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The Holocaust and the Search for Forgiveness: An Invitation to the Society of Jesus?

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THE HOLOCAUST AND THE SEARCH FOR FORGIVENESS

An Invitation to the Society of Jesus?

Pope John Paul II has led the Church into a new era in its relationship with the Jewish Community. Progress rests on painstaking efforts to uncover the truth, identify failures where they exist, and humbly seek forgiveness. Recent scholarship presents a complex picture in Europe both before and immediately after the Second World War, both in the local churches and at the Vatican. Such candor prompts a question: Should the Society of Jesus, serving its own role in the universal Church, review its own history during this dark period, and where necessary, join in the Church's search for forgiveness?

Near the beginning of the new millennium, Pope John Paul II made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and prayed at Judaism's most holy site, the Western Wall of Herod's Temple. While there, on March 26, 2000, the Pope followed the custom of pious Jews and placed his prayer in a crevice in the Wall:

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations: we are deeply saddened by the behaviour of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.

Is the Pope's prayer an invitation to Jesuits to express their own sadness and request for forgiveness? My answer to this question will be approached through a series of steps that will form the parts of this essay. First, the papal prayer symbolized an unprece-

dented event in the long life of Catholicism, namely, the Church's recent confessions of fault and pleas for forgiveness regarding Christian conduct during the period of the Shoah. The visit to the Western Wall was the culmination of this Pope's long effort to create reconciliation between Catholics and Jews. Second, his admission of Christian fault is in vivid contrast to the Church's discussion about its conduct in the Nazi era during the years immediately after the Second World War. Third, his example has inspired several episcopal conferences in Europe to articulate clear statements of regret for past behavior toward Jews in their countries. Fourth and last, I pose the question whether the Society of Jesus should join Pope and bishops in voicing its own penitential plea for its troubled relationship with the Jewish People.

Before I sketch a context for replying to that question, I have a personal confession to make. For more years than I perhaps care to remember, the Holocaust has haunted me, particularly how it came to be and what conclusions should be drawn from the fact that it took place. The puzzled faces of its victims are never very far from my thoughts, my conversations with others, my prayer, my feelings about our culture, and my fears about our faith. Even when involved with philosophical or political issues very distant from twentieth-century carnage, I find myself pushing them close to that Holocaust flame, to see if they are illumined or merely reduced to the ashes of irrelevance. While my professional field is contemporary philosophy, I always work with greatest concentration in libraries and archives that offer materials for understanding the mass murder of the Jews. And there are many of them: in Jerusalem, Rome, Berlin, Munich, Paris, London, New York. I have been to these places but never with the sense that I was on a grand tour, guided by the itinerary of a single defined project. I had more the feeling of a series of expeditions that I hoped would uncover unexpected questions and perhaps even some answers. In the title of Günther Grass's most recent novel, *Crabwalk*, I ran across the ideal metaphor for my feelings about what I have been doing with research and writing on the Holocaust.¹ I may think at times that I am going backward, but maybe I am really scuttling sideways and, indeed, perhaps I am even moving forward.

¹ Günther Grass, *Crabwalk* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).

When I ask myself why I am so entangled with these violent deeds of almost sixty years ago, back come the memories of growing up in Washington Heights in northern Manhattan, which at the time had the largest concentration of German Jews in the world. Their neighborhood was known as both the Fourth Reich and Frankfurt on the Hudson, and the latter has become the title of a major sociological study of that community.² These German Jews created an exotic atmosphere with their European accents, their refined bearing, their own old-world shops, and a heavy sense that something went terribly wrong in their lives. I used to walk by them as they sat on the benches in Fort Tryon Park; I recall animated exchanges but laughter not at all. The great dome of Yeshiva University was the largest structure to be seen through the windows of my family's apartment and Yom Kippur was the only day that competed with Good Friday in spreading a blanket of solemnity over those busy, noisy streets. Growing up in that neighborhood in the nineteen-fifties, how could I not have wondered about this intense people and what sorrows they endured?

There are many Jesuits who have studied different aspects of the Holocaust and I shall refer to some of them in the course of this essay. But there are two special Jesuit voices that are in tension within me as I examine the Holocaust, and perhaps they are not only within me but in others as well. One such voice is that of Karl Rahner, who, in a conversation discussing the Nazi era, stated:

Times of collective madness like this are basically unexplainable. If you keep in mind that I knew many people whose personal and moral integrity I can't call into question in any way and yet who still believed after a long time or well into the war that National Socialism was a real blessing for the German people . . . then, when all is said and done, one really doesn't know, even in hindsight, what one should have done at the time. One doesn't even know what one did right or wrong during that period.³

Certainly, this is a wise counsel of humility before the density of complicated events. But, surely, it is extraordinarily inadequate as

² Steven Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933–1983: Its Structure and Culture* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

³ Karl Rahner, *I Remember: An Autobiographical Interview* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 51.

advice for a critical moral intelligence. The other voice is that of Rahner's contemporary, Alfred Delp. While I was in the novitiate, I developed a special esteem and devotion for this Jesuit who was executed by the Nazis for alleged involvement in the plot to kill Hitler. His book of prison meditations and essays was published in English in 1963, and every year since then I have returned to his reflections on Advent as spiritual reading during that season. I was drawn to the witness of his personal courage and to his intellectual boldness in joining a group that was thinking out plans for a post-Nazi just society for Germany. That seemed an exemplary demonstration of a specifically Jesuit style of intellectual engagement. I was encouraged in my vocation when I read what he wrote to his Jesuit

I have felt Delp's companionship as I have visited Dachau, Auschwitz, and the archives where I have worked to understand the venomous forces that murdered him and so many others.

brothers shortly before his execution: "The actual reason for my condemnation was that I happened to be, and chose to remain, a Jesuit." In 1973 I studied in Berlin and explored the geography of Nazi cruelty, making a pilgrimage to Plötzensee Prison, where Delp was hanged on February 2, 1945. When Santa Clara University invited me in 1995 to lecture on my research, I chose February 2, so that I could commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his death. I have felt Delp's companionship as I have visited Dachau, Auschwitz, and the archives where I have worked to understand the venomous forces that murdered him and so many others. And I have never forgotten a remark from his writings: "At some future date the honest historian will have some bitter things to say about the contribution made by the churches to the creation of the mass-mind, of collectivism, dictatorships, and so on."⁴ While I will continue my personal research, examination of the Holocaust has taken on an intense new force for Christians as a result of Pope John Paul II's papacy.

⁴ *The Prison Meditations of Alfred Delp* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 166, 99. I was pleasantly surprised a few years ago to discover that Delp's mother's maiden name was Bernauer. A helpful biography of Delp, organized with his prison writings, has been published recently: *With Bound Hands: A Jesuit in Germany*, by Mary Frances Coady (Chicago: Jesuit Way, Loyola Press, 2003).

Man of theater and seismographer of symbols that he is, John Paul II has created a religious drama in which Catholics are performing against a backdrop of overwhelming evil, a stage they might gladly exit. But the Pope's pleas for forgiveness have scripted us who are Catholics into his liturgical play before we are very clear about what it is exactly for which we should feel collective responsibility. Still very early into the performance, we may be already aching for catharsis. But why has it taken so long to seek forgiveness? The Catholic Church did not sleepwalk through the last century. It knew a great deal about what was happening to the Jews of Europe during the actual genocide and, in the decades since, the historical record has cast light into many of the darkest recesses. With Hannah Arendt, I believe forgiveness is intimately connected to the need for a new beginning.⁵ But it was precisely that need which was absent in Catholicism for so long: the desire to begin a new relationship with the Jewish people after the Holocaust.

Without such a desire, why plead for forgiveness? The relationship between Christians and Jews seemed theologically frozen, out of time, stranger to those domains where tragedy and sorrow could transform hearts and minds.

There were a few who did prepare for the charismatic role seized by John Paul II: the elderly Jewish scholar Jules Isaac, who pressed to meet with Pope John XXIII to talk about the Church's historical contempt for the Jews; Pope John's determination to end that disdain; the bishops' 1965 adoption of the *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* at the Second Vatican Council.⁶

Still it is John Paul II who has effected a new relationship with the Jewish people. How it will develop is for the future to disclose, but if we have any appreciation for how the earlier relationship shaped and malformed Christianity, we can sense

But the Pope's pleas for forgiveness have scripted us who are Catholics into his liturgical play before we are very clear about what it is exactly for which we should feel collective responsibility.

⁵ See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 236–43.

⁶ See Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

the radical reinvention that a loving relationship might entail. Catholicism's desire for a new beginning with Judaism is in effect the desire for a new relationship with itself, the desire to get beyond Christendom. What I mean by Christendom is not a historical epoch but rather a set of attitudes that generated a fortress Christianity. I shall mention but two of them. The first is that Christianity best interpreted itself through a particular form of European culture that asserted its spiritual surpassing of Judaism. The second maintains that the modern world is a definitive repudiation of Christianity and that the Church is responsible for neither its achievements nor its crimes. These distinctions stand behind the continual argument of Church authorities that there is an absolute border between medieval anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism.

Taking a cue from the philosopher Charles Taylor, I wish to claim that modernity is frequently an embrace rather than an abandonment of Christianity. Taylor gives the example of modern liberal political culture's proclamation of universal human rights as a "great advance in the practical penetration of the gospel in human life."⁷ It was a progress that rested upon an exit from an earlier version of Christian practice. While Taylor has stressed the positive side of Christianity's survival in modern culture, the murder of European Jews forces us to regard the sometimes toxic effects of that endurance as well. Although I am not able to justify the argument here, I would claim, along with others, that anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism interpenetrate in ways that, to my knowledge, have not yet been adequately mapped.⁸ Christendom's historical contempt of the Jews is not a place from which some mere new set of ideas allows us egress. Like the Holy Roman Empire, Christendom formed an intoxicating, imaginative piece of theater. Only another drama of more than equal appeal will displace it. We are currently experiencing the opening scenes of that new play.

⁷ *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, ed. James Heft (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 18.

⁸ An important contribution to the mapping is *The Popes against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism*, by David Kertzer (New York: Knopf, 2001).

I. Pope John Paul II's Passion

On the first Sunday of the Church's Lenten Season in the new millennium, the Pope presided at an extraordinary service to confess sin and to request forgiveness. At the heart of the service was the seeking of pardon for sins against the Jewish people. Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, opened the prayer: "Let us pray that, in recalling the sufferings endured by the people of Israel throughout history, Christians will acknowledge the sins committed by not a few of their number against the people of the covenant and the blessings, and in this way purify their hearts." The Pope continued: "God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your name to the nations: We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness, we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the covenant."⁹ This confession and plea for forgiveness emerged from the Pope's own journey into ever-deeper desire for a totally new relationship between Christians and Jews.

He attributed Nazi crimes to a "godless ideology," but then expressed the sorrow that he hoped would be the foundation for a new relationship between Christians and Jews.

There were four major moments in that journey. First was his visit to Auschwitz in June of 1979, less than one year after his election to the papacy. He described the camp as the "Golgotha of the modern world," and while acknowledging the deaths suffered by other national groups, he paused and spoke before the Hebrew inscription which commemorated the Jewish victims. He said: "The very people who received from God the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by

⁹ "Service Requesting Pardon" (delivered on March 12, 2000), *Origins* 29, no. 40 (March 23, 2000): 648. This request for forgiveness was so unprecedented that it required a lengthy justification from the Catholic Church's International Theological Commission. See the commission's "Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and Faults of the Church," *Origins* 29, no. 39 (March 16, 2000): 627-44.

killing. It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference."¹⁰ The second major moment came with his historic entrance into and address at the Synagogue of Rome on April 13, 1986. It was an event that announced, as no other could have, how unprecedented was his ambitious vision of the new relationship with Judaism. The third moment came two years later with his lamentation at Austria's Mauthausen Concentration Camp. While he spoke of Nazism's program of extermination as an "insane plan" which aimed to turn "Europe back from the path it had followed for thousands of years," his dramatic plea to the dead looked to a future that would learn from their suffering. He pleaded:

Tell us, what direction should Europe and humanity follow 'after Auschwitz' . . . and 'after Mauthausen'? Is the direction we are following away from those past dreadful experiences the right one? Tell us, how should today's person be and how should this generation of humanity live in the wake of the great defeat of the human being? How must that person be? How much should be required of himself? Tell us, how must nations and societies be? How must Europe go on living? Speak, you have the right to do so—you who have suffered and lost your lives. We have the duty to listen to your testimony.¹¹

Finally, there was the Pope's pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the year 2000 and especially his speech at Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. He attributed Nazi crimes to a "godless ideology," but then expressed the sorrow that he hoped would be the foundation for a new relationship between Christians and Jews. The Pope declared:

As bishop of Rome and successor of the apostle Peter, I assure the Jewish people that the Catholic Church, motivated by the Gospel law of truth and love and by no political considerations, is deeply saddened by the hatred, acts of persecution, and displays of anti-Semi-

¹⁰ "Homily at Auschwitz, June 7, 1979," in *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism, 1979–1995*, by Pope John Paul II, ed. Eugene Fisher and Leon Klenicki (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 7.

¹¹ "Lamentation at Mauthausen Concentration Camp, June 24, 1988," *ibid.*, 117f.

tism directed against the Jews by Christians at any time and in any place.¹²

Then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak captured the historical significance of the Pope's admission.

You have done more than anyone else to bring about the historic change in the attitude of the Church toward the Jewish people initiated by the good Pope John XXIII and to dress the gaping wounds that festered over many bitter centuries. And I think I can say, Your Holiness, that your coming here today to the Tent of Remembrance at Yad Vashem is a climax of this historic journey of healing. Here, right now, time itself has come to a standstill. This very moment holds within it 2,000 years of history. And their weight is almost too much to bear.¹³

II. Postwar Discussion

If we look for the reasons why the Catholic Church delayed confronting its failures during the period of National Socialism, initial papal statements at the end of the war would provide a major one. Pope Pius XII's address to the College of Cardinals in June 1945 set the tone for the Vatican's approach to Catholic conduct during the Holocaust for the following thirteen years. There was a strong defense of the concordat that he had negotiated with the Nazi government in 1933. He presents the Church as a victim, as a survivor of the "sorrowful passion" that Nazi enmity forced upon it. The Church is portrayed as a unified force of resistance to Nazi attacks: "To resist such attacks millions of courageous Catholics, men and women, closed their

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¹² "John Paul II's Address at Yad Vashem" (delivered on March 23, 2000), *Origins* 29, no. 42 (April 6, 2000): 679.

¹³ Ehud Barak, "A Nation That Remembers" (March 23, 2000), *Origins* 29, no. 42 (April 6, 2000): 680.

ranks around their bishops, whose valiant and severe pronouncements never failed to resound even in these last years of war."¹⁴

The only comment that suggested something less than heroic performance came when the Pope spoke of the incompatibility of pagan Nazism and Catholicism and admitted that not all Catholics had seen that at the time: "Some even among the faithful themselves were too blinded by their prejudices or allured by political advantage."¹⁵ This did not lead to any conviction about a new relationship with the Jews, as is shown in the fact that the one Catholic group working in Germany for improved Catholic-Jewish relations received a warning from the Vatican in 1950 that dialogue between the two faiths risked the danger of making it appear as if the two religions were equal.¹⁶ An examination of the reasons for Pope Pius XII's general attitude at this time is beyond the scope of this paper, but the effect of his strategy was to encourage German church leaders to rejoice in the triumphant survival of the Church and to stress their own sufferings under the Nazis rather than to acknowledge their failures during that period.¹⁷ They certainly did not wish to further demoralize or divide their people over the issue of what should have been done during the Nazi years.¹⁸ And the very real menace that the Soviet Union represented sustained the anxiety about Communism that the National Socialists had exploited so effectively, and encouraged people to focus on the future.¹⁹

¹⁴ Pius XII, "Nazism and Peace" (June 2, 1945), *The Catholic Mind* 43, no. 992 (August, 1945): 454, 451.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 452.

¹⁶ See Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 189 f., 207.

¹⁷ See Damian van Melis, "Strengthened and Purified through Ordeal by Fire: Ecclesiastical Triumphalism in the Ruins of Europe," in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 231–41.

¹⁸ Heinz Hürten, *Deutsche Katholiken, 1918–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1992), 542–58.

¹⁹ Horst Heitzer, "Deutscher Katholizismus und 'Bolschewismusgefahr' bis 1933," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 2, no. 103 (1993): 355–87.

Nevertheless, there were strong German Catholic voices demanding a more self-critical examination.²⁰ Although Pope Pius XII was beloved by the German bishops, a brief struggle can nevertheless be detected in the various drafts of their first pastoral letter after the war, which was issued at Fulda on August 23, 1945. As a result of Berlin's Bishop Konrad von Preysing's insistence, a much stronger statement was included in the final version than had been anticipated:

The Catholic anti-Nazi writer Eugen Kogon, who had been imprisoned for almost six years at the Buchenwald concentration camp, questioned the postwar moral authority of the German bishops as a result of their conduct during the Hitler regime.

We deeply deplore that many Germans, even of our own ranks, allowed themselves to be misled by the false teachings of national socialism, remaining indifferent to the crimes against human freedom and human dignity; many abetted crimes by their attitude; many became criminals themselves.²¹

This tone was not to be preserved in later statements that embraced general denials of Catholic responsibility and particular defenses of their episcopal conduct. It is striking that there is only one other collective statement of regret in these immediate postwar years: "The

²⁰ For example, see Vera Bücker, *Die Schulddiskussion im deutschen Katholizismus nach 1945* (Bochum: Studienverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1989) and Konrad Repgen, "Die Erfahrung des Dritten Reiches und das Selbstverständnis der deutschen Katholiken nach 1945," in *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte*, ed. Victor Conzemius, M. Greschat, and H. Kocher (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988), 127–79. More recently, there are two fine collections of essays that examine Christian failures in the Nazi period: *Die katholische Schuld? Katholizismus im Dritten Reich zwischen Arrangement und Widerstand*, ed. Rainer Bendel (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002) and *Kirche der Sünder-Sündige Kirche: Beispiele für den Umgang mit Schuld nach 1945*, ed. Rainer Bendel (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2000).

²¹ Pastoral letter of the German bishops at Fulda (Aug. 23, 1945), *The Catholic Mind* 43, no. 995 (November 1945): 692. For a discussion of the drafts, see Michael Phayer, "The Postwar German Catholic Debate over Holocaust Guilt," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 8, no. 2 (1995): 429 f.

1948 statement of the *Mainz Katholikentag* contritely admitted crimes against 'the people of Jewish stock.'²²

But there was lively discussion outside the official statements among German Catholics. Konrad Adenauer, who was to become the first chancellor of the Federal Republic, sent a letter to a Bonn pastor on February 23, 1946, in which he wrote:

The German people, also for the most part its bishops and priests, cooperated in the National Socialist agitation. It permitted itself to be Nazified without offering resistance—yes, even with enthusiasm. Therein lies its guilt. . . . I believe that if the bishops had altogether on a given day spoken out from their pulpits in opposition, much could have been avoided. That did not happen and there is no excuse for it. To the contrary, had the bishops been thrown into prison or concentration camps, that would not have been a misfortune.²³

Even earlier there had been a 1945 statement of a group of Rhineland Catholics who admitted that they had not anticipated how Nazi anti-Semitism could lead to gas chambers. There was also the very

critical voice of an "Open Letter on the Church" by the Catholic spiritual writer Ida Friederike Goerres that appeared in 1946 and that attacked the German Catholic Church on a variety of fronts: "career minded prelates, a power hungry institution, authoritarian clergy, and tendencies toward mediocrity, insensitivity, and triumphalism." A widely discussed article

Bishop Albert Stohr of Mainz denied that the survivors of concentration camps were more courageous than the bishops whom they were now criticizing.

by the Catholic anti-Nazi writer Eugen Kogon, who had been imprisoned for almost six years at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp, questioned the postwar moral authority of the German

²² Michael Phayer, "The German Catholic Church after the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 154. The statement may be found in *Die Kirchen und das Judentum: Dokumente von 1945 bis 1985*, ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Hans Henrix (Paderborn: Verlag Bonifatius-Druckerei, 1989), 239 f.

²³ Frank Buscher and Michael Phayer, "German Catholic Bishops and the Holocaust, 1940–1952," *German Studies Review* 11, no. 3 (October 1988): 485. The German text may be found in *Die Kirchen im Dritten Reich*, vol. 2, ed. George Denzler and Volker Fabricius (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1984), 255.

bishops as a result of their conduct during the Hitler regime.²⁴ Some Jesuits were important interlocutors in the debate. For example, in the very first issue of the Jesuit journal *Stimmen der Zeit* to appear after the war, Max Pribilla, S.J., wrote a scathing essay entitled "The Silence of the German People," in which he argues that only clear condemnations of Nazi crimes could have challenged the murder of the Jews. In the next issue Pribilla charged that, while millions of Germans knew of Nazi atrocities, responsibility was avoided by not reflecting on them.²⁵

We have an important window into the German bishops' view of this criticism in a fascinating unpublished document that reports on an August 23, 1947, conversation between an official of the American Military Government and several German bishops. They strongly reject the criticisms of their conduct under the Nazis.²⁶ Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne, who was the titular head of the German church at the time of the interview, asked his questioner: "Who has the right to demand that the bishops should have chosen a form of fight that would have sent them to the gallows with infallible certainty, and which would have resulted in a campaign of extermination against the church?" Bishop Albert Stohr of Mainz denied that the survivors of

After 1959 there was to be an amazing transformation in the German episcopacy's attitude toward the Holocaust. Various reasons account for the change.

²⁴ Phayer, "Postwar German Catholic Debate," 430–432. Kogon was the author of the first major study of the concentration-camp world: *The Theory and Practice of Hell* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1950).

²⁵ Max Pribilla, S.J., "Das Schweigen des deutschen Volkes," *Stimmen der Zeit* 139 (1946–1947): 15–33; Phayer, "Postwar German Catholic Debate," 431; *Stimmen der Zeit* was closed down by the Nazi authorities in April 1941. A brief report on its life during the Hitler period is found in "Die Stimmen der Zeit im Dritten Reich," by Anton Koch, *Stimmen der Zeit*: 196.

²⁶ A copy of the document "The Catholic Church and Dr. Kogon" is in the John Riedel Papers, ser. 1, box 2, Catholic Church and Nazism File in the Archives of Marquette University. Riedel was Chief of Catholic Affairs for the Office of Military Government for Germany from 1946 to 1948 and later a professor of philosophy at Marquette. The official was Richard Akselrad. My attention was called to it by Phayer, "Postwar German Catholic Debate," 435 f. I want to thank Marquette for giving me access to these papers.

concentration camps were more courageous than the bishops whom they were now criticizing. He claimed: "Most of them were thrown in concentration camps against their will as a result of indirect utterances and secret actions. Also, many of them became victims of their own imprudence and rashness, which have nothing to do with courage." Archbishop Lorenz Jaeger of Paderborn did voice the fear that if the bishops had challenged the Nazi regime more forcefully, there was real danger that "many members of our church, who had been blinded and misled by a deceitful propaganda, would all the more have been driven into the arms of National Socialism by too sharp a language." Bishop Johannes Dietz of Fulda argued that the conduct of the German bishops followed the highest model: "The basically pastoral attitude of the church is taken from the higher example set by Jesus when he was brought before the high priests, before King Herod, and Pilate."²⁷ This model of humility certainly reflected a Catholic theology that praised the cultivation of passive virtues as particularly appropriate for the Christian life; virtues such as obedience, patience, gentleness, mortification.²⁸ It did contrast, however, with the very aggressive approach the bishops took to the Allied authorities whom they denounced for the de-Nazification program, for the war-crimes trials the Allies were conducting and to whom they submitted pleas for leniency for some of the most notorious Nazi criminals.²⁹ All too often the determination of the bishops to repudiate any notion of collective guilt encouraged Catholics to excuse themselves of moral responsibility for the Nazi phenomenon.³⁰

²⁷ "The Catholic Church and Dr. Kogon," 2–4.

²⁸ See Jakob Nötges, *Nationalsozialismus und Katholizismus* (Cologne: Gide Verlag, 1931), especially 193–95.

²⁹ For this see Phayer, "Postwar German Catholic Debate," and Frank Buscher and Michael Phayer, "German Catholic Bishops and the Holocaust, 1940–1952," *German Studies Review* 11, no. 3 (October 1988): 463–85. Making pleas for Nazi war criminals was not just a Catholic phenomenon, as Robert Webster shows in "Opposing 'Victor's Justice': German Protestant Churchmen and Convicted War Criminals in Western Europe after 1945," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 47–69.

³⁰ See Karen Riechert, "Der Umgang der katholischen Kirche mit historischer und juristischer Schuld anlässlich der Nürnberger Hauptkriegsverbrecherprozesse," in *Siegerin in Trümmern: Die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft*, ed. Joachim Köhler and Damian van Melis (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1998), 18–41.

After 1959 there was to be an amazing transformation in the German episcopacy's attitude toward the Holocaust. Various reasons account for the change. Pope Pius XII had passed away the year before; almost all of the bishops who had lived during the Third Reich had either died or been replaced; finally, Germans themselves were conducting trials of fellow Germans who had committed atrocities during the war.³¹ On the occasion of the Eichmann trial in 1961, the German bishops requested atonement for the crimes against the Jewish people and composed a prayer for those who had been murdered. This request for atonement was repeated a year later in a pastoral letter released on the eve of the Vatican Council's opening.³² This period after Pius XII culminates at Vatican Council II, when the German Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea gives a speech calling for a new relationship with the Jewish people and links his support for a conciliar declaration to the Nazi genocide of the Jews.³³ When the declaration was adopted, the German bishops at the council made a special statement welcoming it and they also pointed to the genocide as part of its context.³⁴ Finally, at the end of the council, there is an exchange of letters seeking reconciliation between the Polish bishops and the German bishops.³⁵

II. Most Recent Statements

Shortly after Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy took charge of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews in January of 1990, the commission began work on what was intended to be a single Roman Catholic document on the Shoah. It soon became quite clear that this was not the ideal course because the experiences of different countries were so different during the

³¹ Phayer, "German Catholic Church after the Holocaust," 161 f.

³² Rendtorff and Henrix, eds., *Die Kirchen und das Judentum*, 241–43.

³³ See Stjepan Schmidt, *Augustin Bea, the Cardinal of Unity* (New Rochelle: New City Press, 1992), 505 f.

³⁴ Rendtorff and Henrix, eds., *Die Kirchen und das Judentum*, 244.

³⁵ *Versöhnung oder Hass? Der Briefwechsel der Bischöfe Polens und Deutschlands und seine Folgen*, ed. Otto Roeggele (Osnabrück: Verlag A. Fromm, 1966).

Holocaust period.³⁶ As a consequence, various national conferences of bishops spoke out before the Vatican's own statement was released in March 1998. German bishops issued their statement in 1995 as an explicit observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. While recognizing that there were many individual acts of assistance to Jews, they admitted that "Christians did not offer due resistance to racial antisemitism" and they confessed a general indifference that paved the way for crimes or even for some to become criminals themselves.

The German declaration integrated two previous episcopal statements that had confessed guilt. A 1975 resolution had stated that "we were nevertheless, as a whole, a church community who kept on living our lives while turning our backs too often on the fate of this persecuted Jewish people." In 1988, on the fiftieth anniversary of the pogroms against the Jewish community of November 9/10, the conferences of West Germany, Austria, and Berlin issued a statement entitled *Accepting the Burden of History*. The document claimed that, in the interest of not provoking a further escalation of the Nazi state's struggle against the Church, the bishops had not

In October of 1995 the Dutch bishops spoke. They took notice of the sufferings of the Dutch people and praised the courageous action of the Dutch episcopacy during the war, but then they denounced "a tradition of theological and ecclesiastical anti-Judaism" that "contributed to the climate which made the Shoah possible."

made a public protest against the pogrom. Despite that, they had asked

if in November 1938 yet other expressions of brotherly solidarity would not have been possible and expected; for example, a common prayer for the innocently persecuted, or a demonstrative, renewed intensification of the Christian law of love. That this was neglected,

³⁶ Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, "Reflections regarding the Vatican's Statement on the Shoah" (May 1998), in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998), 62.

saddens us today when we perceive the defense of basic human rights as a duty that goes beyond denominations, classes and races.³⁷

Two months earlier than the German statement, the Hungarian bishops commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the deportation of the Hungarian Jews and requested forgiveness for those Church members who "through fear, cowardice, or opportunism failed to raise their voices against the mass humiliation, deportation, and murder of their Jewish neighbors."³⁸ The Polish bishops had issued an important declaration in 1990, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Nostra aetate*, in which they had asked for forgiveness: "If only one Christian could have helped and did not stretch out a helping hand to a Jew during the time of danger or caused his death, we must ask for forgiveness of our Jewish brothers and sisters." In their statement of January 1995, the Polish bishops condemned those Catholics who had contributed to the death of Jews. It also paid tribute to those many Poles who lost their lives in efforts to rescue Jews.³⁹ In October of 1995 the Dutch bishops spoke. They took notice of the sufferings of the Dutch people and praised the courageous action of the Dutch episcopacy during the war, but then they denounced "a tradition of theological and ecclesiastical anti-Judaism" that "contributed to the climate which made the Shoah possible." "With our pope and other episcopal conferences, we condemn every form of antisemitism as a sin against God and humanity."⁴⁰ In March 1997 the Swiss bishops criticized their own country for its compromises during the war, especially its failure to welcome as many refugees as it could have. But they also criticized Christians as such for those teachings that persecuted and marginal-

³⁷ The German Bishops, "Opportunity to Re-examine Relationship with the Jews" (January 1995), *ibid.*, 10. The 1988 statement "Accepting the Burden of History" may be found on the web site of Boston College's Center for Jewish-Christian Learning (www.bc.edu/research/cjl).

³⁸ The Hungarian Bishops and the Ecumenical Council of Churches, "Joint Statement on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Holocaust" (November 1994), in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, 8.

³⁹ The 1990 statement "Polish Bishops' Pastoral on Jewish-Christian Relations" may be found on the web site of Boston College's Center for Jewish-Christian Learning (www.bc.edu/research/cjl); Polish Bishops, "The Victims of Nazi Ideology" (January 1995), in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, 12-15.

⁴⁰ "Supported by One Root: Our Relationship to Judaism" (October 1995), in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, 22.

lized Jews and that were the source of anti-Semitic sentiments. In reference to these acts and teachings, the bishops declared: "We proclaim ourselves culpable and ask pardon of the descendants of the victims."⁴¹

The French bishops chose to make their forceful statement in Drancy, the Paris suburb from which Jews were shipped to Nazi death camps. They accused those who exercised authority in the Church of a "loyalism and docility which went far beyond the obedience traditionally accorded civil authorities." They said that religious teachings had "deformed people's attitudes" and provided the ground "on which the venomous plant of hatred for the Jews was able to flourish." Even if it can be shown that religious authorities had condemned anti-Semitism as pagan in origin, "they did not enlighten people's minds as they ought because they failed to call

De Lubac's indictment of the French bishops is severe: they did not have a real sense of the Church's independence, of its spiritual authority no matter who is in power.

into question these centuries-old ideas and attitudes."⁴² The depth of the French declaration echoed the private analysis that the French Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac, S.J., had written in 1944 for Jacques Maritain, who had just been named the ambassador to the Holy See. The document, conserved in Maritain's archives, was published only in 1992. De Lubac's indictment of the French bishops

is severe: they did not have a real sense of the Church's independence, of its spiritual authority no matter who is in power; their involvement in administration led them to downplay their evangelical mission; they did not possess a good understanding of Christian doctrine and, thus, were weak in their confrontation with Hitler's propaganda; the Church had lost touch with its people, most of whom seemed to support the Resistance while the bishops appeared to favor the Vichy government of Marshal Henri-Philippe Petain; finally, de Lubac judges that the bishops tended to think of them-

⁴¹ Swiss Bishops Conference, "Confronting the Debate about the Role of Switzerland during the Second World War" (March 1997), *ibid.*, 26.

⁴² French Bishops, "Declaration of Repentance" (September 1977), *ibid.*, 32, 34.

selves as functionaries of the state rather than as exercising shared leadership in the international Catholic Church.⁴³

When in March 1998 the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews released its eagerly anticipated document *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, it seemed to many to be a regression from the confession made by the French. It defended Pius XII and emphasized the distinction between Christian anti-Judaism and Nazism's murderous, racist anti-Semitism. Its formulations seemed so overly cautious: "Did Christians give every possible assistance to those being persecuted and in particular to the persecuted Jews? Many did, but others did not." It added that the "spiritual resistance and concrete action of other Christians was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers."⁴⁴ Commentators pointed to what they regarded as major flaws: the document did seem to blur the "lines between grievously evil acts and a falling short of extraordinary heroism" and its frequent recourse to the passive voice was interpreted as expelling moral agency.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, in it the Catholic Church did admit guilt: "We deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the Church." The statement deplored racism and anti-Semitism, expressed its sorrow for its members' failures, and declared itself an "act of repentance" (*teshuvah*).⁴⁶

Some recent studies indicate a greater affinity between Catholic culture and the National Socialist movement, especially in its earliest stages, than had been thought to be the case.

A defining trait of this penitential moment in the Roman Catholic Church is that it is tied with the desire to keep open the investigation of the church's conduct during the Holocaust. Although

⁴³ Henri de Lubac, "La Question des évêques sous l'occupation," *Revue des deux mondes* (February 1992): 67-82.

⁴⁴ "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," in *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, 52 f.

⁴⁵ Peter Steinfels, "Beliefs," *New York Times* (March 21, 1998), A7; James Carroll, "Vatican Response to the Holocaust," *The Boston Globe* (March 31, 1998), A17. Garry Wills is particularly critical in his *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 13-19.

⁴⁶ "We Remember," *ibid.*, 52 f.

some feared that *We Remember* represented the final word from the Vatican, even that document noted that the "very magnitude of the crime" raised questions for legions of researchers ("historians, sociologists, political philosophers, psychologists, and theologians") and, thus, "much scholarly research still remains to be done."⁴⁷ Some recent studies indicate a greater affinity between Catholic culture and the National Socialist movement, especially in its earliest stages, than had been thought to be the case.⁴⁸ It is impossible to describe in these pages the many interdisciplinary investigations that are advancing our knowledge of this period. But perhaps, as an example of some of the concerns that still must be dealt with, I could point to a few of the questions that the International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission has raised.

This commission of three Jewish and three Catholic scholars was established in October 1999 to examine the eleven volumes of archival documents regarding the Holocaust that had already been

published by the Vatican and that represented the materials judged relevant for discussion of Pius XII and the Church.⁴⁹ The judges had been four Jesuits, each from a different country: Pierre Blet from France, Robert Graham from the United States, Angelo Martini from Italy, and Burkhart Schneider from Germany. Unfortunately, this commission has suspended its work in

And then the documents also show the shadow of the regular Vatican rejection of Jewish aspirations for a homeland in Palestine.

a very public quarrel. After a year of meetings, the commission posed forty-seven questions regarding this material and made requests for additional documents if they were relevant to the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁸ See Derek Hastings, "How 'Catholic' Was the Early Nazi Movement? Religion, Race, and Culture in Munich, 1919–1924," *Central European History* 36 (2003): 383–433, and the important work of Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999).

⁴⁹ *Acts et Documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale*, 11 vols. (Vatican City: Secretariat of State, 1965–1981). Hereafter ADSS.

questions. Mention of several of these questions will indicate how basic is the information that scholars still need.⁵⁰

1. After the Kristallnacht pogrom, the Vatican knew of the public protest by Bernard Lichtenberg, rector of the Catholic cathedral in Berlin. There seems to have been no official reaction by the Vatican, but the commission asks for any records of Vatican conversations about the appropriate response to be made.
2. Well before there were charges of papal silence regarding the Jews, many Polish Catholics felt that Rome was silent in the face of the Nazi brutality they were enduring. Are there further documents that would aid in understanding Vatican reaction to the Polish appeals?
3. Another request concerns the Holy See's attitude regarding Vichy France's anti-Jewish legislation. Is it really the case that the Vatican did not object to restrictions on the Jews as long as they were "administered with justice and charity"?
4. At the end of August 1942, Andrew Szepticky, the Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan of Lviv (Lwow) wrote the Pope, in great detail, of the atrocities against the Jews and informed the Holy See that he had complained to Himmler personally and made public protest. Is there discussion of a reply to this letter?
5. When Berlin's Bishop Konrad von Preysing asked the Pope to protest Nazi actions, what impression did the bishop's words make on Pius XII?
6. Did the Church's understandable anxiety with regard to converted Jews provide a rationale for inattention to Jews as such?
7. Is there evidence to suggest that Pius XII had developed serious doubts about his policies? Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, later Pope John XXIII, writes in his diary of an audience with Pius XII on October 11, 1941, and reports the Pope asked him

⁵⁰ "The Vatican and the Holocaust: A Preliminary Report," by the International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission (October 2000). The text is available on a B'nai B'rith site: bnaibrith.org/cpp/randa/vatican.html

whether his silence regarding Nazi behavior ("suo silenzio circa il contegno del nazismo") would be judged badly.

But perhaps there is need of a wider audience for these documents, beyond professional historians. My own review of them has left me with two very clear impressions. They certainly paint a vivid picture of the Pope's anguish, his immense work of charity, and the complexity of the political forces with which he had to deal. Historians will long debate his response to those forces. The second impression is the overwhelming diplomatic cast of mind that shaped Vatican approaches to the European struggle. And I was surprised to learn that the charge of inadequate protest by the papacy against Nazi Germany was certainly not invented by the young playwright Rolf Hochhuth in his 1963 play *The Deputy*. We know that many leaders, especially from Poland, cried for a more forceful Vatican denunciation of German war crimes and for a clearer identification of the Church of Christ with Germany's victims.⁵¹ If the papal public silence regarding the Holocaust was justified as a way of preventing even worse crimes, it certainly did contrast with Pius XII's declarations to the Allied governments that Rome's monuments and churches must be protected from bombardment.⁵² And then the documents also show the shadow of the regular Vatican rejection of Jewish aspirations for a homeland in Palestine: "Palestine is a Holy Land not only for the Jews, but to a far-greater extent for all Christians,

⁵¹ For example, see the introduction to ADSS 3, pt. 1, pp. 38–55, and document no. 287: Cardinal Hlond, primate of Poland, to Cardinal Maglione on Aug. 2, 1941; from pt. 2, doc. no. 444: Letter from Apostolic Administrator for German Catholics Breitinger to Pope Pius XII on Nov. 23, 1942; no. 477: Letter of Bishop Radonski to Cardinal Maglione on Feb. 15, 1943; in ADSS 5, see doc. no. 449: Polish Ambassador Papée's letter to Cardinal Maglione on Aug. 27, 1942; in ADSS 6, doc. no. 403: Letter of Polish Ambassador Papée to Monsignor Montini on Dec. 13, 1940; in ADSS-7, doc. no. 82: Letter of Polish President Racykiewicz to Pius XII on Jan. 2, 1943. For an example of a strong defense of the Pope, see Robert Graham, *Pius XII's Defense of Jews and Others, 1944–45* (Milwaukee: Catholic League, 1987).

⁵² See ADSS 5, doc. no. 104: Notes of Monsignor Montini of Sept. 27, 1941; the introduction to ADSS 7; ADSS 11, doc. no. 202: Letter of Cardinal Maglione to Apostolic Delegate Cicognani of May 31, 1944, and doc. no. 205: Statement of Pius XII to Curia on June 2, 1944.

and especially for Catholics. To give it to the Jews would be to offend all Christians and infringe upon their rights."⁵³

IV. Forgiveness and the Jesuits

It is time to shift the focus to the Jesuits themselves. The power of Pope John Paul II's seeking of forgiveness is that he brings Catholics with him. As a Jesuit, I feel that his acts and pleas challenge me personally and the Society of Jesus collectively, that they force us to deal with our history in a new way. Among the requests of the Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission is one of access to various archives of the Society of Jesus. The desire is understandable inasmuch as Pope Pius XII relied frequently on the Jesuits, and their role in his papacy should be better understood. But the request is also an opportunity. The Jesuits too must purify their memory, and to do so we need greater understanding of our dealings with the Jewish people.

We are very indebted to the Jesuit historian Vincent Lapomarda for having investigated the activities of Jesuits during the Holocaust. His work honors those Jesuits who were killed by the Nazis, those who rescued Jews, and those who have been recognized as righteous gentiles by Israel's Yad Vashem memorial. But Father Lapomarda also acknowledges that there is a shameful history as well: "One must recognize that there is a serious problem with regard to the relationship of the Jesuits to the Jews."⁵⁴

The Society was to abandon its founder's courageous policy on membership and in 1593, under pressure from its own members, banned the admission of all with "Hebrew or Saracen stock."

⁵³ See ADSS 11, doc. no. 333: Note of the Secretariat of State of Aug. 23, 1944.

⁵⁴ Vincent Lapomarda, *The Jesuits and the Third Reich* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), 4, as well as his "Jesuits and the Holocaust," *Journal of Church and State* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 241–58, and "Holocausto Judío y los Jesuitas," in the

The opening moment in the Jewish-Jesuit encounter was both a stance of courage and a fall into cowardice. We know that Ignatius of Loyola's desire for intimacy with his Savior even included an actual sharing in the Jewish lineage ("secundum carnem") of Jesus and Mary.⁵⁵ Ignatius's devotion to the personal figure of Jesus saved him, and initially the Society, from a most common prejudice, namely, the view that Jewish converts to Christianity and their descendants, the so-called "New Christians" of Spain, were more

One major Jewish thinker, Hannah Arendt, in a widely read book, identifies anti-Semitism as the special charism of the Society.

Jewish than Christian because they were of impure blood. Such "tainted" ancestry justified their exclusion from Church posts and religious orders. Ignatius courageously resisted ecclesiastical and political pressures and refused to exclude Jewish converts or their descendants from the Society's

ranks, and thus some of the most distinguished early Jesuits were of Jewish heritage. As James Reites pointed out in a previous issue of *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*, however, Ignatius was also very much a man of his times, and when it came to the matter of Jews who did not wish to become Christians, he could support the oppressive policy of ghettoization imposed by Pope Paul IV in his 1555 *Cum nimis absurdum*. For one critic, however, that display of Ignatius's social prejudice and theological supersessionism eviscerates Reites's benevolent interpretation of Ignatius's dealings with the Jews.⁵⁶

Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, vol. 2, ed. Charles O'Neill and Joaquín Domínguez (Rome: Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus, 2001), 1946–48.

⁵⁵ See the citation from Ribadeneira in "St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jews," by James Reites, *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 13, no. 4 (September 1981): 17.

⁵⁶ Reites, "St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jews," 13–17; Eloise Rosenblatt, "Canonizing Edith Stein and Recognizing Catholic Antisemitism," in "Good News" after Auschwitz? *Christian Faith within a Post-holocaust World*, ed. Carol Rittner and John Roth (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001), 59–61.

However severely we judge Ignatius on that matter, the Society was to abandon its founder's courageous policy on membership and in 1593, under pressure from its own members, banned the admission of all with "Hebrew or Saracen stock." And not even the general of the order could dispense from this impediment of origin. The Fifth General Congregation explained: "For even though the Society, for the sake of the common good, wishes to become all things to all men in order to gain for Christ all those it can, still it is not necessary that it recruit its workers from any and all human races."⁵⁷ The decree was adopted on December 23, 1593, "perhaps the most shameful day in Jesuit history" according to Fr. John Patrick Donnelly, S.J.⁵⁸ German anti-Semites of later centuries would praise the order's long commitment to such racial purity.⁵⁹

To my knowledge, no systematic effort has been made to trace the effect on Jesuits of this transformation in the attitude toward Jewish heritage from one of honor to that of shame. We do have occasional glimpses that I would like to indicate here. When the Jesuit historian Francis Sacchini wrote in 1622 that the second general of the Society, James Laínez, had Jewish ancestry, the "Spanish Jesuits rose en masse to denounce it." The provincial congregation of Toledo called the fact a "slur," a "foul blot," a "vile imputation," and requested the General to punish Sacchini.⁶⁰ An echo of the Spanish sentiment is audible in the pride that the German Jesuit Ludwig Koch, S.J., took three hundred years later in the identity of the Society as free of Jews.⁶¹

Other articles by Koch defended practices aimed at protection from Jewish influence and denied charges that Ignatius was a "fanat-

⁵⁷ Decree 52. English translation in *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations*, ed. J. Padberg, S.J., M. O'Keefe, S.J., J. McCarthy, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 204.

⁵⁸ John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., "Antonio Possevino and Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 55 (1986): 8.

⁵⁹ Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, 240–244.

⁶⁰ James Broderick, S.J., *The Progress of the Jesuits (1556–1579)* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946), 310 f.

⁶¹ See his entry "Juden" in his *Jesuiten-Lexikon: Die Gesellschaft Jesu einst und jetzt* (Paderborn: Verlag Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1934), 939–42.

ical" friend of Jews.⁶² Perhaps it is not surprising then that when Hitler comes to power, Fr. Koch sees that the "person of Hitler himself has become the symbol of the faith of Germany in its continued existence and future." He goes on to claim that the concordat between the Vatican and Hitler shows that "no enmity between the swastika and the Christian cross needed to exist. On the contrary: the symbol of nature finds its fulfillment and perfection/consummation only in the symbol of grace."⁶³

And then there is the case of Fr. Georg Bichmair, S.J., who was the Jesuit leader of an Austrian group dedicated to the conversion of the Jews, the Paulus-Missionswerke. His lowly view of Judaism certainly made their conversion a religious good for him, but he held in 1936 that, even if Jews were baptized, their essential racial difference endured, and thus he "opposed baptized Jews holding any high office in the church hierarchy or the civil service up to the third generation."⁶⁴ Despite such a view, the Nazis arrested him on

November 10, 1939, for his relief work on behalf of Jews who had converted.⁶⁵

While most Jesuits are unaware of this type of Jesuit speech and conduct, it is important that they come to recognize that for some scholars it is central to how the Society is perceived. One

⁶² See Ludwig Koch, "Jesuiten und Judenverfolgungen," *Stimmen der Zeit* 110 (1925–1926): 381–84, and "Jesuiten und Juden," *ibid.*, 109 (1925): 435–52. In this second article Koch is pleased to report that the son of Zionism's founder, Theodor Herzl, has converted to Catholicism. He seems not to have known that the deeply disturbed Hans Herzl went on in rapid succession to become a Protestant, a Unitarian, and a Quaker; finally he sought readmission to the Synagogue before committing suicide.

⁶³ Ludwig Koch, "Die Kraft der Symbole," *Stimmen der Zeit* 126 (1933–1934): 272.

⁶⁴ Bruce Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 161.

⁶⁵ Gershon Greenberg, "Irene Harand's Campaign against Nazi Anti-Semitism in Vienna, 1933–1938: The Catholic Context," in *Christian Responses to the Holocaust: Moral and Ethical Issues*, ed. Donald Dietrich (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 138 f.

major Jewish thinker, Hannah Arendt, in a widely read book, identifies anti-Semitism as the special charism of the Society: "It was the Jesuits who had always best represented, both in the written and spoken word, the antisemitic school of the Catholic clergy."⁶⁶ One prominent historian of German Catholicism even holds the Society responsible for forging a unity between traditional Christian anti-Judaism and the particular social animosity toward Jews in the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ Only in 1946 did the Twenty-ninth General Congregation abrogate the exclusion of the Jews from the Society but without any explanation of why it was done. The congregation substituted advice to the provincials regarding the "cautions to be exercised before admitting a candidate about whom there is some doubt as to the character of his hereditary background."⁶⁸

The principle of excluding Jews from the Society helps to account for the posture of the single Jesuit institution that evokes the strongest repulsion from Jews as well as non-Jews: the journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, which enunciates official Vatican thinking and which has long been accused of the most vulgar anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism in many of its articles. Even today three of its essays from 1890 have been translated into German and English and are available on an anti-Semitic website ("On the Jewish Question in Europe"). Although during the war years it preserved an almost complete silence about Jews, there were at least two times that reference to them did appear and these are the source of a major indictment by one historian:

So powerful were the habits of theological antisemitism that even during the period of mass murder of Jews, after 1940, the Jesuits of *Civiltà* kept up their anti-Jewish crusade. In 1941 and 1942, the journal attacked the Jews for mythic crimes, "perversity," "malice,"

⁶⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1976), 102. Just recently, in the *New York Review of Books* (March 13, 2003), Jesuits were defended by the historian István Deák in this way: "Depending on the historical period, there were progressive and regressive Jesuits, non-anti-Semitic and anti-Semitic Jesuits, with the latter being particularly vicious in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

⁶⁷ Rudolf Lill, "Katholizismus nach 1848," *Kirche und Synagoge: Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*, vol. 2, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorff and Siegfried von Kortzfleisch (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1970), 363.

⁶⁸ Decree 8. For an English translation see Padberg et al., *For Matters of Greater Moment*, 625.

"injustice, impiety, infidelity, sacrilege"; for, in the eyes of this crucially important Catholic periodical, Jews were deicides whose pariahship could not be eradicated, and whose crimes were repeated in every generation down to the present.⁶⁹

It is not surprising then that Jesuits have been branded as "precursors of racialism" in Fascist Italy.⁷⁰ Sr. Charlotte Klein condemns *Civiltà's* failure to issue retractions of the fantastic charges against the

In the light of twentieth-century experience, perhaps Jesuits need to look afresh at the rhetoric of their vow of obedience.

Jews that it had helped spread, for example, ritual murder stories: "Might it not have been of comfort, even of help, to the Jews under Hitler, if the authoritative Vatican periodical had re-examined and restated its views. Instead it silently consented to be classed together with *Der Stürmer*."⁷¹ *Der Stürmer* was the most rabidly anti-

Semitic of Nazi journals and "addressed itself to man's basest and most primitive instincts."⁷² There is no worse class to be perceived as part of.

⁶⁹ Robert Michael, "Theologia gloriae and *Civiltà Cattolica's* Attitude toward the Jews," *Encounter* 50, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 158; see Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 116 and 120; Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland, 1933-1939* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood, 1994), 334-40; Richard Webster, *The Cross and the Fasces: Christian Democracy and Fascism in Italy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 122-27; and the discussion "La *Civiltà Cattolica*, Jews, and Anti-Semitism," in *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI*, ed. Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1997), 123-36; Susan Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 11-14.

⁷⁰ E. Rossi, *Il magganello e l'aspersorio* (Florence, 1958), cited by Meir Michaelis in his "Christians and Jews in Fascist Italy," in *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National Socialism, 1919-1945*, ed. Otto Dov Kulka and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel and the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1987), 274; see John Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 96 f.

⁷¹ Charlotte Klein, "Damascus to Kiev: *Civiltà Cattolica* on Ritual Murder," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 27, no. 32 (1974); also by the same author see "In the Mirror of *Civiltà Cattolica*: Vatican View of Jewry, 1939-1962," *Christian Attitudes on Jews and Judaism* (June-November, 1975), 12-16.

⁷² *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (ed. Israel Gutman [New York: Macmillan, 1990], vol. 4, p. 1420), s.v. "Der Stürmer" (by Jacqueline Rokhsar).

There is another institution that needs to be considered in any treatment of Jewish-Jesuit relations, the papacy. Although Pope Pius XII has become the center of controversy in discussions on the Holocaust, what is really at issue for Jesuits is the special and ongoing relationship that they have had with the papacy since their restoration as an order in the nineteenth century. The Vatican's assault upon the modern age's liberalism and democracy, and the Society's service to that polemic as well as to an ultramontane papacy is a very heavy historical burden for Jesuits. The Society was appreciated: for example, Pope Pius X took consolation in the fact that, when the Pope was faced with evil times, God had delivered to him Jesuits, the "most select line of soldiers, skilled in battle, instructed for fighting, and ready at the command and nod of the leader even to muster against the enemy where he is most concentrated and to pour out [your] lives."⁷³ This was the age of the

Among the more regrettable elements in the rancorous relationship between Jesuits and Jews is the loss of that special sense of solidarity in suffering that should have emerged from the history they shared.

papal rejection of Modernism and of Vatican authorship of the *Syllabus of Errors*. Sadly, the enemy of the Church was often identified with the Jews who, after their nineteenth-century emancipation from age-old prohibitions against their participation in civil society, became influential in shaping modern culture. Now that Jews had rights in modern society, it was claimed that special precautions were necessary in order to preserve Christian stability. Jews became a convenient target for the denunciation of a culture that was challenging the Catholic Church, and attacking them provided a handy vehicle for protecting Catholic identity.⁷⁴ Jesuits and Jews are heirs to a history of polemics that made both groups dangerously vulnerable

⁷³ Address to the General Congregation delegates (Oct. 16, 1906). Cited in *A View from Rome: On the Eve of the Modernist Crisis*, by David Schultenover, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), 166.

⁷⁴ See Olaf Blaschke, "Wider die 'Herrschaft des modern-jüdischen Geistes': Der Katholizismus zwischen traditionellem Antijudaismus und modernem Antisemitismus," in *Deutscher Katholizismus im Umbruch zur Moderne*, ed. Wilfried Loth (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1991), 236-65.

to political assault. The German Kulturkampf put them on opposite sides: after constant Jesuit denunciations of Jewish liberalism and power, many Jews reacted with satisfaction when, in the summer of 1872, Bismarck enacted a law that closed Jesuit institutions—and entrusted to the government wide power over the Jesuits and the right to expel them from Germany as a whole.⁷⁵

A good indication of how pervasive the anti-Jewish animus continued to be is to be found in the recently published but never promulgated encyclical on racism (*Humani generis unitas*); this document was commissioned by Pope Pius XI in 1938, who entrusted its composition to three Jesuits: the American John La Farge, the German Gustav Gundlach, and the Frenchman Gustave Desbuquois. The fact that Pius XI died before it was released has probably spared Jesuits from much criticism, inasmuch as the document manifests the sorry state of our own attitudes toward the Jews at that time. As one scholar recently observed, the drafts of the document “do not make

entirely pleasant reading. We can be thankful that the document never reached the level of papal teaching.”⁷⁶ If it had reached that level, these ideas would have been part of the Jesuit contribution: Israelites had been “blinded by a vision of material domination and gain” and were doomed to “perpetually wander over the face of the earth.” “Israel has incurred the wrath of God, because it has re-

jected the Gospel.” The Church is not “blind to the spiritual danger to which contact with Jews can expose souls,” and she knows of the need to “safeguard her children against spiritual contagion.” An especially chilling remark in the document praises the superiority of the Church’s historical ways of dealing with the Jews in comparison with the anti-Semitism of the day: while the Church’s teaching and practical attitude toward the Jews

Jews and Jesuits were preeminently people of the city and, thus, were accused of being allied to wealth, loose morality, and a cunning, deracinated intelligence.

⁷⁵ See Uriel Tal, “The ‘Kulturkampf’ and the Jews of Germany,” in *BINAH: Studies in Jewish History*, vol. 1 (New York: Praeger, 1989), 173–93.

⁷⁶ Martin Rhonheimer, “The Holocaust: What Was Not Said,” *First Things* 137 (November 2003): 26.

demonstrate the need for energetic measures to preserve both the faith and morals of her members and society against the corrupting influence of error, these same doctrines likewise show the utter unfitness and inefficacy of anti-Semitism as a means of achieving that end. They show anti-Semitism not only as pitifully inadequate, but also as defeating its own purpose, and producing in the end only greater obstacles to cope with.⁷⁷

It is difficult to imagine this as part of an effective papal challenge to Nazi Germany’s treatment of the Jews.⁷⁸

But we need to see beyond the failures of individuals and investigate our systematic practices. To give but one example: In the light of twentieth-century experience, perhaps Jesuits need to look afresh at the rhetoric of their vow of obedience. One of the clearest insights we have gained from the terrible events of totalitarianism is the mortal danger of authoritarianism and of obedience as an ideal. We have vivid memory of that era’s many criminals who excused their conduct by appeal to their obligation to obey orders. But beyond them there are the countless others who embraced passivity in the face of evil because of an ordinary respect for hierarchy and authority. The Society’s tradition has been an influential force in blessing a conformist mindset and in sanctifying hierarchical structure. Ignatius of Loyola’s 1553 letter on obedience and the Society’s *Constitutions* forged demonic expressions as a legacy to future history. The letter puts forward an ideal of responding to an order by proceeding “blindly, without inquiry of any kind, to the carrying out of the command, with a kind of passion to obey.” The *Constitutions* adopt an infamous image for this passion: “We ought to act on the principle that everyone who lives under obedience should let himself be carried and directed by Divine Providence through the

⁷⁷ *Hidden Encyclical*, pp. 249, 251, 252, 253. See Michael Marrus’s thoughtful review, “The Vatican on Racism and Antisemitism, 1938–39: A New Look at a Might-Have-Been,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4, no. 3 (Winter 1997): 378–95. For a general consideration of “Jesuit anti-Judaism” see Reiner Brüggemann and Gerd Spellerberg, “Die Gesellschaft Jesu und die Juden: Eine Betrachtung über die Folgen des jesuitischen Antijudaismus,” *Werkhefte Katholischer Laien* 15 (March 1961): 82–89.

⁷⁸ The published version is of the French draft and one should note there are differences between it and the American and German drafts. The German version has also been published and its editor claims that it is more sensitive to the Jews than the French draft. See *Wider den Rassismus: Entwurf einer erschienenen Enzyklika* (1938), ed. Anton Rauscher (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001).

agency of the superior as if he were a lifeless body, which allows itself to be carried to any place and treated in any way."⁷⁹ Rhetorically, Jesuit documents are one of the sources for that cadaver obedience (*Kadavergehorsam*) that became such a prominent idol in the moral pantheon of Nazism. We do know that the rhetoric of Jesuit obedience appealed to the Nazi mass-murderer Heinrich Himmler and paralleled for him the discipline of his own SS organization.⁸⁰ We also know from the memoirs of the commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolph Höss, how impressed Hitler's important aide

Identified as international in commitment and urban in attitude, both Jesuits and Jews were regarded as disloyal to the German state and as subversive of Aryan culture and morality.

Martin Bormann was with the Jesuits. Bormann's home was adjacent to the Jesuit house of studies in Pullach, and he admired what he saw as Jesuit capacity for unconditional subordination and regulation.⁸¹

As far as the early Society is concerned, John O'Malley, S.J., points out that, despite such statements, the actual practice of obedience "correlated poorly with the

authoritarian vocabulary the Jesuits used when they spoke of it in theoretical terms."⁸² This lack of correlation then was due to the concrete needs of widely dispersed enterprises that were far from central headquarters. In more recent years, the major changes in the Society that came during the sixties and seventies most often

⁷⁹ "Letter to the Members of the Society of Portugal," in *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, comp. and trans. William J. Young, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959), 294; *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), Cons. no. 547^{v14-15} (p. 222).

⁸⁰ Richard Breitman and Shlomo Aronson, "Eine unbekannte Himmler-Rede vom Januar 1943," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 13, no. 2 (April 1990): 342. For a similar comparison, see Herbert Ziegler, *Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy: The SS Leadership, 1925-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 7.

⁸¹ Steven Paskuly, *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, by Rudolph Höss (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 271. According to Jacques Ellul, even Lenin was captivated by the Jesuit model for his political party. His assertion is cited in *The Genealogy of Violence: Reflections on Creation, Freedom, and Evil*, by Charles Bellinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 128.

⁸² John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 354.

emerged from contesting the rules that had been established by authority. An important study of the changes in Jesuit formation during that period argues that they were not "an orderly reform initiated by authority" but rather a "revolution coming from below."⁸³ Perhaps only another revolution from below will enable us to criticize adequately the nature and impact of some of our major documents on obedience. It may be a sign of hope that, while producing statements on chastity and poverty, the Thirty-fourth General Congregation of the Society avoided any document on obedience, and the term is not even listed in the index of topics for that 1995 meeting. Still, there is need for formal renunciation of a rhetoric, and sometimes a practice, that appealed and migrated to some of the most anti-Christian ideologies. Jesuits still have much to do in learning from the last century's evils.

Among the more regrettable elements in the rancorous relationship between Jesuits and Jews is the loss of that special sense of solidarity in suffering that should have emerged from the history they shared. They were both the most frequent victims for those who sought a total, diabolical explanation for how history operated. They formed, as Lacouture has said, a "tragic couple," both demonized in infamous documents: the *Monita secreta* for the Jesuits, the *Protocols of Zion* for the Jews.⁸⁴ Their diabolical character was charted

This is the Cardinal Bertram who, upon hearing that Hitler had died, wrote a letter to instruct all his priests "to hold a solemn requiem in memory of the Führer."

⁸³ Joseph Becker, S.J., *The Re-formed Jesuits: A History of Changes in Jesuit Formation during the Decade 1965-1975*, vol. 2 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 69.

⁸⁴ Jean Lacouture, *Jesuits: A Multibiography* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1995), 176. For general discussions of the demonization theme and hatred toward one or both groups and the relationship to each other, see Manfred Barthel, *The Jesuits: History and Legend of the Society of Jesus* (New York: William Morrow, 1984); Alexander Brou, *Les Jésuites de la légende*, 2 vols. (Paris: V. Retaux, 1906-1907); Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Bernhard Dühr, *Jesuiten-Fabeln: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1892); Léon Poliakov, *La causalité diabolique: essai sur l'origine des persécutions* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1980); Wolfram Kaiser, "'Clericalism—that is our enemy!': European Anticlericalism and the Culture Wars," *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed.

on the axes of space and time. Spatially, they operated outside of any specific territory and aspired for domination over the world; they lurked behind thrones at the same time that they were quite willing to overthrow those very kings and nations. Jews and Jesuits were preeminently people of the city and, thus, were accused of being allied to wealth, loose morality, and a cunning, deracinated intelligence that was contemptuous of the traditions of the rural past. Temporally, they were at home in periods of decadence and collapse and, thus, they were perceived as devotees of modernity: the same spectacles which detected the Jesuits as fathering the French Revolution saw the Jews as the creators of the Russian one.⁸⁵

This history echoed in Germany in the years leading to and during the period of the Third Reich.⁸⁶ This issue's frontispiece photo is but one example of the fact that Jesuits and Jews were linked often in the propaganda of the Nazis and other right-wing groups. It may be a badge of honor for the Society that Hitler carried a hatred for Jesuits that seems even to predate his obsession with Jews and that led to the exclusion of Jesuits from the army in 1941.⁸⁷ Identified

Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 47–76.

⁸⁵ As examples of this literature, see René Fülöp-Miller, *The Power and Secret of the Jesuits* (New York: Viking, 1930); E. Paris, *Histoire secrète des jésuites* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1970). A recent helpful text can be found in the *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, s.v. "Antijesuitismo,"* by Charles O'Neill and M. Pontet (vol. 1, pp. 178–89).

⁸⁶ As examples of this large literature, see Burghard Assmus, *Jesuitenspiegel: Interessante Beiträge zur Naturgeschichte der Jesuiten* (Berlin: A. Bock Verlag, 1938); Alfred Bass, *An alle Deutschvölkischen! Die Deutschvölkischen im jesuitisch-jüdischen Fangnetz* (Leipzig: Leipziger Verlag, 1920); Ludwig Engel, *Der Jesuitismus eine Staatsgefahr* (Munich: Ludendorffs Verlag, 1935); O. Gröbler, *Jude, Jesuit und Freimaurer im Blitzlicht* (Leignitz: Hahnauer 45, 1932[?]); Erich Ludendorff, *Das Geheimnis der Jesuitenmacht und ihre Ende* (Munich: Ludendorffs Volkswarte Verlag, 1929); Alfred Miller, *Der Jesuitismus als Volksgefahr: Eine Betrachtung zu den Münchener Novemberereignissen* (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1923); NSDAP, *Das zweite Novemberverbrechen: der jüdisch-jesuitische Novemberverrat in München 1923* (Nazi pamphlet, 1923); Alfred Rosenberg, *Schriften aus der Jahren 1917–21* (Munich: Hoheneichern-Verlag, 1943); G. Schultze-Pfaelzer, *Das Jesuiten-Buch: Weltgeschichte eines falschen Priestertums* (Berlin: Brunner-Verlag, 1936).

⁸⁷ See Ian Kershaw, *Hitler I: 1889–1936 Hubris* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 58, 64.

as international in commitment and urban in attitude, both Jesuits and Jews were regarded as disloyal to the German state and as subversive of Aryan culture and morality. Their danger was a shared one as Munich's Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber warned in a March, 1933 letter to the Bavarian episcopate: "We confront new situations from day to day, and the present Jew-baiting can turn just as quickly into Jesuit-baiting." And while no group's losses can compare with that of the Jews, the enmity against the Jesuits did not stop at mere baiting: some eighty-three of them were executed by the Nazis, another forty-three died in concentration camps, and twenty-six more died in captivity or as a result of it.⁸⁸ The heroism of some Jesuits has been very publicly recognized at various sites in Germany and elsewhere. When I visited the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp in November 2003, there was a picture of a former inmate hanging on the wall in a prison cell, the Jesuit Blessed Rupert Mayer. Decorated for his bravery in World War I, he preached against any compatibility of National Socialism and Christianity. He was arrested and imprisoned several times, with the result that his health was broken when the war ended and he died in 1945. Mayer was beatified on November 3, 1987.

A visitor to the principal Berlin museum devoted to those who resisted National Socialism will find there a book of photos and documents entitled *Jesuits in the Kreisau Circle*, which was a resistance group planning for a post-Nazi democratic Germany. On the walls of that German Resistance Museum are framed pictures of a Jesuit provincial, Augustin Rösch, his socius Lothar König, and the executed Alfred Delp. Although there were undoubtedly a few Jesuits who hoped that Hitler and National Socialism might turn out to be a

⁸⁸ March 31, 1933, in *Akten Faulhaber*, ed. Volk, 1:684. Cited in Theodore Hamerow, "The Conservative Resistance to Hitler and the Fall of the Weimar Republic, 1932–34," in *Between Reform, Reaction, and Resistance: Studies in the History of German Conservatism from 1789 to 1945*, ed. Larry Eugene Jones and James Retallack (Providence: Berg, 1993), 461. The numbers of Jesuits killed is taken from *The Jesuits and the Third Reich*, by Vincent Lapomarda. Perhaps the single most important document revealing Nazi attitudes toward Jesuits and their influence is the extensive 1937 report of the Gestapo. It has been published in *Berichte des SD und der Gestapo über Kirchen und Kirchenvolk in Deutschland 1934–1944*, ed. Heinz Boberach (Mainx: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1971), 242–73.

positive force, most German Jesuits opposed Nazism and communicated that opposition to those with whom they worked.⁸⁹ The work of Rösch in particular deserves to be better known because he tried to steer the German episcopacy into a confrontation with the Nazi regime and, thus, break the general approach of Cardinal Adolf von Bertram, the chairman of the Bishops' Conference. It was Cardinal Bertram who blocked the reading from the pulpits of what might have been an important denunciation of Nazi injustice: the 1941 "Human Rights Pastoral Letter" that Rösch had helped author.⁹⁰ This is the Cardinal Bertram who, upon hearing that Hitler had died, wrote a letter to instruct all his priests "to hold a solemn requiem in memory of the Führer."⁹¹

Even the activities of some Jesuits in the resistance may raise awkward questions for the Society of Jesus. For example, there is the

These scholarly investigations will aid us in sensing the poisonous vapors embedded in our styles of thinking and released through our ways of acting.

situation of the writer Fr. Friedrich Muckermann, who was probably the best-known Jesuit opponent of the Nazis. Forbidden by them to speak or write publicly, he fled Germany in 1934 and began publishing the anti-Nazi journal *Der deutsche Weg* while he was in exile. Muckermann died in 1946 in Switzerland. Although his personal courage cannot be doubted, he

seems to have shared in some of the anti-Semitic attitudes that were common in German culture in the period between the world wars.

⁸⁹ See Roman Bleistein, S.J., "Deutsche Jesuiten im Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus," in *Ignatianisch: Eigenart und Methode der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg: Herder, 1990), 478–94.

⁹⁰ See *Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement* (ed. Wolfgang Benz and Walter Pehle [New York: Continuum, 1997]), s.v. "Rösch Circle" (pp. 227–29); Augustin Rösch, *Kampf gegen den Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Roman Bleistein (Frankfurt 1985), and Peter Hartmann, *Die Jesuiten* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2001), 102–10. The human-rights pastoral had the backing of the majority of German bishops, but the document did not explicitly take up the cause of the Jews. See Guenter Lewy, introduction to the 2000 edition of *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: Da Capo, 2000; originally published in 1964), xvii–xxvii.

⁹¹ Klaus Scholder, *A Requiem for Hitler and Other New Perspectives on the German Church Struggle* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 166.

After World War I he had been imprisoned by the Communists and, as a consequence, he frequently put Jews and Communists together as persecutors of religion. Although Muckermann denied that he was an anti-Semite, he did articulate his anxiety regarding the threat to the Christian way of life presented by Jewish influence in cultural and financial circles.⁹²

Then there is the case of Fr. Josef Spieker, who was the first Catholic priest to be thrown into a concentration camp and who was featured in an important recent study by Eric Johnson.⁹³ Spieker split his time doing pastoral work between Cologne and Berlin, where he publicly preached against the Nazi regime. He was harassed by the Gestapo, arrested, and put in a concentration camp. Spieker did not feel the support of the Church authorities for his anti-Nazi activities. It seems that Fr. General Wladimir Ledóchowski pleaded to the Nazi government for his release, and in a letter of November 7, 1935, promised that the "heads of the order would take pains to ensure that Father Spieker, once he is let go, would be sent out of the country and that outside of Germany he would not involve himself in anti-German activities." Eventually Spiekert was released and assigned to Chile, where he was reprimanded by Society authorities for some of his anti-Nazi lectures. He was a heroic figure and Johnson's judgment on him poses a question about Jesuit strategy at the time: "Fr. Spieker's banishment to Chile most likely saved his life, but it was a great loss to Germany."⁹⁴ It is important to remember the works of men such as Rösch and Spieker, but their memory will be adequately honored only when the Society of Jesus acknowledges the many events in its history for which repentance is warranted.

⁹² See Hubert Gruber's study *Friedrich Muckermann, S.J., 1883–1946* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1993), especially 107–18. Muckermann's memoirs were published posthumously as *Im Kampf Zwischen Zwei Epochen: Lebenserinnerungen*, ed. Nikolaus Junk (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1973).

⁹³ Eric Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 196–212. Also see Josef Spieker's memoir *Mein Kampf gegen Unrecht in Staat und Gesellschaft: Erinnerungen einer Kölner Jesuiten* (Cologne: Verlag J. P. Bachem, 1971).

⁹⁴ Johnson, *Nazi Terror*, 546, 212.

Conclusion

Saul Friedländer, certainly one of the greatest scholars of the Holocaust, has written of "the historian's paralysis" that the Shoah has created: the inability to think the heterogeneous phenomena of Nazism: "messianic fanaticism and bureaucratic structures, pathological impulses and administrative decrees, archaic attitudes within an advanced industrial society." He is not afraid of drawing the possible implication of National Socialism's complexity: we may be led to the "conclusion that the destruction of European Jewry poses a problem which historical analysis and understanding may not be able to overcome."⁹⁵ Friedländer has sighted the territory of a modernity that is not beyond Christianity and a Catholicism that is not independent of the modern age. A more critical historical analysis will certainly have its tasks to perform there. But that place is also where the dynamics of confessing fault, seeking forgiveness, and doing penance provide a guide to the operations of sin. While the historical force of politico-religious categories have been studied before, today there is a new volume and intensity to the study of their operation.⁹⁶ These scholarly investigations will aid us in sensing the poisonous vapors embedded in our styles of thinking and released through our ways of acting. But, just as Friedländer has, the Vatican recognizes the limit of mere historical data: The Shoah "cannot be fully measured by the ordinary criteria of historical research alone. It calls for a 'moral and religious memory' and, particularly among Christians, a very serious reflection on what gave rise to it."⁹⁷ John Paul II's pilgrimages are at the center of that mem-

⁹⁵ Saul Friedländer, "From Anti-Semitism to Extermination," in *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*, ed. François Furet (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 31.

⁹⁶ There is the distinguished work of the late Israeli historian Uriel Tal. For example, see his "On Structures of Political Theology and Myth in Germany Prior to the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust as Historical Experience*, ed. Yehuda Bauer and Nathan Rotenstreich (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981), 43–74. More recent works include the two volumes edited by Hans Maier and Michael Schäfer, *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996); *Der Nationalsozialismus als politische Religion*, ed. Michael Ley and Julius Schoeps (Bodenheim: Philo Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997); Claus-Ekkehard Bärsch, *Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998).

⁹⁷ "We Remember," 49.

ory, a reminder that it is we who permit those toxic vapors to determine our feelings and deeds. The Catholic search for forgiveness is a summons to responsibility and to awareness of how dangerous religious faith and spiritual commitment are. This search is creating for Catholicism a new, more critical relationship with its historical reality. But it is also the forging of a new relationship between Christians and Jews.

And we may expect and pray for a new, historically aware relationship between Jews and Jesuits. A challenging refrain of General Congregation 34 is its call to a pilgrim Society for dialogue with other faiths: the sharing of the joys and sorrows of our common human journey; cooperation in the development and liberation of peoples; the exchange of spiritual experience and theological insight.⁹⁸ For me, the most striking of the dialogues to which the congregation calls is that with the Jewish people:

A shared history both unites us with and divides us from our elder brothers and sisters, the Jewish people, in whom and through whom God continues to act for the salvation of the world.

Dialogue with the Jewish people holds a unique place. The first covenant, which is theirs and which Jesus the Messiah came to fulfill, 'has never been revoked.' A shared history both unites us with and divides us from our elder brothers and sisters, the Jewish people, in whom and through whom God continues to act for the salvation of the world. Dialogue with the Jewish people enables us to become more fully aware of our identity as Christians.⁹⁹

Encountering our history with the Jewish people will make us more aware of both positive and negative dimensions in our historical Jesuit identity. The recent "Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity," which was signed by many Jewish leaders and thinkers, is a sign that the penitential voice of Christianity is being heard and is transforming Jewish perception of Christian attitudes toward

⁹⁸ Decree 5, "Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue," in *Documents of the Thirty-fourth General Congregation*, no. 131 (p. 69).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 149 (p. 77).

Judaism.¹⁰⁰ Jesuits need to make their own contribution to that voice. And an important beginning has been made now that two international congresses on Jesuits and Jews have been held, and a third is planned for 2005.¹⁰¹ The first was held in December 1998 in Krakow, Poland. In his message to the participants, Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach wrote: "The fact that you hold your meeting in Krakow, not far from the shameful death camp of Oswiecim, should indelibly fix in your mind the stark reality of what hatred of Jews has accomplished and what we must seek to prevent in the future." As the way into that future, Jesuits need to scrutinize their personal histories for any anti-Semitic conduct or conviction. Each one should ask if he has a theological place for a Judaism that is not regarded as superseded by Christ's revelation. Collectively we must identify and confess whatever anti-Semitic sinfulness our institutions or members have been guilty of. This is a task for many of us and not just those trained as historians.

The promise of this scrutiny is a reconciliation with Jews that is supported by historical accuracy and sincere admission of fault. But it will also indicate transformations of our own relationship to the Jesuit identity we have inherited. In concluding, I return to Alfred Delp. I mentioned near the beginning of this paper his concern that the churches would come to be judged severely for the contribution they made to the "creation of the mass-mind, of collectivism, dictatorships, and so on." Some Jesuit conduct might fall under that same severe judgment. Certainly some Jesuits did fail during those decisive years of totalitarian governments. Occasionally one chances upon windows into that failure. For example, in his wartime diary, Fr. Vincent McCormick, the rector of the Gregorian University and later the American assistant, expressed astonishment that some of the Jesuits in Rome seemed to hope for a Fascist victory in the war. On January 27, 1943, he wrote: "Such blindness is very hard for me to understand. How explain that men with all our

¹⁰⁰ The statement was published in the *New York Times* (September 10, 2000), 23. It was reissued in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, ed. Tikva Frymer-Kensky (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), xvii-xx.

¹⁰¹ The first international meeting of Jesuits in Jewish-Christian Dialogue was held in Krakow, Poland, in December 1998 with the theme "Jesuits and Jews: Towards Greater Fraternity and Commitment." The second was held in the summer of 2000 in Jerusalem with the theme "The Significance of the State of Israel for Contemporary Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue."

intellectual training fail to grasp the real issues, men with our spiritual training are so inordinately nationalistic, while the ordinary intelligent men of the world and the simple folk too see things so much more clearly."¹⁰²

While my focus here has necessarily been directed at Germans, an honest confrontation with anti-Semitism must involve all corners of the Society. And because the history of Jesuit-Jewish encounters does not reduce to the one note of enmity, we should identify those Jesuit activities that are recognizable as philo-Semitic, especially in the years of Nazi persecution of Jews. Perhaps the Society's next general congregation should issue a major statement on its historical relationship with the Jewish people and should join the papacy and the European bishops in confessing fault and in seeking forgiveness. With such a declaration the high esteem that Jesuits have achieved as confessors may also greet their confessions.



¹⁰² See James Hennessey, "American Jesuit in Wartime Rome: The Diary of Vincent McCormick, S.J., 1942-1945," *Mid-America: An Historical Quarterly* 56 (1974): 39.