

MEMORANDUM FOR

National Executive

ABOUT

Inter Office Information

YOUR ATTENTION

FROM

Saul Hayes

No. 62 CONFIDENTIAL

Jan. 6th, 1946.

1. Papal Benediction for a Montreal Jew.

Our attention has been drawn to the apostolic benediction which was bestowed by Pope Pius XII on a Montreal Jew, Ben Obront, at the request of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, a local order of nuns, whom he assisted at their Rigaud, Que., institution; we interviewed him and gathered the necessary information. The case was dealt with as a part of our French public relations program. We got in touch with the office of the papal nuncio, the Archbishop's palace in Montreal, the Franciscan Missionaries and with our French public relations contacts, to obtain the facts on church policy and on protocol both concerning Mr. Obront and the Jewish community. We were informed that the Church authorities would welcome any publicity which the Jewish community could arrange in the case in the general and in the Yiddish press. We were further told that it would be in order for the Jewish community to communicate directly with the Pope. The Archbishop of Montreal indicated his willingness to receive a Congress delegation and Mr. Obront. This would be the first audience granted to the Jewish community by an Archbishop here. At the same time we obtained from the high press officials of the church and from the office of the Catholic Action central Committee views on the stand to the Jewish community which will be helpful in our further work. Wide publicity was arranged in our office for the case. The French papers, particularly "La Presse", displayed the story prominently. The "Montreal Standard" carried the story and picture of Mr. Obront. The Canadian Press notified its subscribing newspapers in advance that a lengthy story on the subject will be sent out during the week-end. The story did go out after it was cleared with our office. It has also been carried over the radio. We arranged for wide publicity in the Yiddish and Anglo-Jewish press and a lengthy story was sent out by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency to all Jewish newspapers. The "Eagle" of Montreal gave it much prominence; we drew the attention of the Church authorities to this issue and it was greatly appreciated.

We are now completing the information on the protocol in connection with the proposed visit to the Archbishop. At the request of the Archbishop, wide publicity will be given to the Congress delegation visiting him.

2. First-hand Report on Situation of European Jews.

Officers of Congress who were delegates to the Zionist Congress in Basle obtained first-hand information on the situation of the Jews in Europe, relief needs and immigration problems. Mr. M. Dickstein was upon his return to Montreal on Friday, January 3rd, in conference with the national executive director. Mr. Dickstein put forward several suggestions which will be discussed at a meeting of the Inner Executive of January 14th.

National Headquarters: CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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3. Film Version of "Abie's Irish Rose".

Our Film Committee is giving attention to the discussion which has arisen around the new film version of Bing Crosby's "Abie's Irish Rose". The American Jewish Committee circularized copies of a review from Harrison's Report, a reviewing service of films of November 30, 1946, entitled: "A Thoughtless Degradation of Racial Minorities". The picture was described as bad from the standpoint of re-emphasizing a most unattractive stereotype of the Jew being also a caricature of the Irish and in very bad taste. The December issue of the National Jewish Monthly, published by the B'nai B'rith, showed itself enthusiastic about this film. The film was screened for a Toronto group of our National Joint Public Relations Committee. This had to be in an unofficial way inasmuch as the United Artist had to be assured that no official action would be forthcoming after the screening.

4. Poster Series Attracts Attention.

The poster series, "Three Great Faiths Worshipping One God", which we distributed to various libraries through the Canadian Library Association, attracted considerable attention. The posters were on display at the Hamilton Public Library where they were viewed by the Youth Chaplain of the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara. In a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Canadian Library Association he stated, "May I first of all say what a splendid set of posters they are, executed in a very modern style and with real appealing message and may I secondly inquire as to their origin and whether or not copies of these posters could be secured". The letter was referred to us. We sent Rev. Ongley another set of the posters. A quantity of the posters which were issued by the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the U.S.A. will soon be available in Toronto at the office of the Canadian Association for Adult Education. The posters are based on the book "One God - The Way We Worship Him" by Florence Mary Fitch. We contacted Mr. H. Ballantyne, General Secretary of the Religious Education Council of Canada in Toronto who stated that the posters will be discussed by their staff committee. The Council includes the Church of England, the Baptists, Presbyterians, etc.

5. Film Catalogue.

A film catalogue entitled, "Visual Aids on Intercultural Relations" is off the Press. The catalogue has been prepared and is being distributed by the Canadian Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, the Canadian Citizenship Council, the National Film Board, the National Film Society of Canada and the Canadian Jewish Congress. The catalogue lists also posters, film strips and Canadian film libraries.

6. Study on Jewish Education in Canada.

The recent issue of the Hebrew Year Book of the Histadrut Ivrit of America carries a lengthy article of Professor Z. Scharfstein on the Jewish education in Canada. The article is based to a great extent on our publications; the author expresses thanks to Congress for the materials which we placed at his disposal while writing the essay.

7. Nuremberg Documents.

The book of Peter D. Mendelssohn, "The Nuremberg Documents" has been added to our library.

8. Citizenship Week Celebrations in Ottawa.

Mr. B. Sadowski, O.B.E., President of our Central Region represented Congress at the Citizenship Week celebrations which were held last week in Ottawa.