word, “deicide,” what was particularly disconcerting for Jews was the following paragraph: “It is also worth remembering that the union of the Jewish people with the Church is a part of the Christian hope. Accordingly, and following the teaching of Apostle Paul (cf. Romans 11, 25), the Church expects in unshakeable faith and with ardent desire the entrance of that people into the fullness of the people of God, established by Christ.” This paragraph, as reported, prompted Heschel to dramatically assert in an interview with *Time Magazine*, “As I have repeatedly stated to leading personalities of the Vatican, I am ready to go to Auschwitz any time, if faced with the alternative of conversion or death.” In this regard, Heschel was cut from a different cloth than was Jules Isaac. In correspondence to F. Lovsky dated 16 December 1947, Isaac had written, “You would not be Christian if you did not long for ‘the plenitude,’ this membership of Israel that will be akin to ‘a resurrection from the dead.’ But I also think that you would not be Christian if you resisted efforts beforehand at purification.

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704 Quoted in Kaplan, 257.
and I am pleased that we are in complete agreement on this point.”

Isaac reiterated this sentiment during the Tribune de Paris sponsored radio broadcasted debate of 10 June 1948, saying, “I think that clearly a Christian must not disavow this mission [to convert], and that he must have constantly before him the famous verses of saint Paul’s letter to the Romans, must he not, what will Israel’s conversion be but life from the dead. That said, however, I think that for Christians, there is only one way to advance, and this way – allow me to tell you with the greatest of respect that I have for Christianity – is to be first and foremost Christians.”

The third session of the Council was to begin on Monday 14 September 1964. As a result of strenuous lobbying efforts on the part of the AJC, Heschel managed to secure a private audience with Pope Paul VI. At noon on that Monday, Heschel and Hunter College president Shuster entered the pope’s private study. Heschel had with him a proposed revised memorandum and a copy of his book, The Prophets. Shuster drafted two accounts of the meeting, one official, the other, confidential and unofficial. The following are excerpts from the unofficial, confidential account. “The Pope was at ease, while Dr. Heschel sat on the edge of his chair, fidgeting, extremely tense, betraying great nervousness.” Heschel’s introductory remarks were “…too long, obsequious in manner, repetitious in addressing the Pope innumerable times as ‘Your Holiness,’ and lacked point and clarity.” In disregard of the Pope’s caution that the declaration on the Jews was a conciliar text, not a papal one, Heschel tried to persuade the Pope to revert to the previous draft of the text out of an expressed concern that as revised, the text “…would create a bad impression on public opinion.” The Pope reminded Heschel that this was a

document addressed to believing Catholics. Heschel persisted. Shuster continued, “My eyes sank to the ground because I heard a Jew speaking to the head of the Catholic Church and bring in such irrelevant, unsuitable and alien considerations as *public relations* in a matter of the highest religious import and significance… [Heschel] returned again and again to obsequious remarks, pointing out that the great public role the Council had assumed in the world, and that the passage, as it stood, would be misunderstood.” In reaction to the Pope’s further caution to Heschel, “…the young interpreter, Monsignor Marcinkus (whose actions I [Shuster] do not condone in any way) could no longer contain himself in view of the ludicrous behavior of Dr. Heschel, and he began to mimic and imitate Dr. Heschel’s gestures and manner of talking.” At the close of the audience, “[Heschel] approached the pope and offered his ‘advice on matters affecting Jews and Judaism…the Pope was silent for a moment as though not grasping the meaning of Dr. Heschel’s remarks. Then he said, ‘Yes, Rabbi Zolli [a Jewish convert to Catholicism] was a very good friend of mine and I knew him very well.’ Dr. Heschel was flabbergasted and visibly taken aback at this reaction of the Pope to his remark, and obviously did not know how to respond to it.” On leaving the Vatican, “[Shuster] recall definitely…the words that came spontaneously to my mind and lips were chillul ha-shem v’yisrael (the desecration of God’s name and of Israel).”

Eleven days later, on 25 September 1964, Cardinal Bea introduced in the Council Chamber a revised *Declaration on the Jews and Non-Christians*. As the New York Times had reported, nowhere in the revised declaration, ostensibly out of theological concerns, was there an admonition never to present the Jewish people as, *inter alia*, guilty of decide. Recalls Tavard,

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708 Quoted in Kaplan, 261-66.
This discussion ended on 29 September 1964; the Secretariat for Christian Unity then started to work to expand the proposed draft. Experts were brought in to help write new paragraphs. Nearly two months later, on 20 November, Cardinal Bea presented the resulting version, which now spoke also of three great religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. This text was accepted in substance on 21 November 1964, with 1,651 votes in favour, 242 in favour with modifications, 99 against and 4 votes that were invalid. During the fourth session of the Council, on 14 October 1965, Cardinal Bea gave his last presentation of the schema in its final form. A vote on 15 October showed 1,763 in favour, 1 in favour with modifications, 250 against and 9 invalid. The final vote on 28 October carried a much higher majority: 2,221 in favour, 2 in favour with modifications, 88 against and 1 invalid...*Nostra aetate* was promulgated on the same day.

In the draft reintroduced on 20 November 1964, the “the Jews” (*Judaeis*) gave way to “Abraham’s stock,” (*stirps Abrahae*), a turn of phrase that “...satisfied Cardinal Lercaro’s expectation that the reference to the Jews have an evident religious quality,” according to Connelly. “The German equivalent was precisely the phrase that had been used by Karl Thieme in his Evanston theses (these that were also the source for the words of Zephaniah that would ultimately replace ’...the Church expects in unshakeable faith and with ardent desire the entrance of that people into the fullness of the people of God, established by Christ’).” Connelly hypothesizes that “Thieme in turn was probably drawing upon the work of Karl Barth, his neighbor in Basel, who referred to the Jews as *Stamm Abrahams* in an exegesis of Romans 9-11 from 1942.”

In French, the words were *lignée d’Abraham*, in Italian, *stirpe*. The word “deicide” was restored in the reintroduced draft. The earlier, “...following the teaching of the Apostle Paul (cf. Romans 11:25), the Church waits with unshaken faith and deep longing for the entry of that people into the fullness of the people of God established by Christ” was replaced with “In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day,

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709 Tavard, 32-3.
710 Connelly, 260.
known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and
‘serve Him shoulder to shoulder’ (Zeph. 3:9).” This change was driven not by Heschel’s
theatrics per se, but by the concern that underlay them. As explained by de Provenchères,
“Certain Jews, unaware of New Testament perspectives concerning the end of times,
appear to have understood this text as a call to undertake a mission to convert the Jews.
The fathers considered it prudent to take into account the risk of this kind of
misinterpretation and to redraft the text differently.” Oesterreicher, in his account of
the conciliar declaration on the Jews, was less guarded in his language.

The statement [of the Christian hope] was so greatly misunderstood that
Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel - a man of deep insight whose blood,
however, boils too easily – felt himself obliged to protest against it in the
following terms: faced with the choice of conversion or death in the gas
chambers of Auschwitz, he would choose the latter. The imputation that
the Church had kept alight the gas chambers of Auschwitz puts the
Church’s profession of faith in the union of all who worship the God of
Israel in the same category as the most ghastly perversions of the Middle
Ages, when Jews were more than once faced with the choice of, for
example, baptism or exile. It is too fantastic to be refuted.

The last word in this regard belongs to de Provenchères. “This [revision] reflected not a
change in Catholic doctrine, but a change in its formulation, using expressions that would
be precisely understood by the man of today, unfamiliar with theology. This was in
conformity with instructions given by John XXIII, and repeated by Paul VI. Having
regard to the interest aroused by the statement on the Jews, it was essential that its precise
meaning be graspable at the same time by the Jews and the Arabs, by the learned and the
man on the street.”

713 de Provenchères: 38.
The expression “guilty of deicide” was not carried forward to the final version
that was put to a final vote on 28 October 1965. “The Secretariat considered that it was
preferable to avoid a word that raises controversies,” recalled de Provenchères, “while at
the same time affirming ‘…precisely and comprehensively the substance of that which it
is desired to convey by this word.’”\(^{714}\) This omission would have been a disappointment
to Isaac, although even he had appreciated the implications of classical Christology - that
in accordance with *communicatio idiomatum*, the properties of the Divine Word can be
predicated of the man Christ and that the properties of the man, Christ, can be predicated
of the Divine Word, that there is a two-ness in the unity of Christ’s person, taught the
church fathers at Chalcedon: Jesus is entirely man and entirely God. Thus it follows what
can be said about his humanity is equally apt of his divinity and vice versa. Bea had
alluded to the *communicatio idiomatum* implications of orthodox Christology in an article
entitled “Are the Jews a Deicide People and ‘Cursed by God’?” written in 1962 during
the council phase of Vatican II for simultaneous publication in the German *Stimmen der
Zeit*, the French *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* and the Italian *La Civiltà Cattolica*. The
article reached the second proof stage before it was suppressed out of a concern its
publication would further inflame certain Arab countries, but not without protest from the
editors of *Stimmen der Zeit*. As a result of this protest, the substance of Bea’s article was
published in *Stimmen der Zeit* under the name of Ludwig von Hertling, SJ, a member of
the German journal who had in his time taught church history at the Gregorian.\(^{715}\)

According to Catholic doctrine, Jesus Christ is in one person true God and
ture human being. Both natures, the divine and the human, are united
hypostatically in Christ, according to the technical term. Between the
divine and the human nature in Christ is what theology describes as

\(^{714}\) Quoted in ibid., 41.

\(^{715}\) Willebrands, *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations*, 57-61.
*communicatio idiomatum*, which means that the same things can be predicated of Christ, Son of God, as of Christ, human being. We call Mary mother not merely of Jesus the man, but we call her Mother of God. We do not merely say that Jesus, the man, died on the Cross, but that God dies on the Cross for us. Conversely, we say that the infant Jesus in the crib, or the blood of Christ, or the Heart of Jesus is to be adored. It is therefore dogmatically correct, even when it might sound somewhat uncustomary, to assert: God has been killed and since it is an unjust and violent death, God has been assassinated.⁷¹⁶

Having regard to the *communicatio idiomatum* implications of the man-God nature of Jesus, Bea was able to conclude that objectively speaking, the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ constituted the crime of deicide. What is astonishing and a testament to intellectual integrity is that Isaac reached this same conclusion. Roumanian Chief Rabbi Emeritus Alexandre Safran, who attended the Seelisberg Conference in 1947, reported that Isaac had been willing to accept the positive formulation in the Ten Points that some Jews (presumably the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead) had “killed God.”⁷¹⁷

However, as Bea noted in *The Church and the Jewish People*, “We cannot speak of the guilt of deicide objectively in the external forum and simultaneously leave the question of possible ignorance to the judgement of God. Here we are asking whether certain persons [emphasis added] can be accused of culpability for deicide or not, and the problem of their subjective knowledge or lack of it is as vital as the objective qualification of the crime itself.”⁷¹⁸ In other words, the guilt of deicide can only be properly imputed to those who have committed the crime with full knowledge of the dual nature of Christ. In this regard, the biblical scholarly consensus was, and is, that Jesus’

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⁷¹⁷ Rutishauser: 46.
⁷¹⁸ Bea, 69 at n.1.
divine status was recognized by his disciples only after his resurrection. In his elaboration of the revised *schema*, Bea echoed Isaac’s arguments and the New Testament passages upon which Isaac had relied:  

Here lies the gravity and the tragedy of their [the Jewish authorities] action – the exercise of their authority in the condemnation and death of Christ. Yet how grievous was their [the Jewish people’s] guilt? Did those ‘rulers’ of the people in Jerusalem fully understand the divinity of Christ and so become formally guilty of deicide? Our Lord on the cross said in his prayer to the Father: ‘Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34). If this reason for forgiveness is no mere empty formula – God forbid – it surely shows that the Jews were far from full understanding of the crime they were committing. St Peter also, addressing the Jewish people on the crucifixion of Christ, repeated: ‘And now brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers’ (Acts 3:17). So St Peter finds an excuse even for the very rulers! So likewise does St Paul (Acts 13:27).  

“As for Peter, who denied Jesus at the time of his Passion,” Isaac wrote, “…it would be more accurate if he had said, ‘This Jesus…we crucified and killed…’ For Jesus’ disciples, being the best-informed of his authority, are more to be blamed for having deserted him.” Bea would use the fact that neither St Peter, nor St Stephen  nor St Paul,  for that matter, had included *themselves* among those responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus in support of the theological argument that the crucifixion of Jesus is not founded on membership of the people of Israel, but on concurrence with the attitude of mind of their leaders in Jerusalem.  

One fundamental fact must first be noted. In none of the texts cited above does the speaker (St Peter, St Paul or St Stephen) include *himself* [emphasis added] among those responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Their rebukes are always addressed to someone else, whether it be the Sanhedrin, the crowd involved in the trial, the inhabitants of Jerusalem or

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719 Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, 361-62.  
720 Bea, 161.  
722 Acts 7:52  
723 Acts 13:27-28; 1 Thessalonians 2:15
Jews in general. Now if these texts referred to a collective responsibility and guilt of the entire Jewish people as such, that is of all members of the people of Israel, then in all honesty the speakers would have been obliged to use the pronoun ‘we’ and to include themselves. It follows that they neither envisaged nor implied a collective responsibility or guilt based solely on membership of the chosen people.\textsuperscript{724}

In his arguments rebutting the accusation of collective guilt, Isaac argued that the Jewish authorities were not representative of the Jewish people. “It is possible to believe, as we shall see,” he wrote, “that this oligarchic caste – four powerful families in all, brutal, cynical and ill-famed – bore the heaviest part of the responsibility for Jesus’ arrest and delivery to the Romans. And it is this caste which our authoritative theologians and exegetes, for lack of better, baptize as ‘perfectly qualified’ representatives of the Jewish nation. ‘Perfectly disqualified’ would be more accurate. Vichy in Jerusalem. And worse yet, if we recall that Vichy could at least claim some democratic basis and exhibited only a secular (or military) dishonor.”\textsuperscript{725} Bea was not persuaded. In his introduction to the Council fathers, when addressing the question whether a declaration that Christ’s death can in no way be laid to the charge of the Jewish people as such, he stated:

I need scarcely say that there is not and cannot be any question of denying or attenuating anything affirmed in the Gospels. The issue must be carefully defined and it is this: The Leaders of the Jerusalem Sanhedrim, although not democratically elected, yet, according to the ordinary understanding of those days, accepted by the scriptures, were regarded and must be regarded as the embodiment of legitimate authority among the people. Here lie the gravity and the tragedy of their action – the exercise of their authority in the condemnation and death of Christ.\textsuperscript{726}

In his second address to the Council Father, Bea, drawing upon the data of history, the “...probability, if not the certainty, is that the Jews in Palestine were at that point only a

\textsuperscript{724} Bea, 77.
\textsuperscript{725} Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 405.
\textsuperscript{726} Bea, 161.
minority,” stated, “Statistics show that in the apostolic age the Jews dispersed throughout the Roman Empire numbered about 4,500,000: are all of them to be accused of the deeds done by the Sanhedrists on that first sad Good Friday?”

There were two other revisions of note in carryforward. The earlier, “All should then ensure that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the Word of God they do not teach anything that could give rise to hatred or contempt of Jews in the hearts of Christians,” became “All should then ensure that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.” This change would have disappointed Isaac. In the penultimate paragraph of his last letter to Pope John XXIII, dated 6 October 1962, Isaac had written that in no case may an authentically Christian teaching give rise to feelings of contempt, revulsion and hatred towards the people of the Old Testament, and it followed that imputations of the deicide people or race, the cursed people, the satanic people of the flesh, the people scattered as punishment for the crucifixion, should be proscribed. This was consistent with the closing of Isaac’s *Note complémentaire et conclusive*, drafted in his own script on the night before his papal audience and left with Pope John XXIII: “Is there not a base principal on which it seems inconceivable that there would not be unanimity? It can be formulated thus: in no circumstances, under any guise, may a teaching calling itself Christian, based on the gospels, engender sentiments of contempt, of repulsion or of hate toward the Jewish people – toward Jesus’ people, toward the Apostles’ people and toward the first Christians.” Also the earlier “Moreover, this Synod…deplores and condemns hatred and persecution of Jews…” became “…the

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728 *Bea*, 161-62.
Church…decries hatred, persecution, displays of antisemitism directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.” One theological reason advanced for this change was that the council documents reserved the word, “condemn” for formal heresies; another was that this verb had not been used in relation to other forms of racism.

*Nostra aetate*, paragraph 4, grounded in paragraph 16 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and related to paragraph 3 and chapter IV, eclipsed, transcended and superseded the Ten Points of Seelisberg.\(^{729}\) The Ten Points had served their purpose. John Oesterreicher, in his account of the Second Vatican Council’s *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*, observes in relation to the fourth paragraph of *Nostra aetate*, “It is the first time also that the Church has publicly made her own the Pauline view of the mystery of Israel.”\(^{730}\) In correspondence to the author dated 18 December 2007, co-author of the conciliar statement, Baum, recalls,

> At the Secretariat we interpreted the words of St Paul as the assurance that Israel remains God’s chosen people and that the ancient covenant retains its validity after the coming of Jesus. This was new to me. This is not how I interpreted Paul in my book written before the Council. But the positive interpretation emerged… I don’t remember who brought it up first, but I do remember that it was new to me, that I embraced it with gladness, and that I made the corrections in the second edition of my book. I did not ask myself whether this interpretation was shared by all the members of the Secretariat. I simply thought that this was the obvious meaning of the conciliar text. Immediately after the Council, I wrote in various articles that implied in the conciliar teaching is that the Church has no mission to convert Jews to the Christian faith.\(^{731}\)

Baum added in subsequent correspondence dated 21 October 2014,

\(^{729}\) It is noteworthy that in the new revised edition of *The Jews and the Gospel*, published under the title, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic?*, Baum chose not to carry forward the Ten Points as an appendix. Although not now recalling his motive, he concedes the possibility that he must have assumed that the Ten Points had served their purpose and been transcended by the conciliar statement on the Jews and Judaism.\(^{730}\) Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 1.\(^{731}\) Correspondence with the author dated 18 December 2007.
John Connelly’s book argues that Karl Thieme was the first theologian who interpreted Romans 11:29 as the assurance that God’s ancient covenant with Israel remains valid even after Christ’s coming. I do not know whether Rudloff brought this interpretation to the Secretariat; my impression is – I think Connelly quoted me on this – that we slithered into this position by systematically avoiding interpretations of Scripture that belittled or humiliated Jews, - a post-Holocaust hermeneutic.  

Where is the Pauline view of the mystery of Israel to be found? It is to be found in what Baum called Paul’s “little treatise on Israel’s rôle in the history of salvation (Romans 9-11),” which Baum described as “…the heart of Paul’s doctrine on this matter, which in the past was often regarded as an obscure speculation of little importance, [and which] has become the object of many scholarly studies and commentaries, and through writers addressing a wider audience – we are thinking above all of Maritain [this author’s emphasis] – the positive doctrine of Paul in regard to Israel is, in our day, being brought to the notice of educated Christians.” A decade later, Oesterreicher, in his commentary, echoed these observations. “From the time of Christian antiquity up to that of Vatican II, there had been hardly any development of the Church’s teaching on the mystery of Jewish existence,” he wrote. “Many other mysteries had been subjects of meditation in prayer and intense intellectual activity, for example, the great mysteries of the triune God, of the person and office of Jesus, and of the Eucharist. There was a constant clarification of concepts and continual refinement of language in order to represent supernatural realities as exactly as possible in human speech. But nothing of this kind had occurred with regard to the relationship of Church and Synagogue. The problem was really the Cinderella of theology.” A half century later, George Tavard,

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732 Correspondence with the author dated 21 October 2014.
734 Ibid., 172.
735 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 39.
another co-author of the conciliar statement on the Jews, would put it this way: “Most theologians, I believe, have not reflected in depth on [Israel’s role in salvation history]. Thomas Aquinas is a major exception. Yet his thought, briefly formulated in his commentary on Romans, has had few echoes. As a result, the Pauline insights on Judaism have hardly affected the teaching of the Christian faith in the Catholic Church. If they had, the sufferings of the Jewish people at the hands of Christians could not have taken place to the extent they occurred.”

Alas, lamented Baum writing in the late fifties, “…the great apostle is proverbially difficult to understand.” Even Thomas Aquinas was not certain of Paul’s meaning, adds Tavard.

As [Aquinas] read Paul’s question and answer – ‘For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead!’ (Rom 11:15) – Aquinas understood that ‘The re-assumption of Jews by God will make the Gentiles resurrect into life.’ He wondered who the Gentiles were who were in need of resurrection. He suggested that they might be Christians with lukewarm faith or Christians misled by the Antichrist. He also suggested that the ‘conversion of Jews’ might be an eschatological event immediately prior to the general resurrection of the flesh… These tentative interpretations evidently show that Aquinas was not certain of Paul’s meaning. His hesitancy, however, does not tone down his forceful conclusion: ‘Ignorance of this mystery would be damning for us.’

As the great apostle is susceptible to more than one interpretation, so too is the conciliar document on the Jews and Judaism. Augustin Bea was fast off the mark in providing his understanding, which was published in English translation in 1966. Bea’s was a conservative interpretation. Commenting on the passage of Nostra aetate, 4 which provides, “Although the Church is the new People of God, the Jews should not be

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736 Tavard, 14.
738 Tavard, 46-7.
represented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this followed from the holy Scriptures,” Bea took pains to clarify more than once that the Jewish people is no longer the people of God “in the sense of an institution for the salvation of mankind [Bea’s emphasis].” The distinction between Israel as an institution for the salvation of mankind and Israel as a collectivity of individuals is echoed by Oesterreicher. “One had to distinguish between the Jews as a ‘corporate person’ and the Jews as a sum total of individuals.” Bea and Oesterreicher appear to be drawing their categories from Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain.

The role of French Protestant convert to Catholicism Maritain, like that of German Protestant convert to Catholicism Thieme, cannot be overestimated in creating a theological vocabulary with which the official Church could speak of the Jews. The role of Israel in salvation history, wrote Maritain, is one that “… [Léon] Bloy had revealed to him in a ‘supernatural lightningbolt.’” Supernatural is the operative word. When it came to the Jewish people, Maritain’s was a spiritual, not a temporal, vertex. For almost two millennia, chapters 9-11 of Paul’s Letter to the Romans had been an occasion to discuss the Christian doctrine of election, predestination and man’s free will, vague and ambiguous theological speculation that was not central to Paul’s thought. “The very first remark on Rom 9-11 which we find in the Bible de Jérusalem [overthrew] the tradition of centuries when it [said], ‘In these chapters [Rom 9-11] it is not a question of divine predestination of individuals to glory or even to faith, but simply the role of Israel in

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739 Bea, 96. See also note 1 at p. 10. .
740 Oesterreicher, “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,” 34.
742 Further to an encyclical of Pope Pius XII, issued in 1943 and encouraging Roman Catholics to translate the Scriptures from the Hebrew and Greek texts rather than from Jerome's Latin Vulgate, Dominicans and other scholars at the École Biblique in Jerusalem translated the scriptures into French. The fruit of their labour was published as La Bible de Jérusalem in 1956.
history,” writes Baum. “When Paul speaks in these chapters of being elected or rejected, he has not in mind the fate of individual men, but rather that of nations and whole communities.”\textsuperscript{743} In modern biblical scholarship, continues Baum, “…the conviction has become almost unanimous that Rom 9-11 must be taken seriously, that it expresses a central theme in Paul’s thought, and that on the whole, its significance is clear and comprehensible.”\textsuperscript{744} “…[P]hilosophy, which even as \textit{ancilla} of theology is never in a servile condition (it is rather an ‘auxiliary’ – on the side of mere natural reason – than a ‘servant’ of theology),” Maritain wrote, “has not only to furnish to the latter a metaphysics (I mean a metaphysics founded in truth); it has also for function, - at least if in the head of the philosopher it is itself strengthened by faith, - to enter, yes, onto the proper terrain of the \textit{sacra doctrina} in order to make there itself an effort of reason and to propose there eventually to the competent doctors new views…”\textsuperscript{745} It is ironic that the inspiration for Maritain’s insight on the role of Israel in salvation history was, in the words of Pierre Birnbaum, “…one of the most extreme and vociferous anti-Semites of turn-of-the-century France.”\textsuperscript{746}

Léon Bloy’s \textit{Le Salut par les Juifs}, first published in 1892, lay dormant for twelve years from publication. The publisher, writes Bloy in his Preface to a new edition published in 1906, “…a most excellent and dignified man formed from the alluvium of the soil and admirably suited to the typographic production of this single work,” suddenly and without warning abandoned his publishing activities, with the consequential

\textsuperscript{743} Baum, \textit{The Jews and the Gospel}, 208-9.
\textsuperscript{744} Ibid., 209.
“arbitrary sequestration of most of the the copies of my book.”747 In 1905, moved by Maurice Maeterlink’s praise of Bloy’s *La Femme pauvre*, newlyweds Jacques and Raïssa Maritain decided to read it. A correspondence began with Bloy which culminated in a visit to Bloy’s home on 25 June 1905. Maritain recalls their first encounter.

In June, 1905, two children of twenty were going up the ever-ascending staircase that leads to the Sacré-Cœur. They bore within them that distress which is the only serious product of modern culture, together with a kind of active despair illumined only – they did not know why – by the inner assurance that the Truth for which they hungered, without which it was almost impossible for them to accept life, would one day be shown them…

They went through a little garden of olden times then entered a humble house with walls adorned with books and beautiful pictures; they first came up against a tall pale person that seemed all goodness; her air of nobility was impressive. It was Madame Léon Bloy. Her two daughters Véronique and Madeleine looked upon the visitors with their great surprised eyes. Léon Bloy seemed nearly shy, he spoke little and in a very low voice, trying to say to his two young visitors something important, something that would not disappoint them.748

Further to this meeting, Bloy’s *Le Salut par les Juifs* would come to the Maritains’ attention and in August 1905, following the completion of his *agrégation de philosophie*, Maritain and his wife read it. They were not disappointed. It may even have been the dominant factor in their decision to convert to Catholicism, Jacques from Protestantism, Raïssa from Judaism. As Maritain put it,

*Le Salut par les Juifs* is undoubtedly, along with *La Femme pauvre*, Bloy’s masterpiece. At a time when we knew nothing of the Christian faith, this book – along, of course, with the help of actual grace – was like a supernatural thunderbolt for us, the blinding extension of the prophets and the Figures, the revelation of the divine meaning of human history, and of that permanent witness to which Israel is implacably constrained, proving in spite of itself the authenticity of the Church’s message.”749

749 Doering, as quoted on p. 133.
In January 1906, *Le Salut par les Juifs* was republished at the Maritain’s own expense. The new edition was dedicated to Raïssa Maritain. Thenceforth until Bloy’s death in 1925, he and Maritain would regularly visit each other.

This book, or rather series of essays, is a self-styled “paraphrase” of chapter 11 of Paul’s Letter to the Romans by which Bloy wished to bear urgent Christian witness in favour of “the elder Race” and about which he would wonder in the close of his Preface dated 19 November 1905, “Does the Jewish world appreciate this book, which honours it beyond all expectation and which has cost it nothing?” Despite the book’s theological deficiencies, as well as antisemitic overtones, according to Fr Charles Journet,

…at a time when the conscience of too many Christians on an important issue was not Christian, [Bloy] loudly proclaimed into the silence like a prophetic trumpet the sound of the revelations of the apostle that touch upon the destiny of the chosen people. One was in the midst of *downgrading* [Journet’s emphasis] the Jewish problem; he, a lay person, undertook in the face of a literary and political world strangely deaf to every call of faith, to *restore it to its rightful plane* [Journet’s emphasis]. He proclaimed that Israel’s existence was a mystery attesting to divine trustworthiness, that one could not lay a hand upon this elected people, this people set apart, without sacred tremors.

Bloy’s starting point is the five last words of John 4:22: “…salvation is from the Jews,” words attributed to Jesus in his dialogue with the Samaritan woman, words which, lamented Bloy although not in these terms, were more honored in the breach than the observance. At the plain meaning level, salvation is from the Jews because, Bloy wrote, “in a word, it is within them that was (i) prepared, (ii) established, (iii) promulgated the

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751 For example, Bloy seems not to have acknowledged the advent of the Holy Spirit, which according to normative church doctrine, occurred at the first post-resurrection Pentecost.
752 See Hellman.
messianic Kingdom.” The plain meaning interpretation of John 4:22 was not lost on Bloy; however, it was the deeper meaning that would draw his interest, a fourth meaning, “…that was to be revealed later by the apostle saint Paul. According to this point of view, salvation is from the Jews not by virtue of (i) the birth as a Jew of the Messiah, nor by virtue of (ii) the preparation of the patriarchs, nor by reason of (iii) the fidelity of this ‘remnant’ of Israel which constituted the heart of the Church. By a detour most puzzling, salvation is to come from the Jews by virtue of their rebellion and from that which ensues [Journet’s emphasis].” By this fourth, deeper meaning, salvation is from the Jews in two Pauline senses: Israel’s unbelief (“…through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles (Rom 11:11)”) and Israel’s future conversion (“…what will their acceptance be but life from the dead! (Rom. 11:15)”). That salvation comes from Israel’s unbelief (Rom 11:11) is the more paradoxical. That salvation comes from Israel’s future conversion (Rom 11:15) was espoused by the Church. But how would this acceptance manifest itself? The Jews, like the apostles, would become teachers to the Gentiles, offered Thoedore of Mopsuestia. The Jews, in imitation of the passion of Christ, would give testimony in blood, mused Gregory the Great. Their conversion would cause this perishable world to become imperishable, Origen hypothesized. Bloy was also captured by the connection between salvation and Israel’s future conversion. Wrote Journet,

It was with the second [rom 11:15] of saint Paul’s revelations [concerning unbelieving Israel] that [Bloy] attempted to nourish his book: salvation—that which the apostle calls a ‘resurrection’ from the dead – will come from the Jews, since it will be bound with their future rehabilitation.

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754 Ibid., 404.
755 Ibid., 406.
756 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 27.
But there are two possible interpretations of the words: ‘What will their reintegration be, but a resurrection from the dead?’ The former is ‘historical’: the reintegration of Israel will provoke in the course of [Journet’s emphasis] history itself, a renewal of Christian life, an epiphany of the catholicity of the Church. The latter is ‘catastrophic’: the Israel’s reintegration will be the sign of the end [Journet’s emphasis] of history, of the last judgment, of the resurrection of the dead.

We [the Church] have opted for the former [interpretation], Bloy, the latter. He did not invent it. [The latter interpretation] was, up until recent times, the more widespread, the more banal. It matters not! Bloy now has his treasure in hand. He is this merchant having found the gem of his desire. Until then, this gem had remained mysterious, without doubt, but limpid and clear. But Bloy was going to colour it with fire, with the melancholy fire of his passion.757

Maritain himself did not share Bloy’s interpretation. “According to St. Paul,” said Maritain in a New York Herald Tribune interview published on 24 March 1940, “the Jewish people will be converted ‘when the plenitude of nations will come to pass’; and after the reconciliation of the Synagogue and the Church, the world will know great renewal of life and faith.”758 Within the official Church, the question is not free from doubt. In his account of the Vatican II statement on the Jews, Oesterreicher wrote,

Among the Fathers of the Church, and also later, there were two ways of understanding the future ‘conversion’ of Israel. One line of approach followed the opinion that with Israel’s final turning to Christ, history would have reached its completion, and therefore Paul’s phrase, ‘life from the dead’ (Rom. 11:15) could mean nothing other than the resurrection of all flesh. The other approach, however, gave the words ‘life from the dead’ - a phrase not found elsewhere in Scripture and therefore peculiar to Rom 11:15 – a spiritual meaning. The adherents of this interpretation saw in Israel’s future conversion the signal for a new outpouring of grace, for a reawakening of love over the whole earth. It could not be the Council’s task to choose between these two approaches.”759

Journet caveated his praise of Bloy with allusions to “theological deficiencies.” A recurring theme in Le Salut par les juifs is the notion that the Jews are preventing the

757 Journet, 408.
759 Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," 27.
advent of Christ’s return, preventing his descent from the cross as it were. This may also have been Maritain’s personal view. In correspondence of 9 November 1954 to James Parkes, Maritain had characterized medieval antisemitism, “…nefarious as it may have been, (especially when allied with the greed of princes for money) [as] essentially impatience against those who prevented by their spiritual obstinacy the advent of Christ’s Kingdom on earth.”

But does this not put the cart before the horse? “The Jews as a people must wait,” writes Baum in his *The Jews and the Gospel*. “They shall not find faith in Christ until the totality of the Gentiles has entered the kingdom…As the Gentiles must confess, in the words of Jesus, that salvation comes to them from the Jews, the Jews also will have to say, though in a different sense, that their salvation depends on the Gentile nations.”

Jules Isaac advised reading with caution Bloy’s *Le Salut par les juifs*, writing,

At bottom, far from leading me away from the Cross, it brings me closer…*Salvation is from the Jews*, in which the sublime skirts the filthy, is a great book. But this book, little known in times past, has only too many readers today: dreading the ravages of filth in ill-prepared souls, I would hope that they would be put on guard against such hazardous reading. Then again, is it certain that even alerted minds, interpreters of the quality of Albert Bégin, for example, have not suffered deleterious effects from this writing? In Bégin’s analysis of Léon Bloy, completed in 1943 and published in 1944, I read: ‘If Jewish baseness blazes before our eyes, it has at least this in its favor…that it is balanced against enormous sufferings. Let us not forget for an instant that while it is glaring because it is the faithlessness of the elder Race, it remains a figure of general ignominy.’ What! In those years of 1943-1944, it was ‘Jewish baseness’ that blazed before our eyes? It was not German baseness, pagan baseness, Christian baseness, human baseness? And what not ‘general ignominy’ flaunted shamelessly enough to spare us the need to seek a *figure* of it among the Jews, tortured, massacred by the thousands, by the millions?"
Maritain set for himself the task of reconstituting the truths of Bloy’s revelation in philosophical language “…which attempts to say it without touching it,’ to express, according to the imperfect mode of human concepts, what it is possible for us to know rationally of the mysterious problem of the Chosen People.” Only once in his writing does Maritain quote from Bloy’s *Le Salut par les Juifs*. The image associated with Bloy’s “…The history of the Jews dams up the history of humanity as a seawall dams up a river, to raise its level” was too perfect to pass up. Maritain’s belief regarding Israel was unselfconsciously articulated in his first public utterance on the Jewish Question in 1921 (delivered in the form of a lecture at *the Semaine des Écrivains Catholiques*). At that time, Maritain had yet to reconstitute Bloy’s message in politically correct vocabulary. The lecture was published under the title, “A propos de la question juive” in both the quasi-official *Documentation Catholique* (30 July-6 August 1921) and in the Dominican review, *La Vie spirituelle* (July 1924). Unlike Maritain’s later pronouncements on the Jewish Question, this first lecture was never to see the light of day in an English translation nor was it to be included in his collection of essays published in 1965 and again in 1990 under the title, *Le mystère d’Israël*. A first principle from which Maritain was never to depart, and which was ever to inform his position on Israel is set out in the first footnote. “It is impossible for one who has not the point of view of revealed truth to understand and to evaluate in a manner most just the history of the Jews and their role in the world. Only a christian is capacitated to unlock the true meaning of Israel’s history, of the Israel after as well as before Christ.” How, then, did the history of the Jews appear through a Christian lens? According to Maritain, “… [F]rom the moment of their rejection of the

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763 Quoted in Doering, 136.
764 Bloy, *Le Salut par les juifs*, 44.
true Messiah, an essentially messianic people like the Jewish people were fatally destined to play a subversive role in the world, not by virtue of a preconceived plan, but rather by virtue of a metaphysical necessity by which messianic hopes and passions for absolute justice, in falling from the supernatural to the temporal, express themselves falsely in the fomenting of revolution [from which Christendom must protect itself].”

The more temporal the context in which the Jewish Question was debated, the more need there was, in Maritain’s view, to switch the context to the supernatural one. Anglican Priest James Parkes, in a correspondence exchange with Maritain intermediated by Sir Robert Mayer, said:

Maritain speaks as though Jews must make up their minds in accordance with our [Parkes’ emphasis] presuppositions. They must make up their minds. But it is their presuppositions that matter. So likewise he says that Israel, following the line he thinks right, will draw nearer to the Church. But half the distance between them has to be covered by the Church, not by Israel, and this fact his Roman Catholicism prevents him from admitting.

Sixteen years were to separate Maritain’s first and second public utterances on the Jewish Question. During this hiatus, the politically incorrect aspects of his thought were jettisoned and the rest was recast in a new vocabulary original to Maritain. This vocabulary is in evidence in 1937, the year in which Maritain made his second public utterance on the Jewish Question in the form of an essay titled, “L’impossible antisémitisme” for Daniel-Rops’ edited collection, Les Juifs. In 1941, this essay was published in English as a chapter titled “The Mystery of Israel” in Maritain’s Ransoming.

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766 Jacques Maritain Center Archives, 430 Geddes Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.
In this essay, the distinction between *corpus mysticum* Israel (Judaism) and Israel as a people (“Jewdom”) flowers forth from Maritain (its post-Christian correlates are Christianity as a Church and Christendom).

Jewish thought itself is aware that Israel is in its own way a *corpus mysticum*. The bond which forms the unity of Israel is not solely the bond of flesh and blood, nor of an ethico-historical society; and yet it is not the bond of the communion of saints, the bond which forms the unity of the Church, through faith in the incarnate God and through the possession of his heritage. (Of course Israel understands the meaning of the communion of saints and longs for it! But if it is true that its Christ came and that Israel failed to recognize Him and thus, on that day, failed in its own faith and in its own mission, so straightway it lost *the trust of dispensing to souls, through the signs of the Ancient Law, the grace of the Christ to come* [this author’s emphasis], while at the same time it repudiated the office of dispensing to souls, through the efficacy of the New Law, the grace of Christ already come; in other words, it repudiated the bond which would have really made the communion of saints its unity within a mystical body.)

Note how Maritain recasts his 1921 thinking in his 1937 “The Mystery of Israel:”

The mystical body of Israel is a Church fallen from a high place. It is not a ‘counter’-Church, any more than there exists a ‘counter’-God, or a ‘counter’-Spouse. It is an unfaithful Church (such is the true meaning of the liturgical phrase, *perfidia Judaica*, which does not mean at all that the Jews are perfidious). The mystical body of Israel is an unfaithful and a repudiated Church... *repudiated as a Church, not as a people* [this author’s emphasis].

By “Church,” he means not the administrative organization charged with the dispensation of religious matters, but rather in the strict sense it conveys in the language of Catholic faith and theology. “It designates,” writes Maritain,

a reality both visible and invisible, both human and divine, the mystical Body of Christ, which is itself a mystery of faith; which bears within itself the blemishes and sins of its weak members, and yet is, in its very essence, life and inspiration – which it receives, in so far as a living whole, from

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769 Ibid., 151-2.
770 Ibid., 153-4.
its divine Head – without any blemish and rust and contamination of the devil; to which all the baptized, gathered together in Catholic faith and discipline, visibly belong, and to the vivifying soul of which all men in good faith and good will, living by divine grace, invisibly belong [this author’s emphasis].

Everything follows from the dichotomy between *corpus mysticum* Israel as a Church (Israel according to the spirit) and Israel as a temporal community (Israel according to the flesh). This dichotomy provides a hermeneutic through which to read Paul’s Letter to the Romans (9-11). Commenting, for example, on Romans 11:28-29, (“As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable”), Maritain writes in a chapter titled “Answer to One Unnamed” in *Ransoming the Time*, “To see nothing more in the destinies of the people of Israel than in the destinies of some social aggregation or other; to pretend that the election of Israel to the title of God’s people was purely and simply revoked by the coming of Christ – this is to simplify things to the point of substituting an altogether natural [Maritain’s emphasis] kind of thought for Saint Paul’s supernatural thought, and it is to utterly extenuate his teaching, ‘Hath God cast off his people? God forbid.’”

Let us consider once more this strange inter-crossing symmetry which holds our attention. As to Christians, the Church follows her divine vocation, and it is not Christianity, it is Christendom, the Christian world, which has failed (in the temporal order)...For the Jews, *it is Israel as a Church* [this author’s emphasis], it is Judaism which has failed (in the spiritual order); and it is *Israel still as the chosen people, it is ‘Jewdom’* [this author’s emphasis] which pursues in history a supernatural (yet ambiguous) vocation.

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771 Ibid., 143-44.
772 All biblical citations are from the 3rd edition of the New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV).
774 Ibid., 158.
Consider the fine-tuning in the vocabulary between Maritain’s “L’impossible antisémitisme” for Daniel-Rops’ edited collection, Les Juifs, (1937) and its English translation which was to appear as “The Mystery of Israel” in Ransoming the Time (1941). In the former, Maritain had written, “The Jews chose the world; they have loved it, their penalty is to be held captive by their choice.”\textsuperscript{775} In Ransoming the Time, this became, “The Jews (I do not mean the Jews individually, but the mystical body of Israel at the moment when it struck against the rock), the Jews at a crucial moment chose the world; they have loved it; their penalty is to be held captive by their choice.”\textsuperscript{776} With few exceptions, after the publication in English translation in 1941 of “L’impossible antisémitisme,” everything Maritain would utter on the Jewish Question would be elaboration of his thoughts in this essay. This observation applies in particular to Maritain’s public lecture, “Les Juifs parmi les nations,” delivered on 5 February 1938 at Paris’ Théâtres des Ambassadeurs, (published in English translation in the United States in 1939 as A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question),\textsuperscript{777} and to his public lecture delivered on 8 February 1939 at the Théâtre Marigny (published in English translation in England in 1945 as The Twilight of Civilization).\textsuperscript{778} Vocabulary was critical for Maritain, as he would remind John Oesterreicher in correspondence of 23 July 1943, “I think that in these days of the passion of Israel, we need to speak of the mystery of its faux-pas in a language sufficiently renewed for not running the risk of causing any injury and in order to keep divine things from getting mixed up in the human mélange. This is precisely what you propose to do in insisting as you have on the drama of love between Israel and God.

\textsuperscript{775} Daniel-Rops, ed., Les Juifs, 51.
\textsuperscript{776} Maritain, Ransoming the Time, 153.
Nevertheless, it seems to me that perhaps the vocabulary [this author’s emphasis] could still be amended along this point of view.”

Maritain never tired of painting all non-Catholics, including Jews, with one brush: “…members of Christ: explicitly and visibly members of Christ if they are Christians (living members if they have grace, ‘dead’ members if they have lost it); members of Christ implicitly and invisibly if being non-Christians they have Christ’s grace; potentially and invisibly members of Christ if being similarly non-Christians they do not have Christ’s grace.” Maritain regarded as “…a truth of which no one is unaware” that conversion was provoked by grace; mission simply completed the process. “…[I]t is not his ministers but Jesus himself who converts souls by the hidden windings of his grace, so that preaching and teaching come to achieve rather than start the secret motions awakened in souls by his love and the love of his servants.” On this question Bea also did not distinguish between the Jews and other non-Christians. Bea, echoing Maritain wrote, “…on this count also the Church has nothing to hide. In the conciliar document [Nostra aetate, 4] she explicitly and openly declares that it is both her duty and her desire to preach Christ who is ‘the way, the truth and the life’, in whom God has reconciled all things to himself. In “The Mystery of Israel,” Maritain writes, “With all Jews in whom grace dwells, as with all souls of good faith and good will, the work of the Cross is present, but veiled and unperceived, and involuntarily experienced. Despite himself, and in an obscuring mist, the pious Jew, the Jew of the spirit, carries the gentle Cross, and

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779 Richard Francis Crane, Passion of Israel: Jacques Maritain, Catholic Conscience, and the Holocaust (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2010), as cited on p. 89.
781 Ibid., 77.
782 Bea, 19-20.
thus betrays Judaism without realizing what he does. The moment he begins to be aware of this mystery of forgiveness and of this putting off of self, he finds himself on the road to Christianity.” In his collection of essays published shortly after the close of Vatican II, Oesterreicher, echoing Maritain, drew on the concept of anonymous Christianity.

What...is expressed in the Declaration, is the overwhelming realization that mankind bears the seal of Christ, even if it is far from being Christian...Though...these considerations are not expressed in the Declaration in so many words, they are nevertheless basically there. They owe much to the work of Karl Rahner, even though substantially this theology is by no means new. It has been formulated most clearly by Henri de Lubac: ‘Without closing our eyes to the needs of all those who are ‘in the shadow of death’, we nevertheless believe with Irenaeus that from the beginning the Son reveals the Father to every creature in a more or less hidden way,’ and that he can ‘become salvation also for those who have been born outside the Way.’

The Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra aetate (n. 4) (“Guidelines and Suggestions”), published in 1974 over the signature of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, Secretary Emeritus of the SPCU, is arguably on all fours with the views expressed by Bea in The Church and the Jewish People. The following passage from the French version of the Guidelines and Suggestions (which makes the point more clearly than does the English version) seems to conform to the view expressed by Bea that the Jewish people is no longer the people of God in the sense of an institution for the salvation of mankind. “L’histoire du judaïsme ne finit pas avec la destruction de Jérusalem, mais elle s’est poursuivie en développant une tradition religieuse dont la portée devenue, croyons-nous, d’une signification profondément

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783 Maritain, Ransoming the Time, 155.
784 Oesterreicher, “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,” 93.
785 Johannes Willebrands was born in the Netherlands 1909 and completed his doctoral studies in Mussolini's Rome. In 1940, he returned to the Netherlands to carry on his pastoral work and became involved with Protestants in the underground movement which assisted Jews to escape. In 1952, he founded the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions.
La différence après le Christ [this author’s emphasis], demeure cependant riche de valeurs religieuses.  

786 The following passage from the Guidelines and Suggestions (which echoes the closing words of Nostra aetate, 4) seems also consistent with the view that the Church has a continuing mission to convert Jews. “In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world (Ad Gentes, 2).”

Although the Guidelines caution that in the case of the Jews, this mission must be prosecuted “…while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (Declaration Dignitatis Humanae),” nowhere do the Guidelines appear to distinguish between Jews and other non-Catholics in terms of the Church’s mission. What say the Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church, published in 1985 over the signature of Cardinal Willebrands (“Notes”)? Paragraph 7 of the Notes provides as follows:

‘In virtue of her divine mission, the Church’ which is to be ‘the all-embracing means of salvation’ in which alone ‘the fulness of the means of salvation can be obtained’ (Unit. Red. 3); ‘must of her nature proclaim Jesus Christ to the world’ (cf. Guidelines and Suggestions, I). Indeed we believe that it is through him that we go to the Father (cf. Jn. 14:6) ‘and this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.’ (Jn. 17:33).

Jesus affirms (ibid. 10:16) that ‘there shall be one flock and one shepherd’. Church and Judaism cannot then be seen as two parallel ways of salvation and the Church must witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all, ‘while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (Declaration Dignitatis Humanae)’ (Guidelines and Suggestions, I).  

787 Nonetheless, as the official Church had acknowledged, God remains until now in relationship with Abraham’s stock. Baum made the necessary corrections to his book,

786 III. Enseignement et Education
787 Author’s emphasis.
which was published as a new revised edition in 1965 under the new title, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic?* In the closing paragraph of the new revised edition, this self-styled pupil and follower of Jules Isaac chose to express himself in the same paradoxical terms as had the official Church: yes, God is redemptively present in the Synagogue; yes, the Church of Christ is the salvific community for the whole of humanity.

Even though the Jewish people are no longer the sacrament of salvation in the world, God continues to act in their midst. Why? Because the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11:29)... We may confidently assert that according to the Scriptures God continues to make himself known in the synagogue and to be worshiped there by men who believe in his covenant. God’s mysterious action in the Jewish people is for the Church a sign of great consolation, since it reminds her of God’s unshakable fidelity and the gratuity of his mercy.  

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The corrections in the new revised edition of *The Jews and the Gospel* addressed not Part I of Baum’s book, in which he had mounted a defence of the purity of the gospels, but Part II, in which Baum presents Paul’s thought on the interrelationship of Israel and the Church. In 1965, Baum still understood biblical inspiration in the normative Catholic sense that the books of the New Testament are theological unities and that, in his words, “…the last redaction bears the imprint of the Holy Spirit, and in their final form the books as a whole represent the message that God wants to communicate to the Church.”

It took this self-styled disciple of Jules Isaac eleven years to catch up to his mentor. In Baum’s Introduction to Rosemary Ruether’s *Faith and Fatricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, published in 1974, Baum disavowed his apology for the New Testament.

My apology for the New Testament led me to a contradiction: for I had to admit in the course of my study that many biblical passages reflected the conflict between Church and Synagogue in the first century. While I was bound to acknowledge that already the New Testament proclaimed the Christian message with a polemical edge against the religion of Israel, I refused to draw the consequences from this. I was still convinced that the anti-Jewish trends in Christianity were peripheral and accidental, not grounded in the New Testament itself but due to later developments, and that it would be consequently fairly easy to purify the preaching of the Church from anti-Jewish bias. Since then, especially under the influence of Rosemary Ruether’s writings, I have had to change my mind. Writing this introduction give me the opportunity declare that the book I wrote in the late fifties [1957-58] and published in 1961 no longer represents my position on the relationship between Church and Synagogue.

In correspondence to the author that could have been written by Isaac himself, Baum clarified precisely how his position had changed by 1974.

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789 Ibid., 34.
790 Introduction to Ruether, 3-4.
I changed my mind in 1974, recognizing that the NT contains passages of anti-Jewish rhetoric, and no longer believe (as I did in 1961) that this prevents the NT from being received as God’s Word [Baum’s emphasis]. I write in various other contexts a) that the shadow of sin is cast even over the Bible and b) that God’s Word continues to address the Church in the Bible when it is read not literally, but in the Spirit. Reading the Bible in the Spirit makes believers recognize that certain passages are not part of the divine message but simply reflect fallible human experiences. 791

Does Baum’s view represent normative Catholic teaching? While the official Church has accepted the historical-critical method of interpreting the scriptures (in Pius XII’s 1943 encyclical, Divino Afflante Spiriti),792 the Church has yet to acknowledge, according to Baum, that damaging cultural prejudices and hostile reactions to outsiders are to be found in the New Testament as in the Old. However, argues Baum, “… [Divino Afflante Spiriti and Vatican II] opened the door to methods of biblical studies that lead to these insights.”793

Baum understands the Jewish people to be bearers of divine revelation in a way that other religious traditions are not. “The Jews, as God’s first-loved people, chosen to give public witness to God,” he writes, "are summoned by divine grace through the scriptural revelation they have received. God’s Word speaks to them through their tradition, while other religious and sapiential traditions are not as such bearers of divine revelation. Still, according to Vatican Council II, they are enlightened by an echo of God’s Word, i.e. by certain messages and rites that are part of their inheritance.”794 If God speaks to the Jewish people through their tradition, what need is there for mission? In his introduction to Faith and Fatricide, Baum writes, “By thus recognizing Judaism as

791 Correspondence to the author dated 11 February 2014.
792 The historical-critical method takes into account the historical context of the text as well as the intention of the biblical author in writing the text.
793 Correspondence to the author dated 3 December 2014.
794 Correspondence to the author dated 19 January 2011.
a religion in its own right and an equal partner in dialogue, Vatican II abandoned, at least implicitly, the Church’s missionary stance toward the Jews.” 795 For example, in an Afterword to the symposium on 10 November 2005 held at the University of St. Michael’s College to mark the fortieth anniversary of Nostra aetate, Baum said, “I understand Nostra aetate to say that since God’s saving Word continues to sustain the Synagogue, the Church has no mission to convert the Jews to Christianity.” 796

In the same Introduction to Ruether’s Faith and Fatricide, Baum raised a “second stage of Christian self-examination,” whether the anti-Jewish trends in Christianity are not “simply peripheral and accidental, but woven into the core of the message.” 797 This was Ruether’s central thesis, that “…almost from the beginning… the Christian affirmation of Jesus as the Christ was accompanied by a refutation of the synagogal reading of the scriptures… the ‘left hand of Christology,’ [and this] is the source and origin of Christian anti-Semitism.” 798 As Ruether put it,

The christological interpretation of the Old Testament is basic to the adversos Judeaeos tradition and Christian theology generally….The Jews are said to be incapable of understanding or interpreting their own Scriptures or even finding God in them. The Jews are ‘blind,’ ‘hard of heart,’ and a ‘veil lies over their eyes.’ All this prevents them from seeing the inner meaning of the text, i.e. its christological meaning. But Jewish blindness is also a function of Jewish ‘literalism.’ Jews are ‘carnal men,’ as distinct from the Christian ‘spiritual men.’ The christological meaning is presumed to be the spiritual, or inward, meaning. The Jews see things only from the outside and are incapable of discerning the spiritual meaning. Lacking such spirituality in themselves, naturally they are unable to see the spiritual meaning of Scripture, i.e., its christological meaning. The general line of thinking here follows the Pauline doctrine of

795 Introduction to Ruether, 4.
797 Introduction to Ruether, 5.
798 Introduction to ibid., 12.
Jewish blindness, the Johannine doctrine of Jewish carnality and even demonism, and the Matthean view of Jewish hypocrisy.

In effect, at the very heart of the gospels is the presumptuous, if not contemptuous, teaching that if only the Jews had paid more attention to their own scriptures, they could have recognized in Jesus what Catholics see in him. At the very heart of this belief is the negation of Jewish spiritual existence. Is it possible for the Church to leave room for a Jewish reading of the Hebrew Scriptures? “Is not Jesus the fulfillment of all the promises made in the Scriptures?” asked Baum in his Introduction. “Is he not the one mediator between God and man? Is it possible for the Church to relativize Jesus?”

There are two principal ways of relativizing Jesus while protecting an aspect of absolute and universal significance, according to Baum. “The first way removes Christianity’s monopoly of divine grace by regarding Jesus as the visible embodiment of a divine principle operative, in a hidden way, in the entire history of men…” he writes. “Jesus is identified with the divine Logos that is creating the cosmos and redeeming the history of men…This theology of universal grace, developed by Protestant thinkers in the nineteenth century and by Catholic thinkers such as Maurice Blondel and Karl Rahner in the twentieth, was able to influence the teaching of Vatican II…According to this new approach, grace is as universal in human life as sin, and more abounding.” In effect, the signature of God’s Son is on the whole of humanity. The problem with this theology is that from a Christian viewpoint, members of other faith claims are Christians without knowing it, “anonymous Christians” in Karl Rahner’s terminology, “implicit Christians” in Schillebeeckx’s. “We are back, then, to the theory of substitution…” continues Baum.

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799 Ibid., 160-61.
800 Introduction to ibid., 14.
801 Introduction to ibid., 16.
“Judaism and the other world religions are stages on the way to the Church. If Jews were faithful to their divine call, they would cease to be Jews.” This first way forward calls to mind Maritain’s, “With all Jews in whom grace dwells, as with all souls of good faith and good will, the work of the Cross is present, but veiled and unperceived, and involuntarily experienced. Despite himself, and in an obscuring mist, the pious Jew, the Jew of the spirit, carries the gentle Cross, and thus betrays Judaism without realizing what he does. The moment he begins to be aware of this mystery of forgiveness and of this putting off of self, he finds himself on the road to Christianity.”

Projecting forward in time the distinction between “…members of Christ implicitly and invisibly if being non-Christians they have Christ’s grace; potentially and invisibly members of Christ if being similarly non-Christians they do not have Christ’s grace,” seems no different than projecting backward in time this same distinction, between pre-Incarnation Christians (Hebrews) and those who were not (Jews), a distinction, according to Parkes, formulated by Eusebius (265-340) in the seventh book of The Preparation and in the first two books of The Demonstration.

Eusebius was the son or adopted son of Pamphilus and bishop of Caesarea. In a paper prepared for a meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society entitled, Jews and Christians in the Constantinian Empire, Parkes writes,

According to Eusebius, Christians are neither Greeks nor Jews, but heirs of an older and purer belief, indeed of the original faith of mankind – ‘the most ancient organization of holiness, and the most venerable philosophy of mankind (Dem I, 2)’. This religion is described by Moses in the book of Genesis, and those who adhered to it are called Hebrews. It is not right to call them Jews, or their religion Judaism, since they lived by faith and knew nothing of Jewish practices. They did not know the Sabbath, those

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802 Introduction to ibid., 17.
803 Maritain, Ransoming the Time, 155.
who preceded Abraham were not even circumcised, and they did not need to elaborate rules and regulations to keep them in the paths of righteousness. They were pre-incarnation Christians. Indeed, they knew the Son already before his Incarnation, and it is the Eternal Christ who appeared to them either in the guise of an angel, or in the voice of God. According to Eusebius, there was not a single decent or righteous Jewish character in the whole of the story. All the virtuous characters, whether before or after Moses, were Hebrews, and so pre-Incarnation Christians. Moreover, since the Bible was divinely inspired, it was clear that God himself never expected [the Jews] to be anything but disgusting and reprobate, since He continuously foretold their rejection of the truth and consequent ruin…It is in this dichotomy that the ultimate evil root of the abnormality resides. 805

The dichotomy to which Parkes refers is presupposed by Bloy when he lumps together pre-Incarnation Christians, “…the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Evangelists, the Apostles, the faithful Friends and all the first martyrs, without daring to speak also of the Virgin Mary and our Saviour himself…” 806 and implicitly juxtaposes Moses and Israel with “…[t]his scruff of disobedient and perfidious persons [Jews] whom Moses [a Hebrew] found so hard…” 807

The second way of relativizing Jesus while protecting an aspect of absolute and universal significance presupposes a distinction between fulfilled and unfulfilled messianism. This is Ruether’s option. “For Rosemary Ruether, …the Jewish ‘No’ to any claim that the messianic age has come as long as suffering and misery prevail could be a constant reminder to Christians not to understand their faith as a fulfilled messianism…,” writes Baum. “The Church’s unspoken and unacknowledged malaise with the claim that with Jesus, the final messianic age had arrived (overlooking its own teaching on the

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806 Bloy, Le Salut par les juifs, 24.
807 Ibid., 46.
parousia) produced the vehement Christian anger with the Jewish ‘No’ and the ardent desire to negate and abolish Judaism.”

Did Baum consider himself to be breaking the bounds of normative Catholic theology with his introduction to Faith and Fatricide in 1974? After all, Dei Verbum, chapter 3 asserts, “Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.” Baum does not think so. Had not Pope Leo XIII’s battle to defend the inerrancy of the whole of scripture been a losing one in response to the documentation of contradictions and historical errors by Catholic exegetes (and for which they were severely sanctioned)?

“I write within the Catholic tradition addressing Catholics,” Baum asserts and continues:

I am keenly aware of the dark side of Catholicism and, in one way or another, of all religions. Religion fosters so much blindness, stubbornness and prejudice as well as indifference to the suffering of ‘outsiders.’ At the same time, I firmly believe in the divinely granted capacity of Catholicism to renew itself, become more faithful to its origin and more relevant to men and women in today’s society. This divine summons, I think, is heard in all religions.

Peculiar in my life of a theologian is a special experience. I belonged to a Catholic current that defended ideas that were at one time censured by the ecclesiastical magisterium and then, at Vatican II, became the Church’s official teaching. I continue to write for the future, beyond contemporary ‘orthodoxy’, seeking fidelity to God’s Word. I practice negation and retrieval, if I may use the vocabulary of the Frankfurt School. Fernand Dumont, the great Quebec thinker, called it rupture and fidelity…

In the Christian Churches we have not adequately distinguished between relativism and pluralism. Our understanding of the one truth revealed in Jesus Christ still prevents us from a theological acceptance of the plurality of religions. The interactions of Christianity and the other world religions are still sources of conflict, contempt, competition and hostility. I do not

808 Introduction to Ruether, 20.
think for a moment that this what Jesus wanted. In today’s world, I argue, the Church’s mission, her fidelity to the one truth, is to exercise a ministry of reconciliation.

In some historical situations the Church, faithful to the Gospel, said to followers of other religions, ‘We hold the truth and you are in error.’ In the world produced by western colonialism, saying this would prevent the Church from coming to self-knowledge and from liberating itself from its ambiguous past. What the Church may have to say to other religions today is that we all have a dark side, we all have contributed to forces that have produced injustice and hostility; yet within all of us are currents grounded in our foundational values promoting respect for all humans and commitment to justice and peace. We are all divinely summoned to renew ourselves and become more faithful to our foundational values. This is said, in fact, in the Louvain Declaration of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

Catholics will have to ask themselves if the plurality of religions is a fault line of history to be overcome by the conversion of humanity to the Catholic Church or whether this plurality is the work of God’s creation and promise of grace, at which we must marvel and for which we must be grateful.

Already today there is a lively debate in the Catholic Church about its mission. Contemporary ecclesiastical documents affirm that this mission includes both proclamation and dialogue, yet they do not provide any principle for deciding in what context it should be proclamation and in what other context it should be dialogue. We must find a way to welcome religious pluralism without surrendering to philosophical and ethical relativism. 809

The Second Vatican Council grounded its clarification on the role of Israel in salvation history on Paul, but the Council expanded the meaning Paul gave to the election of Israel, taking into account post-biblical Judaism and the relationship between the teaching of contempt, on the one hand, and modern anti-semitism and nazi racialism, on the other. In the words of Baum, “…the rereading of Scripture in the light of new historical events is the appropriate theological method followed in the doctrinal renewal of the Church. John XXIII and John Paul II referred to this as listening to ‘the signs of the

809 Correspondence dated 21 March 2013 to David Novak and copied to the author.
times.’ This method allows the Church to hear God’s Word in a new way, revise previous interpretations, and discover relevance of divine revelation for the conditions of the present.”

Baum described the revolution in the official Church’s thinking this way.

Paul thought of Jewish religion after Jesus as an empty ritual that would be revived at the end of time when the Jews recognized their Messiah. But after the long centuries, Jewish religion is no longer what it was in the first century; it has developed through the great talmudic tradition. And the Christian religion is no longer what it was in the first century; it has developed through the great patristic tradition. Christians can therefore no longer say the Christian religion is the fulfillment of Judaism… In the mind of St. Paul, the Jews whom he encountered had said No to Jesus. He thought that even as they remained God’s first-loved people, their religion had become empty. But in subsequent centuries, Jews inherited their religion from their fathers, their religion was not based on a conscious No, and there is therefore no reason whatever to think that their religion had been deserted by God. The Vatican Council took seriously – as no eccelesiaical authority had previously done – the Pauline teaching that the Jews remain God’s chosen people, but the council expanded the meaning Paul gave to this ongoing election, taking into account the reality of post-biblical Judaism…and the contribution ‘the teaching of contempt’ had made to modern antisemitism and the Holocaust.

The Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, published on 6 August 2000 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, concerns itself with interreligious dialogue between Christianity and the “non-Christian” religions without commenting on Judaism per se. Remarked Walter Cardinal Kasper, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Vatican’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (“CRRJ”), “The misunderstanding [that Judaism is just another world religion] can be avoided if the declaration is read and interpreted – as any magisterial document should be – in the larger context of all official documents and declarations,

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810 Baum, ”Afterword,” 151.
811 Correspondence to the author dated 31 December 2007.
which are by no means cancelled, revoked or nullified by this document.” Kasper goes on to offer his own opinion on the meaning of *Dominus Iesus* in the context of Catholic-Jewish relations. “The term mission, in its proper sense, refers to conversion from false gods and idols to the true and one God…thus mission, in this strict sense, cannot be used with regard to Jews, who believe in the true and one God.” Kasper had occasion to reiterate these views in *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, a document issued in 2002 by the Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Synagogues USA. The Catholic reflections, which are presented separately from the Jewish reflections, provide, “A deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people, together with the divinely-given mission to Jews to witness to God’s faithful love, lead to the conclusion that campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable to the Catholic Church.” Kasper is quoted in this document as follows: “God’s grace, which is the grace of Jesus Christ according to our faith, is available to all. Therefore, the Church believes that Judaism, i.e. the faithful response of the Jewish people to God’s irrevocable covenant, is salvific for them, because God is faithful to his promises.” Cardinal Ratzinger [as he then was] is also quoted in this document as follows. “God’s providence…has obviously given Israel a particular mission in this time of the Gentiles. Only the Jewish people themselves can articulate their mission “in the light of their own religious experience.”

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814 Ibid., 4.
Writing twenty-five years after the fact, SPCU Secretary Johannes Willebrands remarked, “To the Pope and the Cardinal we therefore owe the conception (so to speak) of [Nostra aetate, para 4]; as we owe to Pope John’s successor in St Peter’s office, Pope Paul VI, and always to the same Cardinal, the nurturing and the growing process – a painful growing process indeed – of that small embryo.” Is this not a distortion of the truth? If the fourth paragraph of Nostra Aetate had a conception, was it not that fateful handshake between a Jew and a Catholic, both octogenarians, at the close of their meeting on 13 June 1960? Notre Dame de Sion Sr Louise-Marie Nietz thought so. “It all started here, in 1960, and we must remember that it was due to the efforts of a Jew, Jules Isaac, and a man of good will and openness, John XXIII. It was already a Jewish-Christian encounter.” A Council Father, Charles de Provenchères, Archbishop of Aix, who had known and been an ardent supporter of Isaac since becoming archbishop in 1946 said, “I believe that I can confirm that the genesis of [Nostra aetate, 4] was an initiative of M. Isaac…I have reasons to think that the visit of Jules Isaac paid in June 1960 to John XXIII was determinative in the Pope’s decision to assign a study of the question to a preparatory commission of the council.” Gregory Baum agreed, writing in 1974 that Pope John XXIII was “…probably inspired [to add the Jewish question to the agenda of Vatican II] by a visit of Jules Isaac.” Most compelling is the written testimony of Mgr Loris Capovilla, personal secretary of Pope John XIII at the time. In a signed confidential memorandum dated 22 March 1966 concerning Capovilla’s recollections of Isaac’s visit (a memorandum delivered to Jesuit Fr. Stjepan Schmidt, Bea’s personal

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818 de Provenchères: 31.
819 Introduction to Ruether, 4.
secretary, who in turn would deliver a copy in April 1985 to Fr Thomas Stransky). Capovilla attests that until a week after (13 June 1960) Superno Dei nutu (5 June 1960) “…it never entered Pope John XXIII’s mind that the Council ought to be occupied also with the Jewish question (questione ebraica) and with anti-semitism. However [John XXIII] was firmly behind the idea from that day [the date of Isaac’s papal audience] on.”

The fact is, writes Thomas Stransky, executive secretary to the unity secretariat, that “…the Jewish theme reached the Pope’s consciousness at a private audience [with Jules Isaac] on 13 June 1960.”

Do we not hear echoes of Jules Isaac, and perhaps of his spiritual soulmate, Charles Péguy, in the following passages of Nostra aetate, paragraph 4?

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant [Isaac’s Point 1]. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles… The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: ‘theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenant and the law and the worship and the promises [Isaac’s Point 3]; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh’ (Rom 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary [Isaac’s Point 7]. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church’s mainstay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ’s Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people [Isaac’s Point 9]...

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today [Isaac’s Point 14]. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures [Isaac’s Point 13]. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

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820 Stransky, "The Foundation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity," 85 at note 35.
821 Quoted in ibid., 72.
822 Ibid.
Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved by the spiritual love of the Gospel and not by political reasons, decries hatred, persecutions, manifestations of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone. Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent his passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation [Seelisberg Point 7].

No doubt it would have been a source of pleasure for Isaac to have heard the following comments uttered by Cardinal Willebrands, first president of the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, comments made with the benefit of twenty years of hindsight from the date of promulgation of Nostra aetate:

…at least this is true: those [Catholics] who chose to ignore Nostra aetate and subsequent actions and documents, including the example of the Pope, are put in the situation of having to explain their attitudes, theological or pastoral. In other words, an attitude which represents ancient stereotypes or prejudices, not to say one that is aggressive against Jews and Judaism, does not anymore have a right to legitimate existence in the Church. It may be there, and it may still be frequent in some places, but it has been put onto the defensive. It is not taken for granted, as it was - I fear - twenty years ago.\(^2\)

Do we not hear echoes of Isaac, and perhaps of his soulmate, Péguy, in the Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra aetate (n. 4), published in 1974? For example, the Guidelines call attention to the links between the Christian liturgy and the Jewish liturgy [Isaac’s Point 2] and recall that:

- It is the same God, ‘inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments’ (Dei Verbum, 16), who speaks both in the Old and new Covenants [Isaac’s Points 1 and 3];
- Judaism in the time of Christ and the Apostles was a complex reality, embracing many different trends, many spiritual, religious, social and cultural values [Isaac’s Point 4];
- The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded upon it must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism,

with no appeal to the love of God and neighbour (cf. Dt. 6:5; Lv 19:18; Mt 22:34-40);
- Jesus was born of the Jewish people, as were his Apostles and a large number of his first disciples [Isaac’s Points 7 and 9]…
- The history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather went on to develop a religious tradition… [a tradition that] is still nonetheless rich in religious values.

The correspondences between the Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church, published in 1985 and Isaac’s Jesus and Israel are so numerous that they speak for themselves.⁸²⁴ How to explain the resonances between Nostra aetate, no. 4, the Guidelines and the Notes, on the one hand, and Isaac’s Jesus and Israel, on the other? Ovey N. Mohammed, Professor Emeritus, Regis College, observes that the Catholic Church “…stepped over centuries of contemptuous teaching back to the New Testament itself.”⁸²⁵ But someone was waiting for the official Church, someone who had already discovered the gross misalignment between evangelical truth and a certain secular tradition regarding the Jewish people. That someone was Jules Isaac. Few are those who know of the pivotal role that Isaac played in the change and renewal of the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward Jews and Judaism. Thomas Stransky is one of them. He writes,

By only these 17 Latin sentences, though a few had been weakened by immediate compromises, Vatican II began to shift with integrity 1,900 years of relationships between Catholics and Jews, and to open locks that had been jammed for centuries. The conciliar act continues in the life of the Catholic Church, an irrevocable hesbon nefesh, a reconsideration of soul.

In recalling my personal experience of Nostra Aetate’s six-year journey, I favour the biblical image which Cardinal Bea once used: the tiny seed of Jules Isaac’s half-hour conversation with Good Pope John grows into that

⁸²⁴ Reference is made to the Table of Correspondences set out in Appendix III.
large mustard tree which warmly hosts in its branches so many men and women of ‘non-Christian religions’. The all-embracing positive character of the entire Nostra Aetate makes it of commanding import in Catholic history. For Nostra Aetate helped open the Catholic Church to living dialogue with each community of faith – respecting its own identity, ritual and conduct. This dialogue begins with ‘what human beings have in common and what promotes fellowship’ (N.1). Not merely human effort but God’s mysterious initiatives, through us, in a shared history.  

In his address to the Council fathers on November 20, 1964, Bea had made reference to this mustard seed metaphor without elaborating, opening his remarks with “This Declaration might well be compared to the biblical grain of mustard seed.”

Emotionally, Isaac’s life can be regarded as marked by both continuity and discontinuity. Throughout Isaac’s life, there was a ruthless pursuit of the truth, of adherence to spiritual integrity and social justice. It is arguable, however, that Isaac emerged from his living contact with the scriptures in very extreme circumstances a different person spiritually, although his spirituality is shrouded in mystery. Jewish by birth, and married according to Jewish law, he was not in any way a practising Jew nor was he a member of any Jewish congregation. In correspondence to his son, Daniel dated 22 August 1954, Isaac wrote,

I have not renounced my Jewish religious ties (ties, moreover, that never existed), but I have rekindled, by force of circumstance and of activism, my spiritual ties. The New Testament has revealed to me the greatness of the Old. And Jewish spirituality has been, across the centuries, one of the most noble there is. That said, I am in no way prevented from remaining that which I was exclusively in former times: a humanist.”

Was it a mere humanist, however, who uttered, “We have said it, we know it; there are truths superior to the poor, small temporal truth that we nonetheless apply ourselves to

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827 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 249-50.
Was it a mere humanist who wrote, “That the one year, Jesus’ single year, was enough to kindle a flame in the world which would never be extinguished thereafter is a miracle; there are none more convincing.” 829 Was it a mere humanist who, in correspondence to Fadiey Lovsky dated 16 November 1949, confided, “But I have the feeling that there remains for me much to say, that I am preaching in the desert, that I must return to the task, to put paid to certain Christian errors that bar the way into the future as opened by St Paul. With each passing day, christian injustice [toward the Jewish people] aligns me more and more with the Jewish people.” 830 Was it a mere humanist who closed his Note Conclusiv, written on the eve of his fateful audience with Pope John XXIII and hand-delivered to the Pope at this meeting, “And it is my profound conviction that in the eyes of God, I am on the straight path?” In a 1962 interview with L’Arche, “Faith does not impose itself. I am an old non-conforming péguyste … My spirituality is my private affair.” 831 Archbishop de Provenchères remarked, “I am convinced that [Isaac] believed in God; the visits he paid me were always marked by a deference that reminded me of Maurice Blondel’s behaviour in meetings with his own bishop.” 832 In his last years, Isaac would come to consider Judaism as more than a mere religious system. “For better or worse…Judaism is not merely a religion,” he said, “not only a people and a state, it is a historically incontestable fact of grand scale.” 833 In the aftermath of Isaac’s death, sons Daniel and Jean-Claude, would state for the record that their father had never belonged to the Jewish community.

828 Isaac, Expériences de ma vie. Péguy, 103.
829 Isaac, Jésus et Israël, 170.
831 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 251.
832 de Provenchères: 33.
833 Quoted in Kaspi, Jules Isaac, 249.
of Aix-en-Provence, or to any other religious community, nor had he bequeathed to anyone in particular his spiritual message.\footnote{Daniel Isaac, Jean-Claude Isaac, "Note des fils de Jules Isaac," Cahiers de l'Association des amis de Jules Isaac, no. 3 (1981): 65.}

The central thesis of John Connelly’s From Enemy to Brother is that “without converts to Catholicism, the Catholic Church would never have ‘thought its way’ out of the challenges of racist anti-Judaism.”\footnote{Connelly, 287. Examples are Thieme, Oesterreicher, Gurian, Luckner, Démann, Baum, Rudloff, Bloy, Maritain, van Leer, von Hildebrand, Kraus, Vermes.} Isaac was not a border crosser; he was more properly a border straddler. Nonetheless, this neutral, non-confessional, status might have been a factor in Isaac’s ability to capture the attention of the official Church. But there were other factors at play. Timing in life is critical. Had Isaac leveled his indictment against the Church in the interwar period, he might not have been heeded. But he began his campaign after the Holocaust at a time when the Church was recognizing with shame the cultural impact of its anti-Jewish discourse and its implications in legitimating racial antisemitism. His indictment did not take the form of scholarship. It consisted of an eloquent cry of anguish combined with a tireless activism. In his standing to speak for his wife and daughter, Isaac acquired standing to speak for all six million Jews who had perished in the Holocaust. “Why was I overwhelmed by Jésus et Israël and not other writings?” wonders Baum. He offers a preliminary reply. “(1) The book is written by a Jew who survived in hiding, whose family had been murdered. (2) It is not written as a scholarly work, but as a manifesto addressing Christians and their Churches. (3) Despite the anti-Jewish bias throughout Christian history, Jules Isaac is not resentful, but turns to Christian friends to start a movement of reconciliation.(4) His book shows that Isaac has
great admiration for Jesus. Conclusion: He speaks as a man with authority.”

Isaac was by no means the first scholar to recognize a degree of expansion in the gospel accounts of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, nor to remind Christians of Jesus’ Jewishness and the Jewish matrix out of which he came. But his research question was new. “What was my initial concern?” Isaac wrote, “To know, as current Christian thinking would have it, as a living tradition teaches, if Jesus truly rejected Israel - the Jewish people as a whole – if he declared its fall, condemned and even damned it; conversely, if it were true that Israel misjudged Jesus, refused to see in him the Messiah and Son of God, rejected, ridiculed and crucified him; if Israel deserved nearly two millennia of the heinous stain as the ‘deicide people’…”

In asking whether it was scripturally true, as Christianity had taught for nearly two millennia, that the Jewish people were responsible for the death of Jesus and have since remained so, that as a consequence, the Jews had forfeited their very relationship with God, or worse still, were the object of a divine curse, Isaac had ventured into uncharted waters. What Isaac unearthed was a secular tradition regarding Jews and Judaism that is not easy to find it in the Church’s official documents and which was never denounced so compellingly that the official church was forced to address it.

Pope John Paul II was the first Bishop of Rome of record to enter and pray in the Great Synagogue of Rome. It happened on a Sunday, 13 April 1986. Much ado has been paid to what transpired upon the Holy Father’s entrance; scant attention to what happened at the close of his remarks. We know that Professor Giacomo Saban, president of the Jewish community of Rome, delivered a welcoming address. We know that Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff (the same Elio Toaff who had taken himself to Saint Peter’s Square to join the

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836 Correspondence to the author dated 15 December 2014.
crowd of Catholics and other Christians who were praying and silently bearing witness to
the greatness of soul of John XXIII on the eve of the Pontiff’s death) thought it fitting to
recall the memory of Jules Isaac in his address. “We thus find ourselves before a true
turning-point in Church policy. The Church now looks upon the Jews with sentiments of
esteem and appreciation, abandoning that teaching of disdain whose inadmissibility Jules
Isaac – may he be remembered here in blessing – brought to the attention of Pope
John.” 838 We have a text of the address delivered by John Paul II to those in attendance.
We know that at the close of the Holy Father’s address, a chorus was struck up. The
lyrics were drawn from the twelfth of Maimonides’ thirteen articles of faith. 839 The
niggun was drawn from the Modzits Hasidim, who according to survivor reports had
chaunted this confession of faith as they were herded into the gas chambers. 840 Not thelogy, but kerygma – God is trustworthy.

The Pope’s comprehension found expression in the wave of his hands. 841 Here was a
confession to which he too could subscribe. 842

839 In his commentary on the Mishnah (Sanhedrin, ch 10), Maimonides refers to these 13 principles of faith as the fundamental truths of Judaism and its very foundations.
840 Elio Toaff, Perfidi Guidei, Fratelli Maggiori (Milan: Mondadori, 1990), 240.
841 Ibid.
842 I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and though he may tarry, still I await him every day.
APPENDICES

I. EIGHTEEN POINTS

For purposes of greater clarity, may I be allowed to submit for the examination of Christians of good will - who are agreed in principle on the need for rectification – the following Eighteen Points, meant to serve at least as a basis for discussion.

Christian teaching worthy of the name should

1. give all Christians at least an elementary knowledge of the Old Testament; stress the fact that the Old Testament, essentially Semitic – in form and substance – was the Holy Scripture of Jews before becoming the Holy Scripture of Christians;

2. recall that a large part of Christian liturgy is borrowed from it, and that the Old Testament, the work of Jewish genius (enlightened by God), has been to our own day a perennial source of inspiration to Christian thought, literature and art;

3. take care not to pass over the singularly important fact that it was to the Jewish people, chosen by Him, that God first revealed Himself in His omnipotence; that it was the Jewish people who safeguarded the fundamental belief in God, then transmitted it to the Christian world;

4. acknowledge and state openly, taking inspiration from the most reliable historical research, that Christianity was born of a living, not a degenerate Judaism, as is proved by the richness of Jewish literature, Judaism’s indomitable resistance to paganism, the spiritualization of worship in the synagogues, the spread of proselytism, the multiplicity of religious sects and trends, the broadening of beliefs; take care not to draw a simple caricature of historic Phariseism;

5. take into account the fact that history flatly contradicts the theological myth of the Dispersion as providential punishment for the Crucifixion, since the dispersion of the Jewish people was an accomplished fact in Jesus’ time and since in that era, according to all the evidence, the majority of the Jewish people were no longer living in Palestine; even after the two great Judean wars (first and second centuries), there was no dispersion of the Jews of Palestine;

6. warn the faithful against certain stylistic tendencies in the Gospels, notably the frequent use in the fourth Gospel of the collective term “the Jews” in a restricted and pejorative sense – to mean Jesus’ enemies: chief priests, scribes and Pharisees – a procedure that results not only in distorting historic perspectives but in inspiring horror and contempt of the Jewish people as a whole, whereas in reality this people is in no way involved;

7. state very explicitly, so that no Christian is ignorant of it, that Jesus was Jewish, of an old Jewish family, that he was circumcised (according to Jewish Law) eight
days after his birth; that the name *Jesus* is a Jewish name, Yeshua, Hellenized, and *Christ* the Greek equivalent of the Jewish term *Messiah*; that Jesus spoke a Semitic language, Aramaic, like all the Jews of Palestine; and that unless one reads the Gospels in their earliest text, which is in the Greek language, one knows the Word only through a translation of a translation;

8. acknowledge – with Scripture – that Jesus, “born under the [Jewish] law” (Gal. 4:4), lived “under the law”: that he did not stop practicing Judaism’s basic rites to the last day; that he did not stop preaching his Gospel in the synagogues and the Temple to the last day;

9. not fail to observe that during his human life, Jesus was uniquely “a servant to the circumcised” (Rom. 15:8); it was in Israel alone that he reuniited his disciples; all the Apostles were Jews like their master;

10. show clearly from the Gospel texts that to the last day, except on rare occasions, Jesus did not stop obtaining the enthusiastic sympathies of the Jewish masses, in Jerusalem as well as in Galilee;

11. take care not to assert that Jesus was personally rejected by the Jewish people, that they refused to recognize him as Messiah and God, for the two reasons that the majority of the Jewish people did not even know him and that Jesus never presented himself as such explicitly and publicly to the segment of the people who did know him; acknowledge that in all likelihood the messianic character of the entry into Jerusalem on the eve of the Passion could have been perceived by only a small number;

12. to take care not assert that Jesus was at the very least rejected by the qualified leaders and representatives of the Jewish people; those who had him arrested and sentenced, the chief priests, were representatives of a narrow oligarchic caste, subjugated to Rome and detested by the people; as for the doctors and Pharisees, it emerges from the evangelical texts themselves that they were not unanimously against Jesus; nothing proves that the spiritual elite of Jerusalem was involved in the plot;

13. take care not to strain the texts to find in them a universal reprobation of Israel or a curse which is nowhere explicitly expressed in the Gospels; take into account the fact that Jesus always showed feelings of compassion and love for the masses;

14. take care above all not to make the current and traditional assertion that the Jewish people committed the inexpiable crime of deicide, and that they took total responsibility on themselves as a whole; take care to avoid such an assertion not only because it is poisonous, generating hatred and crime, but also because it is radically false;
15. highlight the fact, emphasized in the four Gospels, that the chief priests and their accomplices acted against Jesus unbeknownst to the people and even in fear of the people;

16. concerning the Jewish trial of Jesus, acknowledge that the Jewish people were in no way involved in it, played no role in it, probably knew nothing about it; that the insults and brutalities attributed to them were the acts of the police or of some members of the oligarchy; that there is no mention of a Jewish trial, of a meeting of the Sanhedrin in the fourth Gospel;

17. concerning the Roman trial, acknowledge that the procurator Pontius Pilate had entire command over Jesus’ life and death; that Jesus was condemned for messianic pretensions, which was a crime in the eyes of the Romans, not the Jews; that hanging on the cross was a specifically Roman punishment; take care not to impute to the Jewish people the crowning with thorns, which in the Gospel accounts was a cruel jest of the Roman soldiery; take care not to identify the mob whipped up by the chief priests with the whole of the Jewish people or even the Jewish people of Palestine, whose anti-Roman sentiments are beyond doubt; note that the fourth Gospel implicates exclusively the chief priests and their men;

18. last, not forget that the monstrous cry, “His blood be upon us and on our children!” (Mt. 27:25), could not prevail over the Word, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34).
II. SEELISBERG COMMISION 3 DOCUMENT

Moved by the sufferings of the Jewish people, the Third Commission, in the course of a frank and cordial collaboration between Jewish and Christian members, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, were faced with the tragic fact that certain theologically inexact conceptions and certain misleading presentations of the Gospel of Love, while essentially opposed to the spirit of Christianity, contribute to the rise of anti-Semitism.

Having recognized this, the Christian members put forward certain proposals with regard to the content and form of Christian teaching, which should serve not only to combat anti-Semitism, but also to promote good relations between Jews and Christians.

These deal, among other points, with the need to emphasize the close bonds which exist between Judaism and Christianity, the need to present the Passion story in such a way as not to arouse animosity against the Jews, and to eliminate from Christian teaching and preaching the idea that the Jewish people are under a curse.

On their part, the Jewish members of the commission declare that they will seek to avoid in Jewish teaching anything which would prejudice good relations between Christians and Jews. Jews and Christians alike pledge themselves to promote mutual respect for that which is sacred to each religion. 843

TEN POINTS

Message aux Eglises par les Membres Chrétiens de la Commission III

We have recently witnessed an outburst of anti-Semitism which has led to the persecution and extermination of millions of Jews living in a Christian environment. In spite of the catastrophe which has overtaken both the persecuted and the persecutors, and which has revealed the extent of the Jewish problem in all its alarming gravity and urgency, anti-Semitism has lost none of its force, but threatens to extend to other regions, to poison the minds of Christians and to involve humanity more and more in a grave guilt with disastrous consequences.

The Christian Churches have indeed always affirmed the anti-Christian character of anti-Semitism, but it is shocking to discover that two thousand years of preaching of the Gospel of Love have not sufficed to prevent the manifestation among Christians, in various forms, of hatred and distrust towards the Jews.

843 Rutishauser: reproduced at 41.
This would have been impossible if all Christians had been true to the teaching of Jesus Christ on the mercy of God and love of one’s neighbor. But this faithfulness should also involve clear-sighted willingness to avoid any presentation and conception of the Christian message which would support anti-Semitism under whatever form. We must recognize, unfortunately, that this vigilant willingness has often been lacking.

We therefore address ourselves to the churches to draw their attention to this alarming situation. We have the firm hope that they will be concerned to show to their members how to prevent any animosity towards the Jews which might arise from false, inadequate or mistaken presentations or conceptions of the teaching and preaching of Christian doctrine, and how on the other hand to promote brotherly love towards the sorely-tried people of the old covenant. Nothing would seem more calculated to contribute to this happy result than the emphasizing of the following points:

1. Remember that it is the same living God Who speaks to us through the Old and the New Testaments.
2. Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His everlasting love and forgiveness embrace His own people and the whole world.
3. Remember that the first disciples, the apostles, and the first martyrs were Jews.
4. Remember that the fundamental commandment of Christianity, to love God and one’s neighbor, proclaimed already in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is binding upon both Christians and Jews in all human relationships, without any exception.
5. Avoid disparaging biblical or post-biblical Judaism with the object of extolling Christianity.
6. Avoid using the word *Jews* in the exclusive sense of the enemies of Jesus, and the words *the enemies of Jesus* to designate the whole Jewish people.
7. Avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring odium of the killing of Jesus upon Jews alone. In fact, it was not all the Jews who demanded the death of Jesus. It is not the Jews alone who are responsible, for the Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died.

Remind all Christian parents and teachers of the grave responsibility which they assume, particularly when they present the Gospels, and particularly the Passion story in a simplistic manner. By so doing they run the risk of implanting an aversion in the conscious or subconscious
minds of their children or hearers, intentionally or unintentionally. Psychologically speaking, in the case of simple minds, moved by a passionate love and compassion for the crucified Savior, the horror which they feel quite naturally towards the persecutors of Jesus will easily be turned into an undiscriminating hatred of the Jews of all times, including those of our own day.

8. Avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: *His blood be upon us and upon our children,* without remembering that this cry should not prevail against the infinitely more weighty prayer of Jesus: *Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they do.*

9. Avoid promoting the superstitious notion that the Jewish people is reprobate, accursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering.

10. Avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not been Jews.  

——

En pratique, nous nous permettons de suggérer :

d’introduire ou de développer, dans l’enseignement scolaire et extra-scolaire à tous les degrés, une étude plus objective et plus approfondie de l’histoire biblique et post-biblique du peuple juif ainsi que du problème juif ;

de promouvoir, en particulier, la diffusion de ces connaissances par des publications adaptées aux différents milieux chrétiens ;
de veiller à rectifier dans les publications chrétiennes, surtout dans les manuels d’enseignement, tout ce qui s’opposerait aux principes énoncés plus haut.

Nous plaçons notre effort commun...

Our common endeavors are inspired by the spirit of the words of St. Paul in Romans xi, 28-29: *They are beloved for their fathers’ sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.*

——

844 Isaac, *Jesus and Israel,* reproduced at 404.
### III. TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES

**Jules Isaac**’s *Jésus et Israël*  
(1948)

**Vatican’s Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church**  
(June 24, 1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vatican Notes</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Jesus and Israel</th>
<th>Citation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“...Christians should never forget that the faith is a free gift of God (cf. Rm 9:12) and that we should never judge the consciences of others. St. Paul’s exhortation ‘do not boast’ in your attitude to ‘the root’ (Rm 11:18) has its full point here.”</td>
<td>IV, 21(E)</td>
<td>“If you do boast, remember, it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you.” Rom 11:18</td>
<td>Int, p 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relations between Old and New Testaments</strong></td>
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<td>“The Church, in the spontaneity of the Spirit which animates her, has vigorously condemned the attitude of Marcion and always opposed his dualism.”</td>
<td>II, 4</td>
<td>“to deny this [that the Jewish Old Testament is the foundation, the unshakable bedrock on which the New Testament and consequently the Christian faith are grounded] is a type of monstrous heresy which the Church has always fought and victoriously rejected.”</td>
<td>Pr 1, p 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Hence, in using typology...we should be careful to avoid any transition from the Old to the New Testament which might seem merely a rupture.”</td>
<td>II, 4</td>
<td>“Far from there being a discontinuity in the Scriptures, there is such a bond, wrought by such a hand, that no human hand could dissolve it, no sword could sunder it.”</td>
<td>Pr 1, p 7</td>
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<td>“It should also be emphasized that typological interpretation consists in reading the Old Testament as preparation and, in certain aspects, outline and foreshadowing of the New (cf., e.g., Heb 5:5-10, etc.).”</td>
<td>II, 5</td>
<td>“There is more to say than that, from the Christian point of view, the Old Testament is the prelude (albeit grandiose), the prologue, the first and necessary stage in humanity’s journey toward God; that it is a preview, a prediction, an annunciation, an advance toward the light.”</td>
<td>Pr 1, p 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>“From the unity of the divine plan derives the problem of the relation between the Old and New Testaments. The Church already from apostolic times (cf. 1 Co 10:11; Heb 10:1) and then constantly in tradition resolved this problem by means of typology, which emphasises the primordial value that the Old Testament must have in the Christian view.”</td>
<td>II, 3</td>
<td>“Also to be seen in it, and Christian theology does want to see in it, is a mysterious prefiguring of the New Testament, as a harmony pre-established by the grace of God: a choice theme for doctoral virtuosity, a marvelous exercise with infinite (and sometimes abusive) variations; but equally, and far better, an exalting them with ample harmonics...”</td>
<td>Pr 1, p 7</td>
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“Moreover, the New Testament itself demands to be read in the light of the Old. Primitive Christian catechesis constantly had recourse to this (cf., e.g., 1 Co 5:6-8; 10:1-11).”

“Reference to the Old Testament, reference for the purpose of example or justification, reference and deference: such is the position of the New Testament relative to the Elder; such is thus the only fair Christian position.”

“…his [Jesus’] ministry was deliberately limited “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24).”

“…it was to Israel alone that Jesus preached the “good news” of the Gospel; to Israel alone that Jesus dispatched his disciples during his life on earth; in Israel alone that he recruited them, the Twelve, the Apostles, all of whom were Jewish”

Jesus “was and always remained a Jew”

Jesus Jewish “by belief” “by religion” “by birth”

“Thus the Son of God is incarnate in a people and a human family (cf. Ga 4:4; Rm 9:5).”

“…Jesus’ humanity - his Jewish humanity…”

“Jesus is fully a man of his time, and of his environment – the Jewish Palestinian one of the first century, the anxieties and hopes of which he shared”

“A Jew in the most modest of conditions, a Jew of the people, knowing well the people among whom he lived and loving them, this people, his people, with a marvelous heart that never withdrew from him”

“But there is no doubt that he wished to submit himself to the law (cf. Ga 4:4)

“My only purpose has been to demonstrate that Jesus, “born under the law” (Gal. 4:4), “lived under the law,” that in this respect he remained a faithful Jew until his human death, and that no one can maintain a contrary opinion without perverting the texts.”

“But there is no doubt…that he was circumcised and presented in the Temple like any Jew of his time (cf. Lk 2:21, 22-24)”

“In keeping with the Law (Lev. 12:3) he was circumcised… (Lk. 2:21)”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vatican Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>“This fact [that the majority of the Jewish people and its authorities did not believe in Jesus] … led inevitably to a rupture between Judaism and the young Church… there is no question of playing down or glossing over this rupture; that could only prejudice the identity of either side.”</td>
<td>IV, 21(D)</td>
<td>“And from this [strict monotheism] would come [Judaism’s] unyielding refusal to accept the dogma of the Trinity. “There,” writes Nikolai Berdyaev “lies the abyss that separates the Christian conscience from the Israelite conscience.” I think so too. But an abyss to regard with respect. It will not be filled by pouring cartloads of insult and calumny into it.”</td>
<td>Pr 7, p 36</td>
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<td>“An exclusively negative picture of the Pharisees is likely to be inaccurate and unjust (cf. Guidelines, Note 1; cf. AAS, p. 76). ‘Phariseeism’ in the pejorative sense can be rife in any religion.”</td>
<td>III, 19</td>
<td>“Phariseeism does not admit of a definition synonymous with either hypocrisy or formalism, as so many Christian writers still maintain – and as if the true faith required such a masking of historic truth. ‘A greater misreading of history,’ writes R. Travers Herford, the best historian of Phariseeism, ‘it is scarcely possible to imagine.’”</td>
<td>Pr 7, pp 39-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Gamaliel (Ac 5:34-39) defends the apostles in a meeting of the Sanhedrin.”</td>
<td>III, 19</td>
<td>“…but not the others [did Jesus set against himself and fight], not the respected and respectable masters of the Pharisee school, successors to Hillel, the Gamaliels, of whom perhaps Jesus and certainly Saint Paul were disciples, that Gamaliel who would say in the midst of the Sanhedrin, according to the Acts of the Apostles: ‘Men of Israel, take care…for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!’”</td>
<td>Pr 17, pp 271-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Jesus shares, with the majority of Palestinian Jews of that time, some pharisaic doctrines: the resurrection of the body; forms of piety, like alms-giving, prayer, fasting (cf. Mt 6:1-18)...”</td>
<td>III, 17</td>
<td>“Phariseeism had its faults, but it also had its merits (from which Christianity would profit largely): it enriched the Jewish religion, continuing in its evolution, in its spiritual progress, with new beliefs – in the resurrection of the dead, in a judgment beyond the grave; trust in God, hope in His justice, messianic expectation were thereby strengthened; without eliminating the sacrificial Temple rites, prayer and the reading of the Law in the Synagogues moved to the forefront of religious life and in a certain way spiritualized it…”</td>
<td>Pr 7, p 40</td>
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<td>Vatican Notes</td>
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<td>“The Church and Christianity, for all their novelty, find their origin in the Jewish milieu of the first century of our era…”</td>
<td>III, 20</td>
<td>“When Christianity applies itself to casting aspersions on Pharisee Judaism, it is forgetting everything it owes it; and it is being not only unjust but ungrateful.”</td>
<td>Pr 7, p 40</td>
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<td>“…his attitude to rigorous observance of the Sabbath.”</td>
<td>III, 13</td>
<td>“Like all devout Jews, Jesus went to the synagogue regularly on the Sabbath (Lk. 4:16)”</td>
<td>Pr 8, p 45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| “It should be noted also that Jesus often taught in the Synagogues (cf. Mt 4:23; 9:35; Lk 4:15-18; Jn 18:20, etc.)” | III, 14        | “And the four Gospels tell us also that having begun to teach in the synagogue, Jesus continued: (Mk. 1:39; 2:2; Mt. 9:35; 13:54; Lk 4:44; 13:10, 22; Jn 18:20)  
“That Jesus stressed above all the worship of “the Father in spirit and truth,” that he ranked the ritual commandments of the Law well below the commandments of love, of charity, of morality, of justice, that he dismissed with a sovereign gesture the minute requirements of an exaggerated legalism, agreed: who could challenge the evidence? But there is other evidence that respect for the texts – and for Jesus’ teachings – requires us to recognize: in his eyes, one attitude does not exclude the other. As we have seen, Jesus refrained from condemning sacrificial rites themselves. He did not condemn one of the ritual commandments. And not only did he not speak against the rites, but on occasion he recommended their practice and himself set the example for it.” | Pr 8, p 45-6    |
<p>| “Jesus’ relations with biblical law and its more or less traditional interpretations are undoubtedly complex…But there is no doubt that he wished to submit himself to the law…that he was trained in the law’s observance. He extolled respect for it (Mt 5:17-20) and invited obedience to it (cf. Mt 8:4)” | III, 13        | “But the Beatitudes are related to Jewish tradition not only in letter but in spirit.” | Pr 9, p 54     |
| “He [Jesus] showed great liberty towards it [biblical law] (cf. the “antitheses” of the Sermon on the Mount: Mt 5:21-48, bearing in mind the exegetical difficulties…” | III, 13        |                                                                                | Pr 10, pp 76-80 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vatican Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>“The Liturgy of the word in its own structure originates in Judaism. The</td>
<td>V, 23</td>
<td>“On the teaching of prayer, the most explicit text is Matthew 6:5-15,</td>
<td>Pr 10,</td>
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<td>prayer of Hours and other liturgical texts have their parallels in Judaism</td>
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<td>contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Again, to show its Jewish roots,</td>
<td>pp 80-2</td>
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<td>as do the very formulas of our most venerable prayers, among them the Our</td>
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<td>reverberations and parallelisms does not in any way indicate that its intrinsic</td>
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<td>Father.”</td>
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<td>merits and the efficacy of its perfect simplicity are in dispute.”</td>
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<td>“There is no putting the Jews who knew Jesus and did not believe in him, or</td>
<td>IV, 21(F)</td>
<td>“Since in all historic probability the Jewish people “as a whole” did not</td>
<td>Pr 15,</td>
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<td>those who opposed the preaching of the apostles, on the same plane with Jews</td>
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<td>know Jesus; since the Jewish people of Palestine, insofar as they knew him, did</td>
<td>p 177</td>
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<td>who came after or those of today. If the responsibility of the former remains</td>
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<td>so only as a prophet; since they listened to him, followed him, and admired him</td>
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<td>a mystery hidden with God (cf. Rm 11:25), the latter are in an entirely</td>
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<td>as such, it cannot be legitimately maintained that the Jewish people rejected</td>
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<td>different situation. Vatican II in the declaration on Religious Liberty</td>
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<td>Jesus, or with all the more reason that they rejected the Messiah, the true Son</td>
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<td>teaches that ‘all men are to be immune from coercion…in such wise that in</td>
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<td>of God, in Jesus.”</td>
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<td>matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to</td>
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<td>his own beliefs. Nor…restrained from acting in accordance with his own</td>
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<td>beliefs (no. 2). This is one of the bases – proclaimed by the Council – on</td>
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<td>which Judaeo-Christian dialogue rests.”</td>
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<td>“His relations with the Pharisees were not always or wholly polemical. Of</td>
<td>III, 16</td>
<td>“…as is apparent from certain texts (for example, Jn. 9:16), a number of the</td>
<td>Pr 17,</td>
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<td>this there are many proofs:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pharisees who approached Jesus found favor with him; and that, as other Gospel</td>
<td>p 270</td>
</tr>
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<td>- it is Pharisees who warn Jesus of the risks he is running (Lk 13:31);</td>
<td></td>
<td>texts allow us to see, relations between the Pharisees and Jesus were not</td>
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<td>- Some Pharisees are praised, e.g. ‘the scribe’ of Mk 12:34;</td>
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<td>uniformly hostile…</td>
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<td>Jesus eats with Pharisees (Lk 7:36; 14:1).”</td>
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<td>Jesus recommends observance of the Pharisees teachings: Mt. 23:1-3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Jesus is invited to eat with Pharisees: Lk. 7:36; 11:37; 14:1</td>
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<td>Pharisees warn Jesus against Herod: Lk. 13:31</td>
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<td>A Pharisee opposes Jesus’ arrest: Jn. 7:50-51.”</td>
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<td>“…the Pharisees were not all committed enemies of Jesus. Some maintained a</td>
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<td>wait-and-see attitude, hesitant and questioning, not intentionally hostile; some,</td>
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<td>more or less openly but quite genuinely, approved of him, admired him, believed</td>
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<td>in him.”</td>
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The Crime of Deicide

“The Guidelines already say (note 1) that “the formula ‘the Jews’ sometimes, according to the context, means ‘the leaders of the Jews’ or ‘the adversaries of Jesus,’ terms which express better the thought of the evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such.”

Where Jesus had said, ‘the chief priests, the scribes and the Pharisees’ – which was already a substitution of the whole for the part – people exaggerated, people said: ‘the Jews,’ ‘the Jewish people.’ Where Saint Paul had said, ‘those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers’ – which was once more a substitution of the whole for the part – people said, people said again: ‘the Jews,’ ‘the Jewish people.’ Where only Temple flunkeys, inflamed followers of the powerful, brutish pagan soldiery figured, people repeated obligingly: ‘the Jews,’ ‘the Jewish people,’ ‘all the people,’ ‘all Israel.’

The delicate question of responsibility for the death of Christ must be looked at from the standpoint of the conciliar declaration Nostra Aetate, 4 and of Guidelines and Suggestions (III): ‘What happened in (Christ’s) passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living without distinction nor upon the Jews of today,’ especially since ‘authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ.’

Whether Jesus appeared before only the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, as it is said in the fourth Gospel, or before Caiaphas assisted by the Sanhedrin, as it is said in the Synoptics, whether the Sanhedrin session was partial or plenary, and finally whether the Roman authority took the initiative in pursuing Jesus in league with the Jewish authorities – which obviously is not in the Gospels and remains purely conjectural; in every case, we can reiterate and generalize our previous statement: the Jewish people are in no wise involved. They are in no wise involved in a matter conducted without them, apart from them, despite them, and against them. For this reason, we adjudge it useless to dwell on the question any longer, and hasten to pass on to the second phase of the Passion, the Roman trial; for it is here, according to received tradition, that the responsibility of the people was indissolubly linked with that of the leaders.”
“The Gospels are the outcome of long and complicated editorial work. The dogmatic constitution, *Dei Verbum*, following the Pontifical Biblical Commission’s Instruction Sancta Mater Ecclesia, distinguished three stages: ‘The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their Churches, and preserving the form of proclamation, but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus’ (no. 19).

Hence it cannot be ruled out that some references hostile or less than favorable to the Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish community. Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus. To establish this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain Gospel texts for the Christians of today.”

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“It is an indisputable and undisputed fact that the drafters of the Gospels intended to serve religion, not history…That is indeed the purpose: teaching, ‘catechesis,’ not history. It certainly does not follow that the Gospels are denuded of historic value. But it necessarily follows that religious concerns, concerns of ‘demonstration,’ prevailed over strictly historic concerns in the minds of the evangelists…

It is another and likewise indisputable fact that a certain lapse of time – very difficult to estimate precisely – occurred between the event and the Gospel narration, a lapse long enough for one or another memory to blur, and for true historic tradition to find itself pitted against a legendary tradition which did not take long to spring up and cover the field of Christian piety with dense brushwood…

In normal times and in the first case, that of the Synoptics, thirty or forty years is relatively little; such memories, so moving, could persist. But…the times when the religion of Christ, the dogma of the Incarnation evolved in the exaltation of a burning faith were not normal…

It is again an indisputable fact…a fact of capital importance for religion and for history that in this same period when the Gospel tradition was put down in writing, a gulf was opening up between the Synagogue and its emancipated daughter, the Church….In the measure that the new religion took form, its doctrine, its credo bore it daily farther away from traditional Judaism, and it hence came up against increasing incredulity and hostility on the part of the Jews. And daily oriented more toward the Gentile world, the Church became aware of how greatly it was to its advantage to detach itself from the Jews…. This is why the historian has the right and the duty, the absolute duty, to consider the Gospel accounts as prosecution evidence (against the Jews), with the aggravating circumstance that they are the only evidence available and that all four lie on the same side: we have neither (valid) Jewish testimony nor pagan testimony to present in opposition or in balance.”
<table>
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<th>Vatican Notes</th>
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<td>“It is noteworthy too that the Pharisees are not mentioned in accounts of the Passion.”</td>
<td>III, 19</td>
<td>“We can in fact observe that in his explicit prophecies of his Passion and death, Jesus mentions the scribes, never the Pharisees (Mk. 8:31 and 10:32-34, and parallels).”</td>
<td>Pr 17, p 269</td>
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<td>“The delicate question of responsibility for the death of Christ must be looked at from the standpoint of the conciliar declaration Nostra Aetate, 4 and of Guidelines and Suggestions (III): ‘What happened in (Christ’s) passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living without distinction nor upon the Jews of today,’ especially since ‘authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ.’”</td>
<td>IV, 22</td>
<td>“According to historical evidence, the dominant influence in Jerusalem and in the Sanhedrin lay with a priestly and secular oligarchy composed of a few great families, the most powerful of which was that of Annas, father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. This oligarchy, Sadducee in outlook, cruel and tyrannical in conduct, was itself subjugated to Rome and detested by the people. It was this oligarchy, in all likelihood, which played the determining role [in the trial of Christ]…The Jewish nation could not have been identified with this caste in any way. Not only did the people have no part in the intrigue woven against Jesus, but the four evangelists testify that the leaders acted unbeknownst to the people, despite them, and in fear of them.”</td>
<td>Pr 17, p 283</td>
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<td>“When Jesus announced to the Twelve that he would be ‘rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes,’ he was alluding to the Sanhedrin, and it is the Sanhedrin to which the Gospels – the Synoptics, at least – assign the primary role in Jesus’ arrest, judgment, and sentencing to death.”</td>
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<td>“The universal responsibility of the Jewish people, of the Jewish nation, of Israel in Jesus’ condemnation to death is thus a fact of legend-based belief, without solid historic foundation. In truth, it is an anachronism, and only that: the transposition, considered opportune, of a quite different and later fact – that after a first burst of conversions, and for reasons we will not examine at present, the mass of the</td>
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Jewish people became resistant to Christian preaching.”

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<td>“The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches that Christian sinners are more to blame for the death of Christ than those few Jews who brought it about – they indeed ‘knew not what they did’ (cf. Lk 23:34) and we know it only too well (Pars I, caput V, Quaest. XI).”</td>
<td>IV, 22</td>
<td>“The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches: ‘In this guilt [for Jesus’ death] are involved all those who fall frequently into sin; for …our sin consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the cross…’ [Quotation taken from Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests tr. Fathers John A McHugh, O.P., and Charles J. Callan, O.P., New York, Wagner, 1923, Pt. I, Chap. 5, para. 11.] We can relate this to the Seventh of the Ten Points of Seelisberg, drawn up by the International Emergency Conference of Christians and Jews: ‘…the Cross which saves us all reveals that it is for the sins of us all that Christ died.’”</td>
<td>Pr 19, p 364</td>
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<td>“Such is the major orientation of the innumerable more or less legendary accounts of the Crucifixion: anti-Jewish, basically, profoundly anti-Jewish. And such is their major omission, their major injustice, their major misreading: everything happens as if there were the Jews, evil, cruel, Satanic, on one side, and on the other some charitable souls, these being unidentified. Everything happens as if Jesus himself were not a Jew who lived among the Jews, never wanted to leave the framework of Jewish Palestine: as if – putting the Roman occupation forces aside – Jesus’ friends and foes, adherents and adversaries could not be Jews too, naturally, necessarily. To include all the Jews, ‘all the [Jewish] people,’ in the camp of Jesus’ enemies at the hour of the Crucifixion is a simplistic position that glares simultaneously with prejudice, ignorance, disdain for reality, and the purest pharisaism, in the pejorative sense of the word. For we must reiterate an observation made earlier, which is the key to all this: the Jewish people are here but representatives; they are representatives of the whole of humanity.”</td>
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<td>Pr 20, p 366</td>
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<td>“In the time of Jesus, in that beginning of the first century of the Christian era, which corresponds with the beginnings of the Roman imperial regime, at the apogee of Roman power and civilization, in that time, understand that the Dispersion of the Jewish people had been an accomplished fact for</td>
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centuries. Although history cannot reach any numerical certainty on this point, it is overwhelmingly probable that, of the whole of the Jewish nation, the Jews of Palestine were the minority, the Jews of the Dispersion, or Diaspora, the majority.
IV. NOTE COMPLEMENTAIRE ET CONCLUSIVE

A l’égard du Judaïsme et des Juifs, l’action purificatrice engagée par S.S. Jean XXIII si spontanément, avec tant de décision et de bonté, a éveillé les plus grands espoirs, car une telle action une fois engagée ne peut pas s’arrêter à mi-chemin.

Les mesures déjà prises concernent la liturgie. Par une suite logique elles en appellent d’autres concernant l’enseignement – au sens le plus large du mot, et à tous les degrés.

Problème complexe, nécessitant une étude attentive, et, pour cette raison précisément, digne d’avoir sa place dans les travaux préparatoires du Grand Concile projeté.

Sous quelle forme? Ce pourrait être par la création d’une Sous-Commission Annexe, chargée spécialement d’étudier cette si grave question de l’enseignement Chrétien concernant le peuple de l’Ancien Testament. Le vieil Israël. – Je crois savoir que beaucoup, en catholicité (où l’opinion à ce sujet paraît si flottante), souhaitant une solution de ce genre.

+     +     +     +

Oserai-je dire qu’avec moi-même ils souhaitent encore davantage, tant est grande leur confiance en S.S. Jean XXIII. Nous sommes, j’en ai la certitude, nombreux à former d’un cœur fervent et plein d’espoir le vœu que le Saint-Père non seulement envisage et adopte l’idée de cette création, mais encore, pour lui donner plus de résonance, qu’il veuille bien l’annoncer sous telle ou telle forme qu’il lui plaira – et qu’il en montre à tous les fidèles la haute signification.

Car si ce grave problème d’enseignement, considéré dans toutes des données, est des plus complexes, les principes qui doivent en dominer l’étude sont des plus simples et dignes d’être rappelés solennellement.

Pour ne prendre qu’un exemple, n’y a-t-il pas un principe général sur lequel il semble inconcevable qu’il n’y ait pas accord unanime?


En d’autres temps, certain enseignement traditionnel qui mérite d’être appelé “l’enseignement du mépris” n’a plus droit à l’existence. Puisset-il être définitivement condamné par le Souverain Pontife.
Ce serait un grand acte, purificateur, réparateur, et de quelle porté! Selon les perspectives Pauliniennes, n’est-il pas fait pour dégager tout l’horizon de l’avenir Chrétien?

+ + + +

Présentant de telles requêtes, j’ai pleinement conscience de mon audace. Mais aussi j’ai conscience de parler au nom des martyrs de tous les temps. Mes épreuves, mes deuils, les recommandations suprêmes que j’ai reçues m’ont confirmé que c’était vraiment une mission sacrées. J’ai survécu pour l’accomplir.

Et j’ai la conviction profonde d’être, au regard de Dieu, dans la voie droite.

Deux références à l’Écriture.

1) Le Magnificat (S. Luc, 1, 46-55)

“Mon âme exalte le Seigneur
......
Il a secouru Israël son serviteur
Se souvenant de sa miséricorde,
Comme il l’avait promis à nos pères,
Envers Abraham et sa semence pour toujours.”

2) S. Paul, Romains XI – 29,32

“Les dons et l’appel de Dieu sont sans repentance…
Car Dieu a enfermé tous les hommes dans la désobéissance,
pour faire miséricorde à tous.”

Jules Isaac
Président d’Honneur (avec Jacques Maritain)
des Amitiés judéo-chrétiennes de France.
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