“The Tragic Couple”
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Encounters Between Jews and Jesuits

Edited by

James Bernauer
Robert A. Maryks

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James Bernauer, S.J.
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Thérèse Andrevon has been a student of Jewish-Christian relations for the past thirty years. She has taught Christian clergy and been involved in interreligious dialogue. Her audiovisual presentation on the history of Jewish-Christian relations has won the Prophet Micah prize in 2004 and has been widely acclaimed. She is the author of La Bible: Un Jardin des Délices (1987) and of Amour et Sacrifice (1989). She is presently completing her Ph.D. thesis at the Institut Catholique de Paris and at Leuven University on Nostra Aetate and a Christian Theology of Judaism.

Dean Bell (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley) is Dean/Chief Academic Officer and Professor of History at Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago. He has taught at the University of California, Berkeley; Northwestern University; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; DePaul University; and the Hebrew Theological College. Bell is author of Jews in the Early Modern World (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), Jewish Identity in Early Modern Germany: Memory, Power and Community (Ashgate, 2007), Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth-Century Germany (Brill, 2001), and with Stephen Burnett co-editor of Jews, Judaism and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany (Brill, 2006).

Peter Bernardi, S.J. is Associate Professor of Theology at Loyola University in Chicago. He has written extensively on Maurice Blondel, social Catholicism and moral issues of death and dying. He is currently writing a book that is tentatively entitled A Pascal Liberationist Theology of Salvation.

James Bernauer, S.J. is the Kraft Family Professor at Boston College where he is also Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning. His studies in philosophy and theology were in Tübingen, Paris, St. Louis, and New York. He has published extensively in the field of Holocaust Studies and on the philosophies of Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt.

Michael J. Burns was raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He earned the A.B. degree at Marquette University. He worked on Wall Street, and for seventeen years at Princeton University. He earned a Master of Liberal Arts degree at Harvard where his thesis title was, Accepted and Welcome:
The Unlikely Response of the Jesuits at Marquette University to Jewish Applicants during the Inter-war Years, 1920–1940. He is currently on staff in the Archives Section of the John J. Burns Library at Boston College.

Lou Charnon-Deutsch is Professor of Hispanic Languages and Literature at Stony Brook University. Among her recent books are Narratives of Desire: Nineteenth-Century Spanish Fiction by Women (2000) and Hold That Pose: Visual Culture in the Nineteenth-Century Spanish Press (2008). At present she is working on the topic of conspiracy theories in nineteenth-century European fiction.

Jeremy Clarke, S.J., is a Jesuit of the Australian Province presently teaching Asian history at Boston College as an Assistant Professor in the History department. His classes cover Asian history from the sixteenth century to the present. Jeremy’s doctoral studies were at the Australian National University, Canberra, with Professor Geremie Barmé, and focused on Chinese Catholic history.

Emanuele Colombo is Assistant Professor of Catholic Studies at DePaul University of Chicago. He received his doctorate from the University of Padua. His areas of interest include church history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the history of Jesuit missions as well as that of Christians and Muslims in early modernity.

David Lebovitch Dahl completed his Ph.D. in History at the European University Institute in 2008. He currently works as a researcher at the University of Copenhagen. He has published articles about the relations between Jesuits and Jews in the journals Modern Judaism (2003), Rivista di storia del cristianesimo (2010), and Modern Italy (2012).

Charles R. Gallagher, S.J. is an Assistant Professor of History at Boston College. He received his Ph.D. from Marquette University and has taught at the College of the Holy Cross. He is author of Vatican Secret Diplomacy: Joseph P. Hurley and Pope Pius XII (Yale, 2008). He is currently working on a project on American Catholics, anti-Semitism, and Human Rights 1938–1948.

Beth A. Griech-Polelle earned her Ph.D. at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in 1999. She is currently Associate Professor of Modern European History at Bowling Green State University in northwestern Ohio.
She is the author of *Bishop von Galen: German Catholicism and National Socialism* and has co-edited *Trajectories of Memory: Intergenerational Representations of the Holocaust* with her colleague, Dr. Christina Guenther. She has also served as editor for *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial and Its Policy Consequences Today*. Her current research examines the impact of the Spanish Civil War on German Catholics in Nazi Germany.

**David I. Kertzer** is the Paul Dupee, Jr., University Professor of Social Science at Brown University, where he is also Professor of Anthropology and Italian Studies. Among his recent books are *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (Knopf, 1997), *The Popes Against the Jews* (Knopf, 2001), *Prisoner of the Vatican* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004), and *Amalia’s Tale* (Houghton Mifflin, 2008). From 2006 to 2011 he served as provost of Brown University.

**Diego Lucci** is an Associate Professor of History and Philosophy at the American University in Bulgaria. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Naples “Federico II” and also taught at Boston University and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He is the author of thirty articles and two books, *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (Lang, 2008) and *The Jews, Instructions for Use: Four Eighteenth-Century Projects for the Emancipation of European Jews*, co-authored with Paolo Bernardini (Academic Studies Press, 2012). He is currently working on an edited collection of essays entitled *Atheism and Deism Revalued: Heterodox Religious Identities in Britain, 1650–1800*, to be published by Ashgate.


**Elena Mazzini** received her Ph.D. from the University of Florence. Her thesis title was: *Anti-Jewish Stereotypes in the Catholic Context after the Shoah. The Strategies and Identity’s Rhetoric in Post-war Italy* (1945–1974). She is currently in Milan at the Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione (INSMLI). Among her books are: with L. Martini, *Giorgio La Pira e la vocazione di Israele* [Giorgio La Pira and the

Gianfranco Miletto, born in Turin, has studied classical philology at the University of Turin and in 1991 received his doctorate in Hebrew Studies. His research interests include Biblical Studies (L'Antico Testamento Ebraico nella tradizione babilonese: I frammenti della Genizah [Silvio Zamorani Editore, 1992]) and the Jewish cultural history in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Die Heldenschilde des Abraham ben David Portaleone [Peter Lang Verlag, 2003]). In 2003, he received the “habilitation” in Jewish Studies at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg with a monograph study of Abraham ben David Portaleone: Glauben und Wissen im Zeitalter der Reformation: Der salomonische Tempel bei Abraham ben David Portaleone (1542–1612) (Walter de Gruyter Verlag, 2004). Currently Dr. Miletto is private lecturer at the Martin-Luther-Universität of Halle-Wittenberg and editor with Giuseppe Veltri of the English translation of the Nefuzot Yehudah by the Matnuan Rabbi Judah Moscato (Judah Moscato Sermons [Brill, 2011–2012], 3 vols.).

Raffaella Perin, Ph.D. in History of Christianity, has written essays on the attitude of the Catholic church towards the Jews and the Protestants in Italy during the first half of the twentieth century. She is now achieving a second Ph.D. in Contemporary History studying Vatican Radio during the Second World War.

Claude (Dov) B. Stuczynski is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of General History at Bar-Ilan University. Having written a number of contributions in various languages, his two main fields of research are: the Portuguese converso phenomenon and the first encounters between Europeans and Amerindians. He is mainly interested in the relationship between religion and politics in medieval and early modern periods.
INTRODUCTION

James Bernauer and Robert A. Maryks

The improved relationship between Jews and Christians has been among the most significant and promising historical developments since the Second World War. The road toward that new situation has many markers but it would be a very common perception to see the adoption of the declaration *Nostra Aetate* during the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) as the most decisive early step toward reconciliation between these two faith communities.¹ The Society of Jesus has been a leader in the Catholic church’s dialogue with the Jewish people, most clearly but certainly not exclusively in the role that the Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea exercised in formulating this groundbreaking document. It is he who, with Rabbi Abraham Heschel, appears in the photo on this book’s cover. The picture captures a conversation in the 1960s between two learned men of deep spirituality who are discussing a text. It is easy to appreciate the rapport between these two intellectuals. And yet the force of their discussion is not to be perceived as the mere display of a mutual personal esteem but rather in terms of a fundamental conversion, a momentous shift that their conversation was producing. Their dialogue became broadly significant because it exercised particular influence in leading the Catholic church to redefine its relationship with the Jewish people and with Judaism.

And one of the most important of the meetings between Rabbi Heschel and Cardinal Bea took place in November, 1963, in what was then the chancery of the archdiocese and is now part of the Boston College campus.² It was only fitting then that this Jesuit College’s Center for Christian–Jewish Learning sponsored a scholarly conference in 2012 that was dedicated to continuing the Bea–Heschel conversation and to the enhancement of that ongoing relationship between Jews and Christians,

particularly Jews and Jesuits. Such conferences contribute to a purifica-
tion of the memory for these groups and to a comprehension of how they
came to be where they are in their relationships to one another.

The history of the encounters between Jews and Jesuits has long been in
need of a thorough investigation because both were significant players in
modernity and had important interactions. The 2012 conference at Boston
College had been prepared for by almost 60 years of formal Christian–
Jewish exchanges; more particularly, it followed a series of four meetings
sponsored by the Jesuit leadership in Rome. The first took place in Kraków,
near Auschwitz, in 1998, and its theme was “Jesuit and Jews: Towards
Greater Fraternity and Commitment.” Two years later there was a meeting
in Jerusalem and its topic was “The Significance of the State of Israel for
Contemporary Judaism and Jewish–Christian Dialogue.” The third assem-
bly was held in 2005 in Zug, Switzerland, on the subject of “The Importance
of Modern Jewish Thought for Jewish–Christian Dialogue.” Finally,
in 2007, New York City’s Fordham University hosted conversations on
“Diaspora, Secularization, and Modernity.” All of these gatherings were
deemed successful, and perhaps their greatest achievement was to make
their participants aware of how ignorant they were regarding the history
of encounters between Jews and Jesuits. Such ignorance has long pro-
voked dangerous myths about their dealings (myths that are readily avail-
able on the Internet) and unnecessarily limited the rapport between these
two groups. Certain expressions take on a life of their own—one thinks of
advertising slogans or popular lines from films—and this seems to have
happened to the title of the conference, “The Tragic Couple,” a term which
became a constant point of reference in the Boston conversations. The
expression is owed to the French journalist Jean Lacouture (b.1921) in the
context of a remark on Jesuits and Jews, and several conference partici-
pants wondered about its appropriateness to the complexity of that inter-
action.3 Certainly it was not meant as the title for any grand narrative
because that story does not yet exist, if it ever will. Indeed it is the absence
of that narrative that was one of the sources of the Boston meeting’s spe-
cific energy. And yet, it did seem that there was something appropriate to
the phrase. Jesuits and Jews did form a distinctive couple, in part because
they were both the most frequent victims for those who sought a total,
diabolical explanation for how history operated, although it must be
said that the suffering that was endured as a consequence cannot be

compared. Both groups were demonized in infamous but popular fabrications: the *Monita secreta* for the Jesuits and the *Protocols of Zion* for the Jews (the latter derived in part from the rhetoric of the former). Their diabolical character was charted 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 while at the same time they were quite willing to overthrow those very rulers 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 which 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.

The animosity directed toward the two groups did not just come from the outside because the Jesuits had developed their own enmity toward the Jews. And this was unexpected to some extent. As far as the Jesuits were concerned, the opening moment in the Jewish–Jesuit encounter was both a stance of courage and a surrender to cowardice. The official name for the Jesuits is the Society of Jesus, and 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. 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 or

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The Latin caption reads: *Obstinatum Iudaeum tribus hisce verbis convertit: Mane nobiscum Isaac* (“With these three words [Ignatius] converts an obstinate Jew: ‘Stay with us, Isaac’”). One of the first foundations of Loyola in Rome was the House of Catechumens (*Casa dei Catecumeni*), which hosted Jews willing to convert. The first Jew of that community who was baptized on Sunday, 18 September 1541, was a wealthy thirty-two-year-old man of “nice appearance and good habits,” just as the Jew represented in the center of this engraving. The two Jesuits in the rear might be Diego Laínez, who preached at the baptism, and Alfonso Salmerón, who administered the sacrament.
conversos of Iberia, were more Jewish than Christian for 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. Unfortunately, however, the Society was to abandon its founder’s brave 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 superior 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.” The decree was adopted on 23 December 1593, “perhaps the most shameful day in Jesuit history,” according to one Jesuit historian. That shameful day would cast its shadow long into the future, on many different activities of the Society, and those would shape a tragic profile to that couple’s history.

This Jesuit racism regarding Jews as well as resistance to it from the earliest years by Jesuits was the most significant defining conflict of their early relationship and is still in need of greater understanding, especially the character of those Jesuits who confronted racism because it was the source of the esprit that came to flourish in the last century’s Jesuit opposition to Fascism and Nazism.

In his recently published book, From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933–1965, John Connelly has traced the prehistory of the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate) from the intellectual milieu formed by groups of Catholic anti-Nazis operating in Central Europe in the 1930s. Unsurprisingly, among those who fought Nazi racial anti-Semitism we find not a few influential Jesuits from other areas. For example, there was Pierre Charles (1883–1954), a Belgian Jesuit who fiercely criticized racism in his Les Protocoles des sages de Sion (Casterman: Paris: 1938) with its

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revelation of the work as a forgery, and the French Jesuit Pierre Lorson (1889–1954), the author of *Christians before Racism*—the first book-length study of race from a Christian perspective written in French. What characterized these and other Catholic antiracists was, Connelly argues, that they lived along borders. But “because it is impossible to walk, let alone live on a border, these people in fact were border-crossers who took ideas in both directions,” whether these borders were ethnic or religious, or—in most cases—both. As Connelly put it, “without converts the Catholic church would not have found a new language to speak to the Jews after the Holocaust.” The Jesuit experience suggests that the potency of the converted is worth being traced in earlier centuries because it is difficult not to notice certain parallelisms between those interwar Jesuit border-crossers and the group of Jesuits, most of them of Jewish origins, or conversos, who opposed purity-of-blood laws in the Society of Jesus in the last quarter of the 16th century. A brief historical excursus is warranted so that we appreciate this early Jesuit–Jewish relationship.

The foundation of the Jesuits in 1540—half a century after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain—coincided with the rise of a Spanish anticonverso hysteria that reached its peak in 1547, when the most authoritative expression of the purity-of-blood legislation in Iberia, *El Estatuto de limpieza de sangre*, was promulgated by the inquisitor general of Spain and archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez Silíceo (1486–1557). The Society of Jesus could not avoid coping with the problem of conversos, because the Jesuits were founded by a group of so-called Old and New Christians, most of whom were born in Iberia, as was their leader Ignatius of Loyola (c.1491–1556). In spite of the desired universal character of the order envisioned by its founding fathers, the vexed purity-of-blood concern had produced from the very beginning a profound polarization in the Society of Jesus as it tried to implement its mission.

The death of Superior General Francisco de Borja in 1572 marked a turning point in the history of converso Jesuits, whose influence—after three decades of holding the highest posts of responsibility in the Jesuit administration—began to fade. After the deaths of Borja’s two predecessors, Ignatius of Loyola and Diego Laínez in 1556 and 1565, respectively, the

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11 Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother*, 63.
12 Ibid., 5.
Fig. 2. The 1604 Köln edition of the biography of Diego Laínez (1512–1565), the second superior general of the Society of Jesus, by Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611). Courtesy of John J. Burns Library at Boston College.

This volume also includes the biography of the Jesuit Alfonso Salmerón (1515–1585), a very close friend of Laínez since adolescence, translated from Spanish into Latin by the Jesuit humanist from Antwerp, André Schott (1552–1629). The converso-phobic Italian Jesuit Benedetto Palmio portrayed Laínez as “an Israelite indeed—as he admitted publicly—but in whom there was no deceit.” Unlike Sacchini’s, Ribadeneyra’s biography of Laínez silenced Laínez’s Jewish ancestry. Modern scholarship has confirmed Laínez’s Jewish genealogy, which had been already known to his contemporaries.

anti-converso Jesuits seized the momentum of political transition by campaigning against the converso presence in the Jesuit central administration. The campaign was successful—the anti-converso Italo-Portuguese lobby managed to block the election to the generalate of the converso Vicar General Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76). From the very start of his tenure, the newly elected superior general, Everard Mercurian (1514–80),
Pedro de Ribadeneyra as the biographer of Ignatius of Loyola

Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611) from Toledo was the author of the first official biography of the Jesuit founder, Ignatius of Loyola, which has had numerous editions in various languages. The caption reads that Ribadeneyra was Ignatius’s accurate biographer. However, the French contemporary historian Marcel Bataillon charged Ribadeneyra with “the crime of the hagiographic deformation.” Indeed, Ribadeneyra, who was a closet-converso, concealed the fact that the Inquisition in Alcalá had accused Loyola of being a crypto-Jew. Modern scholarship has established Ribadeneyra’s Jewish genealogy.
began to “cleanse the house”: he deprived almost all converso Jesuits of governmental posts in Rome, Italy, and possibly in other parts of Europe. Consequently, the period of the converso political sway ended, shifting the approach of the Jesuit administration in Rome away from both candidates and members of Jewish ancestry, a shift which under Mercurian’s successor, Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615), would eventually result in the important discriminatory legislation of 1593. As mentioned earlier, it officially barred conversos from joining the Society of Jesus and dismissed those who were not yet full members of the order.14

The discriminatory policy of Mercurian and the defeat of the converso lobby during the Third General Congregation triggered the anti-Roman separatist movement by Spanish Jesuits known as the memorialistas, or those who wrote reports called memoriales.15 The converso character of the memorialistas movement was denounced by the anti-converso lobby, which after the election of Acquaviva (1581) included high-ranking officials in the Jesuit curia, such as the German Paul Hoffaeus (d.1608), the Italian Lorenzo Maggio (d.1605), and the Portuguese Manuel Rodrigues (d.1596).16

Their Italian predecessor, Assistant General Benedetto Palmio (1523–98), had fueled their anti-converso bias in his memorial to Acquaviva. There he wrote that the first cause and origin of the evils in the Society of Jesus proceeded from the multitude and insolence of Spanish converts from Judaism. Other Jesuits shared Palmio’s prejudice. Paul Hoffaeus claimed that one of the categories of people who compromised the order’s unity were so-called confesos (i.e. converts from Judaism) who were “either suspicious or hateful.”17 Paraphrasing Luke’s Gospel [Luke 16:8], Lorenzo Maggio argued that “those from the circumcision subverted the entire house of the Society. As sons of this world who are shrewd in dealing with their own and avid of new things, they easily excite disorders and destroy the unity of souls and their bond with the government.”18

Manuel Rodrigues’s argument seemed more racist: “Jewish converts [and their descendants] are by nature contrary to the true and sincere spirit of religion and thus harmful. … They promote genuine mortification and solid virtues very little and seem to be merchants, seeking first seats and being called rabbis; they are hardly eager to seek perfection … and

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14 Ibid., 117–18.
16 Ibid., 129.
17 Ibid., 144.
18 Ibid., 145.
readily admit others of the same blood who are very unworthy.” Rodrigues’s description of Jewish converts and their descendants echoes the popular anti-*converso* work by Bishop Diego de Simancas, *Defensio Statuti Toletani* (1573), in which he employed the concept of “hereditary vices,” which were—according to Simancas—peculiar to Jewish converts and more frequent in them than in others. Simancas’s predecessor, Inquisitor Siliceo, whose purity-of-blood statutes he defended, expressed this idea more eloquently: “[The Jewish converts] still hold on their lips the milk of their ancestors’ recent perversity.” The difference between pure and impure Christians was to Siliceo similar to the one between bred and in-bred horses.

This enmeshing of anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic reasoning by the Jesuit leadership in the late 16th century was challenged by a group of Jesuit intellectuals, who were largely of Jewish ancestry. Most prominent among them was a prolific writer and diplomat from Mantua, Antonio Possevino (1533–1611). Following his engagement in the mission to Roman Jews after the Third General Congregation, he influenced Pope Gregory XIII’s decision to create a college of neophytes aimed at training preachers to convert Jews in Italy and the Levant. He was one of the most prolific Jesuit writers, authoring close to 40 books. The most famous of them was the *Bibliotheca selecta*, part of which was dedicated to the topic of the conversion of Jews, who in his eyes were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God. Through this and other writings, Possevino became one of the fiercest opponents of purity-of-blood legislation in the Society, even though his description of Jews had often a taste of traditional Christian anti-Judaism.

In his memorial to Acquaviva, Possevino argued that “either by procuring it or by consenting to it, both Jews and Gentiles dirtied their hands in shedding the innocent blood of Christ.” He further claimed that:

[Loyola, Laínez, and Borja] did not believe those stains [of Jewish origin] should interfere with the development of the Society, if they could even be considered “stains,” provided the efficacy of baptism that deletes any stain, no matter how deep and contrary to God it is. ... Whether one looks to the [Jesuit] Constitutions, or to the example of former Fathers General, or to the disposition of Divine Providence manifested in Sacred Scripture, one cannot

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19 Ibid., 146.
20 Ibid., 34–35.
21 Ibid., 30.
see how this fear [of men of Jewish ancestry] can be born within a Society whose Institute should be distinguished by the blood that is found in its freedom, and in the fact that it permits no preference for lineage, or for human concerns, which are vestiges of paganism.

In his argument, another Jesuit opponent of purity-of-blood laws, García Girón de Alarcón (1534–97), evoked the authority of Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (1469–1534) who suggested that refusing candidates to religious orders only for the reason of their Jewish origin seemed irrational, for “our salvation comes from Jews, from whom Christ, the Apostles, and many fathers of the faith were born according to the flesh.” A similar perspective was articulated by another Jesuit pioneer of the dialogue between Jews and Jesuits, António Vieira (1608–97), a Portuguese missionary to Brazil. Echoing Paul’s Letter to the Romans, he recalled the privileged role of the Jews in the history of Christianity, for even though they “are hated by God for their blindness … they are loved because of their faith and the merits of their ancestors.”

Possevino’s and his confreres’ bold and tenacious fight against Jesuit racism were voices crying in the desert—their writings circulated mostly in manuscript and remained unpublished until the 20th century and thus had a limited impact on later generations of Jesuits. The enemies of the conversos in the Jesuit administration prevailed and, despite the absurdity of the anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic arguments they employed, they were able to orchestrate in 1593 the promulgation of the purity-of-blood law. This law was abrogated only in 1946, because Jesuits feared, in the shadow of the Holocaust, being accused of modern racism. Instrumental in this abrogation was a French Jesuit of Jewish ancestry, Auguste Valensin (1879–1953). We are still in need of full access to the Jesuit archives for this period so as to be able to establish the more precise circumstances that led to the repeal of the anti-Jewish law, since the decree of the repeal did not disclose its reasoning. It is clear, however, that the 1946 Jesuit abrogation was part of a more extensive postwar Catholic stream that would become the flood which brought down the barriers to Nostra Aetate. While Jesuits and Jews have undertaken a new journey, clarity with respect to their past was a priority for the conference. Without pretending to be exhaustive in narrating such a complex and vast historical phenomenon, most

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presentations engaged the 20th century as the most intense era in Jesuit–Jewish exchange, but there were important considerations of earlier historical encounters that prepared the way.

I. Jesuits and New Christians

Emanuele Colombo’s “The Watershed of Conversion: Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), New Christians, and Jews” develops how the discussion about the conversos migrated into later developments and how the conversion experience itself came to be envisioned as central to Jesuit spirituality. His contribution examines three aspects of Antonio Possevino, whom he considers one of the most fascinating and still understudied early modern Jesuits. First, his commitment to the challenging of the anti-converso policy introduced in the Society of Jesus during the Fifth General Congregation; second, the alleged Jewish ancestry of Possevino; finally, Possevino's attitude towards Jews. These aspects, often presented as intertwined, are from the author's perspective three different and separate issues. Possevino does not show a sympathetic view towards Jews as such but rather emphasizes the value of conversion. A sincere conversion and the sacrament of baptism are regarded as more powerful than any distinction of blood or race. This idea of conversion is at the origin of Possevino's understanding of the Society of Jesus and of the Catholic church.

The sheer historical complexity of Jesuit dealings with communities of the converted is featured in Claude Stuczynski’s “Negotiating Relationship: Jesuits and Portuguese Conversos—A Reassessment.” His essay proposes an alternative way of dealing with the intense perceptions that characterized Portuguese Jesuit attitudes towards Portuguese conversos. Current historiography still perceives this phenomenon either in a Manichean way (Simão Rodrigues's anti-converso approach vs. António Vieira's philo-Semitism) or in a very simplistic form (Vieira's position as byproduct of a loose Iberian tolerance). Reconstructing these relationships as byproducts of interaction between Jesuit theology and Iberian politics, Stuczynski analyzes three very diverse encounters between the two: (1) Jesuits, conversos, and the Holy Office in 16th-century Bragança (by way of Inquisition files and archives); (2) Father Diogo de Areda's perception of the converso problem in the 1620s; and finally (3) Jesuits and converso ideologies of mission and commerce in 1619 Lisbon. Through these cases the author puts forward a new paradigm for perceiving Jesuit–converso encounters in early modern Portugal and the move toward a positive relationship.
II. Jesuits, Jews, and Modernity

Dean Bell’s “Polemics of Confessionalization: Depictions of Jews and Jesuits in Early Modern Germany” shows the importance of polemics in that contentious post-Reformation era when the various Christian confessions were in the process of consolidating their identities. This period of “confessionalization” fashioned identities between the middle of the 16th to the middle of the 17th centuries through the marginalization and stigmatization of targeted enemies. While Bell acknowledges the survival of more traditional medieval stereotypes of Jews, he draws attention to the modern mobility of anti-Jewish diatribes and their fecundity in embracing Jesuit enemies. Animal imagery places both Jews and Jesuits in a threatening jungle where they may be recognized as subhuman and yet also possessed of a superhuman ability to devour and destroy. Jews and Jesuits are painted as sinister conspirators and agents in the poisoning of Christianity.

Diego Lucci’s “The Suppression of the Jesuits and the Enlightenment Discourse of Jewish Emancipation” draws a remarkable parallel between the political and cultural dynamics that led to the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 and the debate on Jewish emancipation in the decade preceding the French Revolution. These two historical phenomena resulted from the Enlightenment discourse of the emancipation of man and the development and strengthening, in theory and practice, of the modern state as an all-encompassing, panoptical, superpersonal entity. The suppression of the Society of Jesus was caused by political and economic conflicts and the assertion of state independence against the Catholic church. By expelling the Jesuits and leading the papacy to suppress the Society, several states of Western Europe aimed at getting rid of this highly independent and influential order, involved in evangelization and educational activities but also in economic enterprises in its missions. As regards the Jews, the Enlightenment discourse of emancipation revolved around the need for the state to eliminate Jewish difference, and thus led the Jews to self-realization, by putting an end to their communal lifestyle, at a time when Jewish communities were commonly regarded as “states within the state.” This is proved by Christian Dohm’s and Henri Grégoire’s emancipatory projects, and by Moses Mendelssohn’s opposition to the predominant conceptions of Jewish emancipation. In fact, the dynamics of Jewish emancipation after the French Revolution, strongly influenced by the emancipatory projects of the 1780s, eventually led to the assimilation of the Jews into surrounding society. Thus the suppression of the Society of Jesus and the debate that led to Jewish emancipation were two important episodes in the development of the modern state into a
growingly centralized and homogeneous entity, without internal distinctions of division, delegation, or autonomy. The Jews were a small, marginal, and powerless element of European population: it was therefore possible to eliminate, or at least reduce, their otherness by means of assimilation policies. On the other hand, the Jesuits were considered to be effectively promoting the church’s interests, regardless of the state’s plans and objectives: they were thus treated with an iron fist. In both cases, the modern state’s ability to assert its power and its claim to lead mankind to emancipation and self-realization were at stake.

Gianfranco Miletto turns our attention to intellectual models and Italy in his fascinating “Jesuit Influence on Italian Jewish Culture in the 16th and 17th Centuries.” Although there were many formal and informal contacts between Jesuits and Jews, with cases of Jewish students studying at Jesuit schools, for example, their most significant encounter may have been in their mutual efforts to develop a model for knowledge that would integrate secular sciences and religious traditions. Miletto’s study emphasizes the pre-Galileo, pre-Descartes discussions that featured the Jerusalem Temple of Solomon as a paradigm for knowledge itself. The Jewish physician Abraham ben David Portaleone’s influential text Shilte ha-gibborim delineates the Temple as a vehicle for engaging with the various dimensions of the culture of his day. Although their names are not mentioned, it is clear that Portaleone’s work was itself inspired by such Jesuit writers as Giulio Camillo and Juan Bautista Villalpando. But the influences were mutual as Miletto shows in the impact of Portaleone on the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher.

There is a major geographical shift represented by Jeremy Clarke’s “From Kaifeng to Shanghai via Rome and Paris: Jesuits and the History of Judaism in China.” The relation between Jesuits and Jews in China has a history that goes back to the days of Matteo Ricci. Although many in the field of Sinology, and beyond, are well aware of these encounters, less well known is the manner in which the Jesuit international networks and tradition of scholarship helped preserve the history of this community. The chapter summarizes this relationship for those who are outside the bounds of Chinese studies while at the same time emphasizing the pivotal role played by the studious labors of Jesuits at either ends of the world.

III. Hateful Visions

Lou Charnon-Deutsch’s, “Visions of Hate: Jews and Jesuits in the European Feuilleton,” compares visual and literary representations of Jews and
Jesuits in 19th-century European serial novels. During the French revolutionary period dozens of French, Spanish, and Italian conspiracy novels wedded stereotypes of Jews (especially the Wandering Jew Ahasuerus) and Jesuits (many based on Eugene Sue’s Jesuit protagonists d’Aigrigny and Rodin). The most fanatical of these theories concerned the plots of Jews and Jesuits to acquire world power, told in novels about clandestine groups conspiring to overthrow governments through extortion, violence, and treasonous political intrigue. The author argues that the stereotyping of Jews and Jesuits was more than a narrative device reflecting the enduring popularity of gothic-inspired and romantic fiction. Rather than arbitrary coincidences, the narrative spaces where Jews and Jesuits intersected are politically significant. Historicizing anticlerical and anti-Semitic writing reveals both the deep-seated anxieties of the troubled European imaginary and the political and economic motives hidden behind the false claims of humanitarian rescue missions that are the ideological bedrock of serial fiction.

Beth Griech-Polelle’s “Jesuits, Jews, and Communists: Portrayals of Jesuits and other Catholic Religious in Nazi Newspapers during the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39” updates the virulent fantasies of propagandists. She examines the images of and articles on Catholics, specifically Jesuits, as they appeared in the Nazi newspapers, Das Schwarze Korps and Der Stürmer. Although most historical works assert a strain of anti-Catholicism in these newspapers, Griech-Polelle was looking for connections made between Catholic priests, Jews, and communists during the years 1935–38. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 along with the Nazi-run immorality and currency trials of priests and nuns in Germany, anti-Catholic imagery and articles should have experienced an upswing in Nazi propaganda. However, what surprised many German Catholic church leaders was the linkage being made between Catholics and a “Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy.” Her essay investigates how these images and articles do in fact seek to portray a connection between priests, Jews, and communists.

IV. In the Shadow of 20th-Century Catastrophe

The most complex and intense relations between Jesuits and Jews took place in the 20th century, before, during, and following the Holocaust. Our division of chapters, necessarily fragmented, follows national lines: France, Italy, and the United States.
A. French Conflicts

Peter Bernardi’s “French Jesuits and Action Française” examines the considerable influence on French Catholic life exercised in the early decades of the 20th century by the French neomonarchist, nationalist movement known as Action Française (AF). With its antirevolutionary program whose watchwords were “order, discipline, and authority,” AF championed the traditional prerogatives of the beleaguered Catholic church in the face of the anticlerical policies of the Third Republic. Thus AF won the support of prominent ecclesiastics, including the indulgence of the antimodernist Pope Pius X. And yet there was a scandalous dark side to AF; Charles Maurras, AF’s chief ideologist, had published anti-Christian and anti-Semitic writings. AF’s “integral nationalism” tended to view Jews as “the other.” While French Jesuits were divided in their reactions to AF, Pierre Rousselot, Louis Billot, and other Jesuits of their generation were AF sympathizers. In a series of articles, French Jesuit Pedro Descoqs endeavored to mitigate the scandal of Maurras’s writings and to justify Catholic collaboration with AF. The influence of Maurras and AF continued to grow among Catholics after the First World War. The condemnation of AF by Pope Pius XI in December of 1926 had grievous repercussions among French Catholics, including for the Jesuit order. Pope Pius XI, not convinced that the French Jesuits were fully supportive of the condemnation, demanded compliance with the directives of the Holy See concerning AF. The Jesuit Superior General Ledóchowski sent a special “visitor” to France to investigate. This essay relates highlights of the history of AF and the French Jesuits.

A sharply contrasting picture of the French Jesuits is drawn by James Bernauer’s “A Jesuit Spiritual Insurrection,” which claims that approximately 50 Jesuits participated in a spiritual insurrection during the Nazi occupation of France. Making up this group were such prominent Jesuits as Pierre Chaillot, Jean Fleury, Henri de Lubac, Gaston Fessard, and Yves de Montcheuil. This essay describes several elements in the discernment of spirits that guided their resistance. First, the critical respect they showed their Catholic and Jesuit formation. Secondly, the concrete grasp of the challenge that their historical moment posed. Thirdly, their frontal assault upon Petain’s and Vichy’s claims to be champions of so-called Christian values. Fourth was the ecumenical reach of their activities such as in the journal Les Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien. Fifth was their early alertness to the toxicity of speech against the Jews and their consequent partisanship for a new relationship with Judaism. Finally, their practical
intelligence and moral passion in rescuing Jews from the jaws of Nazi murder.

B. Italian Struggles

David Lebovitch Dahl’s “The Anti-Semitism of La Civiltà Cattolica Revisited” examines the changes in attitudes to Jews among the Jesuits at La Civiltà Cattolica from 1850 to 1900. It describes how the journal published by the Jesuits was the exponent of a certain anti-Judaism, how during the Italian unification in the 1860s and 1870s, some Jesuits used anti-Semitism in their struggle for a Catholic Italy, and how some Jesuits supported anti-Semitic movements after 1880. The question that the chapter poses is to what extent the anti-Semitism expressed in the journal was shared by the members of the journal’s editors and staff. May we speak about an institutionalization of anti-Semitism within the review, or was anti-Semitism rather one of several strategies that a minority of members used in their polemic against the liberal Italian state? The author enters into the complexity of the topic by dealing with three questions: Was the anti-Semitism of La Civiltà Cattolica the product of a concerted strategy? Was it shared by the members? And was it expressed in conventionalized discourse?

Elena Mazzini’s shifts the timeframe for the study of the journal in her “Transforming Anti-Semitism: The Civiltà Cattolica after the Shoah (1945–65).” This essay investigates how La Civiltà Cattolica’s traditional anti-Semitic stance was re-elaborated and marginalized during the two decades following the Second World War. The Jesuit review was characterized since its birth in 1850 by a visceral anti-Semitism, both political and religious. Between 1850 and 1945, it depicted the Jews according to two main paradigms: (1) modern anti-Semitism (i.e. Jews were presented either as money-driven people or as parasites and profiteers); (2) theological anti-Judaism (i.e. Jews were referred to either as infidels or Christ-killers [gens deicida]). Mixing these two different types of prejudice gave the Jesuit journal a special role in the Italian Catholic context. Even if many other Catholic newspapers participated in the construction of an anti-Semitic discourse, the Civiltà Cattolica was the one that codified and systematized clichés that were later employed by many other journals. Moreover, the Jesuit review was considered a sort of unofficial mouthpiece of the Holy See, so that it became a prominent actor in shaping Italian Catholic public opinion. How was the Jesuit journal able to deal with its anti-Semitic heritage after the Shoah? Did its editors realize that the long-lasting tradition
of anti-Semitism had to be considered among the causes that led to the Jewish genocide?

Raffaella Perin's “Vatican Radio and Anti-Semitism during the Second World War” studies another prominent Jesuit institution that had a more philo-Semitic face. She investigates the attitude of the Vatican Radio towards the racial and anti-Semitic policies operating in Europe during the Second World War. Although Vatican Radio was not considered an official institution of the Holy See, it nevertheless followed its political and religious guidelines, remaining loyal to its instructions. Vatican Radio became a special means of communication that the Catholic church had used since the middle of the 1930s to broadcast religious, political, and social messages and teachings addressed to the faithful. Considering its broadcasts in various languages, on the basis of available documents, it is possible to focus on the points of view, opinions, and the disposition of these Catholic means of propaganda. In particular, she shows how it reflected the Holy See's attitude to crucial themes, such as the totalitarianism of Fascist regimes, and on the other hand how the Jesuits of the Vatican Radio engaged in denouncing not only the religious persecutions organized by Nazism but also its racial and anti-Semitic ideology.

Using documents recently made available from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano and other church archives, as well as from the Italian foreign ministry archives and the Italian Central State Archives, David Kertzer’s “Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, Mussolini, Pius XI, and the Jews” examines the role of the critically influential Jesuit, Pietro Tacchi Venturi (1861–1956), Pope Pius XI's personal yet unofficial emissary to Mussolini. Kertzer's chapter places its emphasis on the dark side in the thought and activity of the Italian Jesuit—his role in the evolution of the Italian dictator's attitudes toward the Jews. For Kertzer, Tacchi Venturi bore a personal responsibility for the racist legislation of Mussolini's regime. He represented a cultural and virulent anti-Semitism that targeted Jews as collaborators with Protestants, Freemasons, and Bolsheviks in an enmity toward the Catholic church and the Fascist state. Kertzer's portrayal situates Tacchi Venturi in an assault upon Jews with two other influential Jesuit advisors of Pius XI: Enrico Rosa, the longtime editor of La Civiltà Cattolica, and Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, the leader of the Jesuit order.

In his “The Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi and the Rescue of Italian Jews” Robert A. Maryks studies the same Jesuit but from a very different and more positive perspective. He traces the efforts of Pietro Tacchi Venturi to aid Jews trapped in Fascist Italy, even as he served as Mussolini's exclusive ecclesiastical confidant. Tacchi Venturi was a renowned Italian historian
of the early Society of Jesus, a writer, and a diplomat. After Il Duce’s promulgation of the racial laws in the autumn of 1938, Tacchi Venturi acknowledged that “he did deal with not a few negotiations that either Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, or the Vatican Secretariat of State assigned him between 1922 and 1943.” What is generally not known among those assignments is the Jesuit’s activity on behalf of the Jews who were affected by the racial laws. Even though many scholars have recognized that Tacchi Venturi did play some role in dealings with the “Jewish question,” they also usually emphasize his reluctance to support the total abrogation of the racial laws in his negotiations in the summer of 1943 with Mussolini’s successor, General Pietro Badoglio (1871–1956).

C. American Contrasts

Although the history of relations between Jews and Jesuits in the United States is worthy of many lengthy studies, the two chapters in our volume do represent the most significant institutions created by American Jesuits: publications and schools. Charles Gallagher’s “‘Correct and Christian’: American Jesuit Support of Father Charles E. Coughlin’s Anti-Semitism, 1935–38” uncovers and explores the American Jesuit response and reaction to the 1930s anti-Semitism of Father Charles Coughlin, the so-called “radio priest” of Royal Oak, Michigan. The essay shows that due to the political factors of isolationism on the eve of the Second World War, Catholic anticommunism connected to the Spanish Civil War, and episodic anti-Semitism on the part of single Jesuits, the religious order by and large failed to either criticize or castigate Father Coughlin during his anti-Semitic phase. While there is currently no full survey of Jesuit attitudes and actions concerning the Coughlin crisis, Gallagher’s chapter explore the American Jesuit response through an examination of important aspects of the affair which heretofore have never been explored by scholars.

A more pleasant face is on show in the next chapter. The positive reach of some historical trends is on display in Michael J. Burns’s “‘Accepted and Welcome’: The Unlikely Response of the Jesuits at Marquette University to Jewish Applicants during the Interwar Years, 1920–40.” He shows the various factors that fed into the creation of a spirit of egalitarianism at Marquette that was resistant to any quota system for Jewish applicants to the university, a school that had become appealing to Jewish students, particularly but not exclusively for those who lived in Milwaukee. The large immigration of Eastern European Jews in the late 19th and early 20th
centuries led to what Burns refers to as a “tsunami of anti-Semitism” that erected barriers across the United States against Jews applying for higher education. Questionnaires were developed in both private and public colleges that would reveal the Jewish identity of students. In contrast, certain Jesuit schools, especially Marquette, protected the fairness of its admissions process even though some Catholics complained that they should be given priority in acceptances from a university that claimed a Catholic identity. Jesuit resistance to discriminatory policies even extended to a directive from the leader of the Jesuit order, Włodzimierz Ledóchowski. After a 1927 survey of Jesuit institutions, Ledóchowski ordered that, while there should be no religious test for students, the schools were to cease hiring non-Catholic faculty and administrators. Despite this directive, statistics show that Jesuit schools actually increased the number of Jewish faculty and administrators.

**Epilogue**

Although the editors maintain that there is no obvious grand narrative for the encounters between Jesuits and Jews, for reasons that we have already mentioned the document *Nostra Aetate* has a special significance in manifesting a particularly Jesuit impetus for a new relationship between Judaism and Catholicism. The source for this momentum is rooted in such historic contributions as the 1960 petition of the Pontifical Biblical Institute as well as the shrewd leadership of Cardinal Bea at Vatican Council II. Both of these highlight the crucial seed that transformed minds and hearts, namely, the Jesuit scholarship on Jewish Scriptures, an advance still in need of an authoritative study. Still there is one individual who may be pointed to as a forerunner and representative of this growth in scholarship, the French Jesuit examined in Thérèse Andrevon's “Joseph Bonsirven, SJ: A Pioneer of a Theologian of Judaism before Vatican II.” Father Joseph Bonsirven (1880–1958) joined the Jesuits after the First World War, when he was already a priest. He taught the Sacred Scriptures in Belgium and ended his academic career at the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome. Since his youth, he developed a passion for the work of modern exegetes, which led him to specialize in the Jewish roots of the New Testament. Bonsirven is much less known for his contribution to the fight against anti-Semitism and for the elaboration of a positive discourse on the Jews. Andrevon’s essay focuses on this second aspect of his work as a Jesuit. It shows his contribution to restoring to Judaism its noble entitlement, and
to the reflection concerning the role of the Jewish people in the history of humanity after Christ. It demonstrates how Bonsirven was a pioneer for the renewal of the Christian perspective on the Jews, even though his thought was framed within the traditional theology of substitution. She seeks to understand why the works of this man, who died before the Second Vatican Council, were not used as a direct source for the redaction of *Nostra Aetate*. The gaps in his thinking allow her to articulate suggestions concerning the tools which a theologian needs when he or she wishes to reflect on the “mystery of Israel.”
PART ONE

JESUITS AND NEW CHRISTIANS
THE WATERSHED OF CONVERSION: ANTONIO POSSEVINO, NEW CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS

Emanuele Colombo

Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) is one of the most fascinating Jesuits of the early modern period, author of an impressive *Encyclopedia of the Counter-Reformation*¹ and renowned for his political and diplomatic activities in Central and Eastern Europe. Although he is often quoted, and although hundreds of articles on specific aspects of his life and career have been published, the most recent comprehensive biography written about him dates back to the 18th century, a work by the French Jesuit Jean Dorigny.²

Born in Mantua in 1533, Possevino was trained as a humanist and served as a tutor to two future Gonzaga cardinals before “he experienced something of a religious conversion and entered the Jesuits in 1559.”³ While still a novice, he was sent to Piedmont to negotiate the founding of a Jesuit college and to debate theological issues with the Waldensians.⁴ Subsequently, he spent almost ten years in France preaching, writing, and organizing Jesuit colleges.⁵ In 1573, Possevino was appointed secretary of the Society of Jesus, a position which involved him in a correspondence

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Born into a family of goldsmiths that moved from Piedmont to Mantua via Milan and changed their name from Ca(g)liani, Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) entered the Society in 1559, of which he later became secretary. Following his engagement in the mission to Roman Jews after General Congregation 3, he influenced Pope Gregory XIII’s decision to create a college of neophytes that would train preachers to convert Jews in Italy and the Levant. Possevino became the most vocal defender of converso Jesuits and, more broadly, of the significance of Christians of Jewish ancestry in the history of Christianity. He also was one of the most prolific Jesuit writers, authoring close to forty books, including some biblical commentaries. The most famous of them was the Bibliotheca selecta, part of which was dedicated to the conversion of Jews.
with Jesuits around the world. In the following years, he was assigned to diplomatic missions for the pope: in Scandinavia and Sweden, where King John III wanted to convert to Catholicism (1577–80); in Poland–Lithuania and Muscovy (1581–82), in order to restore peace between the two kingdoms and achieve the union of the Orthodox church with the church of Rome; and in Transylvania (1583–84) to mediate a dispute between Emperor Rudolf II and Stephan Báthory. In 1587, Superior General Claudio Acquaviva called him back to the Jesuit College at Padua for political reasons. Consequently, Possevino turned to writing and worked on his most important book, the Bibliotheca Selecta (1593–1603–07), which appeared with a prefatory letter by Pope Clement VIII. This work, a monumental

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bibliography with suggested readings for almost any topic, became exceptionally popular in the Jesuit network and extremely influential in the elaboration of the Jesuit pedagogical code, the *Ratio Studiorum*.10

**Possevino and the Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry**

In the last few years three scholars—Robert Maryks, Thomas Cohen, and Marc Rastoin11—published detailed works on the early modern debates about the exclusion of New Christians from the Society of Jesus, in which they underlined the preeminent role of Antonio Possevino in those debates.

During most of his life, Possevino fought against the blood discrimination within the Society. He made public speeches and wrote several documents on the topic. Among them, two memorials addressed to the general superiors of the Society show clearly his position. In 1576, Possevino wrote to Everard Mercurian a long memorial, probably “the most important effort during the generation after Ignatius’s death to call attention to the need to rid the Society of lineage-based discrimination.”12 Possevino asked Mercurian to write a public letter on unity in order to solve the growing divisions within the Society. In 1598, five years after the decree *De genere* of the Fifth General Congregation, Possevino addressed a second memorial

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to Superior General Claudio Acquaviva.\textsuperscript{13} The two documents, carefully studied in their specificity by Cohen and Maryks, address the problem of blood discrimination within the Society.

There, Possevino underlines that “God does not make any distinction of nations, persons, or qualities, as far as his precepts are being observed.”\textsuperscript{14} He suggests that Jesus was a Jew, that he willed to unite both Jews and Gentiles, and that he chose individuals from both groups as leaders of his church. “This way no tongue should dare to call those who became Christians by the name of ‘Jews,’ or ‘Greeks,’ or ‘Scythians,’ or ‘Gentiles,’ for all are one in Christ [Colossians 3:11].”\textsuperscript{15}

The history of the Society of Jesus—according to Possevino—retraced the history of the early church. Ignatius never allowed any discrimination within the Society.\textsuperscript{16} His companions were both Old and New Christians, and Diego Laínez, a New Christian himself, had long served in the highest offices of the Society and became the second superior general. Another New Christian, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, had been secretary of the Society for many years. Francisco de Borja, the third superior general of the Society, never permitted discriminations of any kind. Jesuits of Jewish descent, Possevino writes, gave a relevant contribution to the Society both in Europe and in the Indies, and blood discrimination would have been viewed as a remnant of paganism, as the Jesuit experience in the mission lands was showing. “[The Society of Jesus] permits no preference for lineage, or for human concerns, which are vestiges of paganism, or for its own honor, such as not allowing oneself to be touched by others or to greet them, as is the custom of some infidels ...”\textsuperscript{17}

In both memorials, the idea of the efficacy of conversion is stressed: baptism is more powerful than lineage, and “[Jesuits who reject Paul’s affirmation that ‘there is no distinction between Jew and Greek’ are questioning—‘perhaps inadvertently’—the efficacy of baptism, and ‘are creating a new species of Cathars.’”\textsuperscript{18} As noted by Thomas Cohen, this argument connects the debate about Jesuits of Jewish ancestry with the problem of the

\textsuperscript{13} ARSI, Instit. 184/II, fols. 349–52; Congr. 26, fols. 28–30; 288–92.
\textsuperscript{14} ARSI, Congr. 20b, fol. 208v. Quoted in Maryks, The Jesuit Order, 165.
\textsuperscript{15} ARSI, Instit. 184/II, fol. 349v. Quoted in Maryks The Jesuit Order, 175.
\textsuperscript{17} ARSI, Congr. 20 b, fol. 207v. Quoted in Cohen, “Jesuits and New Christians,” 13.
admission in the Society of Asian or South American people. In both cases, according to Possevino, a true conversion should cancel any other distinction. While it is true that some Jews who converted, later “went back to their vomit,” this happened because they “falsely converted in order to maintain their property and avoid abandoning their homeland and relatives.” The danger of relapse was present everywhere among Protestants in Europe or pagans in Africa and Asia. If due to someone's relapse the Jesuits should refrain from procuring salvation and admitting New Christians in the Society, they should abandon their care in converting Gentiles for the same reason. At last, the only problem is whether the conversion is sincere: if it is, any distinction due to birth should be eliminated, concludes Possevino.

Jewish Blood?

Many scholars who have written recently on Possevino state that he was “almost certainly a closet-converso,” always referring to an important article by John Patrick Donnelly as evidence. In fact, there are several elements in Possevino’s life that support the hypothesis of his Jewish origins. He was born in Mantua, where there was a large community of Jews; his father was a goldsmith, a typical job for Jewish people at the time; and the family changed the name from Calliani (or Cagliani) to Possevino. Additionally, Donnelly underlines three episodes in which Possevino was suspected of being a Jew: in 1557, before he joined the Society; in 1585, while he was serving as a papal legate; and in 1607, in a polemical pamphlet when Possevino was involved in the debates over the Venetian Interdict. None of these accusations is connected with the debates of the acceptance of New Christians in the Society, and they seem to be more

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19 “Et questo fecero per conservare la roba e per non abbandonar la patria et i parenti loro, questi non hanno luoco fra i veri convertiti ...” Quoted in Maryks, The Jesuit Order, 177.
20 ARSI, Instit. 184/II, fol. 350v.
21 See Maryks, The Jesuit Order, 160; 123; Cohen, “Jesuits and New Christians,” 8; Rastoin, Du même sang, 143.
23 Possevino was the subject of a violent attack by Venetian pamphlets because of his important role in the Venetian Interdict issue. See Luigi Balsamo, Antonio Possevino S.I. bibliografo, 44–50. Pietro Pirri, L’Interdetto di Venezia del 1606 e i Gesuiti. Silloge di documenti con introduzione (IHSI: Rome, 1959), 232–327.
gossip without solid proofs than real accusations. Moreover, in a letter to a friend, Possevino explicitly denied his Jewish origins.\textsuperscript{24} At the same time, there are some facts in Possevino's life which are hardly compatible with his Jewish origins. The most eloquent argument is the stunning silence on Possevino's alleged Jewish ancestry: the silence of the superiors of the Society; the silence of Possevino's adversaries in the debate on the admittance of New Christians in the Society; and the silence of Possevino himself. This silence is difficult to explain if we consider that Possevino was for more than 30 years at the forefront of the harsh debate on the admission of \textit{conversos} within the Society, and that his Jewish origins might have been used by his enemies as a weapon against him, and by Possevino as a source of pride. There are some additional arguments against his alleged Jewish origins.

First, as Robert Maryks observes, “from the very start of his tenure, the newly elected superior general, Everard Mercurian, begun to ‘cleanse the house’: he deprived all \textit{converso} Jesuits of governmental posts in Rome, Italy, and possibly in other parts of Europe.”\textsuperscript{25} In fact, Mercurian fired the New Christian secretary Juan Alfonso de Polanco, who had held this position under three generalates, and substituted him with Antonio Possevino.\textsuperscript{26} Additionally, for many years under Claudio Acquaviva, who continued the policy of “house cleaning,” Possevino had important diplomatic appointments in Eastern Europe. If Possevino was a New Christian, it seems that the superiors of the Society did not know it.

Second, for almost 30 years Possevino wrote or spoke publicly against the \textit{converso} discrimination in the Society of Jesus. Besides the two memorials I have already mentioned, he wrote another letter to Claudio Acquaviva (1598), he publicly spoke on this topic at the Provincial Congregation in Brescia (1599) and at the Provincial Congregation in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[24] Letter to Alfonso Bonaccioli Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 191 inferior 24b. Quoted in Donnelly, “Antonio Possevino and Jesuits,” 4. See also the Letter to Antonio Barisone, Ferrara [after March 1608], ARSI \textit{Opp. NN.} 333, fols. 305\textsuperscript{r}–306\textsuperscript{r} published in Donnelly, “Antonio Possevino and the Jesuits,” 28–30. Donnelly interprets this document as Possevino’s implicit admission of his Jewish origins. However, in the document Possevino defends the Jesuits of Jewish ancestry and denies his Jewish origins, as he did for his entire life.
\item[26] Rastoin, \textit{Du même sang}, 143 assumes that Mercurian was not aware of Possevino’s Jewish ancestry. In 1577, Possevino abandoned his position as secretary of the Society because he was appointed as papal legate to the king of Sweden. It is unlikely that this appointment was a case of \textit{promovatur ut admoveatur} (Maryks, \textit{The Jesuit Order}, 17) since the appointment was made by Gregory XIII, whose confidence Possevino enjoyed. See Donnelly, “Antonio Possevino: From Secretary,” 330.
\end{footnotes}
Piacenza (1603), and he wrote a letter to Pope Clement VIII on “The Things that Are Considered Necessary Now in the Society of Jesus,”27 in which the critique against the *converso* discrimination had a central role. To the best of my knowledge, Possevino’s adversaries never claimed that he was defending the Jesuits of Jewish ancestry because he was one of them. For instance, Benedetto Palmio, one of the strongest supporters of the blood discrimination within the Society, was Possevino’s mentor, and never suspected him of having Jewish origins.28 If Possevino was in fact of Jewish origin, it seems that those opposing him did not know it.

Third, in defending the Jesuits of Jewish ancestry, Possevino often praised them for their exceptional contributions within the Society. As we have seen, in the two memorials he praises Laínez who openly declared himself to be a New Christian. Despite his public declaration and his offer to abdicate his office because of his origins, Laínez was nevertheless elected superior general of the Society.29 Possevino also praised Juan Alfonso de Polanco, a Jesuit of Jewish origin who had been his direct predecessor as the secretary of the Society. Possevino mentions not only dead Jesuits of Jewish ancestry,30 who could no longer suffer any consequences from publicity, but he also discloses the ancestry of some of his contemporaries: in the first memorial, for instance, he explicitly mentions the Jewish ancestry of Juan de Mariana, Juan de Maldonado, and Manuel de Sá,31 all


28 See also ARSI, Opp. NN. 331, *Calumniae contra Possevino sparsae refelluntur*. In these documents there is no mention of Possevino’s Jewish ancestry.


30 Possevino mentions the Jewish ancestry of Pedro Ramón, who Possevino mistakenly considered dead as a martyr together with Rodolfo Acquaviva, and who was instead alive in Japan. See Donnelly, “Antonio Possevino and Jesuits,” 10–11.

31 ARSI, Congr. 20b, fol. 208v. See Maryks, *The Jesuit Order*, 159; Cohen, “Nation,” 493. Juan de Mariana (1536–1624), a prominent Spanish Jesuit, expressed his view against the discrimination within the Society in his *De rege et regis institutione* (Toledo: 1599), see Maryks, *The Jesuit Order*, 212–13; The Spanish Juan de Maldonado (1533–83) and the Portuguese Manuel de Sá (1530–96) were both famous theologians.
distinguished Jesuits still alive at that time. Being consistent with his argument about the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the early church and the unity of Old and New Christians in the early Society of Jesus, Possevino did not want to hide the Jewish origins of some distinguished Jesuits, both dead and still alive, because, according to his view, it should not be a source of scandal. Given these reasons, if he truly had Jewish origins, it is quite strange that he never mentioned them.

Finally, Possevino's strong commitment against blood discrimination in the Society of Jesus has been used by scholars to reinforce his Jewish ancestry: their line of reasoning is that he was eager to defend New Christians because he himself was most likely one of them. However, a close reading of the two memorials clearly shows that at the heart of Possevino's arguments is not the defense of Jewish origins per se; rather, he is reinforcing the value of a sincere conversion more powerful than any "racial" difference, and is proposing a view of the church and of the Society of Jesus that could be shared by Old and New Christians alike. In fact, among the Jesuits who fought against the discrimination policy, there were also other Old Christians.

In short, we can conclude with Luigi Balsamo that the hypothesis of Possevino's Jewish ancestry, explicitly denied by Possevino, lacks substantial proof. Given Possevino's high popularity, and his 30-year-long public exposure in the debate on the converso discrimination, it is strange that neither the superiors of the Society, nor the Jesuits, who unlike Possevino supported the discrimination of conversos, nor Possevino himself, ever mentioned his Jewish origins. If Possevino truly was a New Christian, nobody knew it.

_possevino and the Jews_

When we turn our attention from Possevino's defense of New Christians and their right to be accepted in the Society of Jesus to his attitude toward Jews, we face a more complex and nuanced view that requires a deeper

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32 See Donnelly, “Possevino and the Jesuits”; Maryks, _The Jesuit Order_.
34 “L’ipotesi di una discendenza di Possevino da antenati ebrei poi convertiti, circolata in epoche diverse ma negata dall’interessato, è rimasta finora priva di qualsiasi documentazione.” Balsamo, _Antonio Possevino S.I. bibliografo_, 19.
study of his most important scholarly works. Possevino's *Bibliotheca Selecta*, *Apparatus sacer*, and *Cultura ingeniorum* were drafted during the 1570s, and published in the years 1593–1606, a crucial period in which the Catholic church hammered out new means for the anti-Lutheran debate, such as the *Controversiae* (1586–93) by Roberto Bellarmino and the *Annales* (1589–1607) by Cesare Baronio.

The idea behind the *Bibliotheca Selecta* was to counteract the influence of Conrad Gesner's *Bibliotheca Universalis* (Zurich: 1545) and to create a bibliographic canon, suggesting a model of an ideal library in accordance with the *Ratio studiorum*—the "Magna Carta of Jesuit education"—which in those years was being elaborated. This enterprise, which initially received a lukewarm reception in the Society, became a major contribution to the Jesuit education system, as it suggested important authors and texts for various curricula, as well as methods of teaching and study. In the introduction, Possevino explains his idea: during his missions in France he understood the importance of books for the defense of the Catholic faith and the need of "replacing bad books with good ones." Possevino was aware of the power of books when used as weapons for missions and the theological debate, and he conceived his *Bibliotheca* as a continuation of his missionary work.

Another book, designed to be the second part of the *Bibliotheca*, was published in 1603–06 with the title *Apparatus sacer*. It is a mirror of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* and it consists of an alphabetical list of more than 8,000 books considered orthodox.

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36 "Herein lies the crux of the ideological confrontation between the two authors, and it determined their treatment of bibliographical information. Gesner cataloged all the works he was able to find and furnished impartial information to assist the reader in making a reasoned—that is, responsible—choice in his personal quest for knowledge. Possevino, by contrast, relieved readers of this responsibility and protected them against the danger that he deemed inherent in personal choice, taking pain to list only 'good books' which complied with the principles of Catholic morality" (Balsamo, "How to Doctor," 52).
38 See Donnelly, "Antonio Possevino's Plan."
40 "In the *Apparatus Sacer* he [Possevino] not only listed the 'good books' to be read but took care to update the list of prohibited books with the more recent additions announced by the ecclesiastical authorities following publication of the Clementine index" (Balsamo, "How to Doctor," 66).
A third work connected with the *Bibliotheca* is *Cultura ingeniorum*[^41] [The cultivation of intellectual skills], an excerpt of the first part of the *Bibliotheca* that was published as a separate book in many editions, both in Latin and in Italian, and also as a pocket book. Here, Possevino emphasizes the importance of schools as a missionary instrument and gives theoretical and practical advice for founding and running Catholic schools.

In these works, we can find some interesting clues about Possevino’s attitude towards Jews and the Jewish tradition. In his *Bibliotheca*, Possevino shows that the universal knowledge finds its origin in the Old and New Testaments that constitute the principle and the guidance for any discipline. The Old Testament, read from a Catholic perspective, is always present in this work. For instance, in Book 12 (*De Philosophia*), Possevino states that the study of philosophy should be preceded by studying the origin of the world described in the Bible. In *Cultura ingeniorum*, Possevino proposes a genealogy of languages, and states that the first language ever created was Hebrew and that other languages derived from it:

[God] named the sky “heaven,” the light “day” and ordered Adam to give a name to all the species. ... I can hear in different alphabets, like Greek, Latin, and Italian, and in other languages, almost the same pronunciation of the vocals and consonants of the Hebrew alphabet: for this reason I understand that all languages derive from Hebrew.^[44]

In *Apparatus Sacer*, Possevino abundantly quotes the Dominican Hebraist Sisto of Siena (1520–69), author of the *Bibliotheca Sancta* (Venice: 1575) in which he refers to Talmudic and Rabbinic literature. Possevino met Sisto in person, heard him preaching in both Greek and Hebrew, and appreciated his work.^[45] Again, in *Cultura ingeniorum*, Possevino talks about the


[^44]: *Cultura degli’Ingegni*, 28–29. Possevino was fascinated by the Hebrew language, even though, unlike his brother, he did not know it well enough. For instance, in a dispute with reformed priests in the Piedmont valleys, Possevino showed a weak knowledge of Hebrew. See Emanuele Fiume, *Scipione Lentolo 1525–1599: “Quotidie laborans evangelii causa”* (Claudiana: Turin, 2003), 648.

[^45]: *Apparatus Sacer*, III (Venice: 1606), 225–33. The recent scholarship challenged the conviction that Sisto was a converted Jew and that the Inquisition accused him of crypto-Judaism. See Ulderico Parente, “Sul preteso giudaismo di fra Sisto da Siena davanti all’Inquisizione Romana (1551–1553),” in *Le inquisizioni cristiane e gli ebrei: Tavola rotonda*
origin of schools. The most important school is the “school of the world,” in which “God is the professor and in which He has always been teaching.” It is a school that is always open, with no vacation. The history of the people of Israel is a clear example of the “school of the world”: the Jews were subject to many dramatic challenges and temptations, but this was the way in which God helped them to understand the difference between his true reign and false idolatry: “God could not give a better lecture than the one He gave when the Jews were afflicted by slavery and continuous displacement of their houses. What appeared as a disaster served to wonderfully express the will and the liberal charity of the Divine Wisdom.”

Possevino’s approach toward Jews changes completely when he considers their history after the Incarnation, with the substitution of the covenant, as we can see in a passage of the Bibliotheca where Possevino discusses architecture. When he does so, he bears in mind the work of the Spanish Jesuit Juan Bautista Villalpando, a theologian and mathematician who wrote an important Commentary on Ezekiel (1596). Villalpando claims, through an interpretation of the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, that Solomon’s Temple had been inspired by God and that it was at the origin of the classical styles of architecture. In this way Villalpando, participating in the contemporary debates on architecture, wanted to reconcile the Bible with the classic architecture described in Vitruvius’s De architectura, a book that was republished many times and became quite popular in the Renaissance. Possevino has a different view: “Can one find in the Bible a model, hidden or not, of Christian architecture?” Possevino suggested that:

God had inspired Beseleel, the architect of the Tabernacle. He had dictated, and thus revealed, to David the plans (schemata) of the Temple of Jerusalem. The interpretation of these passages might contribute to the study of the Scripture, but it cannot serve to inspire the modern architect. Temples, worship, and the priesthood have all changed, as has the Law. The Judaic practice of sacrifice no longer exists; the arcades and halls of the Temple of Solomon witnessed ceremonies that the Christians have abolished. God has allowed to survive many of the temples in which the Greeks and Romans adored their false, pagan gods, and some of these buildings have even been
converted into churches. But God has not spared the Temple or the city of Jerusalem. Is this not a sign of His will? ... God's architecture was no longer to be found among the Jews; it had been passed on to the pagan temples, from Egypt to Greece and Rome, to fertilize there the first new Christian architecture: *translato enim sacerdotio, translatio facta est legis, et illius Templi architecturae.*

The idea of a substitution of the Law is consistent with Possevino's judgment about Jews after the birth of Jesus. In *Cultura ingeniorum*, the same Jews whose history before the Incarnation was an exceptional example of the “school of God,” became, after the birth of Jesus, one of the most dangerous enemies of Catholic schools. In chapter 63, discussing “What pitfalls and ambushes have been used ... to subvert Catholic schools, seminaries, academies, and colleges,” Possevino suggests that the first enemies of the Catholic schools have been “the Ancient Philosophers who, opposing a thick forest of different opinions, obscured and overshadowed the rays of the true Philosophy.” The second enemies for Possevino were the Jews:

> When they crucified our Lord Jesus Christ, they hoped to—we might say—crucify and to mock His doctrine, from which derives the most true doctrine of the very true Philosophy. For this reason they started to persecute the Apostles, to contradict the saint Prophets, to make up false interpretations of the Scriptures, to send around the world thousands of wicked ambassadors to prevent the propagation of Christian Religion.

We can find the same harsh judgment against Jews in Book 9 of the *Bibliotheca Selecta*, “On the Helping of Jews, Muslims, and Other Peoples.” Jews are particularly dangerous for the Catholic church: in early Christianity they tried to suppress the faith in Jesus Christ and their rabbis distorted the meaning of the Scriptures; they gave to heretics their most dangerous weapons against the Catholic faith by their opposition to the use of images, the veneration of Saints, and the Eucharist; they opened the door to Trinitarians, Sabellians, Nestorians, and they paved the way to Mohammed. Additionally, they tried to infect Christianity with magic and superstitions. In a dramatic image, Possevino describes the Catholic church as a beleaguered citadel with Saracens and Turks on the one side, and heretics and Jews on the other.

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49 *Coltura degli Ingegni*, 43.
50 “... quasi inter incudem, et malleum res christianae veretur inter Saracenos et Turcos atque inter Haereticos et Iudaeos.” *Bibliotheca*, I, 441.
The aim of Book 9 of the *Bibliotheca* is not only to condemn the "vomit of the Jews": here Possevino also shows how it is possible to "help" them—an expression that was particularly dear to the Jesuits, whose commitment was—to use Ignatius's expression—"helping souls." Here, we can find part of Possevino's plan for world evangelization, where he suggests methods to approach different peoples of the world in order to help their souls and convert them. As he noted, Jesus Christ after his death and resurrection obtained from the Father the power to spread the Gospel everywhere: among Turks, Indians, Jews, and all others. To approach Jews, Possevino suggests that a special training is needed: a perfect knowledge of the Old Testament, both the Hebrew and the Septuagint versions, and the mastery of patristic authors who had written against Jews, such as John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine. Interestingly enough, Possevino adds a longer list of 30 contemporary authors who wrote against Jews. He also suggests that Christians should "usurp" rabbinic arguments that can be used in defense of the Christian faith. Possevino was particularly interested in the conversion of children, because "the children of Jews, soaked in poison since an early age, hardly convert to Catholicism when they grow up." However, when he discusses the possibility of forcibly taking the children from their parents and baptizing them, citing the reasons of those authors who supported such a practice, he rejects their arguments and reiterates the classic view on the subject by Thomas Aquinas.

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54 Among them the renowned Jesuit José de Acosta, and the dominican Guillaume Totani, author of *Fortalitium fidei contra Judeos, Sarracenos aliosque christiane fidei inimicos* (De Romoys: Lions, 1511).


57 *Bibliotheca*, I, 441.
As is often the case in other parts of the Bibliotheca, the plan for the conversion of Jews is not something that develops from a theoretical discussion, but from Possevino’s missionary experience. In 1577, while he was the secretary of the Society, Possevino preached for six months in the church of the Confraternity of the Holy Trinity, where Jews were compelled to attend weekly sermons. After the Jesuit Giovanni Battista Eliano, a Jewish convert who used to preach there, was sent to Loreto, the superiors asked first Roberto Bellarmino, and then Antonio Possevino, to substitute for him. Possevino was particularly successful, and in six months he converted 14 Jews. Since some of the converts were young, Possevino asked cardinals Guglielmo Sirleto and Giulio Antonio Santori and through them Pope Gregory XIII, to create a college for the neophytes, arguing that it was not enough to convert Jews but that it was also necessary to educate them, to train them as preachers, and to send them to different places in Europe and in the Levant, where they might convert other Jews.

The Bibliotheca is full of appreciation for the contribution of the contemporary popes (Paul III, Julius III, Paul IV, Pius IV, Pius V, and of course Gregory XIII) in the work of converting Jews. Both repression (the bulls of Paul IV or the decrees of Julius III against Jews who read and wrote
anti-Christian books) and education (as in the institution of houses, hospitals, and colleges for the neophytes)\(^{62}\) were necessary to help the souls of Jews. Possevino was convinced that instruction and education were a crucial step to prevent Jews from returning to Judaism after their conversion. He underlines the importance of the bull “Cupientes Judaeos” issued in 1542 by Paul III, at the request of Ignatius Loyola, as crucial in soliciting the conversion of Jews. The document states that nobody is allowed to confiscate the property of converts, and grants the neophytes all the rights of citizenship.\(^{63}\) Commenting on the bull, Possevino observes that the baptized Jews receive all these rights “because with the grace of baptism they become fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God [Ephes. 2:19].”\(^{64}\)

The Watershed of Conversion

In his recent book, Robert Maryks makes an interesting remark about Jerónimo Nadal, one of the most influential Jesuits of the first generation.\(^{65}\) Nadal “was sincerely convinced that Jewish ancestry was not an impediment for Jesuit candidates. In a passionate discussion over the admission of a converso candidate by the name of Santander, he replied: ‘We [Jesuits] take a pleasure in admitting those of Jewish ancestry.’”\(^{66}\) At the same time, Nadal’s secretary Diego Jiménez revealed that Nadal was


\(^{63}\) “Statuimus, ut civitatum et locorum in quibus sancto baptimate pro tempore regenerabantur vere cives sint, et privilegiis ac libertatibus at immunitatibus, quae alii, ratione nativitatis et originis dumtaxat consequuntur, gaudeant” (*Magnum Bullarium*, 758–59).

\(^{64}\) Possevino is quoting §3 of *Cupientes Judaeos*. See *Magnum Bullarium*, 759.

\(^{65}\) For a bibliography on Jerónimo Nadal (1507–80), see Manuel Ruiz Jurado, “Jerónimo Nadal” (*DHCJ* 2:2793). “Nadal’s life as a Jesuit was marked by long and frequent journeys throughout Europe on official business of the order ... The frequency and character of Nadal’s travels meant that practically all the Jesuits in Europe met him and heard him speak, and many would have spent an hour or so with him privately at least once in their lives. Nadal thus knew and influenced more members of the Society more immediately than even Ignatius—and for a longer period of time.” John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 12.

full of anti-Jewish sentiments, a version that has been considered reliable by some scholars.\textsuperscript{67} Are these two attitudes compatible? Could a Jesuit such as Nadal be in favor of the New Christians and, at the same time, be strongly against Jews? Here is Maryks’s answer: “It is hard to reconcile Nadal’s supposed Judeo-phobia, as portrayed by his secretary Jiménez, with his alacrity to admit into the Society candidates of Jewish ancestry, as portrayed in his own writings.”\textsuperscript{68}

While in Nadal’s case we might assume with Maryks that the accusations of Judeo-phobia were false,\textsuperscript{69} in Possevino’s case we have clear evidence of his double-faceted attitude. He spent most of his life defending Jesuits of Jewish ancestry, but he defined Judaism as “vomit” and Jews as the most dangerous threat to the Catholic church. The coexistence of these two apparently opposite attitudes is key to understanding Possevino’s view: conversion is the watershed, and the power of baptism is stronger than any “racial” difference. Talking about New Christians, Possevino asked how it was possible that “the Word of God converted them, but now they find themselves unconverted.” How was it possible that people who converted “should now be thought to have received grace in vain or that their Baptism was no Baptism, or that their divine vocation had been revoked”?\textsuperscript{70} A sympathetic approach towards Jews, alien to Possevino and to the early modern Catholic sensibility, is not a condition to fight for the rights of New Christians. Unlike the former, in fact, the latter did convert.

If we compare Possevino’s attitude towards Jews with his attitude towards Muslims we can find strong analogies. On the one side, according to Possevino, Islam is a dangerous threat for the Catholic church that should be fought with debates and, if necessary, even with crusades. On the other side, he promotes the apostolate with Muslims using missionary strategies, and he requests full respect for those who convert.\textsuperscript{71} For sure, the relationship with Jews was more complex, and we find this complexity

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 87–88.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 87. See also Maryks’s comment in a footnote on the same page: “Jesuit documents on the subject show that Jesuit Judeo-phobia and converso-phobia, as well as judeo-philea and converso-philea, went hand in hand, even though one could object that a converso-phobe could be at the same time a Judeo-phile, or vice versa. Apparently it was not so among early Jesuits, because of the common genealogical identification of conversos with Jews.”
\item \textsuperscript{69} Maryks, \textit{The Jesuit Order}, 88.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Both quotations are from Donnelly, “Antonio Possevino and Jesuits,” 20.
\end{itemize}
in Possevino: his fascination with the history of the people of Israel before the Incarnation but, at the same time, his ideas about the substitution of the covenant with the birth of Jesus, about the new status of Jews, “stubborn and perfidious enemies of the Church,” and, yet, his admission of the possibility of their conversion.

As far as we know, it is difficult to affirm that Possevino had Jewish ancestry. Certainly, as we have seen, his supposed Jewish origins were not a relevant element in the debates on the admission of New Christians to the Society of Jesus. Possevino’s arguments against blood discrimination within the Society were not focused on the defense of a single group, but represented a broad view about the nature of the Catholic church and the Society of Jesus. Possevino had the same approach to converted Jews and to converted Gentiles in different parts of the world. His view was apparently simple: baptism and a sincere conversion are stronger than any “racial” differences. Conversion also represents a duty for every Christian, because “the purpose for which God has established and ordered the church and its leaders is solely to convert souls and to guide them to eternal glory.”72 Possevino’s Bibliotheca Selecta is not only a great scholarly work but “Possevino's final and most complete version of his thinking on world evangelization.”73 Discussing Jews, he reinforced the idea that it is a duty of each Christian to try to convert them and, in his letter to Pope Clement VIII on “The Things that Are Considered Necessary Now in the Society of Jesus,” which might be considered Possevino’s testament, he reemphasized the importance of promoting within the Society the apostolate to Jews among the hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Ottoman Empire, Africa, and India.74 Conversion was the possibility, for these “enemies of the Church,” to abandon their “vomit” and to become members of the household of God.

73 Ibid., 188.
NEGOTIATED RELATIONSHIPS: JESUITS AND PORTUGESE CONVERSOS—A REASSESSMENT*

Claude B. Stuczynski

Jesuits and Conversos in Portugal: An Overview

Current historiography on Portuguese Jesuits and Portuguese conversos (or New Christians) has rendered the subject even more enigmatic than before. Broadly speaking, the dominant narrative has been that Father António Vieira’s sympathetic attitude towards conversos and Jews in the 17th century was, within a sustained Portuguese Jesuit tradition of suspicion, rejection, and exclusion, rather exceptional.¹ On the one hand, this perspective has been reinforced by recent contributions.² These studies and others have confirmed that Portuguese Jesuits were instrumental in enforcing the exclusion of Christians of Jewish origin within the Society on ethnic grounds of “purity of blood” [limpieza de sangre, limpeza de sangue], and that they were staunch supporters of the Holy Office in its fight against converso “Judaizers.” A strong alliance between the Society of Jesus and the Portuguese Crown was made during John III’s reign (1521–57), becoming “organic” in the 1560s and 1570s, during the reigns of Cardinal-King Henry and King Sebastian. One of its consequences was a

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growing involvement of Jesuits in the Inquisitorial machinery. Although the Society officially forbade their members to act as inquisitors, the close collaboration with the Portuguese Holy Office was unique within the Catholic world. For in Portugal, Jesuits acted as counselors on heresy (calificador), censors, preachers at Autos-da-Fe, and spiritual “assistants” of Inquisition detainees. Moreover, a few of them were members of the Inquisition’s highest instance, the General Council of the Holy Office (Conselho Geral do Santo Ofício). And during the “pardon negotiations” of 1605, the Jesuit Francisco Pereira, a counselor on heresy, was among the pro-Inquisitorial lobbyists who met with the king with the goal of pre-empting the granting of amnesty to conversos. This three-way alliance helps to explain the fact that Jesuits collaborated in concrete persecution on even an informal basis.\(^3\) Giuseppe Marcocci has brought the case of Father Luís da Cruz from the city of Bragança, who on 18 July 1588 violated the secrecy of confession by denouncing local New Christians to the Inquisition of Coimbra. Accordingly, Father da Cruz reported to the Holy Office that in 1587 the Bragançan Old Christian Luís de Paiva reported to him in confession some heretical expressions pronounced by his sister-in-law, the New Christian Leonor de Valhadolid. Father da Cruz justified his decision to apply to the inquisitors on the grounds that the bishop of Miranda did not intervene in the affair and that “there is no such secrecy that he couldn’t and mustn’t tell to your majesties,” for “all the more we must fulfill this obligation, since we feel that this land is plenty of deceit, truly having Jews.”\(^4\)

On the other hand, expanding on a seminal study made by João Lúcio de Azevedo at the beginning of the 20th century, Israel Salvator Révah showed in the 1970s (as did others after him) that Father Vieira was far from alone in his behavior.\(^5\) During the 17th century, many other Portuguese Jesuits supported Vieira’s sustained campaign against New Christian social

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\(^4\) Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo [ANTT], Inquisição de Coimbra, maço 58, doc. 95, quoted in Marcocci, “Inquisição, jesuítas e cristãos-novos em Portugal no século XVI,” 318; Marcocci, I custodi dell’ortodossia: Inquisizione e Chiesa nel Portogallo del Cinquecento (Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura: Roma, 2004), 189, 259.

discrimination and anti-converso inquisitorial-biased persecution. In that period, members of the Society became among the most passionate supporters of conversos. One might well ask how this dramatic change took place.

Politics provides an initial avenue of conjecture. Portugal’s dynastic union with the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy from 1580 to 1640 loosened the ties binding the Society and the Crown. The Spanish Habsburg dynasty was less aligned than was Portugal with the Society’s interests and goals. There existed an ambivalent, oftentimes hostile relationship between the Inquisition and the Jesuits in Spain. Several factors account for this phenomenon. First, the Ignatian inclusive, pro-converso legacy had not disappeared from the Spanish Society of Jesus. Second, as with the problem of attaining a concerted policy regarding who would benefit from the vast Spanish and the Portuguese colonial empires in America, Africa, and Asia, the task to harmonize the missionary and ecclesiastical activities of the Portuguese padroado (dominated by the Jesuits) with the Spanish patronato (where the Society’s influence was much weaker) became harder. Tensions were particularly felt when the Franciscan order in the Spanish Philippines began to spread the Gospel in Portuguese Asia. Third, as José Eduardo Franco has recently argued, the converso issue functioned as a focus around which these incipient discrepancies in emphasis began to become apparent (although overt antagonisms did not play a part until Vieira’s time). Accordingly, the fairness of inquisitorial procedures against the New Christians and the extent of “purity-of-blood” segregation in Portugal aroused these first hints of difference. However, only after the House of Bragança’s successful 1640 uprising against the Habsburgs were those ties seriously weakened—when the Portuguese Holy Office became

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associated with pro-Spanish tendencies. It was at this point that Father Vieira and other Jesuits became influential at the Court of John IV (1640–53), and it was under these circumstances that Father Vieira elaborated on his millenarian, far-reaching views, envisioning the new Bragança king as the head of the messianic Fifth Empire and the converso businessmen, along with the Jesuit missionaries, as their most important agents. In fact, from the 1620s to the early 1640s, Spanish Habsburg policy under the reign of King Philip IV (i.e. Philip III of Portugal) (1621–65) was receptive to conversos, influenced by, among others, the Jesuit Father Fernando de Salazar who was the confessor to the king’s favorite, the Count-Duke of Olivares, and by the latter. Father Salazar was supported by Spanish members of the Society. In many respects, Salazar’s policies were reminiscent of Vieira’s views, for beyond differences of style, degree, and emphasis, they shared providential-mercantilist inclinations and agendas, by then popular among members of the Society. Thus we can infer that during the 17th century many Portuguese Jesuits became alienated from the official anti-converso policies of the past, once they came to the conclusion that these impeded the fulfillment of God’s assigned role to Portugal and to the Society to spread the Gospel all over the world through military expansion, economic prosperity, and evangelical mission.

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But there is another, more heuristic way to explain the marked change in Iberian Society’s attitudes toward *conversos*. This explanation takes into account the fact that during the 16th century some Iberian Jesuits stood against anti-*converso* exclusivism. According to Francisco de Borja Medina, these Jesuits were precursors of Father Vieira and followers of Ignatius of Loyola’s view on *conversos*’ full Christianity.\(^\text{14}\) Moreover, even if inside Portugal anti-*converso* currents were predominant within the Society, a more flexible reality was possible outside the kingdom, in Catholic Europe or in the distant colonial domains of Asia and Brazil.\(^\text{15}\) According to Stuart B. Schwartz, Vieira’s attitudes toward *conversos* and Jews echoed widespread and popular tolerant views.\(^\text{16}\) Of course, it is also important to remember that even during the 17th century many preachers at Portuguese *Autos-da-Fe* were Jesuits, a sign that the collaboration with the Holy Office had not disappeared.\(^\text{17}\) Moreover, even before the death of Father Vieira in 1697, Jesuit–Bragança pro-*converso* attitudes were rapidly deteriorating, and, during the reign of John V (1707–50), much of the 16th-century Jesuit–Inquisition alliance was restored. That enabled the enlightened despot and minister of King Joseph I, the Marquis of Pombal, to depict the Society of Jesus as the eternal ally of the Holy Office and as the main instigator of religiously un-Christian and economically prejudicial anti-*converso* policies.\(^\text{18}\) A less diachronic and more synchronic explanation, then, suggests

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that Ignatian missionary *converso* inclusivism and Iberian ethnic exclusivism were part of a Portuguese Jesuit tradition manifested in two opposed ways, according to individual or collective choices, geographical spaces, and, of course, historical circumstances.\(^{19}\)

However, both the political and the more heuristic explanations offered above suffer from the problem of dualism. The paradigmatic image of the pro-*converso* Jesuit embodied by Father António Vieira confronts that of the anti-*converso* member of the Society, for example, Father Simão Rodrigues,\(^{20}\) in a sort of “yin–yang” tension. It seems to me that these narratives are too simplistic. They fail to explain convincingly how such dominant anti-*converso* attitudes of the 16th century became so vividly pro-New Christian in the 17th century. I propose an answer that builds on the argument made by Giuseppe Marcocci and José Eduard Franco, who identified the time of the dynastic Iberian union of 1580–1640 as a transitional period and analyzed institutional interactions between the Portuguese Society of Jesus, the Inquisition, and the Iberian Crown during that period. My investigation will focus on the direct approaches of Jesuits to *conversos*, as they stemmed from concrete situations. Examining the relationship between the Jesuit College of Bragança and local New Christians, Father Diogo de Areda’s discourses and sermons on *conversos*, and the affinities between the Jesuits and *conversos* during the visit of King Philip III of Spain (Philip II of Portugal) to Lisbon in 1619, I will demonstrate the existence of a mixed and more nuanced reality. I call this phenomenon “negotiated relationships,” and I will argue that these negotiated relationships coexisted with the above-mentioned dichotomic views.


\(^{20}\) On Simão Rodrigues’s anti-*converso* approach, see Maryks, *The Jesuit Order*, index.
Bragança is a border city in the Trás-os-Montes region in northeastern Portugal. As did other, similar places, this city attracted many expelled Spanish Castilian Jews. After Portugal's mass conversion of the Jews in 1497, a considerable part of Bragança's total population became New Christian. When the Inquisition of Coimbra began to operate systematically in the region in 1575, this is why Bragança became what Révah called: “une metropole du crypto-Judaisme.” A Jesuit presence in the city became palpable in 1559, when three fathers of the Society were invited by the municipal council. That led to the foundation of the Jesus' College in 1561, the eighth Jesuit house in Portugal. Though comparatively small in size, it was the most important Catholic institution in the Trás-os-Montes region. Inquisitorial data is conclusive: the College of Jesus of Bragança was among the most influential allies of Coimbra's Holy Office. The situation in Bragança was complex. On the one hand, local Jesuits played an important role in the fight against the heresy of crypto-Judaism. Sermons preached in the College of Jesus dealt with converso religious deceit.

Some local New Christians, such as the converso woman Guiomar da Serra, claimed that sermons preached by the Jesuits convinced them to leave the Mosaic heresy and return to the bosom of the church. Others, like Francisco Alvares, a 25-year-old converso, even explained that they led him to confess his sins before the Inquisition in Coimbra. Were these self-justifications real or invented? We will probably never know. We do know that Bragança's College of Jesus was deeply implicated in local inquisitorial persecution—much more than what we can infer from Marcocci's archival evidence. Thus the College's secret minute book (caderno
secreto) containing information regarding the religious behavior of many local New Christians was handed over to the inquisitors by its rector. This Jesuit father was the same figure who conducted local inquiries on behalf of the Holy Office about pilgrimages made by conversos to the ancient Jewish cemetery in Bragança, and about a scandal caused by local New Christian perjurers.27 At the same time, the Bragança Jesuits did not abandon their evangelical vocation regarding the New Christians. The church of the Jesuit College of Bragança was located in the main street of the city, the “Rua Direita,” being the parochial church of most conversos.28 It hosted a school for boys, and many New Christian families sent their sons to that institution.29 Bragançan conversos, “Judaizers” or not, were constantly exposed to Catholic content. Jesuits were the most active disseminators.

There is no better way to illustrate the “negotiated relationships” existing between Bragança Jesuits and Bragança conversos than to take a close look at the local Jesuit collaborator with the Portuguese Inquisition mentioned by Marcocci: Father Luís da Cruz. In several inquisitorial files, Father Luís da Cruz’s name was noted by detainees as a popular preacher who used his word to spread the Gospel, not the “pedagogy of fear” endorsed by the Inquisition. Indeed, some inquisitorial sources indicate that Father da Cruz preached to local New Christians on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, chapter 11.

Against the contemporary Iberian tendency to explain Christian supersessionism as a natural consequence of constant Jewish obstinacy and perfidy, the Jesuit preacher chose to exalt the glorious biblical past of “carnal Israel” in order to encourage his converso listeners to join the “spiritual Israel” of the Gospel era. Perhaps his rather unconventional evangelical discourses at the height of a systematic inquisitorial repression were instrumentally misunderstood by some local converso “Judaizers.”

It was not a coincidence that the rector of Jesus College, who provided so much aid to the inquisitors, was the person invoked by some converso detainees as one of their most dedicated defense witnesses before the Holy Office.30 Like Father da Cruz, his contradictory behavior concerning Bragança’s New Christians reflected ambivalence, tensions, and nuanced negotiated relationships with individual converso men and women.

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27 ANTT, processos n. 484, n. n. 1867, n. 8675, n. 8914.
28 ANTT, processos n. 5078, fol. 22v, n. 5078, fols. 8r, 20v.
29 E.g. ANTT, processos ns. 474, 1857, 5101.
30 E.g. ANTT, processo n. 1861.
Father Diogo de Areda's Preaching on Conversos

We will now turn to the intriguing figure of Father Diogo de Areda. Born as Silveira in Arraiolos in 1568, he studied at the Jesuit University of Évora. In 1584, he joined the Society, and changed his name to Areda in 1588. Father Areda taught theology, canon law, philosophy, Holy Scriptures, and letters in different Jesuit institutions: at the Colleges of Santo Antão and São Roque in Lisbon, at the Jesus College of Coimbra, and at the College of Oporto. He spent 30 years at the prestigious Jesuit stronghold of Lisbon, the church of São Roque, until his death in 1641. From 1637 or earlier, Father Areda was a reluctant follower of Count-Duke of Olivares’s centralistic policies, and afterwards a supporter of the Portuguese anti-Habsburg uprising of 1640.31 Robert Maryks has suggested that Father Diogo de Areda might have had some Jewish ancestry: “by the change of his name and intellectual interests.”32 What is certain is that he was a well-known preacher, celebrated for the clarity of his speeches and writings,33 some of which had to do with conversos. By 1625, he was commissioned by the general inquisitor of Portugal, Bishop Fernão Martins Mascarenhas, to write on his behalf an anonymous Treatise on Various Means Offered to His Catholic Majesty to Remedy Judaism from this Kingdom of Portugal.34 Bearing Mascarenhas’s coat of arms, the Treatise on Various Means was issued at the height of a renewed debate on the integration of New Christians. On one side were the enemies of the conversos, newly energized by the recent scandal caused by the discoveries and trials between 1619 and 1623 of a purportedly crypto-Jewish group based at the University of Coimbra: the Confraternity of St. Diogo. This group was led by the canon law professor, António Hómem, and many of his colleagues—priests and

34 Tratado sobreos varios meyos, que se oferecerão a sua Magestade Catholica para reme- dio do judaismo neste Reyno de Portugal, s.l. s.a., circulated both as a manuscript and as a printed book.
nuns, some of them only partly New Christian—were members of the group. The Hómem affair was then invoked as tangible proof that crypto-Judaism persisted over time. Anti-*converso* elements claimed that more severe repression through the Inquisition and the "laws of purity of blood" were needed to stop this ineluctable process of heretical contamination. This approach was encapsulated by one of Vicente da Costa Mattos’s mottoes written in his vitriolic anti-*converso* book, *A Brief Discourse against the Heretical Perfidy of Judaism* (Lisbon: 1622): “a little Jewish blood is enough to destroy the world.” On the other side of the debate were the representatives of the Portuguese New Christians who, after the ascension to power in 1621 of King Philip III of Spain (Phillip II of Portugal) and his favorite, the Count-Duke of Olivares, renewed negotiations to obtain social integration, asking the Crown and the papacy for a new inquisitorial “pardon” and the abrogation of social and juridical segregation. In order to guarantee the success of Olivares’s efforts to restore the lost grandeur of the Iberian kingdoms, they claimed, it was imperative that the useful *conversos* be fully integrated into the Iberian societies. The short *Treatise on Various Means* (24 folios in total) added to these lively discussions and negotiations. It claimed to adopt a “middle way”—mixing rigor with moderation—after reviewing six other solutions to the "New Christian problem," ranging from total expulsion, following the *morisco* precedent in Spain, to the readmission and toleration of official Jews, as happened in papal Rome and in other Catholic and non-Catholic political domains.

Toward the goal of suppressing Judaism in Portugal, Father Areda anonymously suggested harsher punishments against "Judaizers." These included the expulsion of those who were condemned by the Holy Office...

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38 This treatise was surveyed and analyzed from a completely different perspective by Reuven Faingold, “The ‘New Christian Problem’ in Portugal: 1601–1625,” *Zion* 54 (1989): 379–400 [in Hebrew].
as *de vehementi* (although refraining from the expulsion of their “innocent” offspring),39 and the irrevocable death penalty for heretical teachers or “dogmatizers.”40 Father Areda was opposed to the concession of any collective inquisitorial general pardon or social integration to the entire “Hebrew nation” [*nação*]. However, he did not endorse many of the traditional anti-*converso* tactics. Thus Father Areda advocated conceding to the New Christians liberty of movement and unrestricted emigration. This measure, he argued, would contribute to cleansing much heresy from the kingdom, because many “Judaizers” would leave the country in order to practice their concealed faith openly.41 He also claimed that it was unjust to segregate New Christians on the basis of mere ethnic origins, “for to exclude them only for having been Jews or for coming from the Jews is obviously unjust and contrary to the unity of the church.”42 The author of the *Treatise on Various Means* acknowledged that some *conversos* were fervent Catholics who greatly contributed to Portugal’s common good and prosperity.43 And even if the majority of them were initially converted by force and out of fear by King Manuel I in 1497, many of their descendants had become willing and devoted Catholics.44 Therefore, even if actual social segregation should be maintained, exceptions would be contemplated after close scrutiny.45 Moreover, those *converso* families who were widely untouched by heresy must be accepted into the ecclesiastical ranks and within the nobility.46

Naturally, many of the suggestions of the *Treatise on Various Means* coincided with those of Areda’s patron, stemming from a previous, shorter piece that Mascarenhas had sent to the Habsburg king.47 He was known as very hostile to *conversos* as a group, and opposed to “general pardons.”

39 *Tratado sobreos varios meyos, que se offerecerão a sua Magestade Catholica para remedio do judaismo neste Reyno de Portugal*, fols. 19v–22v.
40 Ibid., fols. 23r–v.
41 Ibid., fol. 19v.
42 Ibid., fol. 7v. Cf. fol. 14v.
43 Ibid., fols. 11r, 15v.
44 Ibid., fol. 12v.
45 Ibid., fol. 15v.
46 Ibid., fol. 24r.
During the time he served as general inquisitor, the Portuguese Holy Office attained an unprecedented degree of repression.\textsuperscript{48} However, much more discreetly, Mascarenhas supported the promotion of a few wealthy New Christian families and individuals into the Old Christian elites.\textsuperscript{49} Sometimes he testified on their behalf in order for them to be accepted in the very exclusive military orders and in other restricted circles.\textsuperscript{50}

Fernão Martins Mascarenhas died in 1628 and was buried in the Jesuit church of São Roque in Lisbon, a clear sign of his commitment to the Society of Jesus. Not unsurprisingly, a eulogy was delivered by his protégé, Father Diogo de Areda. Areda praised his defunct patron for his constant support of the Society,\textsuperscript{51} his moral integrity despite calumniators, and for his firm decision to “uproot Judaism from Portugal,” although leaving an open door to sincere penitents.\textsuperscript{52} In 1623, detractors denounced Mascarenhas’s \textit{converso} preferences as stemming from corruption.\textsuperscript{53} But the fact is that the general inquisitor, as well as Father de Areda, implemented many of their ideas regarding the “\textit{converso} problem” with assimilated wealthy New Christians such as Heitor Mendes de Brito and his family, and the Ximenes.\textsuperscript{54} With Heitor Mendes de Brito’s son-in-law, the \textit{arbitrista} Duarte Gomes Solis, they shared a common meritocratic criterion for \textit{converso} social promotion. Regarding the Ximenes family, the agreement with one of its scions, the archdeacon of Braga, Fernão Ximenes


\textsuperscript{52} Diogo de Areda, \textit{Sermam que o Padre Diogo de Areda ...} (Pedro Craesbeeck: Lisbon, 1628), fol. 6v.


de Aragão, was total. In this case, the consensus emerged from direct epistolary and literary interchange.55

In 1630, the *Treatise on Various Means* was sent to the Habsburg king. We know it from a manuscript version, and Areda’s authorship is assumed.56 The reissue of the treatise after the death of Mascarenhas was related to the Santa Engrácia affair and with the deliberations at the Assembly of Tomar. During the night of 15 January 1630, a host was desecrated after a robbery in the church of Santa Engrácia in Lisbon. *Conversos* were immediately suspected. A New Christian, Simão Solis, was wrongly accused, but in the following year he was burned alive after being mutilated. The desecration of Santa Engrácia aroused public processions, popular riots, aggressively worded books, and other expressions of widespread anti-*converso* feeling, including sermons.57 Until 1747, the anniversary of the profanation of Santa Engrácia was annually recalled with an anti-*converso* sermon.58 In 1630, Father Areda was among those preachers who were invited to address the public on several occasions on that burning subject. Only two of these sermons were printed. The first of them was delivered at the Santa Engrácia church, during the initial stages of the affair. The second sermon was preached later on, at the church of Santa Justa in Lisbon, before the end of May 1630.59 These two sermons probably reflected the overtones of the rest. The main thrust of Father Areda’s message preached at Santa Engrácia church was that the desecration should be viewed as an *a posteriori* edifying event. After defining the incident as an act of blindness, he asked why Jesus Christ permitted the perpetration of such an offense against his blood and flesh. The sermon was an elaboration of a threefold answer: to increase love, faith, and piety. Jesus Christ was crucified, Father Areda reminded his audience, in order to redeem humanity. Being an act of God’s love towards men and women, the recent

56 See MS 1461 of the BNL.
58 See MS 1461 of the BNL.
profanation committed in Santa Engrácia aimed to remind us how the Son of God continues to accept humiliation on behalf of love. Moreover, this disgrace tests one’s actual faith towards him and the Eucharist and generates religious piety.⁶⁰ The sermon delivered in Santa Justa focused on the perpetrators of the sacrilege and on the avengers. Let the authorities discover, judge, and punish the real criminals, Areda said. For, he continued, God does not like collective punishments based on mere prejudice and hate. That is why, while the Almighty rewarded Phineas the Priest for killing the Israelite–Midianite couple of sinful lovers (Numbers 25:1–9), he punished King Jehu’s household for killing both guilty and innocent people in the Jezreel valley (2 Kings 9–10; Hosea 1:4). Contrary to Phineas, Jehu was not driven by pure justice: he also acted out of hate.⁶¹ Regarding the perpetrators of the sacrilege, Father Areda clarified that mere evil could not explain their horrendous misdeed; no human being could commit a crime against his Creator attacking the Eucharist with full consciousness. The act must be “darkened” by some degree of passion and folly.⁶² Moreover, if one takes as a precedent the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, it should be remembered that deicide instigated by Pharisees and Scribes (and not by all the Jewish people) was committed in ignorance. Father Areda quoted St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians 2:8: “None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,” and the words of Christ from the pain of the Cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).⁶³ Thus in just those moments at the crescendo of popular, anti-converso fulmination, Father Diogo de Areda abandoned his attacks against the conversos as a group in order to protect them from collective guilt and far-reaching demonization. One might even wonder if the decision to send the Treatise on Various Means to the king in 1630 was a deliberate attempt to offer a “mixed” solution to the New Christian problem of “Judaism,” thereby moderating the generally more one-sided anti-converso measures suggested in 1629–30 to the Habsburg monarch by members of the ecclesiastical Assembly of Tomar.⁶⁴

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⁶⁰ Areda, Sermaõ que o Padre Diogo de Areda, passim.
⁶¹ Ibid., fols. 12v–13v.
⁶² Ibid., fols. 6v–7r.
⁶³ Ibid., fol. 6v.
I will now touch upon some cultural and ideological affinities between Jesuits and New Christians. As mentioned above, the education of the latter was oftentimes modeled by institutions dominated by the former, such as the Jesuit College of Bragança on a regional level, but also the universities of Évora and Coimbra. For instance, books written by the above-mentioned Archdeacon Fernão Ximenes de Aragão on Christian spirituality and on anti-rabbinical polemics were deeply influenced by Jesuit literature, rhetoric, and values. And when one of his nephews, Manuel Ximenes de Aragão, wrote a report (“memorial”) addressed to King Philip IV (Philip III of Portugal) to obtain social promotion for his family as Old Christians, he emphasized the contributions made by his parents to the Society, including the foundation of the St. Patrick College for Irishmen in Lisbon or having a Jesuit as a member of his family who was calificador of the Holy Office. Affinities showed up on an ideological level as well; it is possible to identify a common belief held by both Jesuits and wealthy converso businessmen, especially those immersed in the Indian colonial trade, such as the Mendes de Brito and the Ximenes families. Even if, as Hernani Cidade has suggested, a wider phenomenon of “Portuguese literary autonomism” was taking place, I believe that mutual Jesuit and converso concerns transcended the sphere of politics vis-à-vis the question of Spanish dominance over Portugal. Basically, these two groups adapted the messianic imperial ideas promoted by King Manuel I (1495–1521) to the time and the political circumstances of the dynastical Iberian union. In his arbítrios Duarte Gomes Solis identified the reign of Manuel I as an imperial-evangelical golden age. His own suggestions, infused with
economic mercantilism and Catholic providentialism, were aimed at restoring those happy days to his motherland. Accordingly, Solis claimed that converso merchants supported, and were supported by, the Society in the colonies, elaborating on the idea that New Christian businessmen together with Jesuits played fundamental imperial-evangelical roles in Portuguese Asia—and recently in Brazil.70 These ideological affinities were implicit during the visit of Habsburg King Philip III of Spain (Philip II of Portugal) to Lisbon in 1619. The visit of the Portuguese king to his kingdom had been a long-awaited event ever since his father’s stay in Lisbon (1580–81). Then, Philip II (Philip I of Portugal) supported much of King Manuel’s imperial real or mythical values as an expression of behaving as a legitimate Lusitanian monarch.71 Philip III’s (Philip II of Portugal’s) trip to Portugal in 1619 aroused particular expectation among Lisbon’s residents for they hoped that the visit would restore to the “lonely” and “almost widowed” city its deserved role as a metropolis of the once-prosperous Indian colonial trade and promising Asian padroado.72

A magnificent and costly reception was prepared to receive the monarch, and Heitor Mendes de Brito as well as members of the Ximenes family (among others) played crucial roles in financing the event.73 Lisbon’s corporations and foreign “nations” erected arches of triumph to salute the king. They were decorated with classical and mythological themes, with episodes of Iberian history (mostly Portuguese) and with symbols and texts denoting the particulars of each group. The first and the most luxurious was the “arch of the Men of Commerce” of Lisbon [Arco dos hómens de negócios]. It was constructed after baroque esthetics: replete with rich decorations, statues, signs, riddles, emblems, and poems. Its main

70 See the letter addressed to the duke of Lerna, Lisbon, 12 December 1612, cited in Duarte Gomes Solis, Discursos sobre los comercios de las dos Indias, ed. Moses Bensabat Amzalak (s.n. Lisbon, 1943), 239.
71 Fernando Bouza, Felipe II y el Portugal ‘dos Povos’. Imágenes de esperanza y revuelta (Universidad de Valladolid: Valladolid, 2010).
message evoked the leading imperial role played by the Habsburg–Portuguese king over the world, celebrated with joy and gratitude by Lisbon's merchants. At the top of the arch stood some armillary globes, adopted by King Manuel I as a symbol of Portugal for his outstanding overseas discoveries and successful colonial enterprises. Each side of the arch depicted a different continent decorated with an effigy of an appropriate Portuguese king and a deserved cardinal virtue. Thus the gate of America was associated with “prudence” and with King Philip I of Portugal (Phillip II of Spain), called *el prudente* (the Prudent King). The gate of Asia celebrated the person of King Manuel I and “religion.” 

According to João Baptista Lavanha's description of the arch, on one of its sides the female embodiment of religion raised her eyes over a nearby cross, while on the other, a statue of King Manuel I bore the following inscription: “Look at Asia, conquered with my lucky courage, when my vassals opened a new way into the vast oceans. Let your power subdue what is left to conquer in the East Orb. For your Portuguese captains shall overcome opulent kingdoms.”

Lisbon's businessmen added an alley in which were placed statues: “of those illustrious Portuguese that in India, Africa, and Portugal made heroic acts.” The Jesuits opted to offer to the monarch an edifying theatrical performance in the College of Santo Antão. The piece was written by Father António de Sousa and was called: *Royal Tragicomedy of King Manuel: Conqueror of the East*. It was reminiscent of Luís de Camões’s Portuguese epic poem: *Os Lusíadas* (1572). The Latin Jesuit theatrical piece narrated a cosmological conflict between Faith and Idolatry in which the character of King Manuel I along with Vasco da Gama, Martim de Albuquerque, and other Portuguese discoverers and conquerors spread Christianity and fought against devils, Muslims, and pagans in Asia, and incidentally, also in Brazil. The show ends with the visiting Habsburg king being encouraged to continue that glorious Portuguese tradition.

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74 João Baptista Lavanha, *Viagem da Catholica Real Magestade del Rey D. Filipe II...,* fols. 15v, 20r.
75 Ibid., fol. 19v.
77 Lavanha, *Viagem da Catholica Real Magestade del Rey D. Filipe II N. S. ao Reino de Portugal e Relaçãodo Solene Recebimento que nelle s lhe fez,* fol. 67 ss.; João Sardinha Mimoso, *Relacion de la Real Tragicomedia com que los padres de la Compañía de Jesus en su Colegio de S. Anton de Lisboa recibieron a la Magestad Catolica de Felipe II de Portugal, y de su entrada en este Reino, có lo que se hizo en las Villas, y Ciudades en que entró* (Jorge Rodrigues: Lisbon, 1620).
the arches, religious rites, and civic festivities displayed in honor of King Philip, it was those of the merchants and the Jesuits that neatly shared a message: the need to revive the neglected Portuguese “State of India” [Estado da India]. Both Lisbon businessmen and Jesuits insisted on the fact that Asia was still the richest colonial area. Portugal was thereby called by God to fulfill a providential role as protector and diffuser of Catholicism all over the world (Lavanha depicted the gate of Africa much as a part of the Asian imperial project). Being the New World associated with Spain—Brazil was still perceived as a minor, albeit promising, Portuguese colony—the arch of the “Men of Commerce” and the Jesuit theatrical play called upon the visiting monarch to follow the precedent of King Manuel I.

Significantly, “men of commerce” [hómens de negócios] was then a synonym for New Christians, even if the reality was ethnically more variegated. Lisbon’s “men of commerce” was an oligarchic group of mostly converso tradesmen and investors in Portuguese India, led mainly by Heitor Mendes de Brito and the Ximenes family. For them, the call to revive the Portuguese empire in Asia did not only mean personal enrichment. Instead, it was a means to earn esteem as useful and admired subjects, thus paving the way to succeed in their personal and familial process of social ascension. The theatrical play of the Jesuits may have betrayed a concern of eventually losing much of Jesuit hegemony in the Asian padroado on behalf of Spanish missionary interests in Asia led by Franciscan and other orders, as recently happened in Japan. Thanks to both common and diverse concerns, Lisbon converso merchants and Jesuits were the most appropriate collaborators for the depiction of an idealized Portuguese imperial king.

In the end, the visit of King Philip III (Philip II of Portugal) to Portugal brought no concrete advantages to the kingdom. The monarch died shortly afterwards in 1621 and a new regime under Philip IV (Philip III of Portugal) and his favorite, the Count-Duke of Olivares, merged with strong reformist agendas. Nonetheless, it is incontrovertible that the proposals of Duarte Gomes Solis for deep economic reforms in Portuguese Asia and beyond influenced Olivares. Thus Solis contributed to the foundation of a short-lived Portuguese “East India Trading Company” (1628–33). Heitor Mendes de Brito’s first-born son Francisco, along with other wealthy New Christians

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(e.g. António Gomes da Mata and Diogo Rodrigues de Lisboa), were among the most prominent investors. However, only with the foundation of the “General Trade Company of Brazil” (1649) did converso–Jesuit circumstantial and implicit imperial affinities become real and explicit alliances.

As with the Jesuit activities in the city of Bragança and the sermons and writings of Father Diogo de Areda on conversos, during King Philip’s visit to Lisbon in 1619, Jesuits did not perceive the converso group as the single and most dangerous threat to Portugal’s good. Different negotiated relationships between members of the Society and New Christians reflected complex and non-Manichean approaches. Perhaps the shortcomings of the king’s visit to Lisbon, the indiscriminate collective hate aroused by the Santa Engrácia affair despite Areda’s preaching, as well as the problematic conciliation between the educational-evangelical routine of the Jesuit college and the merciless repression of the Holy Office in Bragança and beyond, encouraged many Jesuits progressively to abandon ambivalent “negotiated relationships” for more consistent and positive attitudes towards conversos, as embodied a generation later by Father António Vieira, Father Salazar, and by many other Iberian Portuguese and non-Portuguese members of the Society of Jesus.
PART TWO

JESUITS, JEWS, AND MODERNITY
POLEMICS OF CONFESSIONALIZATION:
DEPICTIONS OF JEWS AND JESUITS IN EARLY MODERN GERMANY

Dean Phillip Bell

Introduction

Over the past several decades confessionalization has become a central conceptual category and elemental process that symbolizes the historical and religious development of early modern Germany.1 Not surprisingly, the theme of confessionalization has been highly charged and frequently debated. Typically interpreted as the consolidation of the three major Christian confessions (Catholic, Evangelical, and Reformed) between the middle of the 16th and the middle of the 17th centuries, it has focused on the development of religious doctrine, identity, and relations with the state. Historians of confessionalization have also grappled with important questions related to the development of modernity, including territorial and state-building, social discipline, as well as changes in theology and spirituality.

One way in which confessionalization was expressed was in the polemics produced to marginalize competing denominations and religions and, simultaneously, to provide clarification of internal religious dogmas. While some accusations were prominently associated with certain groups, many stereotypes were recirculated and applied to a range of “outsiders” and “enemies” throughout the period of confessionalization. Such

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marginalization can tell us as much, if not more, about the marginalizing society as it does about the people or groups being marginalized.

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which Jews and Jesuits—two small, but particularly prominent religious “outsider” groups (at least in some circles)—were represented in confessional polemics in early modern Germany. In considering the common and unique representations of these two groups, this essay will contribute to the history of Jews and Jesuits in early modern Germany, as well as to the history of the confessionalizing societies themselves. While there are many different anti-Jewish and anti-Jesuit texts and representations, I have selected a few individual works, particularly from the late 16th century, as representative for the sake of an initial analysis.

Jews and Jesuits in Early Modern Germany

After the wave of 15th- and early 16th-century expulsions from a range of towns, cities, and territories, the position of the Jews in Germany began to develop more permanent foundations. Jews settled for the first time in some important locations, with significant and well-integrated communities developing in a number of major cities, suburbs, and regional rural areas. Jews in many places played an increasing role in German economic development. Such developments, however, did not mean that Jews no longer faced discrimination. Many traditional medieval stereotypes continued virulently as the expulsion or ghettoization of Jews was advocated in some locations. Added to the well of more traditional anti-Jewish imagery were new rhetorical devices and accusations that reflected early modern German social, religious, cultural, political, and economic concerns. Jews accounted for less than half a percent of the total population in early modern Germany. Still, Jews were an active and visible presence, made all the more significant because of their long and complicated history in Germany. In addition to actual Jews, early modern Germany, like many parts of Europe, was populated by more abstract Jews—images or figures that served as theological strawmen or as imaginary bogeymen, accused of dastardly criminal deeds.\(^2\)

At the same time, by the second half of the 16th century, Jesuits occupied a key position in Germany and contributed greatly to the revival of Catholicism in the Holy Roman Empire. Given their reforming impetus,
political impact, and work in education, the Jesuits were both participants of and subject to the vast swing of confessionalization and its polemic. The initial Jesuit foundations in Cologne, Vienna, and Ingolstadt spawned large provinces, colleges, and houses in central German political areas. Expulsions, as in Bohemia at the start of the Thirty Years’ War, were a threat to Jesuits well into modernity. Since Jesuits were engaged at the front lines of the confessional battles of the Reformation they came under particular scrutiny and criticism from Protestant reformers and advocates. At times they also faced criticism from within the Catholic world—later by more liberally minded Catholics, but even in the 16th century by ecclesiastics resisting the reforms championed by the Jesuits.

Ante-Jesuitism

The range of anti-Jesuit writings and images in early modern Germany was vast. In addition to images that played on religious difference and criticized Jesuit and broader Catholic theology and practice, Jesuits were also presented as dangerous—tyrannical, bloodthirsty exploiters who harmed the common man. Anti-Jesuit stereotypes revealed both continuities and changes. They reflected the psychological conditions and needs of their creators and circulators. As with many stereotypes, in some cases there were, however, kernels of truth in the accusations; or at least, the negative stereotypes were based on the involvement (and success) of Jesuits in some areas, such as education and foreign diplomacy, as well as the work of some Jesuit writers who challenged the divine right of kings and so ran the risk of being lumped together with political dissidents.

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8 Ibid., 24–25.
Anti-Jesuit discourse could be multivalent (and at times even self-contradictory). Consider the ad hominem attack expressed by Johann Wigand against the Jesuit Peter Canisius, whom he labeled: “a dog of a monk, idolater, wolf, ass of the Pope, swindling trickster, shameless and miserable devil.”

Jesuits were cast as in league with the Devil; they were also often portrayed as heretical, magical, foreign, power-hungry, lusty, devious, and manipulative. It should be noted that there could be critical assessments of Jesuits even from within the order—often such criticism dealt with perceived administrative deficiencies and power structures.

A common method of marginalization is dehumanization. Like Jews and other marginalized groups, Jesuits were often likened to or associated with animals. They were, at times, depicted as rams, foxes, snakes, and lizards, for example—each connoting various negative perceptions, such as sneakiness and changeability. Jews and Jesuits were likewise both cast as scorpions. The junckherr Johann von Münster made this connection. There are no differences between heretics and idolaters, he wrote, for both are scorpions—for just like the scorpion kills men with its poisonous bite, the Jesuits likewise lead man to spiritual death. Their sweet words and sophistries draw in unsuspecting victims, who are killed by the poison. Continuing with the dehumanizing comparisons, Münster also related the Jesuits to frogs: “Just as the frog gives much annoyance with its great clamor to anyone who hears it ... out of necessity [people] must hear our stinking preachers and read their writings, much useless howling ... Just as the frogs lay in the sludge, feces, and false places ... and the same sect also lay in the sludge, feces, and false places of idolatry and stiff-necked ... and senseless service to God.”

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14 Ibid., 2; see 2–3 for further comparison.
15 Ibid., 7.
added, frogs were also associated with false prophets. Dehumanization could take other forms as well. Jesuits, again like Jews, were depicted almost simultaneously as subhuman and superhuman, as one recent scholar notes: “Jesuits allegedly were so extreme in their submission to their order that they became like machines and, in their determination to achieve their goals, drew on powers unavailable to other men.”

Like Jews, Jesuits were frequently cast as outsiders and conspirators, operating beyond the community or nation. Jesuits were associated with a broad international organization, and so they assumed the animus directed towards Catholic countries such as Spain and France; its members were seen as bent on international domination and steeped in corruption and deviousness. In the throes of confessional strife, in some cities, such as Augsburg, Lutheran ministers preached against the Jesuits, arguing that they were planning to dominate the city and do away with Lutheranism. The preacher Georg Müller pointed to a growing Catholic presence on the city council and an increase in the number of Catholic processions through the city. Jesuits were similarly blamed by the representatives of the Estates for fomenting unrest in Bohemia in the early 17th century.

Most anti-Jesuit discourse was focused on religion and belied the anti-papal and broader anti-Catholic sensibilities of Protestant and Lutheran writers. These attacks tended to draw from a well of anti-Catholic and anti-Latin sentiments that abounded in Germany in the Reformation era. At times, the order was associated with Italians writ large. Christian Francke wrote in his polemical dialogue that “The Italians, however, come to this external holiness because they are by nature inclined to superstition and dissembling …” characterized by a certain false reverence.

16 Revelation 16:13.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 3–5, drawing particularly on comparisons with campaigns against Jews in the early 19th century.
20 Ibid., 23.
24 Ibid., 10v.
Germans and Bohemians, in contrast, were by nature “pious and devoted.”  

At the same time, anti-Jesuit discourse was often synonymous with anticlericalism. Such anticlericalism, which cast clergy as licentious, subversive, and bloodthirsty, also criticized celibacy and perceived financial exploitation. Not surprisingly, like other marginal or outside groups, Jesuits were accused of sexual misconduct. Jesuits were frequently cast as being superstitious, a category that allegedly rational opponents and antiritualists might find particularly attractive. Unlike more general anticlerical claims, however, Jesuits were not typically associated with either laziness or gluttony—in fact they were characterized as being engaged in the world and being tall and thin.

The range of anti-Jesuit literature was wide in the late 16th century. Taking the common form of a dialogue, for example, *Ein schönes Gespräch eines Christen mit einem Jesuiten* (n.p.: 1592) continued the attack in a genre that had been favored for debate with real and imaginary Jews in the Middle Ages. The good Christian in the dialogue accuses the Jesuits (as well as monks and priests) of obscuring God’s “light, pure, and clear” word. Rome and the pope come in for harsh criticism, and are compared to a child of the Devil. (In the play, the Jesuit recoils at the accusation of heresy.) Not only are the Jesuits blind, the harangue continues, but they daily practice idolatry and false service to God, and they persecute pious Christians. Turning to the debate over good works, the Jesuit declares that faith is nothing without good works, while the good “Christian” maintains the concept of salvation through faith alone. What follows is a discussion of the sacraments and an attack on the Catholic mass. Typical, as well, was the ensuing attack on the concept of priestly mediation and an emphasis on learning for laymen.

In Johann von Münster’s *Christliche und wolgegründete Antwort* (Bremen: 1591), to take another example, the author conceded that the Jesuits were

25 Ibid., 11v.
27 Ibid., 22.
28 Ibid., 26.
29 Ibid., 24.
31 Ibid., iiiir.
32 Ibid., iiiiv.
33 Ibid., vr.
34 Ibid., unpaginated.
generally acknowledged to be learned men, who had studied theology (though, he added the caveat: through their sophistries). Jesuits were even understood by many common people as heroic figures, engaged as missionaries in the far reaches of the globe. Politically powerful, however, the Jesuits, according to Münster, were in the service of the Roman Antichrist. Münster argued in the introduction: “Should not here one say about the Jesuits what Christ said to the Pharisees: your hypocrisy goes so far that you are made a Jesuit comrade, but your power is a double manifestation of Hell,” before concluding that:

God, however, consoles all pious hearts, which are desirous of the truth and will save them and His dear Son, Christ, through His Word and Spirit, from the lies, errors, and idolatry of the Antichrist and his trusted champions, the Jesuit monks and all other sects who combat the holy Evangelium, Amen.

Other confessional-age writers also took shots at the Jesuits. Frequent were accusations of novelty—“their evil, daily, new-found guile”—and association with the Antichrist and Devil—“and whose enmeshment is not only with the Antichrist, rather also with the Devil himself.” Jesuits were consistently represented as idolatrous and purveyors of false, superstitious, and foolish teaching. Lest one think them overly pious individuals, some authors accused them of false piety and hypocrisy—only someone blind to the reality would continue to see them and their order as holy. In fact, Jesuits were presented regularly as mired in darkness—accusations that resonated with medieval attacks against the Jews as well.

The Jesuits could be presented like Jews in a rather ethnographic vein—making the broader public aware of their key theological tenets and alleged errors—much as the handbooks of the late 16th century sought to explicate the details of Jewish religion and customs. At times fairly direct comparisons were drawn between Jesuits and one of the most central marginalized groups, Jews. As noted above, like Jews, Jesuits were at times depicted as blasphemous opponents of true religion, followers of the Devil and Antichrist. Signaling perhaps a connection with the Jews,

36 Later compared with tyranny, as with the Mahomteans: von Münster, Christliche und wolgegründte Antwort, 25.
37 Citing Mathew 23.
39 Francke, Ein Gesprach, 6v–7v; 8v; 12v.
40 Ibid., 7v.
41 Ibid., 8v.
Münster wrote of the “pope's synagogue.”42 One of the more frequent characterizations of Jesuits, at least by Lutheran critics, was that they were “new Pharisees,” or at times more broadly “new Jews.”43 The accusations of being Pharisees centered on what appeared to the authors as overly ritualistic ceremonials, idolatry, and sophistries.44 Johann Müller, the Lutheran preacher in Hamburg, posited another link between Jews and Jesuits. Müller cautioned that: “No Christian should study the Hebrew language with Jews, when he can study with Christian teachers. If [someone] attaches [himself] to one of these despised [people], he will be treated in many unjust and annoying ways, as is self-evident. It is irresponsible to frequent Jesuit schools when an evangelical school is available; it is even more irresponsible to look for Jewish teachers for the study of the Hebrew language, where there is no lack of Christian [teachers].”45

In more popular canards, and also reminiscent of anti-Jewish works, Jesuits were alleged to have committed heinous crimes, such as murder. Consider the Warhaftige Urkund der erschröcklichen zeittung von den Jesuiten zu München inn Bayr. The report is introduced by an open letter, in the name of Maximilian, in which the author asserted that the report no doubt stemmed from “opponents of our Catholic faith, hate-filled begrudgers, who [write out] according to their long-standing tradition, instigated by the evil spirit, as of the Father of Lies.”46 Pious and intelligent people would, of course, not believe such false reports—though commoners might be enticed to believe them (the author of the tractate noted

42 Ibid., 29; as well as the “Jesuit synagogue.”
43 Johannes Heil, “Gottesfeinde”—“Menschenfeinde”: Die Vorstellung von jüdischer Weltverschwörung (13. bis 16. Jahrhundert) (Klartext: Essen, 2006), 361, 367ff.—this latter label stretched back to the early years of the Reformation and was frequently used to denote adherents of the old faith, i.e. Catholicism in general.
44 Von Münster, Christliche und wolgegründete Antwort, 13; see also 15 regarding criticism of high priests, and 57 regarding various characteristics of Pharisees.
45 Quoted in Debra Kaplan, Beyond Expulsion: Jews, Christians, and Reformation Strasbourg (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2011), 141. It should be noted that in Iberia the link was even more fundamentally established (see Robert Aleksander Maryks, The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry and Purity-of-Blood Laws in the Early Society of Jesus [Brill: Leiden, 2009]). But in German lands, direct links between Jesuits and Jews were more likely to come in the form of criticisms of the legalism and ceremonial of Pharisees, a characterization used frequently in Christian history and especially during the Reformation and age of confessionalization.
46 “Warhaftige Urkund der erschröcklichen zeittung von den Jesuiten zu München inn Bayr wegen ihrer schandt-vnd mordstucken, die sie mit eines Burgers Tochter allda sollen begangen haben wie solsche newlich an drey vnderschiedlichen orten, reimen vnd Liedweiß in Truck aufgegangen[n] vnd jetzund zu München mit rechtew waren grundt vnd hochansehnlichen” (Munich, 1607), 3.
later on). The second introductory part of the treatise was issued by the burgomaster and council of Munich. In it, the book publishers of a false account were taken to task—still, the accusation was clearly circulating. The alleged victim, the daughter of a burgher, was named Elisabetha, or in other accounts Christina. Pregnant, she was in the Jesuit church one night in January when she was murdered and buried behind the altar. Five Jesuit priests were detained. Some people reported that the child was cut from its murdered mother’s body, baptized, and then lived another 14 days. According to other reports, the heart of the murdered mother was eaten and replaced with a pig’s heart—bringing to mind all manner of premodern fairy tales.47 The Lied, of course, was represented as obviously false, “evil, devilish lies.” In contrast, the Jesuits were characterized as pious, upright, and God-fearing. But the message and the resonance of the accusations, at least as far as the protests made clear, were quite vivid and disturbing.

The Case of Lucas Osiander48

In order to contextualize the confessional nature of many of these general accusations and negative representations, consider the work of Lucas Osiander (the elder, 1534–1604), the son of the famous early reformer Andreas Osiander. Osiander was one of the most vociferous anti-Jesuit voices of the age of confessionalization, who also wrote against a variety of other religious groups. Osiander studied in Nuremberg and Königsberg, was deacon in Göppingen, priest and superintendent in Blaubeuren and Stuttgart, and court preacher and member of the consistory in Württemberg.

In his Warnung vor der falschen Lehr und phariseischen Gleissnerey der Jesuiten (Tübingen: 1568), Osiander began his discussion in the context of his critique of the tyranny and idolatry of the Roman church—he asserted that the “holy teaching of the Evangelicals was adulterated with cruel tyranny and persecution, and that the Empire of Christ was hindered by its ascendance.”49 He was particularly concerned with the Jesuits, who he

47 Ibid.
49 Lucas Osiander, Warnung vor der falschen Lehr und phariseischen Gleissnerey der Jesuiten (Tübingen, 1568), 1.
attacked as a new order, and the new Pharisees and hypocrites, who worked to turn the common man from Christ and true religion. Osiander placed the Jesuits within the context of a long line of heretics since before the period of the heretic Arian. But for Osiander, the Jesuits were even more egregious than other papists, because their writings were widely disseminated and confused and blinded simple Christians. He wrote, he claimed, to sound a warning about the Jesuits, who were mired in papal errors, idolatry, and shocking horror. Indeed, he argued, they opposed Holy Scripture itself and were simply the papal Devil in the guise of Jesuits.

Osiander employed sharp and colorful language in describing the Jesuits, placing them in the same category as crafty foxes and wrenching wolves. Taking aim particularly at the Jesuit catechism authored by Peter Canisius, Osiander began with the question of who is justified before God. One is not justified, Osiander asserted, through works of the Law and ceremonials but only through faith. Man, however, cannot be justified through himself alone, but only through Christ. The Jesuits, on the other hand, offered a contrary and misguided notion that justification could be achieved through our own works. Osiander next turned to the Jesuit, papist, understanding of the sacrament of penance, polemicizing that the Jesuits had remained for years in the shocking darkness of the papacy. Musterling a good deal of harsh language against the Antichrist papacy and the papal Jesuits, Osiander contended that in their approach to and understanding of penance, the Jesuits were the new Pharisees, even more entrenched in the papal position than the old Pharisees and Sadducees, the monks and priests. Not surprisingly, in his discussion of these new Jesuit Pharisees, Osiander cited Luke 7, and the justification effected by acceptance of God’s ways rather than expertise in the Law.

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50 Ibid., 1–2. Similarly, see Francke, Ein Gesprech, 3r, 12v–13r.
51 Ibid., 2.
52 Ibid., 5f.
53 Ibid., 5.
54 Ibid. He draws similar metaphors in the introduction to his work against the papal calendar in 1583—see his Bedencken, ob der newe päpstliche Kalender bey der Christenheit seie (Tübingen, 1583).
55 Francke, Ein Gesprech, 9.
56 Ibid., 16.
57 Ibid., 18.
58 Ibid., 22.
59 Ibid., 28.
60 Ibid., 38.
61 Ibid., 48–50.
The Jesuits were Pharisee/hypocrites and scoffers of our Lord and God, his all-holy Words, and even all of poor Christendom.\textsuperscript{62}

Osiander confronted central Jesuit views of the sacraments as well, contrasting the seven held by the Catholic Jesuits with the two held by Protestants.\textsuperscript{63} His discussion of baptism and the Eucharist was complex, presenting the Jesuit, and generally broader Catholic perspective, and criticizing it in comparison with the Evangelical approach. Throughout, the narrative was defensive and polemical, and even as he conceded some validity in Jesuit positions, he simultaneously pointed to errors and evil interpretations. On occasion he again returned to label the Jesuits as the new Pharisees,\textsuperscript{64} particularly as he criticized their external ceremonies.\textsuperscript{65} “among the papal ceremonies several are borrowed from the heathens and idolaters, several from the Jewish priesthood, directed at the diminution of the New Testament ... which is nothing more than if one were to kindle a thin little candle around midday amidst all the brightest sunshine.”\textsuperscript{66} Indeed, in this context, the mediation of the priests comes in for particular criticism. Osiander also addressed the subject of prayer in great detail.\textsuperscript{67} Jesuits were likewise new Pharisees here as well because of the additions they inserted into prayer and the increase in unnecessary obligations that they imposed upon Christians beyond the Ten Commandments.\textsuperscript{68}

Osiander’s polemic was hardly limited to the Jesuits. While the theological, political, or social concerns might vary, Osiander utilized similar language and approach in castigating other groups. In his \textit{Warnung An die Christliche Prediger, und Zuhörer, in der Churfürstlichen Pfalts Daß sie nicht Stimme Hund warden, noch reissende Wölff für getrewe Hirten ansehen sollen} (Tübingen: 1584), Osiander rued the presence of many false and evil people in the Palatinate—namely the Calvinists. These he depicted collectively as a fierce wolf in sheep’s clothing.\textsuperscript{69} Both Calvinist and Zwinglian teachings he presented as erroneous.\textsuperscript{70} These damaging teachings rob the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 51.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 98.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 109; see also 157 and 159.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 112.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 114.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 121.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 130.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Lucas Osiander, \textit{Warnung An die Christliche Prediger, und Zuhörer, in der Churfürstlichen Pfalts Daß sie nicht Stimme Hund warden, noch reissende Wölff für getrewe Hirten ansehen sollen} (Tübingen, 1584), 154.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 3, as well as others such as Carlstadt, Bullinger, etc., 5.
\end{itemize}
poor people and youths of true ministers and cause great damage.\textsuperscript{71} He further characterized the Calvinists as stiff-necked and unrepentant.\textsuperscript{72} Their position regarding the Eucharist came in for particular critique and he presented them as deviating from the Augsburg Confession.\textsuperscript{73} Here, Osiander objected, the Calvinists placed Christ in heaven alone and not here on earth\textsuperscript{74} and they saw the Eucharist as a mere sign.\textsuperscript{75} Their teaching was therefore labeled as damaging poison.\textsuperscript{76} Osiander also took a shot at their understanding of child baptism.\textsuperscript{77} (Zwinglians he similarly castigated as enthusiasts and heretics.)\textsuperscript{78}

The same year Osiander took up the battle more directly with Calvinists in Heidelberg in \textit{Abfertigung der untreuen Gegenwartung etlicher unreiner Preidger der Calvinischen Lehr zu Heidelberg} (Tübingen: 1584), in response to a new mandate by Duke Johann Casimir that opened up the territory to Calvinists. Calvinists and Zwinglians, he reiterated, were fierce wolves, against which the authorities should protect the people.\textsuperscript{79} However, Osiander was concerned that the authorities themselves behave like a wolf and not a trusted hound, which is obligated to watch over his sheep.\textsuperscript{80}

Osiander also drew a comparison with the broad group of reformed faiths and the papacy: “for they are not less than their ancestors and patriarchs, Karlstadt, Zwingli and their assistants, with their false teachings about the Eucharist, in whose churches, assigned by the Antichristian papacy [to instigate] a cruel divorce of Christian unity, causing great damage.”\textsuperscript{81} These groups Osiander also labeled as purveyors of false,\textsuperscript{82} heretical,\textsuperscript{83} and blasphemous teachings,\textsuperscript{84} and themselves as untrue, un-Christian,\textsuperscript{85} and godless people.\textsuperscript{86} Their teachings were akin to a fire
burning out of control and against which people must be warned.\textsuperscript{87} Particularly in the case of the Lord’s Supper, Osiander was careful to oppose the Calvinist/Zwinglian teaching\textsuperscript{88} and the pure teaching of Luther.\textsuperscript{89} Osiander also associated Calvinist and Jewish interpretations.\textsuperscript{90} Indeed, as with Jesuits, Osiander likened Calvinist teaching to the poisonous bite of the scorpion.\textsuperscript{91}

Anti-Jesuit discourse served numerous purposes and took a variety of forms. Dehumanized and compared with deadly animals, Jesuits were also depicted as dangerous outsiders, power-seeking intriguers in league with external forces in search of political domination. While some accusations clearly built on earlier anticlerical trends and must be contextualized within the anti-Roman and anti-Catholic sensibilities that had been brewing in Germany since the 15th century, Jesuits were also castigated for their additions and novelties. Indeed, they were themselves a new phenomenon, and therefore they lacked real grounding and authority.

Jesuits shared a number of traits with Jews, our polemicists would have us believe, and were frequently marked off as “new Jews” or “new Pharisees,” referring simultaneously to their enslavement to sophistries, external ceremonies, and theological blindness. As such, polemicists wrote summaries of Jesuit thought—sometimes fairly accurately delineating the theological positions and practices of Jesuits—in an effort to “warn” their readers about such subversive and seditious people in their midst and to make them wise to the Jesuits’ larger plans. As was the case with other groups being marginalized, the attack against the Jesuits was often a thinly veiled criticism of the secular authorities who tolerated or even supported them. In the age of confessionalization, polemical language was perhaps particularly pointed towards the end of critiquing authorities that allowed other confessions within their borders. In the case of Jesuits, recounting Jesuit theology allowed Lutheran polemists to define and explain their own theological positions for their reading audiences. In a very real sense, Jesuits were, in this regard, no different than

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 75.
\textsuperscript{88} Which he notes repeatedly is in opposition to the Augsburg Concord—see ibid., 59, for example.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 4, 57.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 60. Osiander’s writing elicited some fiery responses. Among these, the Jesuit Christoph Rosenbusch penned an extensive response to Osiander: \textit{Christophori Rosenbusch Wolgegründete erneuerte Antwort und Ehrerrettung auf die Schmachschrift Lucae Osiandi, die er intuiert: Warnung vor der Jesuiten bludürstigen Anschlägen, und bösen Practicken (Ingolstadt, 1586).}
Calvinists, Zwinglians, or even Jews, whose erroneous religious systems needed to be uncovered and contrasted with “true” religion.

Anti-Jewish Representation

In the polemical battles of the age of confessionalization, Jews were also the subject of attention. Anti-Jewish writings drew from a rich and deep well of images and accusations from the Middle Ages, at the same time that they incorporated the inflections of confessional battle that we have seen above in regard to anti-Jesuit literature. Jews were the topic of similar “warnings,” and they were cast as dangerous wolves out to devour poor sheep, that is the faithful Christians. In a certain sense, pride of place must be reserved for the Jews who were vilified long before various sectarian groups and the Jesuits. In a real way, anti-Jewish diatribes were applied to other marginalized groups. Just as Anabaptists became the new Jews in the 1530s and 1540s, so too did Jesuits become the new Pharisees in the 1570s and 1580s.

A range of words and concepts were used to attack Jews, concentrated on specific themes. As Nicoline Hortzitz notes, clusters of words in anti-Jewish writing dealt with alleged: bloodthirstiness, evil, ignoble blood, guile, arrogance, sickness, power, avariciousness, invalidation, inhumanity (including a broad range of associations with animals such as pigs, cows, donkeys, foxes, dogs, bloodhounds, crocodiles, mice, tigers, vipers, wolves, worms, etc.), parasites, impurity, stupidity, disbelief, dishonesty, blasphemy, uncleanness, obscenity, barbarism, obdurateness, and destructiveness. If we were to group these accusations, we might say that Jews were seen as powerful but evil, criminal, and obscene; and arrogant but ignoble, inhuman, and blasphemous. Many of these characterizations merged across categories. Some drew heavily from earlier, medieval discourse, while others were invested with greater currency in the 16th century.

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92 See the anonymous Getrewliche Warnung an alle guthertzige Christen, sich für dem schnöden gesuch und überschwencklichen wucher der Juden zuverhueten (Frankfurt [?], 1531) as well as Leohnardt Thurneysser zum Thurn, Ein warhafftige vnd Erchröckliche Geschicht, so sich begeben hat den andern tag Jnnij, auff Sant Marcellin tag, zu Franckfurt an der Ader, wie man 24 Juden verbrendt hat, vnd wie sie schröckliche ding bekandt aben, wie sie auch nach Keiserlichem Rechten gericht worden (Frankfurt an der Oder, 1579).


94 Ibid., 197–201.
Jews were portrayed as causing great damage to the common man, particularly through their alleged practice of usury. Jews were seen as tyrannical and destructive.95 They were depicted as liars96 and as in league with the Devil. Like Jesuits later, Jews would be labeled as dissemblers97 and their usury was depicted as horrible98 and dreadful.99 As they were for medieval theologians, Jews were blind and stiff-necked, and instigated by the Devil.100 They were blasphemers—drawing upon accusations made familiar by the anti-Jewish converts Johannes Pfefferkorn and Antonius Margaritha—against God and Christianity.101 Enemies of Christianity, the Jews spread their poison against Christians.102 “When a Christian is ruined, they rejoice and think that their curse, which they express on their Sabbath has been effective; they hope with time to curse and ruin everyone, for which they need the help of the Devil.”103 Jews were also alleged to engage in sorcery and black magic, which they learned from the Devil and which they taught to their children.104 In the same vein, Jews were presented as thieves and robbers.105

Consider Der Juden Erbarkeit (n.p.: 1571). In this text, Jewish blasphemy of Jesus and the Jews’ destructive usury come in for extensive commentary.106 The Jews damage all of Germany with a storm and deluge. The entire text is couched in apocalyptic expectations—with hunger, pestilence, and fire to descend from the heavens. The Jews plot in their quarters and carry out their deeds through their league, poisoning the lords and oppressing the poor. Their persecution of Christians is horrible and fierce—thirsting as they do for Christian blood. In their criminal behavior, the Devil has brought them as a plague against good people. Alleged Jewish atrocities were likewise cataloged chronologically in many...
works, such as Leohnardt Thurneysser zum Thurn’s *Ein warhaftige vnd Erschröckliche Geschicht*, marking Jews as contemporary as well as historical enemies.

More extensive treatment of the Jews can be found in the work of the polemicist Marcus Lombardus, *Gründtlicher Bericht und Erklärung von der Juden Handlungen und Ceremonien* (Basel: 1573)—which is presented much in the vein of the anti-Jewish ethnographies of the Reformation and age of confessionalization, intended, as its full title suggests, to identify the practices against Jesus and Christianity, the evil deeds committed against Christians on a daily basis, the inhuman usury, and the Jewish customs that are against both God and the world, indeed against nature itself. As with the Jesuits, the Jews were presented as tyrants, ruling over the world. Lombardus cited medieval authorities regarding the horrible hatred that the Jews were said to have against all Christians. In fact, many cities and countries have, as a result, expelled the Jews—the author noted Venetian attempts at expulsion in 1571 and the burning of Jewish books in Italy by way of example.

These obdurate and stiff-necked people were agents of the Devil who daily expressed their animosity through their Talmud. According to Lombardus, drawing from both Luther and Margaritha, the Talmud was a compendium rife with malevolent diatribes against Jesus, Mary, and God, making the Jews more hostile than all other sects, including the Muslims. Jewish prayers in particular were also referenced for their anti-Christian language. Ceremonies of the Jews were typically described—along with side comments and additions—as foolish. The author placed associated customs, such as the annulment of vows, into an anti-Christian presentation. For him, citing other anti-Jewish writers,
there lives in this world no more wrathful, evil ... godless people than the Jewish, which, however still does not want to believe that it has among itself many murderers, adulterers, thieves, gluttons, sorcerers, gamblers, etc., even as many as among Christians, and according to their number many more.119

Lombardus went on, in a related manner, to retell narratives of alleged Jewish ritual murders,120 with particular details regarding the case in Bohemia. He cataloged other nefarious episodes as well, including well-poisoning at the Black Death121 and deadly Jewish doctors.122 Indeed, Lombardus provided a supporting history of expulsions of Jews across Europe since the Middle Ages.123

In his opening section Lombardus isolated what he termed the false Jewish notion of the Messiah.124 Basing some of his polemic on Luther’s anti-Jewish expressions,125 he claimed to write in order to elucidate Jewish practice and warn his Christian readers, for the Jews were indeed the students of Satan, “wild, blind, mad dogs” scattered across Christendom, Turkey, and the pagan world.126 As he would write later, “therefore, the Jew is only an instrument of the Devil.”127 Jews themselves were castigated as liars, out to deceive the authorities.128 They practiced inhuman usury and counterfeiting, causing great damage.129 All the while, they maintained their position as servants of the Devil: “But they want to upset the world with sin and make the Devil a god.”130 Lombardus similarly depicted the Jews as thieves.131 While Jews were alleged to see themselves as the most holy people, they were in reality idolaters, who practiced sorcery.132

Jews were dehumanized throughout the text, and compared to animals such as wolves:133 “What enemy are the Jews other than the wolf, which not only seeks our goods but also aspires to the soul—God has no greater or more noble jewel on the earth than a Christ-believing soul.”134
Lombardus asked why Christian authorities would allow Jews to remain given all of the offenses he noted—unfortunately, however, he argued that there were many false and godless people among the Christians who allow such open opposition to Christianity.  

Jews in the age of confessionalization were represented much as they had been before—as damaging agents of the Devil, who wreaked havoc on society through their usury and tyranny. Jews remained blind and obdurate, refusing to see the truth of Christianity. What was worse, they were alleged to curse Christians in their daily prayers, secretly hoping to bring all of Christendom to ruination. While these sorts of accusations could have been, and indeed were, often found in the past, they took on new dimensions in ongoing struggles with the Ottomans and in efforts to forge more consistent dogma and confessional identity. Princes or other authorities who protected the Jews were brought in for special criticism, as they had been in some of Luther’s later Jewish writings. In many cases, a list of expulsions was appended to treatises, almost as a practical suggestion for what action truly upright Christian rulers should take against these domestic enemies. Building on the damaging works of Pfefferkorn and Margaritha, Jewish customs were represented as sinister and the Jews as a people of criminals. And yet, as in some of the visual representation of the age, Jews were cast as servants, and at times dupes, of the Devil.  

That is, Jews had no real control or power, except what was accorded them by Christian inaction or devilish inspiration.

Conclusions: Representations of Jews and Jesuits in Early Modern Germany

Anti-Jewish representations, as noted above, focused on a range of alleged actions, behaviors, and beliefs. In the Age of Confessionalization Jewish rituals were increasingly presented, almost in ethnographical form. And while many Jewish observances were accurately portrayed, many were placed in negative contexts, glossed with anti-Christian intent, and twisted in important ways to make the ostensibly anti-Jewish point of their editors. As such, no matter how much they allegedly focused on a “true”

135 Ibid., 38. The association of Jews and wolves is old. In the later Middle Ages, Hans Folz had made similar connections. See Hans Folz, Die Reimpaarsprüche, ed. Hanns Fischer (Beck: Munich, 1961), 317–18.

understanding of Judaism and Jewish rituals, such writings were largely polemical treatises penned for a variety of political and religious purposes. When compared with the “summaries” of Jesuit theology and practices, enlisted for much of the same polemical ends, we may in fact be in a position to articulate some of the core concerns and strategies of late 16th-century polemicists. At times Jews and Jesuits were even lumped together by Protestants—polemicists as well as more common people—and portrayed as undesirable elements in society, as they were in Hildesheim in the later 16th century.137

In assessing this situation, it is worth revisiting some of the central tenets associated with confessionalization and marginalization. A product of German historiography in the 1970s,138 historians generally assume that confessionalization unfolded especially in Germany between the years 1555 and 1648, though some scholars maintain that the confessionalization of the church followed the process of splintering and differentiation of Western Christianity that began in the later Middle Ages.139 Traditionally, according to the historian Heinz Schilling, confessionalization evolved in four phases: initiation (late 1540s–60s); transition into confessional confrontations (1570s); the high point of confessionalization (1580s–1620s); and the final phase, the end of confessionalization under the conditions of the war and the on the basis of the Peace of Westphalia and later religious developments (1620s–18th century).140 Confessionalization, with its accompanying discussion of state and identity-building and social discipline, along with religion and spirituality,141 has become almost a central category for distinguishing the early modern period and it has at times provided a useful historical framework.142 The concept of confessionalization has been used in a variety of ways in the scholarly literature,
and has been particularly drafted into the service of questions of periodization and modernization. It allows us to compare various religious movements and developments, which despite differing theology, spirituality, and legal-institutional forms shared some general developments.

Wolfgang Reinhard has argued that confessionalization was caused by religious innovation and the origin of and competition between more churches with absolute claims.\(^{143}\) According to Reinhard, the cohesion of the confessions was established through a process that included clarification of theology, dissemination of ideas through media and propaganda, and enforcement of newly established norms.\(^{144}\) Reinhard argues that confessionalization involved not only the identification of correct belief, but also the elimination of beliefs and practices that did not fall within the realm of acceptability. These various goals were accomplished largely through monopolizing education, marginalizing dissenters, and censure. They were carried out through new church organizational structures and confession-specific agencies for education, control, and repression.

Marginalization could also be quite complex and, at times, almost elemental. It was not necessarily determined by demographics or by the lack of privileges or social standing. Through marginalization, various factors affected the perception and treatment of particular individuals or groups in certain contexts. The boundaries of tolerance for individual transgressions of social norms could vary a good deal,\(^{145}\) particularly since such norms often assumed theoretical or ideal behaviors that did not always correspond with reality.\(^{146}\) Some groups are actively marginalized, while the marginalization of others is more latent.\(^{147}\) The process of marginalization is often carried out through concrete measures or identifiers of negative status, what Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller calls stigmatization.\(^{148}\) Examples might include the patches and hats assigned to medieval Jews, fools, and lepers.\(^{149}\) There are, however, levels of stigmatization.\(^{150}\)


\(^{144}\) Reinhard, “Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung,” 263.


\(^{146}\) Ibid., 402.


\(^{148}\) Ibid., 16.

\(^{149}\) Ibid., 17.

\(^{150}\) Ibid.
may simultaneously exist a certain ambivalence vis-à-vis marginalized groups, who may themselves serve various purposes in society—both as a means to contest otherness and to develop identity. On the one hand, society at times finds the marginal groups, such as those in “dishonest professions,” useful and necessary. At other times, such groups provide a constant reminder, a living testimony, of the transgression of institutionalized norms.\textsuperscript{151}

The status of an individual or group, as a result, can only be understood in connection with other people and groups,\textsuperscript{152} and so the process and results of marginalization can be quite telling with regard to the marginalizing society itself. While marginalization could be precipitated by social challenges, marginalization could be important in the process of crafting social cohesion, especially when marginalized groups or individuals were utilized as scapegoats against which society could rally.\textsuperscript{153} As Healy notes, images of enemies (\textit{Feinbilder}) were in a real sense simultaneously self-images (\textit{Selbstbilder}).\textsuperscript{154} Understanding the central motifs and motivations of such images of enmity can, therefore, tell us a great deal about those who crafted and circulated them:

The \textit{Feinbild} was highly derivative, but it was distinctive enough to represent a coherent position on important issues while sufficiently malleable to be deployed in service of a range of causes; hence its special appeal throughout the modern period. Anti-Jesuitism helped express opposition to authoritarianism, tradition, and internationalism, in particular. And these principles lay at the center of many struggles in the period from the Reformation ... Many of the images and charges used by anti-Jesuits were generic ones, which were applied at various times to all kinds of enemies. What one might call the language of “otherness” provided a set of clichéd images or stereotypes that could easily be adapted to the anti-Jesuit cause.\textsuperscript{155}

The designation of others as opponents and precursors of the Antichrist and Apocalypse was a common strategy in the Reformation period. The list of opponents included Jews, heretics, Tartars, Turks, as well as Evangelicals, farmers, monks, and Jesuits.\textsuperscript{156} While Jews were the one


\textsuperscript{152} Graus, “Randgruppen in der städtischen Gesellschaft im Spätmittelalter,” 388; see also Hergemöller, “Randgruppen der spätmittelalterlichen Gesellschaft: Einheit und Vielfalt,” 2.

\textsuperscript{153} See Hergemöller, “Randgruppen der spätmittelalterlichen Gesellschaft,” 49.

\textsuperscript{154} Healy, \textit{The Jesuit Specter}, 16.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{156} Heil, “Gottesfeinde”—“Menschenfeinde”, 531.
constantly present outsider religious group from the Middle Ages and into early modernity, the negative representations of Jews and Jesuits allow us to understand the dynamics related to these individual groups but they also surface central issues—some timeless and others newly emerging—that were facing those who constructed such marginalization and they reveal important lines of rupture and confrontation within broader early modern German society. The agenda and tools of confessionalization were well served by deprecating outside, and at times competing, groups. This forged an identity, by clarifying religious beliefs and practices, at the same time that it afforded the opportunity to censure what would have been presented as erroneous religion. Such marginalization did more, however. It allowed a pointed method for engaging with secular authorities, who could be criticized somewhat indirectly, especially when they knowingly or unwittingly harbored such religious others. Marginalization also helped to place the broader cosmic events—military conflict at home and abroad and the impending sense of the End of Days—into a larger framework. The late 16th century was indeed a period of transition from and intensification of the earlier work of the Reformation and the pending wars of religion that scarred Europe throughout the 17th century. The age of confessionalization was one of consolidation, in which traditional motifs were continued, recirculated, and used in new ways that would shape European religion and politics well into modernity. The representation of outsider groups, such as Jews and Jesuits, was utilized fully in this process.
THE SUPPRESSION OF THE JESUITS AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT DISCOURSE OF JEWISH EMANCIPATION: TWO PARALLEL HISTORICAL PHENOMENA

Diego Lucci

Introduction

This chapter argues that the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 and the Enlightenment discourse of Jewish emancipation in the 1780s resulted from the combination of the Enlightenment discourse of human emancipation and the state-making process in 18th-century Europe. At that time, the political authorities of many European countries adopted the Enlightenment struggle for the emancipation of man, and they adjusted it to their purposes, while many supporters of emancipation saw the state as the entity that could best put their theories into practice. The combination of these two factors led to the shaping of the modern state as an all-encompassing, panoptical, superpersonal entity, one that could not tolerate opinions and lifestyles divergent from the models of self-realization and social inclusion that it attempted to impose. In that scenario, the Society of Jesus, commonly perceived as a “state within the state,” was first expelled from many Catholic countries and then suppressed, while the Jews, generally regarded as a “nation within a nation,” were required to renounce their communal lifestyle and assimilate into surrounding society.

The Enlightenment Discourse of Human Emancipation and the Suppression of the Jesuits

Far from originating merely in a quarrel between the autocratic prime minister of Portugal, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal, and the Catholic church, the suppression of the Jesuits was one of the most emblematic episodes in the making of the modern state. In fact, the suppression of the Society of Jesus was caused by political as well as economic conflicts and by the assertion of state independence against the Catholic church.
The very reason the Society of Jesus was established in 1540 made it dangerous to a model of the state that aimed at controlling all aspects of social, economic, and cultural life. As explained in the later version of the Jesuit *Formula Instituti*, a Jesuit had “to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine.” The Jesuits pursued their goals mainly through cultural means, namely by establishing educational institutions throughout Europe, evangelizing the peoples who had not yet been reached by the Christian message, and preventing the spread of Protestantism. Briefly, the Jesuits were often perceived as the vanguard of the Counter-Reformation church, and the knowledge and intellectual skills they were required to acquire were the Catholic answer not only to the Protestant insistence on biblical erudition but also to centuries of moral corruption and cultural decline within the church.1

The Jesuits’ attempts to revive the Catholic spirit and restore the church to its ideological power took place in a time when the state authorities asserted their supremacy in any field of social life, including religious matters, in compliance with the principle *cuius regio eius religio*. In Catholic countries the Society of Jesus initially managed to coexist with the state institutions. But the Jesuits’ activities were perceived as a threat to state sovereignty when the ruling elites started paying attention to the *philosophes’* pleas to play a proactive role in shaping civil society, with the purpose of leading mankind to self-realization. When the Enlightenment state undertook the mission to “emancipate” mankind, the bell tolled for the Society of Jesus.

In the Enlightenment discourse of emancipation, reason was regarded as the highest state of human existence. Therefore, the political authorities of the growingly centralized states of Enlightenment Europe, inspired and supported by their organic intellectuals, pursued the rationalization of human life through the improvement of social, economic, and legal agencies gradually developed and employed since the age of religious wars. However, this rationalization process was mostly pursued in accordance with a concept of reason that 20th-century philosopher Max Horkheimer defined as “instrumental,” namely a kind of pseudo-rationality.

that prevents man from self-developing in an environment of free, autonomous, critical thinking. In instrumental reason, the main criterion to consider something as “reasonable” is its operational value: when applied to mankind, this criterion reduces man to a mere means to an end, and hence to a mere aspect or element of a larger whole. In fact, in the age of Enlightenment the main function of state-managed agencies, such as schools, hospitals, standing armies, courts, prisons, and the legal, bureaucratic, and fiscal systems, was to increase the power of the state. Those agencies provided the ruling elites with better tools to exercise control over the bulk of the population, while claiming to benefit the common good and promote the emancipation of man.

In the 18th century, many advocates of republican institutions, from Rousseau to Robespierre, and most supporters of so-called enlightened despotism, most prominently Voltaire, many advocates of mercantilism, the German cameralists and the French physiocrats, endorsed political models that could lead man to overcome his imperfect, limited, “empirical” self and to discover his “true” self. And the true self’s identity, mentality, and lifestyle were defined aprioristically, in accordance with the role assigned to man in the context of a specific view of life and the world. As Isaiah Berlin pointed out in his seminal essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958):

The real self may be conceived as something wider than the individual (as the term is normally understood), as a social “whole” of which the individual is an element or aspect: a tribe, a race, a Church, a state, the great society of the living and the dead and the yet unborn. This entity is then identified as being the “true” self which, by imposing its collective, or “organic,” single will upon its recalcitrant members, achieves its own, and therefore their, “higher” freedom. … This monstrous impersonation … is at the heart of all political theories of self-realization.

And by “theories of self-realization” Berlin meant theories aiming at making the individual comply with his “true” will (that is, his true self’s will), although the individual’s empirical self prevented him from acknowledging such will as his own.

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3 On the role of state-run agencies in the development of the modern state, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1987). Bauman draws on Michel Foucault’s theories on the strengthening of social control agencies (i.e. schools, hospitals, courts, jails, armies, etc.) in Enlightenment Europe.
Given that the new, “emancipated” man of the Enlightenment was supposed to act willingly as a well-oiled cog in the state’s administrative, economic, and military machine, no alternative was permitted, no divergent view of self-realization was allowed, and no competition to the state’s “rationalizing” mission was admitted. But the Jesuits were a dangerous competitor for the state’s “emancipatory” projects because they held an alternative view of humanity and proposed a different model of human emancipation. They were considered particularly “dangerous” in Catholic countries, where they could have a significant influence on people’s mentality thanks to their educational and pastoral activities. The Jesuits’ educational institutions in Catholic Europe and their “reductions” in Latin America indeed posed a threat to the state’s “emancipatory” plans, which entailed bringing all aspects of society under state control.

The fact that the Jesuits were seen as “political enemies” by Pombal and other supporters of state supremacy is proven by the accusations alleged against them in an impressive press campaign, orchestrated by the Portuguese statesman in 1758–59. The Jesuits were accused of “having provided a theological justification for, and having actually instigated, a plot against the king’s life in order to cover up their rebellion in South America, where they had allegedly seized royal territory and founded an independent ‘Jesuit Republic.’”5 The Jesuits’ activities in South America were opposed by the Portuguese and Spanish authorities, because the Jesuit reductions provided a system of production alternative to slave labor and to state-managed systems of forced labor, such as the Spanish encomienda and its successor, the repartimiento.6 Consequently, the Jesuit reductions represented a threat to the state’s attempts to control any aspect of economic life. Moreover, the Jesuits’ pastoral and economic activities promoted the spread, among the natives, of a model of humankind and a


6 On the mainland of Central and South America, Spain ended Native American slavery in 1769 and African slavery also in the 18th century, while slavery was retained in Puerto Rico until 1863 and in Cuba until 1866. However, state-managed systems of forced labor created conditions similar to slavery. In the encomienda system, the Spanish Crown granted Spanish settlers a specified number of natives whom they had to instruct in the Spanish language and the Catholic faith. In return, the encomenderos could extract tribute from the natives in the form of labor, gold, or other products. The encomienda was abolished in 1720 and was replaced by a new system, the repartimiento, which consisted of the allotment of native workers to European settlers who owned farms, haciendas, or mines. In the Portuguese Empire, open slavery was practiced until the 19th century. Brazil became independent from Portugal in 1822, but the Brazilian authorities abolished slavery only in 1888.
self-consciousness that diverged from the colonial powers’ plans, which entailed the constant submission and exploitation of the native population. For these reasons, in April 1758 Pombal arranged to have a Portuguese cardinal, Francisco de Saldanha, appointed as papal legate for the investigation of the Jesuits’ activities in South America. The Society of Jesus was thus stripped of its possessions in the New World, upon Cardinal Saldanha’s advice, by July 1758.⁷

Pombal led another attack on the Jesuits when the aristocratic Távora family was charged with the attempted murder of King Joseph I in September 1758. The Jesuits were accused of having backed the Távoras, because the Jesuit Father Gabriele Malagrida was the personal confessor of Marchioness Leonor of Távora. The entire Távora family, along with aristocrats from other influential families, such as the houses of Aveiro and Alorna, was tried for high treason and sentenced to death and executed in January 1759.⁸ Malagrida was, at first, acquitted of high treason, but Pombal had his brother, Paulo de Carvalho e Mendonça, appointed as the inquisitor general. Carvalho eventually had Malagrida condemned and executed for blasphemy and heresy in September 1761. Malagrida’s alleged involvement in the Távora affair gave the Portuguese authorities a pretext to outlaw the Society of Jesus and expel the Jesuits from Portuguese territory, both in Europe and in America, in 1759.⁹

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⁸ The house of Távora was part of the old aristocratic elite, which despised the self-made man, Pombal, and clashed with him on several occasions. While the tense relations between the Portuguese aristocracy and Pombal are well documented, the guilt or innocence of the Távora family and its associates is still a subject for debate. See Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1995), 69–86; Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal 1750–1808* (Routledge: London and New York, 2004), 1–32.

⁹ On the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portuguese territory, which led to the interruption of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Rome until 1770, and the anti-Jesuit campaign orchestrated by Pombal, see Eduardo Brazão, “Pombal e os jesuítas,” in *O
Pombal arranged to diffuse all official documents issued by the Portuguese authorities regarding the Jesuits, including the judgment of the special tribunal appointed to investigate the assassination attempt. The dissemination of those documents led to the publication of many articles, pamphlets, satirical engravings, and to a wide debate in the European public sphere. Two factors were decisive for the success of the anti-Jesuit campaign that led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from various Catholic countries and, finally, to the suppression of the Society in 1773: preexisting negative stereotypes on the Jesuits and the existence of a wide anti-Jesuit network.

In both the documents issued by the Portuguese Crown and the publications that followed the expulsion from Portugal, the Jesuits were depicted as immoral, seditious, and craving for power. The attacks on the Jesuits were particularly effective in France, where the bankruptcy of the Martinique mission, headed by Father Antoine de Lavalette, gave the Parlement of Paris a reason to condemn the Society to extinction in 1762 and push Louis XV to dissolve the Jesuits throughout his dominions in 1764.10 In France, the Jesuits were indeed regarded as the most eager supporters of ultramontanism, which asserted the superiority of the pope over political authorities and hence opposed the Gallican theory—sanctioned in the Declaration of the Clergy in France (1682)—that the rulers' power is independent of papal authority in all matters, including ecclesiastical regulations.11 Therefore, the Jesuits were seen as a threat to state

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11 The Declaration of the Clergy of France, which was passed during the reign of Louis XIV, increased royal authority at the expense of papal power in matters of religion. The *Declaration*, which drew on the works of 16th-century French jurists such as Pierre Pithou and Guy Coquille, gave the king the right to convene church councils in his dominions,
control over the church in France. This is proven by the attacks that the Jansenists on the one hand and the *philosophes* on the other led against the Society of Jesus in the late 1750s and 1760s.

The anti-Jesuit network, which encompassed reformist Catholics from the whole of Europe, was headed by the Jansenists, who were persecuted as heretics by the church but maintained a remarkable degree of organization in France, where their clandestine publications were widely distributed. Drawing on preexisting anti-Jesuit stereotypes, the Jansenist journal *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques* and many treatises by Jansenist authors, most prominently the *Histoire générale* by Coudrette and Le Paige (1761), depicted the Society of Jesus as an organization working for the expansion of its power at the disadvantage of state authority and of the French nation as a whole. The *philosophes* were torn between their hatred of the Jesuits and their contempt of the Jansenists. However, Voltaire incorporated some anti-Jesuit stereotypes in his *Candide* (1759): for instance, he portrayed the Jesuits of Paraguay as taking advantage of the indigenous peoples while claiming to be helping them. Moreover, in a 1765 pamphlet on the “destruction” of the Jesuits in France, d’Alembert praised the French magistrates, who had proven their *esprit philosophique* in condemning the Society, and he described the Jesuits as “pleins du projet de gouverner, et de gouverner par la religion.”

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Anti-Jesuit sentiments became so widespread that Pope Clement XIII’s bull *Apostolicum Pascendi Minis* of 1765, which approved the Society’s ends and methods and maintained that the Jesuits were the object of much calumny, was rejected by many Catholic powers, including Austria, and failed to prevent Charles III from banishing the Jesuits from the Spanish Empire and Naples in 1767. In his order of expulsion, Charles III forbade any debate on the matter on pain of death: this measure not only made discussion impossible in Spain, but also discouraged debate outside of the Spanish dominions. Such anticlerical ministers as Count Aranda and Bernardo Tanucci obviously had a strong influence on the Spanish monarch’s decision to ban the Jesuits, which also led his nephew Ferdinand, duke of Parma, to expel the Society from his duchy in 1768.14

Given the situation described, Pope Clement XIV’s brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* of 21 July 1773, which abolished the Society of Jesus, came as no surprise to most educated European people. The pressure on the papacy had become so strong that the pope first tried to conciliate the Jesuits’ enemies by treating the Society harshly, forbidding it to accept novices, and repeatedly refusing to meet Superior General Lorenzo Ricci. However, these measures did not placate the main Catholic powers. Therefore, “in the name of peace of the church and to avoid secession in Europe,” Clement XIV eventually decided to suppress the Society of Jesus. Jesuit communities were disbanded, their libraries and properties were confiscated, and Ricci was jailed in Castel Sant’Angelo.

In the end, some of the major Catholic powers of the time managed to get rid of a well-organized and influential religious society, involved in evangelization, educational activities, and economic enterprises. Conversely, in Protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia, where the pope’s decisions had no value, the limited scope of the Jesuits’ action and influence allowed them to avoid clashes with the political authorities and, consequently, they were preserved.15

*The Enlightenment Discourse of Jewish Emancipation*

Unlike the Jesuits, the Jews were only a small, marginal, and powerless element of the European population—but they were an element

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15 On the Jesuit presence in Russia and Eastern Europe after 1773, see Marek Inglot, *La Compagnia di Gesù nell’Impero Russo (1772–1820) e la sua parte nella restaurazione generale*
marginalized, discriminated against, and oppressed for centuries. It was exactly because the Jews had long been kept in a situation of “inferiority and submission” that they had a privileged position in the Enlightenment discourse of emancipation and, hence, in the modern state’s attempts to rule over a growingly homogeneous, controllable, and exploitable population, without internal distinctions of division, delegation, or local autonomy. As Adam Sutcliffe pointed out in *Judaism and Enlightenment* (2003), “the core values of Enlightenment—justice, reason, toleration, self-actualisation, freedom of thought and speech—provide the fundamental grounds on which the entitlements of minorities such as Jews are protected in modern societies.” On the other hand, Enlightenment views of Judaism presented a hardly reconcilable dichotomy:

> The Enlightenment vision of universal tolerance and emancipation stood uneasily alongside the identification of Judaism as so atavistically contrary to all emancipatory values and modes of thought. Judaism was thus profoundly ensnared in the relationship between the Enlightenment and the Christian worldview from and against which it emerged.17

The Jews were still perceived as the “others par excellence” in a civilization that was experiencing dramatic developments in its fundamental values, lifestyle, and institutions, and that hence needed to rethink the position and role of those “internal strangers.” As Ronald Schechter observed in *Obstinate Hebrews* (2003), the Jews of Enlightenment Europe were thus regarded as “good to think” when it came to such concepts as liberty, equality, toleration, national identity, civilization, and modernity. However, the Jews were viewed through various ideological lenses, which prevented most Enlightenment thinkers, including the supporters of Jewish emancipation, from taking into account the Jews’ actual aspirations, needs, and concerns. For these reasons, the Jews “were far more important to gentiles for what they symbolized than for who they were.”18

The rethinking of Jewish culture and religion was an essential component of the Enlightenment discourse of Jewish emancipation, which was viewed as an essential step in the process of emancipation, and

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17 Ibid., 6.

“enlightenment,” of humankind in general. In traditional “replacement theology,” the Jews’ rejection of Christian revelation had been the “official” reason for discriminating against them in the Middle Ages and the early modern era. The Jews’ refusal of Christianity led some “philo-Semitic” intellectuals of the Enlightenment (especially English and German deists, such as John Toland and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing) to reinterpret Mosaic Judaism in new terms—not as the forerunner of Christianity, but as a source of philosophical truth, a rational system of ethics, or a model of republican politics. Yet, those attempts to provide demystified readings of Judaism produced new mystifications of Jewish culture, which was essentially reduced to an instance of some philosophical, moral, or political doctrines. Conversely, many philosophes expressed unsympathetic attitudes toward Jewish culture and stigmatized the foundational role of Judaism in the formation of Christianity. Judaism was attacked by those who, like d’Holbach and Voltaire, aimed at destroying the edifice of Christianity by undermining its Jewish foundations. As a consequence, the Jews were mostly regarded as well suited to contribute to the cultural, social, and political advancement of European civilization only if they discarded their “obsolete” beliefs and practices and agreed to conform to a new, “rational,” instrumental model of mankind.

The aim of absorbing man into a “superpersonal entity” largely characterized the 18th-century debate on human emancipation in general and on Jewish emancipation in particular. The Enlightenment projects for the emancipation of man did not allow for any difference in the treatment of human beings. Nevertheless, in most cases, the differences to be eliminated were also relevant to aspects of individual and social life that supposedly prevented human beings from achieving self-fulfillment. In fact, according to the self-realization theories of the age of Enlightenment, self-fulfillment could be achieved only if one renounced, first of all, the elements of his mentality and lifestyle inconsistent with his true self’s will—namely, a will imposed in the name of a superpersonal entity. And this superpersonal entity consisted of a universal, standardized humanity, integrated into a network of civil, social, and economic structures predisposed and controlled by a methodically organized and pervasive political system. On this point, Ronald Schechter has observed that “the ideologies

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19 On the remystification of Jewish history and culture in the age of Enlightenment, see Sutcliffe, Judaism and Enlightenment, passim.
of Enlightenment and republicanism ... demanded that the Jews relinquish their 'particularistic' belief and identity in order to achieve regeneration in the midst of a universal community, whether this was defined as an association of enlightened persons, a nation, or an empire.”

21 For these reasons, the combination of humanitarian and utilitarian arguments in the most significant Enlightenment projects for Jewish emancipation was not accidental: in fact, it resulted from the intention to integrate the Jews into political, social, cultural, and economic frameworks that were supposed to lead mankind to self-realization. This is proven by the two most important projects for Jewish emancipation in the decade preceding the French Revolution.

The treatise On the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews, written in 1781 by the Prussian state official Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, was inspired by the intention to make the Jews “happier.” However, Dohm also sought to make the Jews “more useful” to society and the state. In his emancipatory project, he proposed to admit the Jews to the enjoyment of the same rights, and to the acceptance of the same duties, as the other citizens through the elimination of many obligations and prohibitions. On the other hand, he believed that the Jews could actually enjoy civil equality only if they renounced their legal and administrative prerogatives and their communal lifestyle, which could prevent them from integrating into the mainstream of society. Moreover, according to Dohm, the government had to take care of the education of the Jews, in order to allow their younger generations to appreciate the advantages of emancipation and in order to lead them to participate in the social, economic, and cultural processes being promoted in the surrounding society. Briefly, the government had to lead the Jews to consider their Jewish identity as “secondary” and their role as citizens as “primary.”

21 Schechter, Obstinate Hebrews, 12.

Eight years after the publication of Dohm’s plea for Jewish emancipation, the French clergyman Henri Grégoire published his *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des Juifs* [Essay on the physical, moral and political regeneration of the Jews, 1789]. The French abbé was even more explicit than Dohm in highlighting the need to relieve the Jews from their “backwardness.” According to Grégoire, the Jews had experienced a process of “degeneration” over the centuries, both on account of external reasons, such as their Christian neighbors’ hatred and the imposition of many disabilities, and because of internal problems, such as their “absurd” laws, religious and educational traditions, and sexual and eating habits. This process of degeneration had affected the Jews’ psychological as well as physical characteristics, and it had prevented the “race of Abraham” from behaving morally and coexisting with non-Jews. The Jews therefore needed to undergo a “physical, moral and political regeneration” in order to become like the others—who, evidently, had not experienced any process of degeneration—and, hence, to be considered and treated as normal citizens. However, regeneration could take place only if the Jews adopted mainstream society’s beliefs and practices and gave up their communal lifestyle and a number of customs and traditions which had contributed to making them a degenerate “race.” And given that the degenerative process had deeply affected the Jews’ psyche and biology, their regeneration could not take place overnight: indeed, in Grégoire’s opinion, it would take several generations to “regenerate” the Jews.23

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In an attempt to question the then predominant approach to the issue of Jewish emancipation, the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn declared, in his essay *Jerusalem* (1783), that if the price the Jews had to pay for emancipation was the rejection of essential elements of their “revealed legislation,” then the Jews would prefer to renounce emancipation. But Mendelssohn’s warning was ignored. In fact, when applied to the Jews, the Enlightenment discourse of emancipation led to solutions that endorsed their assimilation into dominant culture and society. This attitude was best expressed in the famous speech pronounced by the Parisian deputy Clermont-Tonnerre at the French National Assembly in December 1789, during a debate on the eligibility of Jews for citizenship:

> The Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals. They must be citizens. ... Every one of them must individually become a citizen; if they do not want this, they must inform us and we shall then be compelled to expel them. The existence of a nation within a nation is unacceptable to our country.24

The Jews of France were emancipated in 1791, and their coreligionists in most of Europe were granted emancipation during the 19th century. But what was granted to the Jews as individuals and citizens was essentially the “right” to overcome their “empirical self” with its unacceptable defects: this way, they could discover their “true self,” which they had always ignored because of their culture and religion, and they could hence become what Dohm had called “more useful and happier members of society.”25

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25 Christian W. Dohm, *Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews*, trans. Helen Lederer (Hebrew Union College: Cincinnati, 1957), 60. After the first emancipation of Jews in revolutionary France, Jewish emancipation was achieved in various German states, including Prussia, in the Napoleonic era between 1808 and 1812, in Piedmont in 1848 and then Italy in 1861, in England in 1858, in the Habsburg Empire in 1867, and in Germany after unification in 1871.
After the Enlightenment

Both the Jesuits and the Jews were victims of the same intellectual, cultural, and sociopolitical dynamics, namely the Enlightenment discourse of human emancipation and the fact that the growingly centralized and all-encompassing states of 18th-century Europe appropriated the Enlightenment concept of emancipation and adapted it to their purposes. Nevertheless, one might argue that, while the Jesuits were attacked as enemies of the state in those Catholic countries where their activities could clash with the political authorities’ interests, the Jews were mostly conceived as the main beneficiaries of the emancipatory projects of the time. To this objection I would answer that the suppression of the Society of Jesus was, after all, a temporary accident, while the Enlightenment discourse of Jewish emancipation led to a very controversial process of assimilation and, at the same time, to renewed hostility towards the Jews.

In August 1814, shortly before the beginning of the Congress of Vienna, Pope Pius VII issued the bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*, which restored the Society of Jesus. Several factors contributed to the restoration of the Jesuits: first of all, the death of the “enlightened” rulers who had promoted the suppression of the Society; moreover, the plans to restore the “old order” after the turmoil caused by the French Revolution and Napoleon; and last but not least, the need for a renewed cooperation that would benefit both the church and the Catholic powers of Europe, after the humiliations suffered in the age of revolutions and the Napoleonic Wars. The circumstances of the time thus led to a new period of growth for the Society of Jesus, as proven by the many Jesuit schools and universities established in the 19th century. Briefly, the Jesuits often benefited from an atmosphere of renewed cooperation between church and state, in a time when the states of Europe, in their efforts for social control, found it more profitable to cooperate with—and, when possible, take advantage of—religious organizations, instead of fighting them.26

On the other hand, the emancipation of European Jews did not bring about the benefits that authors like Dohm and Grégoire had envisioned. What the 18th-century “emancipators” endorsed was essentially the assimilation of the Jews into mainstream society. In fact, the Enlightenment discourse of emancipation asked the Jews to change, to regenerate, and to consider themselves, first and foremost, as “citizens,” namely as elements

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or aspects of the superpersonal entity called “state,” and only secondarily as “Jews.” But in the age of Jewish emancipation the assimilation of the Jews into surrounding society did not put an end to European discomfort with Jewish otherness, and it did not prevent the spread of new forms of anti-Jewish hostility.27

The century following the French Revolution saw the development of a model of state characterized by an even more radical homogeneity than that pursued in the age of Enlightenment, although this model of the state actually finds its origins in the state-making process of the 18th century, as historians Linda Colley and David Bell have shown in their studies of nation-making in England and France. Of course, I am talking of the nation-state—a model of political association and social inclusion in which the démos, the political community, is essentially reduced to the ethnos, which Jürgen Habermas has defined as “a pre-political community of shared descent organized around kinship ties.”28 It was in the context of the growth of the nation-state that racial anti-Semitism emerged and spread, proving that discomfort with difference does not disappear when the “others” recant, convert, or assimilate.

As Zygmunt Bauman has observed, a person, a belief, or a practice that is blatantly different from the mainstream “does not fit the structure of the orderly world, does not fall easily into any of the established categories, emits therefore contradictory signals as to the proper conduct—and in the result blurs the borderlines which ought to be kept watertight and undermines the reassuringly monotonous, repetitive and predictable nature of the life-world.”29 But those who have assimilated, those who

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have proven able to modify their beliefs or lifestyles, are an even more dangerous threat to “the reassuringly monotonous, repetitive and predictable nature of the life-world.” The fact that they have changed once implies that they can change again. Their protean nature may thus ingenerate an unbearable discomfort in the elements of a superpersonal entity that is conceived as radically and invariably homogeneous. Therefore, when conversion or assimilation occurs, this discomfort, which has been named in several ways (i.e. racism, xenophobia, proteophobia, etc.) produces a fixation on “constant or allegedly constant physical (therefore irreversible) traits.”

And given that the “blood” cannot change, cannot assimilate, this fixation can lead to the removal of so-called ethnic or racial differences through new forms of discrimination, segregation, expulsion, and, in the most extreme cases, physical elimination: it was exactly this escalation that, starting in the age of Jewish emancipation, eventually led to the “final solution” of the “Jewish question” during the Second World War.

In conclusion, the significance of the suppression of the Society of Jesus and of the Enlightenment discourse of Jewish emancipation lies in the fact that these two historical phenomena, which affected the “tragic couple” of Jesuits and Jews, resulted from the development of a concept of human emancipation and of a related model of political organization that were obviously insensitive to difference and that, therefore, opposed divergent views of emancipation and social inclusion. And the era that followed the age of Enlightenment, with a renewed cooperation between state and church and with the controversial dynamics of Jewish emancipation, saw essentially a continuation, if not the culmination, of the process of self-realization and state-making that had been triggered in the 18th century.

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Introduction

Contrary to popular opinion, the walls of the ghetto did not sunder the cultural relationship between Jews and Christians. The Jewish Italian historian Attilio Milano regarded the ghetto as a kind of monastery in which Jews could live according to their laws and traditions.¹ The organization of ghetto life strengthened the authority of the rabbis to such an extent that in Verona and Mantua the day of the establishment of the ghetto was declared to be a day of feasting.² Paradoxically, one notes in the ghetto a flowering of Jewish theatrical, musical, and literary culture.³

During the early modern period, the Catholic church and the rabbis had two common goals: to safeguard their respective traditions, and to adapt them to a modern cultural context. The rabbis often adopted culturally Catholic models, adjusting them to their needs and for a Jewish milieu. I will here mention only a few examples, beginning with the world of books. In 1595, a small treatise titled *Leqaḥ ṭov* [A good teaching] was published by the printer Giovanni di Gara in Venice. The treatise is a kind of Jewish catechism compiled by Abraham Jagel of Mantua from the *Catechismus Maior* and the *Catechismus Minor* of the Jesuit Peter Canisius (1521–97). Jagel conceived his treatise for the benefit of Italian Jewish youth but *habent sua fata libelli*: the *Leqaḥ ṭov* was translated into Yiddish and became a beloved text among the Jews of Eastern Europe who were believed to be exemplars of Jewish ethics.⁴

⁴ Gianfranco Miletto, “Die *Ratio Studiorum* und der Katechismus des Petrus Canisius als Vorbild für das jüdische Erziehungssystem in der Gegenreformation,” in *Katholizismus*
Some years before the publishing of the *Leqaḥ tov*, in 1564, Rabbi David ben Abraham Provenzali and his son Abraham founded a Jewish high school in Mantua (rather than a university, as has often been said) and developed a course outline based on the *Ratio studiorum* (1599) of the Jesuits.⁵ Cases are on record of Jews who attended Jesuit colleges. In the 17th century, Jewish students admitted to the medical faculty of the University of Padua reported that they had learned Latin at the Jesuit colleges in Mainz and Prague.⁶

Mantua comes up yet again as we move to our final example of Jesuit influence on Italian Jewish culture. The descriptions of Solomon's Temple made by the Jesuit Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608) and the Mantuan Jewish physician Abraham ben David Portaleone offer good examples of the push, characteristic of both the Catholic church and Judaism in the 16th and 17th centuries, to integrate secular sciences and religious tradition. Villalpando's and Portaleone's works are based on the *Theatrum sapientiae*, a visual encyclopedia of Giulio Camillo Delminio (c.1480–1544).

*The Visual Encyclopedia in the 16th and 17th Centuries*

The encyclopedic works of the 16th and 17th centuries reflect the profound crisis that then encompassed culture, religion, and politics. Geographical and technical discoveries led to a new conception of the world. Traditional principles of world order, undisputed until that time, were thrown into question.⁷

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The medieval educational system of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic), and of the *quadrivium* (mathematics, geometry, music, and astronomy)—the so-called liberal arts—came to be seen as insufficient to satisfy the new demands. Despite an ongoing adherence to such obsolete frameworks, new systems were created that allowed for the fusion of contemporary knowledge with traditional values, thus preserving a unitary vision of wisdom. A model was sought in which the variety of reality could be classified within a uniform structure that simultaneously took into account the processing of knowledge and the constitutive elements of reality. The epistemic process of knowing would therefore be equivalent to a reconstruction of God's creation.

Rhetoric, supplemented by Lullism and Ramism, was the model chosen to achieve these lofty goals. The melding of topics with the dialectic of Lull and Ramus was, however, adapted to the preference for and admiration of the classical world according to a typical feature of the culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, namely, a visual, perceptible representation of knowledge. This meant that images that had found no place in the abstract system of Lull were replaced by the geometrical figures and letters of Lull's dialectic.

The encyclopedic project that most clearly conjoins the classical art of memory and the mnemonic logic of Lull with the Neoplatonic and hermetic–Kabbalistic tendencies of this epoch is the theatre of Giulio Delminio Camillo.\(^8\) Giulio Camillo dedicated his entire life to developing an encyclopedia of knowledge in the shape of a theatre.\(^9\) Camillo saw his theatre as a construction of universal memory for words and concepts, the *memoria verborum* (memory for words) and the *memoria rerum* (memory for things) of classical mnemonics, in which, using Cicero's concept of rhetoric, the entire cosmos would be represented. Rhetoric was for Camillo much more than merely an art; in his view it was imbued with cosmological–ontological meaning. In the framework of Neoplatonic and Christian–Kabbalistic philosophy, rhetoric becomes the principle through

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which the entire cosmos is ordered and interpreted. Giulio Camillo was convinced that the rhythms and laws of rhetoric corresponded to the rhythms and laws of the cosmos, and that the relationships between words that produce harmonically structured speech resemble the connections between all things in the universe. For Camillo, the elegance of the art of rhetoric was a reflection of universal harmony. And his goal was to illustrate all this in a theatre.

Camillo drafted his mnemonic construction in keeping with the pattern of the Vitruvian theatre and modified it in accordance with his mnemonic purposes.10 In a normal Vitruvian theatre, gradually ascending seats were arranged in a semicircle in front of the stage and were divided by seven gangways. Camillo’s theatre also rose in seven stages or levels, which were divided by seven gangways representing the seven planets. However, at each of these seven gangways Camillo put gates or doors, decorated with many images and pictures, mostly of mythological subjects. Gates and doors with their images thus fully occupied the auditorium. The usual function of the theatre was thereby altered. The spectator stood where the stage would otherwise have been and looked at the pictures on the gates and doors on the seven rising steps. The imaginary gates served as repositories of memory in which the order of Eternal Truth was presented to the spectator like a type of drama.

In Camillo’s theatre, erected and decorated in accordance with his Neoplatonic and Kabbalistic vision of the world, King Solomon played a leading part. On the foundation of the whole structure of the theatre stand the seven pillars of Solomon’s House of Wisdom, upon which all of creation rests:

Solomon in the ninth chapter of Proverbs says that Wisdom has built herself a house and has founded it on seven pillars. By these columns, signifying most stable eternity, we are to understand the seven Sephiroth of the super-celestial world, which are the seven measures of the fabric of the celestial and inferior worlds, in which are contained the Ideas of all things both in the celestial and inferior worlds.11

But Camillo's theatre remained a utopia. He was able to build only one wooden model of his theatre that no longer exists today and was already missing in the 17th century.

Although Camillo's encyclopedic project was not carried out, his theories represented a milestone in the evolution of the topic. Camillo put the system of images that classical mnemonics had seen within an imaginary memory building into something decidedly concrete: the actual construction of his theatre. The imaginary construction of classical mnemonics with the symbol-images indicating concepts, words, and things takes on a concrete architectural shape, and the mnemonic collection of images is placed in the restricted room of the theatre. Since the images refer to the basic principles of the cosmos, the primary structure of the cosmos itself is reconstructed in the space of the theatre in the shape of a dramatic performance.

Mnemonics and the passion for collecting that was characteristic of the 16th and 17th centuries are conceptually related to one another. One might say that the idea of memory as an architectural structure changed into an architectural representation of memory itself. Studioli (small study rooms or cabinets for contemplation) and Wunderkammer (cabinets of wonders or curiosities), all the rage among princes and prosperous scholars at this time, can be more or less directly associated with Giulio Camillo's theatre.

Giulio Camillo's theories were also well known and popular outside Italy, especially in France and Germany. The German physician and scholar Samuel Quiccheberg or Quic(c)helberg (1529–67) who was cultural counselor in the service of the Fugger and Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria

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for their libraries and art collections, felt it to be his mission to convince princes and scholars to erect “theatres as well as archives of wisdom.”

Though in his tract *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi* (Adam Berg: Munich, 1565) he refers to Giulio Camillo and to the model of Italian collectors, the Jesuit pedagogic conception of the theatre must have influenced him as well.

Even more explicitly than in that of Giulio Camillo, King Solomon plays a central role in the biblical iconography of Quiccheberg’s theatre. The conclusion of his tract is amended by the inclusion of a quotation from 1 Kings 5:9–14, wherein Solomon’s wisdom and knowledge of nature are praised. Solomon, who talked about all sorts of plants and animals, is the prototype of the encyclopedic scholar of the Renaissance who distinguished himself through his virtues, eloquence, and knowledge of the natural world. King Solomon was the first collector to categorize and explore everything. But his wisdom was ultimately grounded in God. Solomon thus embodies the divine order of the tract which regards God’s wisdom and the Bible as the foundation and the summit of all knowledge.

In early modern Europe, theatres, galleries, cabinets of curiosities, and collections became the external expression of what was formerly mnemonic. They were an expression of a cultural crisis and testified to the attempts to manage it. In the virtual architectural buildings of the mnemonic systems or in the real room of the studies and the galleries, the great multiplicity of reality, which seemed alive and movable, was classified and reconstructed. New astronomic and geographical discoveries had widened the borders of the world and the universe, extending them into dimensions previously unknown. Here, one tried to restore the missing

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15 The Jesuit college of Munich is mentioned at the beginning of the title: *Collegii Societatis Jesu Monachii Inscriptiones vel tituli Theatri amplissimi*. See also Hanak-Lettner, *Die Ausstellung als Drama*, 89.

16 Roth, *Der Anfang der Museumslehre*, 214–17, 232.
and seemingly lost universal order in a mnemonic system that made comprehensible the processing of memory as well as of reality. Counterposed to the image of an unlimited, fleeting, barely comprehensible world was the limited space of the collection of the *studiolo* and of the “theatre.” Constructed by man, it could, therefore, be controlled by him. To “classify” did not mean to explore nature in accordance with modern, scientific criteria but to display the invisible concatenation of Being of which man is likewise a part.

Among the architectural models which served as scenery and backdrop for the performance of knowledge, the Temple—along with the theatre, the gallery, and palace—was used as a metaphor. Around the middle of the 16th century, the metaphor of the Temple appears in the title of numerous works: Niccolò Franco’s *Tempio d’amore* (Francesco Marcolini: Venice, 1536); Girolamo Parabosco’s *Tempio della Fama in lode d’alcune gentil donne venetiane* (Comin da Trino: Venice, 1548); Gerolamo Ruscelli’s *Il tempio alla divina s. donna Giovanna d’Aragona, fabricato da tutti i più gentili spiriti, et in tutte le lingue principali del mondo* (Francesco Rocca: Venice, 1565); Giuseppe Betussi’s *Le imagini del tempio della signora donna Giovanna Aragona* (M. Lorenzo Torrentino: Florence, 1556); Ottavio Sammarco’s *Il Tempio della divina signora donna Geronima Colonna d’Aragona* (Lorenzo Pasquati: Padua, 1568); and Corradi Lancellotto’s *Tempulum omnium iudicum pontificiae, Caesareae, regiae, inferiorisque potestatis* (apud Ioannem Baptistarum Somaschum: Venice, 1574) are only a few examples.17

The Temple, in accordance with the early modern fondness for classic culture, was first and foremost an ancient Temple. In Gian Paolo Lomazzo’s (1538–1600) treatise, *L’idea del tempio della pittura*, the description of the seven parts of the art, namely proportion, movement, color, light, perspective, composition, and form, contains a Temple with the ancient circular plan.18 The sacred meaning of such constructions was emphasized at the time of the Counter-Reformation and Solomon’s Temple assumed the function of the theatre.

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Solomon's Temple by Villalpando

The mnemonic system seemed at the time to be an interpretative key for the secrets of God's creation, and this presupposed participation in God's wisdom. The theories of Giulio Camillo and Quiccheberg were placed in a religious-mystical framework and supported by biblical quotations that imbued the performance with a sacred character. Solomon's Temple is not mentioned directly in the explanation of the Theatre that Camillo offers in his treatise L’idea del teatro. However, Camillo's theatre is associated in his thinking with the domus sapientiae [House of Wisdom] founded on seven pillars, symbolically evoking the Solomonic Temple of the Book of Proverbs (cf. Prov. 9:1) attributed by tradition to King Solomon. Solomon is described in the Bible as the perfect sage, whom God amply equipped with extraordinary wisdom (1 Kings 3:9–14). The Temple, for whose construction God had engaged Solomon, was the architectural representation of this wisdom.

The encyclopedic endeavors were gradually transferred from the theatres of Giulio Camillo and Quiccheberg to the Temple of Solomon. The hermetic-Kabbalistic items that had resonated powerfully in the hermetic, heterodox circles of Venice, were removed or were reinterpreted to reflect the Counter-Reformation's vision of the world.

This process culminated in the Temple description by the Jesuit Juan Bautista Villalpando. The interior of the Temple was described
approximately by Villalpando as being similar to the gallery of a prince, a kind of *Wunderkammer* in which God's wisdom displayed all of creation:

The essential feature of this sacred building was that it was drafted by God's wisdom. Although this is also true for the construction of the world, the essential and admirable quality in the construction of the Temple is that in it, just like in a small picture, God had composed with a wonderful art the images of all things beneath the firmament of the heavens.\(^{21}\)

Reflecting his idea of the Temple, Villalpando includes in its description chapters about medals and coins, weights and weighing practices, strategy and weapons, social structure, and geography.\(^{22}\)

In Villalpando's depiction, Solomon's building becomes a symbolic construction in whose architectural framework knowledge—in the guise of a theological world-vision—was transformed. After its destruction and the loss of its historic, real shape, the Jerusalem Temple became an idealized construction and in this new form could adopt new symbolic functions. In the hermetic philosophy of modernity, the building plan of the Temple of Solomon was considered a mystical image of the heavenly and the earthly order. The mystical interpretation of the historic construction of Solomon as a mental construction in which the plan for creation is reflected was supported by the Bible itself. In 1 Chr. 28:11–19 it is reported that David handed over the building plans of the Temple and the instructions about its equipment, which he received “from the hand of Lord,” to his son Solomon. The literary *topos* of God as architect of the *cosmos* was

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\(^{21}\) *In Ezechielem Explanationes*, vol. 2, 461: “Fuit huius aedificii sacri proprium, fuisse illud Dei Optimi Maximi sapientia conditum: quod, quamvis illi sit cum mundi fabrica commune, hoc tamen est proprium et in templi fabrica admirandum magis, quod in ea tamquam in parva quadam, depictaque tabella, rerum omnium, quae sub vasto caeli ambitu continetur, arte mirabili Deus imaginem efformavit.” See also 473: “Hoc enim maxime decuit Deum Optimum Maximumque, eundemque sapientissimum rerum omnium opificem et huius aedificii Architectum, in quo rerum omnium imago quaedam ac similitudo continetur ...”

\(^{22}\) See for example the index in the second part of the third volume of the Temple-description, xv–xvi: *De Hebraeorum ponderibus, numismatis atque mensuris mathematicarum demonstrationum liber primus; De Romanis, Graecis, Hebraicisque ponderibus atque numismatis. Secundae partis apparatus Liber secundus in quatuor disputationes tributus; De ponderibus et mensuris in universum; Romana antiqua pondera atque numismata; Graecorum pondera atque numismata; Hebraorum pondera atque numismata.*
paralleled in the Bible by the account of God as architect of his Temple. From this, interpreters derived the idea that God applied the harmonic dimensions that underlie his creation also for the construction of his House.

Villalpando’s monumental Temple-portrayal is turned into a speculative theoretical design. Villalpando holds the Jerusalem Temple to be a construction inspired by God, whose plan and proportions were revealed to Solomon and to the prophet Ezekiel in a twofold manner. Because of its divine origin, the Jerusalem Temple is, for Villalpando, the archetype of all architecture. Since the humanist culture of the time regarded as standard the proportions based on Vitruvius, Villalpando tried his best to prove that the entire Temple and all the parts of the building display the same anthropomorphic proportions and musical ratios as Vitruvius’s architectural principles. In conformity with the aesthetic principles of classical architecture and in accordance with the Pythagorean–Neoplatonic ideas of the time, the Temple takes on, in Villalpando’s view, a cosmic value. In agreement with Philo of Alexandria (*De Vita Mosis* III), Villalpando symbolically connects the quadratic plan of the Temple with the signs of the zodiac and arranges the four outside walls of the innermost square in accordance with the four elements of nature while the seven quadratic yards correspond to the seven planets. All the parts of the Jerusalem Temple are harmonically related like the members of the human body and display the same harmonic proportions that link the human body (microcosm) and the world (macrocosm).

In the Temple building, erected according to divine instructions, Villalpando sees the demonstration of that universal harmony that permeates the divine creation and assures the cohesion of all of its parts. Against this background, Villalpando’s reconstruction of the Temple acquires a meaning beyond religious allegory, reflecting political and social aspects. In contrast to the brittle nature of the state and society, the historic-biblical Temple acquired a paradigmatic character in the 17th century. In its double function as a religious center as the house of God and as an administrative center (the seat of different offices, tax and treasury, courthouse, and public health) the Temple symbolizes a political and social order institutionalized through divine will. The Temple as an ideal, perfect building, whose architecture is in keeping with universally valid principles that derive from God himself, and exhibiting mathematical-cosmic proportions, becomes the utopian image of an irrevocable divine norm in accordance with which social structure and political life should be shaped. A changeable, unstable reality is countered by a stable, static social and
political order which derives its model from the Bible. Likewise, there are clear allusions to Solomon's Temple in the design of the Escorial, with its quadratic plan. The symmetrically divided inner courtyards and the centrally protruding church have been inspired by such considerations. In its double function as royal seat and as a monastery, the Escorial is the architectural representation of a sacral conception of terrestrial power. It has its biblical prototype in King Solomon and in the Temple he erected.23

Villalpando and Portaleone

We return to books and to Mantua. In the last years of his life, the Jewish physician Abraham ben David Portaleone (1542–1612) from Mantua wrote the Shilte ha-gibborim [The shields of the heroes], a Hebrew description of Solomon's Temple.24 He published it shortly before his death as his spiritual testament for his three sons, David, Eliezer, and Yehudah. In the introduction, using the literary form of a letter addressed to his sons, Portaleone explains that he decided to write the book in consequence of a paralytic stroke. He considered his illness a chastisement from God because in his youth he preferred to occupy himself “with the seductive words of Greek wisdom,”25 and neglected the study of the Torah. Now, at the end of his


25 Portaleone, Shilte ha-gibborim, 2b. A German translation of the Shilte ha-gibborim has been made by Gianfranco Miletto, Die Heldenschilde, 2 vols. (Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main, 2002).
life, he wanted to write this book as a sign of his repentance and as atone-
ment for his sins.

The *Shilte ha-gibborim* is divided into four parts, and clearly exhibits a
religious and pedagogic intention. The three “shields,” as Portaleone
names the main parts of his work, consist of excerpts from the Bible, the
Talmud, the Midrashim, and the Zohar. They form a cycle of prayers and
meditative readings for the entire year, stylized in accordance with the
ritual of Temple worship.

After the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish
people, the Torah took on the unifying function that the Temple had pre-
viously filled. The scholar who deals with the Torah and the rules of sacri-
fice resembles a member of the *mishmarot*, the divisions of priests and
Levites for the daily services in the Temple, and his study replaces the
offerings in the Temple. An indispensable prerequisite for the effective-
ness of Torah study as an offering for the people of Israel is the mental
intention involved (in Hebrew, the *kawannah*).26 So that his readers can
more easily imagine being in the Temple, Portaleone prefaces the three
“shields” with a description in 90 chapters of every particular of the Temple
complex, including its furnishings and liturgical rules.

However, Portaleone does not restrict himself to a description of the
Temple complex and the cultic acts. Despite Portaleone’s censure of phi-
losophy and secular sciences, the numerous topics related to the Temple
are used as a framework to deal with different aspects of the culture of his
time. In chapters 4–13, Portaleone links the detailed description of the
musical instruments and of the Temple music with the musical theories of
the Renaissance. The various functions of the priests and the Levites in the
Temple service give Portaleone the opportunity to explain the social and
political structure of the ancient state of Israel (chapters 40–43). The gar-
ments of the High Priest lead to an extensive treatise about gems, their
application in medicine and their value, in which Portaleone declares
even the current trading prices and gives advice on how forgeries can be
recognized (chapters 48–49). The discussion of animal sacrifices and
incense offerings introduce a detailed treatise on zoology and botany on
the basis of the earliest information after the discovery of the “New World”

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26 For a possible association with the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, see
Alessandro Guetta, “Avraham Portaleone from Science to Mysticism,” in *Jewish Studies
at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the 6th EAFS Congress, Toledo July 1998*,
2 vols., ed. Judit Targarona Borrás and Angel Sáenz-Badillos (Brill: Leiden, 1999), vol. 2,
40–47.
(chapters 50–56, 77–85). Chapter 76, which is about different kinds of salt, is actually an alchemical discussion of the topic. The book consequently resembles an encyclopedia, where, against the background of the Temple, the most important branches of knowledge as seen from the viewpoint of an educated Jew of the 16th and 17th centuries are described.

Initially, the analysis seems nonsystematized. Musicology precedes warfare and the explanation of the social structure of the people of Israel. Zoology and botany are dealt together with current price lists of gems and the exchange rates of the coins. Yet a principle of order infuses the whole; it is the Temple itself with its rooms and furnishings. These serve as guides for the different scientific treatises.

The Shilte ha-gibborim, a unique work in the Jewish literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, cannot be unequivocally assigned to a specific literary genre. It can be viewed as a book of edification as well as an encyclopedia or an antiquarian work. If we consider the Shilte ha-gibborim in a cultural–historic context and compare it with other, non-Jewish works of this time, we immediately recognize its structure. The mundane topics that Portaleone inserts into the description of the Temple can be summarized as follows. The Greek and Latin alphabet with other alphabets of real and imaginary languages introduce the following 90 chapters. Music and musical instruments (chapters 4–13), physiognomy (chapter 38) with an allusion to the Aristotelian tract De historia animalium, politics and administration (chapter 40), military art and weapons with a description of the bore (chapters 41–43), gems and minerals with descriptions of their effects and with an explanation as to how one can recognize forgeries (chapters 48–49, 54), zoology and the medical use of animals (chapters 50–53), coins and medals with their exchange rates and the price list of gems and pearls (chapters 55–56), weights and measures with a description of scales (chapter 72), different oils and wine types (chapter 75), different types of salt and a description of their extraction (chapter 76), herbs, spices, and scents (chapters 78–88). Chapter 86 offers suggestions regarding the storage and making of wine and vinegar, and chapter 88 describes the process of distillation.

This variety of subjects is reminiscent of the contents of a Wunderkammer of Portaleone’s time. Portaleone finds the ideal framework for their representation in the Temple of King Solomon. The Temple of Solomon, whose project was of divine origin and represents the plastic, visual realization of

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27 For an overview of research and interpretations about Portaleone and his work, see Miletto, Glauben und Wissen, 25–28.
the identification between science and divine word, is the architectonic transposition of the harmonic cohesion of the variety of the creation. Therefore, Solomon’s Temple becomes the topological ordering principle of knowledge already implied in the cosmic interpretation of Villalpando. As earthly residence of God and architectural representation of his wisdom, the Temple is seen as a type of Wunderkammer, as the model of the theatrum sapientiae. The description of the Temple enables us to sort out and make sense of the apparent hodgepodge of the religious and the mundane.

In his Temple reconstruction, Portaleone faithfully follows the biblical and rabbinical texts; it betrays no influence of the Neoplatonic–hermetic interpretations of Giulio Camillo, Quiccheberg, Villalpando, or Philo of Alexandria. Nonetheless, even if neither Giulio Camillo nor Villalpando are mentioned, Portaleone is inspired by their works. That the theatre and writings of Giulio Camillo were also known and appreciated among Jewish scholars in Mantua in Portaleone’s time has already been pointed out by Ruderman in his monograph on Abraham ben Hananiah Jagel (1553–c.1623). As far as Villalpando is concerned, we can assume that Portaleone knew of the monumental description of the Temple by the Jesuit, with whom he shares the idea of the Temple as an architectural representation of God’s universal wisdom. There can be no doubt that Portaleone did read the Solomonic Temple description of another Jesuit. In chapter 46 (p. 45a) of the Shilte ha-gibborim, explaining the precious

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stones of the Efod, Portaleone prides himself on having found a new method for understanding the names of the stones and their attributed association with the tribes. Portaleone's “new method” is actually taken from the Jesuit scholar Francisco de Ribera (1537–91).30

Portaleone strives to write a work that corresponds to rabbinic tradition. Accordingly, his mnemonic–encyclopedic Temple differs from similar Christian models on a crucial point: he represents the sciences without using pictures or images. Because of the biblical prohibition of using images as cult objects, images would be absolutely unacceptable in the context of a Jewish Temple description. The rooms and the cult objects of the Temple replace the *imagnes agentes* of the rhetorical mnemonics and are used as topical places. The sequence of the representations of the different sciences is determined by the succession of the liturgical performance and by the architectural arrangement of the Temple itself, which offers the ideal framework for the explication of scientific topics that were of burning cultural interest. Villalpando and Portaleone take a parallel approach to secular topics. They treat more or less the same topics and motifs in the collections kept in the *Wunderkammer* and in the *studioli* of princes and wealthy scholars.

*Portaleone and Athanasius Kircher*

Portaleone's work was not only read by Jews. In 1651, the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher founded the so-called Museum Kircherianum, a collection of curiosities in the manner of a *Wunderkammer* in the Collegium Romanum which reflects his encyclopedic, wide-ranging, and multifarious interests. The Museum is the concrete realization of Kircher's pan- and theosophical interpretation of knowledge explained in several monumental works.31 According to Kircher's conception of the cosmos, in the archetypal or intelligible world are settled all the ideas of everything held in the divine intellect that realizes them in the three inferior worlds, namely: in the angelic or intellectual world, the place of the angelic choirs; in the sidereal world where the sun and the heavenly spheres are settled;
and the elemental world where the four elements (air, water, earth, and fire) are settled. The four worlds are harmonically related. The metaphysical value of numbers expresses through music (considered by Kircher a branch of mathematics) the universal harmony and the innermost relationship between the four worlds in its most sublime manner.\textsuperscript{32}

Kircher devoted to music a monumental work entitled the \textit{Musurgia Universalis}.\textsuperscript{33} The author’s aim was not merely the realization of a systematic exposition of the theoretical and practical foundations of music without omitting all the material referring to it as acoustical and musical phenomenon.\textsuperscript{34} The work was intended to be an encyclopedia, and its “universality” (\textit{universalis}), its encyclopedic character, is based on a mathematical interpretation of the harmony of the universe.

Athanasius Kircher devotes 20 pages at the beginning of his work to a description of the music in the Temple of Solomon. He takes as starting-point that the music had a primordial origin without merits of a particular people or culture.\textsuperscript{35} After the Deluge, the Egyptians take credit for

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Athanasii Kircherii e soc. Iesu Oedipus Aegyptiacus} (Vitalis Mascardi: Romae, vol. I, 1652, II/1–2 1653, III 1654), II, 6: “Nemo, dum nos de Arithmetica tractaturos percipit, vulgarem illum mercatorum calculus tradituros existimet, sed reconditiorem illam numerorum scientiam, qua per occultam quandam analogiam arcanior Theologiae pars concluditur; quae uti ex mente divina et suprema monade perenni emanatione scaturit, ita omnia quoque quatuor Mundorum supra explicantur [i.e. the archetypal world, the angelic world, the sidereal world, and the elemental world], omniumque in iis contentorum mysteria involvit.” See also \textit{Musurgia Universalis}, vol. II, 441: “Loquimur autem hic de numero non mathematico, sed de numero symbolico et rationali, qui ex divina mente procedit, cuius mathematicus imago quaedam est et similijudo, sicut enim mens nostra se habet ad mentem divinam, ita numerus mentis nostrae ad numerum mentis divinae.”
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Musurgia Universalis, sive Ars Magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta}, 2 vols. (ex typographia haeredum Francisci Corbelletti: Romae, 1650; vol. 2 Ludovici Grignani: Romae, 1650).
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Musurgia Universalis}, vol. I, 44: “Musica igitur non a Graecis aut Aegyptiis aut Chaldaeis, sed a primis ante diluvium hominibus primam habuit suae inventonis originem; immo si omnes homines e mundo iam tollerentur praeter paucos pueros rerum ignarios, hosce tamen tum necessitate cogente tam [sic] casu et experientia cum tempore in varias inventiones humano generi necessarias incidere posse nihil dubito; inventiones enim rerum hominum insitae sunt, nec libris solum discuntur, sed et intellectu aliqua insigni necessitate cogente, vel casu aut experientia vel genii suggestione eruuntur; Musicam igitur iam a principio fuisse, praeterquam quod Sacrae Literae id luculenter testentur, ipsa etiam ratio dictat, ut dixi, certe 4.cap. num.21 Geneseeos musicorum instrumentorum inventio lubali aperte adscribitur.” See also \textit{Oedipus Aegyptiacus}, vol. II, pt. 2, 120–21.
\end{quote}
Fig. 5. Musical instruments according to Portaleone's description from Atahnasius Kircher's *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome, 1650): neginnot, minnim, mahol. With permission of the Heinrich-Heine-Universitätsbibliothek Düsseldorf.
Fig. 6. Musical instruments according to Portaleone’s description from Atahnasius Kircher’s *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome, 1650): mashroqita. With permission of the Heinrich-Heine-Universitätsbibliothek Düsseldorf.
Fig. 7. Musical instruments according to Portaleone’s description from Atahnasius Kircher’s *Musurgia Universalis* (Rome, 1650): magrefah. With permission of the Heinrich-Heine-Universitätsbibliothek Düsseldorf.
preserving the art of music. The name Moses, from which, according to Kircher, the Latin “musica” originates, testifies to the high regard in which this art was held by the Egyptians. Music then went to the Greeks, the Latins, and other peoples. Extrapolating from the fact that divine inspiration was given to David and Solomon, Kircher infers that the Jews knew the rules of music in their most perfect form. Like Villalpando, Kircher believed that the Temple was built in accordance with musical proportions that would not have been possible if Solomon had not had full and perfect knowledge of all the rules of music. To support this opinion Kircher mentions the Shilte ha-gibborim as the treatise which describes better, and with more accuracy, than all the other rabbinic works, the music of the Temple. Kircher quotes in Hebrew some passages from Portaleone's chapters about musical instruments, offering an approximate Latin translation.

Portaleone identified the musical instruments used in the Temple service with those of his time with the help of lexicographic interpretation, based on formal characteristics and on the quality of single instruments. The nevel, for example, a stringed instrument mentioned many times in the Bible which is commonly translated as “harp,” is named in this manner because of its form, which calls to mind that of the “wineskin” (also a meaning of nevel in Hebrew) or because of its sound which is so sweet that it renders the sound of every other instrument contemptible (so, too, the meaning “naval” in pie’l form). The same quality can be found in the modern instrument of the lute, wherefore according to him the nevel should be identified with the lute.

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37 Ibid., I, 55: “Nullum dubium est, quin Musica Hebraeorum tempore Davidis et Salomonis fuerit perfectissima, cum enim David a puero Musicum ageret, eaque mirum in modum afficeretur, fieri certe non potuit, ut eam ad altiorem dignitatis gradum elatus non omnibus modis promoverit; Salomon vero infusa imbutus scientia, uti aliarum omnium rerum, ita vel maxime musica a Deo instructum fuisse credi debet, quomodo enim Divinum illud aedificium iuxta harmonicarum proportionum regulas omnibus numeris elaboratum, sine maxima musicæ scientia peritiaque fieri potuerit, non video; certe omnia templi vasa miro ordine distributa, tum maxime instrumenta musica summo arte elaborata cum maxima varietate et sapientia condita fuisse, solus is nescire poterit, qui ordinem et dispositionem singularum rerum, in mirifica hac et divina fabrica occurrentium, non intellexerit.”

38 Ibid., I, 48: “Inter coeteros igitur Hebraeorum Authores exacte huismodi instrumenta tractat Author Schilte haggibborim.”

A very similar method is used for the identification of another stringed instrument, the 'ugav, whose name Portaleone draws from 'ugah, a special cake because of its form/shape which is similar to this instrument as well as to the viola da gamba. Therefore, Portaleone considers the 'ugav and the viola da gamba to be the same and identical instrument.\(^{40}\) The magre-fah of the Talmudic tractate Arakhin is described by Portaleone like the monochord of his time.\(^{41}\) In the Musurgia Universalis, Kircher agrees with Portaleone and sketches the forms the musical instruments following Portaleone's description ("secundum descriptionem R. Hannase").\(^{42}\)

For Kircher the idealized reconstruction of the ancient Hebrew culture and of the Temple of Solomon is a confirmation of the theory of the prisca theologia and prisca sapientia, which he defended. Like Quiccheberg, Villalpando, and Portaleone, Kircher found in Solomon's Temple the ideal construction for the representation of knowledge thoroughly integrated into the Catholic as well as the Jewish tradition. The Temple building takes on the meaning of a metaphysical principle according to which knowledge, which has its basis in God’s word, is formulated. In their shared religious outlook, the Theatrum sapientiae evolves into a Templum sapientiae, a synthesis and symbol par excellence of God’s wisdom and universal harmony.

Despite formidable religious and cultural barriers, early modern Jesuit and Jewish authors such as Quiccheberg, Villalpando, Portaleone, and Kircher strongly influenced one another, their respective work clearly marked by an interpenetration of ideas. This cultural medley, with its mystical interpretations of biblical motifs, would not find a home in the mechanical–rational worldview heralded by the epistemology of Descartes and Galileo. In this new worldview, the harmonic order of the universe remained a goal, but was sought, instead, within the context of physical–mechanical relationships. Indeed, one is tempted to wonder if and how the creative Jesuit and Jewish minds of this next period managed to engage with one another.

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40 Ibid., 8a–b (= Miletto, Die Heldenschilde, vol. 1, 176).
41 Ibid., 6a–7a (= Miletto, Die Heldenschilde, vol. 1, 165–69).
42 Musurgia Universalis, vol. I, 54. Kircher has mistakenly read the adjective ha-nissa’ [honored] on the frontispiece of the Shilte ha-gibborim as author name.
Matteo Ricci, the famous Jesuit missionary to China, welcomed a stranger called Ai Tian to the Jesuit residence in Beijing. The year was 1605. This scholar official from the city of Kaifeng in the inland province of Henan had heard of the wise man from the West and wished to speak with him. He used the opportunity of visiting Beijing for the doctoral examinations as an excuse to call upon the Jesuit. Ricci subsequently included their encounter in his journal, which was later wrought into a book by another Jesuit, Nicolas Trigault, when he traveled back to Rome to promote the work of the Jesuit missionaries in China. This edited work was published in Augsburg in 1615 as *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu* [Concerning the Christian expedition among the Chinese undertaken by the Society of Jesus] and was then republished and translated into other languages very rapidly. Ricci had included this particular encounter because the scholar was both Chinese and Jewish. Ai Tian and his coreligionists aroused great interest throughout Europe as the discovery of a “lost” community of Jews living in the middle of China was exciting, surprising news.

Over the next two centuries, until the banning and expulsion of European Christian missionaries during the 18th century (and the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773), a number of Jesuits wrote reports about the origins, nature, and history of the Kaifeng community. These writings too were sent back to Europe, not only as part of the general exchange of correspondence between Jesuits but also in response to specific enquiries from a number of interested parties spread across the continent. When China was forcibly opened up to foreign trade in the middle of the 19th century, as a consequence of the defeats inflicted upon

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1 An incomplete English translation of this was completed in the 1940s by a New England Province Jesuit, Louis Gallagher, and published as *The China That Was: China as Discovered by the Jesuits at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (The Bruce Publishing Company: Milwaukee, 1942).

imperial China during the Opium Wars, a new group of scholars showed interest in the ongoing existence of this community.

They found the community drastically reduced in size and substance, both as a result of natural diminishment (since it was not receiving Jewish settlers from beyond China) and through gradual integration into the broader populace because of intermarriage. The community had come so far from its distinctive origins that some individuals were even willing to sell portions of the community’s sacred scriptures and treasures to foreigners—even though they had rejected similar offers from the Jesuits in earlier centuries. From then onwards the study of Chinese Judaism, at least in terms of this ancient community, has largely been limited to the older primary sources of historical enquiry.

Elsewhere during the 19th and 20th centuries, newer Jewish communities were established, not only in the treaty ports (especially Shanghai), but also in regional locations like Harbin, in the northeast. There was a substantial Russian Jewish community in this city, mainly due to the presence of the Chinese Eastern Railway’s headquarters, which connected China and the Russian Far East. White Russian émigrés substantially augmented the Jewish community of Harbin in the early decades of the 20th century after the October Revolution. Likewise, other European refugees settled in Chinese Jewish communities after the rise of Nazism and the terrible persecutions that accompanied it. By and large, however, these newer communities were not connected to, nor communicated with, their illustrious forebear.

Thus much of the most important information about the Kaifeng community can only be drawn from the pre-Suppression writings of the Jesuits (i.e. prior to 1773). That Jesuits would bother to record the history of a Jewish community on the other side of the world at the same time that their leaders in Rome had recently voted to exclude New Christians from the Society is a story worth exploring further. There has already been much written about the meeting between Ricci and Ai Tian, as well as close analysis of the scriptures in the possession of this community and the various stelae inscriptions that were found within the Kaifeng synagogue.

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3 A number of these are now in the possession of the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati.


5 Although published some years ago, Hyman Kublin provides a comprehensive selection of some of the more important selections from these writings in Studies of the Chinese Jews: Selections from Journals East and West (Paragon Book Reprint Corp.: New York, 1971).
Rather than repeat this line of research, the context within which such knowledge was produced will be discussed.

By moving from an analysis of the composition and development of the community to a more considered examination of the following five factors it is hoped that a new and richer understanding of the relationships between Jesuits and Jews in China will be achieved. These factors include: (a) the principle actors engaged in generating the primary sources; (b) their own historical circumstances; (c) the reception of these reports back in Europe; (d) their long-term preservation; and (e) the broader implications of these activities. As part of this discussion, particular attention will be paid to the actors of the latter period, namely, during the late 17th and early 18th centuries, as their involvement has been less remarked upon. This group includes, among others, Gianpaolo Gozani, SJ (who first visited Kaifeng in 1698), Jean Domenge, SJ (who first visited in 1718), and Antoine Gaubil, SJ (who visited in 1723). While the research is thus an instance of specific historical enquiry, it is also an investigation of the interconnectedness of the early modern world, especially among the citizens of the republic of letters. The full, active, and conscious participation of the members of the Society of Jesus in this republic will again be made abundantly clear.

At the time of Ricci’s encounter with Ai Tian, the Jesuits in Europe had moved into a difficult stage of their relationship with Judaism, and especially with those Christians who were descendants of Jewish families but had converted after the Spanish and Portuguese impositions in the 14th and 15th centuries. As discussed by Robert Maryks in his work *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry and Purity-of-Blood Laws in the Early Society of Jesus*, while the first generation of Jesuits included many who were of Jewish ancestry and while Ignatius was very supportive of the so-called *conversos* (the converted ones and their descendants), by the end of the 16th century the Society had voted to shut New Christians out. Thus the fact that Ricci recorded meeting a Chinese Jew at a time when Jesuit documents and general assistants argued that “those from the circumcision subverted the entire house of the Society” bears further consideration.

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The historical circumstances within which Ricci came to adulthood are pertinent to such a consideration. That is, Ricci’s educational background, early missionary experiences, and personal character provide enough clues for the possible reasons behind his openness towards Ai Tian, and his desire to record this meeting.

**Ricci’s Roman Background as Cause for Openness to Ai Tian**

First, when Ricci left Europe for the missions in 1578 there was still not yet a universally held opinion against the admittance of conversos into the Society. It is true that some Spanish and Portuguese members had been agitating against people of Jewish blood (especially at the Third General Congregation in 1573) but at the time a noticeable number of senior Jesuit figures—including the second general, Diego Lainez (d.1565), and the recently deceased Juan Alfonso de Polanco (d.1576)—were known to be of Jewish ancestry.8

As with many of the great Jesuits of his own and subsequent generations, Ricci was educated at the Collegio Romano (Roman College), and took many courses with the illustrious Jesuit scientist Christopher Clavius (1538–1612). Although the extensive course of learning promulgated by the Jesuits (known in brief as the Ratio studiorum—the method and system of the studies of the Society of Jesus) had not yet been codified in its entirety, the roots of it were clear.9 Students were to study the humanities and sciences in the spirit of enquiry popularized by the Renaissance, as well as traditional courses in philosophy and theology. For the best students, not only did this include the study of the Latin and Greek classics but also the Hebrew language, in order to understand and expound Scripture more competently. The Roman College became a key center in implementing this standardized course of study. A spirit of equanimity marked its

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8 Even though the Jewish ancestry of Lainez was beyond doubt, the Spanish Jesuits were so ashamed by it that they strongly denied it. One historian of the Society, Francesco Sacchini, in opposing this refutation noted “I merely wish to indicate that I in no way repent of what I wrote about Laynez. As a Christian, his Jewish blood was not an ignominy but an ennoblement, for he was not a wild shoot, as each of us is, but a fallen branch of the good olive grafted again sweetly and fitly into the parent stock.” As cited in James Broderick, *The Progress of the Jesuits (1556–1579)* (Longmans, Green and Co.: London, 1947), 321, where the original source—*Monumenta Historica, Lainii Monumenta*, viii, 831–55 is given. I am grateful to the discussion of this in Jean Lacouture’s *Jesuits: A Multibiography*, trans. Jeremy Leggatt (Counterpoint: Washington, D.C., 1995), 172.

9 Although the *Ratio Studiorum* was promulgated in 1599, it was the result of a longer process of experimentation.
atmosphere of learning and characterized the style of leadership practiced there.

The official biographer of Ignatius, the Portuguese Jesuit Luis Gonçalves da Câmara (1520–75), disparagingly described such equanimity as “the Roman way,” seeing in it a tacit approval of a certain spiritual laxity. Others were less critical of this approach, including the man who did the most to formulate a uniform policy of missionary activity in the East, the Italian Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606). He was a prominent supporter of the Roman way and actively promoted a spirit of tolerance among the missionaries under his charge; in 1573 the new Jesuit Father General, Everard Mercurian (1514–80), appointed Valignano as the Visitor to the East, which meant that he was in charge of all the Jesuits from Goa to Nagasaki and all points in-between.

Valignano’s letters regularly used the phrases “il modo soave” or “il spirito soave” [a gentle spirit or style] to describe his preferred missionary approach and he was scathing with regard to the prevailing Portuguese attitude of intolerance and cultural superiority as this ultimately did more harm than good. After arriving in Goa in 1574 he went to Japan to review the work of the missionaries there. During the first of his three visits, from September 1578 until July 1579, he interviewed the missionaries and observed their works. He was disappointed in the ways in which the Jesuits had proceeded in their approach to this sophisticated culture. He noted:

As a result of our not adapting ourselves to their customs, two serious evils followed, as indeed I realized from experience. They were the chief source of many others: First, we forfeited the respect and esteem of the Japanese, and second, we remained strangers, so to speak, to the Christians.10

The Roman way was not based on estrangement but on friendship and mutual regard. Valignano had been Ricci’s own novice master in Rome when he first entered the Society of Jesus in 1571. Later, in 1582, Valignano summoned Ricci from Goa to study Chinese in Macau with the view to entering China and he remained in close and frequent contact with Ricci during the early years of the China mission. Thus it is certain that not only had Ricci been exposed to Valignano’s spirit of openness but also that Valignano clearly trusted Ricci to engage in just such a manner in his new

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mission. Ricci’s meeting with Ai Tian, as with many other Chinese scholars, thus flowed from this predisposition, one that was in marked contrast with the view that sought exclusion and expulsion. Another enduring influence of the Roman College was the fact that Jesuits from all over the European continent were studying there, so Ricci would have been exposed to and forced to deal with the questions and challenges of national difference prior to his arrival in China. Additionally, Rome’s citizens were more tolerant of the Jewish community in their midst than were places in Spain and Portugal (and their dominions). Sadly, the same could not be said of the Vatican, especially given “the multifaceted conversionary program organized by the later sixteenth century papacy.”

This program included the establishment of a house for Jewish catechumens in 1542, the burning of the Talmud in 1553, and the creation of the Jewish ghetto by Paul IV in 1555.

Ricci’s early missionary experiences also influenced his subsequent attitudes towards the numerous Chinese scholars who came to his door. Prior to settling in China in 1583, he had first lived and worked in Goa. There he had witnessed the attitude of the Portuguese colonizers towards the local populations, and also towards New Christians who had made their way to the bustling entrepôt. In Goa, Ricci had written of the disgust he felt in the face of intolerance towards the local populations shown by the Portuguese (including the Jesuits). This reveals in a dramatic way his awareness of the bigotry that could accompany national chauvinism.

Finally, Ricci’s own temperament and personality seems to have been one that was predisposed to friendship, which would have been encouraged by his Roman education. Throughout his years in China he was close with the Chinese Christians who became Jesuits (in fact he was also the first novice master in China), developed deep friendships with a number of scholars, and was attentive to the lowliest of the mission’s converts. All this shows that Valignano’s model found expression in Ricci’s own life. Thus perhaps it is not surprising that Ricci met so favorably with Ai Tian.

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12 Ronnie Po-chia Hsia notes, in A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552–1610 (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010), 48, that the Inquisition was established in Goa in 1560 to “combat the infiltration of Jewish and Muslim errors and the relapse of converts.”
13 It should not be a surprise therefore that one of Ricci’s most famous works in Chinese was a distillation of Latin classical texts about right relationship, called Jiaoyou Lun [On friendship], published in 1595.
in Beijing at the same time that Jesuits in Rome, Lisbon, and beyond were chasing *conversos* from their midst.

*Early Encounters between Jesuits and Jews in China*

It is one thing for Ricci to have been open to such contact but it must also be remembered that it was the Jewish community itself that first sought Ricci out. According to Ricci’s journal this was because they thought he might be a coreligionist of theirs. Ai Tian had heard that Ricci and the other Jesuits were “not followers of the Law of the Saracens and ... worshipped only the King of heaven” and thus were possibly “followers of the Mosaic Law.”\(^{14}\) Yet it was not just companionable curiosity that prompted Ai Tian to seek out Ricci. The community was diminishing in numbers and in knowledge of their faith, which is much remarked upon in all subsequent literature. This state of affairs was certainly one cause for the Jewish visitors to visit this strange foreigner. They thought that not only was he one of theirs come from afar but also—given their straitened circumstances—that he might be able to be of assistance, perhaps even as a rabbi. So, the initial encounter was a mixture of a desire for engagement on the one hand and Jesuit flexibility and tolerance on the other. In some ways, given the subsequent unfolding of the relationship, this initial meeting was one of the high points of Jesuit–Jewish interactions in China.

It was a number of years before the Kaifeng Jewish community came to realize that the Jesuits were not in fact Jewish. Various instances of mutual miscomprehension have been remarked upon in numerous articles and books.\(^{15}\) Even though, by the end of this meeting, Ricci had realized that he was talking to a member of a lost Jewish community rather than to a fellow Christian, it seems that Ai Tian was either none the wiser or at least not overly concerned about the differences, given that Ricci was invited to be the rabbi of the Kaifeng community in 1608. (The only stipulation was that he refrained from eating pork.) During this initial time of interaction, the Jesuits on the other hand were trying to learn as much as they could about the community. Some, but not all, of what the Jesuits learnt during this time was recorded for posterity.

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The first Christian visitor to the community was in fact a Chinese convert, Xu Bideng (also known as Antonio Leitão, 1578–1611), who traveled there in 1607. Interestingly, this fact has been noted but little remarked upon in the literature. Xu was based in Beijing at this time, and it was most likely that he was delegated to go to visit Kaifeng and its synagogue because Ricci was too busy with other duties. Xu also investigated whether or not there existed any remnant Christian communities in Ai Tian’s hometown (these communities were referred to by other Chinese as “the adorers of the Cross,” which was one way of describing Nestorian Christians). Xu Bideng was a Jesuit by this stage and was seemingly knowledgeable enough about Christianity, certainly at least as it had been taught to him.

Even so he was not only unable to read Hebrew but was also unable to place any of the Jewish symbols and customs practiced in Kaifeng into a broader religious and cultural context. Ricci noted, for instance, the fact that Xu managed to get the beginning and end of the scripture in the Kaifeng synagogue copied, thus indicating his lack of knowledge of Hebrew. Nevertheless, the fact that he was Chinese gained him access to the Kaifeng Jewish community in ways that would probably not have been possible to his more educated European confreres. That he obtained a copy of some of the scriptures also reveals the extent to which the Jews had made him welcome, and says much about his own resourcefulness besides.

Upon his return, Brother Xu reported to Ricci what he had observed. Ricci had given him explicit instructions about what to look for and what to enquire about (as for instance the texts in their possession), and also wrote a courtesy letter to the leader of the synagogue. Thus much of the information Ricci reported in his journal was obtained both from the conversations he had with Ai Tian in Beijing and through the observations of the Chinese Jesuit Xu. Apart from the general information contained in Ricci’s journal, however, there are no other reports about the investigative journey that can be attributed to this Chinese Jesuit. Xu died a few years later in 1611, drowned on a voyage between Shaozhou and Macau, so he did not have the chance to return to the community for further investigation. Thus even from the very beginning of the story important information (such as Xu’s own reflections and reactions) has disappeared without a trace.

Over the course of the century knowledge about the Kaifeng Jews and their religious heritage and practice became more comprehensive and more accurate as a succession of Jesuits visited Kaifeng, both to study the
Jewish community and to provide solace to the small Christian communities. The Italian Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), who had studied Hebrew as part of his usual course of academic formation, visited Kaifeng in 1613. A few years later, in 1619, another Italian, Nicolo Longobardo (1559–1654), and the Chinese Jesuit brother Zhong Mingli (João Fernandes, b.1581), likewise traveled there. After the death of Ricci in 1610, Longobardo was appointed the superior of the Chinese mission. In a postscript to one of his official annual letters to the General in Rome, written in September 1610 (thus prior to his own visit to the community), he pleaded that one or two Jesuit fathers who knew Hebrew be sent to Kaifeng:

I have been informed that those Christians of the Cross, owing to the love with which they worship the same God as the Jews, go to offer their prayers in the synagogue; and the Jews allow them [to do this] because of this [common] reverence. In addition, since the Jews surpass them in numbers, rank, and wealth in China, they undertake their protection. Hence, it would be very advisable, Ven. Father, to dispatch one or two Fathers, versed in the Hebrew language, because they possess the Hebrew Scriptures but do not understand them since their rabbis who knew Hebrew are dead. In fact, having heard us say that the Messiah had already come to the world, they say that they are willing to follow Him, to worship His likeness, etc. May, therefore, these Fathers come, as there are so many Jews in several provinces of China; and those of the Cross will be retrieved together with them.16

With the benefit of historical hindsight, it appears ironic to modern readers that Longobardo was seeking European Jesuit specialists in order to convert Chinese Jews at a time when the Society in Europe was discriminating against Jesuits whose ancestors had themselves converted from Judaism. Later, in 1623, Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628) passed through the community on his way to Shanxi. Francesco Sambiasi (1582–1649) was sent to Kaifeng in 1628 to found a Jesuit residence in order to work with the ancient Christian community and the more newly established one. In later years, between 1636 and 1642, Rui de Figueiredo (1594–1642) was stationed at Kaifeng and was very active with the Christian communities. In 1642, the Macanese Jesuit Brother Fei Cangyu (Francisco Ferreira, 1604–52) joined de Figueiredo, although by this time, with the imminent collapse of the Ming dynasty and the ongoing sieges of Kaifeng by rebels, the Jesuit

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residence faced great economic hardship, “being in extreme poverty and ... the residence was lost in March.”

During the third siege of Kaifeng, from September 1642 onwards, the attacking army and the forces loyal to the Ming dynasty deliberately broke the dikes of the Yellow River in order to use its force against each other’s army. Neither side envisaged the catastrophe that resulted when heavy rains forced almost another mile of the now weakened embankments to break. In the words of Roger Des Vorges, “the two resulting streams soon converged in a single rampaging torrent that smashed into the north wall of Kaifeng.” The flood was devastating.

The inundation clearly cost the Jewish community many lives and also did great damage to the synagogue and the scriptures contained within it. The Jesuit Rui de Figueiredo also died in the deluge, as presumably did most of the Christian community. It was subsequently a number of years before the connection with the Christian or Jewish communities resumed in any substantial way.

Before moving on to the later actors, their reports, and the way in which these writings were received in Europe, it is fascinating to note that there is significant circumstantial evidence to suggest that de Figueiredo was actually of Jewish blood himself. He came from Curucho, a town near Évora in Portugal, which historically had a large Sephardic community. His family name is a common Sephardic one meaning “from a fig tree field.” Furthermore, recent studies have shown that many of the Portuguese merchants in Macau were likely of Jewish stock, having “fled persecution in Iberia to reach the outer fringes of the Portuguese thalassocracy in Asia, where they hoped to be less exposed to the injustices of Spanish and Portuguese law.” There were at least two other Jesuit missionaries in Asia who were named de Figueiredo: Melchor de Figueiredo and Cristovão de Figueiredo.

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17 Joseph Dehergne, “Les Chrétiéntes de Chine de la période Ming (1581–1650),” *Monumenta Serica* 16, 1/2 (1957): 46. Ferreira was a Macanese Christian, whose mother was Chinese and his father Portuguese. He entered the Society in 1627. Roger V. Des Forges, in *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2003), 157, argues that Figueiredo was in Kaifeng from 1624 to 1642 but the entry in Joseph Dehergne, *Répertoire des jésuites de Chine de 1552 à 1800* (Rome, Institutum Historicum S. I.; Paris, Letouzey and Ané, 1973) states that even until 1627 he was still elsewhere.


19 The synagogue had been badly damaged by an earlier flood in 1461 and then, later again, in 1849, it was once more threatened.

de Figueiredo. It is known that both of them were from converso families.

Furthermore, it is well known that many of the converso members of the Society had indeed requested to go to the missions, or had been sent anyway, as a way of living out the Jesuit vocation without having to work under the threat of ongoing persecution from their brethren or the Inquisition. Outstanding among this group, as shown by Maryks, were the famous missionary to Latin America, José de Acosta (1539–1600), and the illustrious missionary to Vietnam, Alexandre de Rhodes (1591–1660). It is noteworthy then that the Jesuit who died in Kaifeng in the flood that damaged the synagogue and the Jewish writings may indeed have been of Jewish heritage himself.

*Reports from the Latter 17th Century and Early 18th Century*

For the Jesuits, the existence of the Jewish community in Kaifeng was important in several ways. This group of monotheistic believers was seen as a possible source of converts, as evidenced by Longobardo’s comments regarding the desirability of sending a number of priests trained in Hebrew. While to modern readers this can seem objectionable, and certainly is not imbued with a Vatican II understanding found in the 1965 Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetatae*, at that time the Christian belief was that this was a positive act. That is, baptism enabled Jewish converts to partake of the gifts of monotheistic Christian fellowship and to be beneficiaries of Christ’s salvific acts. So, it is understandable that the early Jesuits in China hoped to convert the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng. Furthermore, this group of believers must have initially seemed very appealing to the missionaries since presumably many of the religious terms and concepts like covenant, salvation, and redemption, for instance, would not need much elucidation (nor, indeed, translation).

The Jesuits were thus doubly disappointed when they came to the realization that although some knowledge of Hebrew had been maintained among the community, most of the Jewish community lacked a deep understanding of the intellectual content of their faith. (This is evidenced, for instance, by the fact that many in the community were unaware of the books of the Jewish canon that they were missing.) Furthermore, Donald

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21 See *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús [DHCJ]* 2:1416.
Leslie notes that the Jesuits who were able to study the scriptures in the possession of the community reported that “the Judaeo-Persian colophons to the Law, dated 1620–6, suggest a poor knowledge of Hebrew at this time.”22 Thus even from an early stage, the Jesuits had a sense that this was a community increasingly cut-off from its heritage and one which was little different from the other communities they encountered throughout China. Even here, therefore, their task of conversion would present many challenges.

The early Jesuits also considered themselves fortunate to meet a long-established monotheistic community because they were able to use its existence to justify their own presence in China. That is, given that a frequent charge against them was that they were representatives of a foreign religion that threatened China’s traditional mores and philosophies, if they could show that they were similar to, or even related with, another ancient and acculturated religious community, this would help them and their neophytes. The famous sinologist Erik Zürcher studied the enculturation of religions like Buddhism and Christianity and, as summarized by Nicolas Standaert, argued that “no marginal religion penetrating from the outside could expect to take root in China (at least at the social level at which the Jesuits functioned) unless it conformed to what was considered ‘orthodox’ and ‘orthoprax’ (zheng), in a religious, social, and political sense.”23 Thus to be able to show that they were akin to the Kaifeng Jewish community (and therefore engaged in orthodox behavior) was important politically and socially for Ricci, his confreres, and subsequent generations of Christians.24

Yet the more they found out about the Kaifeng community, the more their initial hopes were disappointed. Although the community kept the major festivals, observed dietary regulations, and the practice of circumcision, it seems as though the community was becoming progressively integrated into the Han Chinese milieu. This becomes very clear in a letter written many years later in 1724, where it was noted that “it was already

24 In a similar way the discovery of a stelae outside of Xian between 1623 and 1625 attesting to the long-standing existence of Nestorian Christianity in China was also an opportunity for the Jesuits to show the longevity and therefore validity of their own form of religion. Alvaro Semedo (1585–1658) was thus missioned to go to Xian to make a translation of the stelae and this find was communicated throughout the world.
about 200 years since anyone had come to visit them. This is why no-one applies himself to study, especially since the time they lost their grammar which they call *tu-ching-pen*, that is *pen* for book, *tu* for studying and *ching* for the Bible."\(^{25}\) The grammar book referred to was lost in the floods of 1642.\(^{26}\)

Despite the fact that their initial intentions did not meet with the success that had been desired, the Jesuit commitment to intellectual enquiry meant that they did not abandon their research about the community forever. As noted above, however, the floods in the middle of the 17th century not only damaged much of the patrimony of the community but also caused a large gap in the records about it. The break in the chain of knowledge changed at the turn of the 18th century with the arrival of another set of visitors. These new Jesuits took the copious notes that have become some of the most important pieces of information about this community that still exist today.

*Jesuit Reports in the 18th Century*

The first of the visitors was the Italian Jesuit priest, Gianpaolo Gozani (1659–1732), who arrived in China in 1694. Between the years 1698 and 1713 he was stationed in Kaifeng on four different occasions, ministering to the Christian community that had grown again after the floods of the previous century. As was the Jesuit practice (and obligation) he wrote numerous letters describing the state of the Christian community he was living with, and anything else that might be of interest to European readers. Naturally enough, this included information about the Jewish community; the first of his extant letters that contains references to them was written in 1704. This was then subsequently included in the 1707 edition of the famous series produced by the French Jesuits, *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de*
Jésus [The curious and edifying letters written by Jesuit missionaries], published in 34 volumes between 1702 and 1776.

Although Gozani also wrote a number of other letters between 1704 and 1713, the one of 1704 is the most important because of its description of the synagogue. He also accompanied Father Antoine Gaubil to the synagogue in 1723. As Gaubil had just arrived in China, Gozani acted as his translator in a conversation with the local community elders. Unfortunately, Gozani did not know Hebrew. Even so, he did the next best thing and took (or commissioned) rubbings and copies of the stelae that were in the synagogue, sending these along with his usual correspondence.

The stelae included one from 1489, another from 1512, another from 1663, and one from 1679. They recorded aspects of the Jewish community’s history, in addition to noting some of its achievements in broader society. In his 1969 article, Donald Leslie maintains that the inscriptions from the 1489, 1512, and 1679 stones can still be seen on another stone in Kaifeng, near the site of the old synagogue.27 The information on the 1663 stelae, which had text carved on both its front and back, was only preserved by the rubbings procured in the first instance by Gozani, and then by other Jesuits after him. Scholars still refer to the Gozani editions of 1704, so it is reasonable to suggest that the other rubbings did not add substantially to the knowledge already held. Gozani sent copies to both the French Jesuits in Paris and to the Jesuits’ curia in Rome, where they were preserved in the archives. The importance of this ongoing preservation will be discussed below.

After Gozani, the next to visit was a French Jesuit, Jean Domenge (1666–1735). Domenge arrived in China in 1698 and then spent the next 27 years at various mission stations throughout the country, including at the river city of Jiujiang, along the Changjiang (the Yangtze), and at Xi’an where he stayed for nine years. After these years he spent some time in Beijing before going to Nanyang and then, finally, between 1718 and 1725 he was stationed at Kaifeng. In 1725, he was forced to leave, however, when Emperor Yongzheng ordered that missionaries working in the inland cities of China be deported to Guangzhou and Macau, where he died in 1732.

Domenge was clearly a bright and linguistically gifted man. He had the languages he acquired through his early Jesuit education (including Hebrew), and learnt Mandarin and Manchurian during his years in China.

He was also one of the composers of a 14-volume dictionary of Chinese–Manchurian words (*Dictionarium Tartaro–Sinicum*). He utilized these linguistic skills in his years at Kaifeng and it is from his observations that many more pieces of information about its Jewish community have been preserved. Between the years 1721 and 1725 Domenge wrote six letters about the community. In these missives he took special care to discuss the scriptures in the community’s possession (making as accurate a list as possible) and to note the various religious practices of the community. Other books have analyzed the content of these scriptures and, even into the present, there are new and different translations prepared about them.28

One letter in particular, which Domenge wrote in 1721, contained detailed and accurate diagrams of the synagogue and its features. This was also the longest of Domenge’s six letters. He sent them to the community at the Jesuit college in Paris. We will return to this collection of letters, and their preservation, shortly.

Finally, in 1723 and 1725, one other French Jesuit (Gaubil, mentioned earlier) visited Kaifeng and also recorded what he learnt there. Gaubil was the embodiment of the desires held by Longobardo a century earlier, having devoted himself to studying Hebrew “in order to be able to read the lives of the saints in their primitive sources.” With this knowledge he was able to supplement and verify the information that had been recorded by Domenge earlier.29 His letters too were sent to the Jesuit community in Paris, and to the Jesuits’ head office in Rome.

The collections were then consulted and used by other scholars in Europe. As Donald Leslie noted in his work *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: The Jewish Community of Kaifeng*, a French Jesuit, Gabriel Brotier (1722–89), compiled the letters of Gozani, Domenge, and Gaubil into a manuscript *Mémoire sur les Juifs établis en Chine* in 1753 or 1757. “It was published in Latin in 1771 and then in French in the *Lettres* in 1774.”30 As noted above, this had been preceded by a report in the 1707 edition of the *Lettres*, which republished the account provided by Gozani.

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28 There has been recent scholarship on the scriptures owned by the community, and the prayer practices that can be revealed from the remaining textual evidence. See, for instance, Fook-Kong Wong and Dalia Yasharpour, *The Brill Reference Library of Judaism, Volume 32: Haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews of China* (Brill: Leiden, 2011).


Before discussing the ways in which the letters (and the subsequent compilations) were received in Europe, it is important to note the challenging conditions within which the Jesuits were working and the often complex arrangements that needed to be made first to go to Kaifeng, and then to approach the Jewish community there. In a letter Domenge wrote in 1723, he describes the difficulties he had faced on one of his visits. This letter was a direct response to a letter sent by one of the Jesuits from the Paris community, and the following lengthy quotation shows that even though Domenge sought a gracious tone, he was frustrated at the lack of comprehension shown in Paris about the difficulties the China-based Jesuits faced:

I have had the spare time to pay attention to the remarks which you made about my replies. Here indeed is what I can tell you about all of this. 1. If the scholars do not contribute some monetary aid for making new discoveries you are talking in vain about the need to examine and make copies, seek explanations etc. [for] nothing of all this will get done. For Father Gozani who is at Kaifeng will not want to and cannot do it, however well intentioned he may be, since he cannot read Hebrew, and it is thus necessary that another missionary goes there, either from Nanyang which is 60 leagues [150 miles] away or from Peking at more than 150 leagues [375 miles]. ... I stayed in Kaifeng about eight months to make this first attempt, it cost me about 74 taels merely for my board and that of my men and for my agent and others, money for the voyage there and back. It is true it was dear then to live in Kaifeng. And all of this expenditure has fallen on the mission according to what my superior told me and it is perhaps because of this that on the arrival of Father Gaubil, he forbade me to exert myself to obtain the books of the Jews ...

Clearly, the journey of academic discovery was an expensive and at times problematic one, and it gives pause once again that anything has been preserved at all about the Kaifeng Jewish community.

The European Reception of these Reports and their Ongoing Preservation

Although the Jesuits have been obliged to write regular letters ever since the earliest days of the Society’s foundation, they also wrote them to engage in a global exchange of knowledge. The letters written by Domenge and Gaubil were addressed to Etienne Souciet, SJ (1671–1744), who was an active member of the Jesuit community at the College of Louis the Great, and between 1725 and 1740 was in charge of the library. Souciet was vitally

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31 Domenge 8a, as translated in Leslie, *Juifs de Chine*, 174.
interested in the theological and philological questions raised by the existence of the Jewish scriptures held by the Kaifeng community. The French bibliophile would end up being one of Gaubil’s main correspondents, until Souciet’s death in 1744. Between the years 1722 and 1725, at which time Souciet became the College’s librarian, Gaubil wrote him 16 personally addressed letters. Between 1726 and 1729 there were another 23, and then in 1730 and 1731 there were yet a further ten addressed to Souciet, at a rate of ten a year. These were not, of course, the only things that Gaubil wrote in these years.

They do reveal, however, that Souciet and Gaubil (and to a lesser extent Domenge) were involved in a vibrant academic conversation. This was not only because of the binding friendships that had been forged between the French missionaries and their fellow Jesuits back at home (some of whom would have been their former teachers or their fellow companions in training) but also because since the earliest days of the French Jesuits’ mission in China they were also engaged in court-sanctioned scientific enquiry. After all, the first French Jesuits to go to China as part of an official delegation—Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), Jean-François Gerbillon (1654–1707), Jean de Fontaney (1643–1710), Louis Le Comte (1655–1728), and Claude de Visdelou (1656–1737)—were known as les mathématiciens du roi (the mathematicians of the king). In the words of Paul Demiéville of the Institute of France:

> At that happy time, the divorce between the natural sciences and the humanities had not yet been perpetrated. In the correspondence of Gaubil, history, philology, literature, the customs of the Chinese all hold almost the same place as astronomy, which was his principal occupation, or of geography.32

Consequently, one finds Gaubil in communication with scholars at the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, the French Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Inscriptions and Humanities, as well as being a foreign associate of the British Royal Academy. In addition to Jesuits like Souciet and Guillaume-François Berthier (1704–82, who was the editor of the journal Mémoires de Trévoux), he communicated with the celebrated French scholar Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749). Amazingly, it would often take up to a year for a letter sent from Beijing to be received in Paris, and that is only if everything went to plan. In the year 1694, for instance, a British squadron

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captured the French vessel sent that year. Then, to highlight the tenuousness of such long-distance communication, the very next year “the French vessel was lost body and soul at Belle-Isle” (i.e. near the island off the coast of Brittany).33

Preservation of these Letters and its Implications

The 20th century saw another increase in scholarship about the Kaifeng community that—as discussed in the introduction above—was visited by a number of Protestant missionaries in the mid-19th century. Such renewal in interest saw scholars trying to gain access to details about the community and its history from numerous sources, but the best kept, most detailed, and most authentic primary ones were those that were preserved in the Jesuit archives in Rome and in Paris.34

As Eber has shown, even though the synagogue had been dismantled between 1851 and 1866, scholars were still able to visualize the actual size and shape of the synagogue from the historical descriptions and drawings provided by Gozani and Domenge.35 The community itself may have physically torn down its walls but Jesuit scholarship and archival practices remained as a bulwark for those seeking knowledge about the Kaifeng Jews. One such scholar was another Jesuit, a Spaniard, Jerónimo Tobar (1855–1917). From 1880 until his death almost 40 years later he was based at the famous Jesuit center in Shanghai. The 19th- and 20th-century sinologist and president of the Société de Géographie in France, Henri Cordier (1849–1925), described him as the best sinologue among the missionaries in the Jiangnan region—that is, the region south of the Yangtze River, which included Shanghai.

In 1900, he published a work that translated the inscriptions of the stele and plaques that had been in the Kaifeng synagogue. The work was entitled Inscriptions juives de K’ai-fong-fou [Jewish inscriptions from Kaifeng prefecture], and was published as edition number 17 of the China-based Jesuit journal Variétés Sinologiques. It was considered a breakthrough, building upon the largely forgotten work of Gozani and

34 In 1851, a Protestant missionary, Bishop Smith, then in Shanghai, sent two converts to Kaifeng, who recorded numerous inscriptions still present in the synagogue. Tobar notes in his own work that these are more copious than Domenge’s.
Domenge, and the relatively recent work of a Protestant missionary, Bishop George Smith. In his work Tobar noted:

The whole world knows that the synagogue no longer exists; if we wish to have some idea of it, we must make use of the ancient descriptions made prior to its destruction. We possess three different descriptions about the Chinese synagogue: one very short one by Fr. Gozani, one other more detailed one by Fr. Domenge, which was included in the Memoire about the Jews of China by Fr. Brotier, and finally the report of the Protestant delegates edited by George Smith. This last one is the most complete, but the second has the advantage of being accompanied by two plans which augment abundantly those things not mentioned in the text.36

Whereas Tobar had Smith’s work at hand (given that he was based in China), the plans drawn by Domenge and the letters of Gozani were copied and sent to him by members of the Society of Jesus in Paris and Rome. The 18th-century missives about Kaifeng had now traveled back to China from Europe at the dawning of the 20th century, allowing generations of other scholars to study anew (and improve upon) the records and reflections of the Jesuits of yesteryear.

**Conclusion**

The knowledge about the Jewish community in Kaifeng was dependent on not just one or two lucky happenstances but the coming together of a wide range of factors. First of all, there was the desire of Ai Tian and his coreligionists to connect with the Jesuits, and then the willingness of these Jesuits to engage with the Jewish community, although at times for mixed reasons. Importantly, there was also the addition of natural talent, human erudition, skilled seamanship, and a culture of learning and enquiry that rigorously preserved the information that had been procured at great personal and physical cost. In other words, without the Jesuits’ missionary zeal, the underpinnings of the *Ratio studiorum*, the safe travels of Jesuits both to and from China and within its borders, the successful delivery of letters written by them and then the careful dissemination and analysis of the information contained within these letters by Jesuit scholars and archivists back in Europe, we would not know now what we do about the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng. This conversation among men of learning in the

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17th and 18th centuries has thereby become a conversation among all peoples today. The tragedy in this instance is that it is a conversation without significant numbers of Chinese Jewish partners, but at least it enables the hope that this can happen sometime in the future. Matteo Ricci and Ai Tian would indeed be pleased.
PART THREE

HATEFUL VISIONS
Most people are familiar with some version or other of the medieval legend of Ahasuerus the Wandering Jew, the carpenter or shoemaker who refused to allow Christ to pause by his workshop as he bore the cross up to Calvary. As punishment for what the legend represents as a lack of compassion, Christ pronounced some version of the curse condemning the Jew to march on without rest until judgment day. Because of his longevity Ahasuerus was a very popular device in 18th-century chronicles in which he helped to frame history from an outsider’s perspective and, following the 1789 French Revolution, fashion a stance on the right or the left of the political spectrum. In the “century of revolutions” he became not just a witness to history and a warning against the terrible punishment God metes out to sinners, but also a symbol for “the spirit of revolt, of unconquered courage, of the very Jewish race itself, and ‘what else is not to be overcome.’”¹ In the 1840s Ahasuerus suddenly exploded into the public consciousness on a much larger scale, and the fact that this happened at first in conspiracy novels that were not about repentant Jews at all but about unrepentant Jesuits adds a fascinating detail to the Wandering Jew’s trajectory in romantic fiction that is long and twisted. The obvious catalyst for this eruption was Eugène Sue’s controversial anticlerical novel Le Juif errant [The Wandering Jew, 1844–45], but the underlying reason, explored in this chapter, was the fact that Jews and Jesuits were already linked in the popular imagination as groups whose status needed to be monitored.

Pairing Jews and Jesuits in fiction then is not as odd as it may seem. In the mid-19th century both groups were constantly thrust into the public eye as “problems” that needed to be tackled in a new social order. The universal principle of equality regardless of race and religion touched both of these groups in negative and positive ways: campaigns of hate countering progressive calls for reform, and campaigns for assimilation

militating against calls for expulsion, repeatedly kept both groups under a looking glass that distorted their reality even while it clearly made for very entertaining fiction. The twin questions—What to do with the Jesuits? And what to do with the Jews?—did not only concern government bodies across Europe during an era when it became imperative to patrol more assiduously the boundaries of legitimate citizenship. Writers of every stripe cast both groups into the public eye, seizing on the issue of their collective identity in new, more secular political systems. Novelists in particular hold the distinction of having drawn the broad reading public into debates about solutions to the nettlesome political, religious, and social questions involving both groups with their radicalized positions too often couched in an uncompromising rhetoric of hate. Dozens of French, Spanish, and Italian conspiracy novels wedded stereotypes of Jews, not just the Wandering Jew but eventually his banker progeny who were obvious parodies of the Rothschilds, to versions of the scheming Jesuit protagonists of Eugène Sue’s novel.

The most fanatical of these conspiracy novels concern the plots of Jews and Jesuits to acquire power on a global scale, hatched in clandestine groups conspiring to overthrow governments through extortion, violence, and treasonous political intrigue. Novelists often overlaid these conspiracy plots with the imagined tactics and rituals of earlier secret societies that bore similar mythical pedigrees, including the Templars, philosopheS, illuminati, and Freemasons. But the stereotyping of Jews and Jesuits was more than a handy narrative device reflecting the enduring popularity of gothic-inspired, romantic plots. Rather than arbitrary coincidences, the narrational spaces where Jews and Jesuits intersected are politically and socially significant. Historicizing anticlerical and anti-Semitic writing together reveals both the deep-seated anxieties and xenophobia of the troubled European imaginary in the new industrial age and the political and economic motives hidden behind the false claims of humanitarian rescue missions that were the ideological bedrock of the romantic feuilleton.

The repentant wandering Jew played a significant role in monitoring the behavior of Jews and Jesuits by providing a handy telescope onto both the past and the present that allowed writers to further either liberal or conservative agendas. But behind the often benevolent characterization of the fabled wanderer, in some cases employed as a neutral or even sympathetic witness to history in contrast to the pernicious Jesuits, was the seed that flowered into the perception of the abject Jew’s money-making prowess in the modern era. The Ahasuerus of fable, with his gold coins
that he carries in his pocket and that are miraculously never depleted, was replaced symbolically by some authors with ruthless Jewish bankers who control Europe’s finances and monarchs, patterned after the Jesuits who so often played the role of evildoers in the serial novel. Novelists of the left and the right attributed both Jews and Jesuits with mythical powers and longevity, imputing to them the fraudulent acquisition of wealth and other iniquities shrouded in secrecy that their creators aimed to bring to light ostensibly for the edification of their readers. Jesuit greed and casuistry in their quest for world power is matched by a Jewish drive to control the destiny of Europe’s royal houses and advance revolutions. The devising of elaborate traps and descriptions of secret conclaves to describe their activities made for very stimulating reading especially during the heyday of the serial novel, 1840–60, which cemented the perception that certain groups were synonymous with treachery. The acquisitiveness of both groups was an integral part of the mythology that had grown up around them by the end of the 19th century. In the popular imagination what the Jesuits gained through espionage, court intrigue, the manipulation of wealthy women, and a host of fraudulent and devious practices, Jews gained through usury, bribery, and the manipulation of world markets. The animalistic, demonic, and malefic qualities novelists over and again attributed to them stuck to these two groups like glue until it was no longer possible to say Jew or Jesuit without conjuring an arsenal of negative characteristics. A host of writers repeatedly portrayed them as polarizing and alien agents, socially and politically dangerous both to sovereign governments and to the social fabric, toiling with a hidden agenda to spread evil on a world scale.

The crystallization of these stereotypes, while it may not have been directly responsible for violent acts, gives us a window onto the way that anti-Jesuit and anti-Semitic writers viewed the world around them in the present and the ways that they envisioned a better future that non-writers sought to enact in some instances through violence. Anticlerical fiction writers borrowed and then refashioned both history and legend to suit their ideological purposes, easily transferring the evil attributed to Jews to Jesuits as it suited their political purposes. For example, in Estanislao de Cosca Vayo’s anticlerical novel *El judío errante en España* [The Wandering Jew in Spain, 1845–56] a secret society called the Exterminating Angel led by a Jesuit bishop incites a riot in Madrid during which an enraged mob, believing that clerics have poisoned the city wells, enters a convent and kills several monks. No matter if a few monks are massacred, remarks the leader of the Exterminators, “El riego de sangre vertida por nosotros o por
nuestros enemigos, fertiliza nuestra causa” [The stream of blood spilled whether by us or our enemies will fertilize our cause]. Anti-Semitic literature plays with history and legend in a similar fashion around the same time. In 1847, Jacques Collin de Plancy, in his anti-Protestant and anti-Semitic novel *Légende du Juif-errant* [The legend of the Wandering Jew], casts Isaac Laquedem as a sinister organizer of dissidents during the 16th-century Westphalian Anabaptist rebellion in Münster. Rather than merely a keen observer of men’s greed, ambitions, and aggression, as he is in most chronicles, ballads, and novels, Collin de Plancy’s Wandering Jew is an instigator and crafty manipulator of the Anabaptists to further his own secret ends to reestablish the reign of Solomon in a new kingdom of Zion. No matter if many of his followers are killed, he proclaims to his followers, “Il fallait que ces épurations se fussent; le Père l’avait ordonné. Ainsi le camp d’Israël fut purgé plus d’une fois” [Do not be defeated. Such purifications were bound to take place; the Father has so ordained. Thus was the camp of Israel purged more than once].

From the above it is obvious that both of these novelists played fast and loose with history to weave their tale of conspiracy. Historically, on 15 July 1834, as a cholera epidemic ravaged the city, large demonstrations did actually take place in the streets of Madrid, flamed by unidentified political agitators. Over the next few days the demonstrations raged on, and on 17 July a number of priests were assassinated and their bodies mutilated by enraged crowds because of fears that the priests had brought on the cholera epidemic by poisoning the city wells. There is of course no evidence that elements of the Catholic church played a role in the Madrid riots. Similarly, many episodes of Collin de Plancy’s novel are historically accurate: the emptying of the Overwater church convent by Bernard Rothmann, the destruction of Münster’s cultural patrimony by the Anabaptists, Jan von Leiden’s proclamation of polygamy, Jan Matthy’s sensational death, and Bernard Knipperdoling’s bloody reprisals and public decapitations. But de Plancy deformed the historical picture by multiplying the number and role of voyants, prophets, and “sous-prophets” (like the Wandering Jew Isaac) to appeal to fans of the occult. For de Cosca Vayo a better world would mean the separation of church and state and the suppression of religious orders, especially the Jesuits. Even though


arch-villains Bishop Julián and Father Loyola die and the society of the Exterminating Angel is routed, de Cosca Vayo is not optimistic about Spain’s future: other rebellions such as the ones organized by the enemies of freedom will occur, he predicts, because the invisible hand that rules from Rome will continue to pursue its Machiavellian ways to spread its poison in Spain “para oprimirle y no dejarle ni asomos de libertad” [to oppress it and leave it without a modicum of liberty].

For Collin de Plancy, on the contrary, it is the Jesuit order that will rescue civilization from evil Protestants and conniving Jews: “Mais les choses étaient déjà bien changées. En même temps que Luther croissait en Allemagne pour agiter le monde chrétien, la terre espagnole voyait grandir un de ses enfants, qui devait mettre un frein au monstre de la réforme menteuse, et amener dans les moeurs la réformé vraie. C’était Ignace de Loyola. Lorsqu’il entra dans la lice, comme un envoyé de Dieu la carrière était vaste” [Just as Luther was crossing Germany to agitate the Christian world, the Spanish nation saw rise up one of its children, destined to restrain the monster of the deceptive reform, and institute a truly moral reformation. It was Ignatius Loyola. Since entering the list of God’s envoys, his career has been vast].

One of the most fascinating aspects of these 19th-century stereotypes of conniving Jews and Jesuits is the way they feed from and into two of the greatest conspiracy hoaxes of the modern era. The 19th-century serial novel is the fertile ground where these two great hoaxes met and fed off each other. Any account of the transmission of hate in West European fiction invariably leads back to the anti-Jesuit Monita secreta and forward to the anti-Semitic Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Their longevity and pedigrees have been the subject of many scholarly works, but not their connection and similarities, probably because they seem to belong to distinct eras and realms of animosity. The Monita secreta dates from 1613 or 1614, while the Protocols was first published under that title in the first decade of the 20th century. The author of the first was presumably a Polish ex-priest, Hieronim Zahorowski (d.1634), who had been discharged from the Jesuit order. The second was a privately issued pamphlet that the Russian Okhrana, or Czarist secret police working in Parisian circles, was circulating in the 1890s and that Pavolachi (Pavel) Krushevan, editor-in-chief of

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a St. Petersburg periodical, *The Banner*, republished in installments in 1903. But calling Krushevan the author would be a misattribution owing to the complex genealogy of this document that was cobbled together from several 19th-century texts.

Both documents purport to be based on real events and include a list of protocols for acquiring world power, but both are forgeries in the sense that Jews and Jesuits did not write them and their claims are false. Both the *Monita secreta* and the *Protocols* existed as conspiracy theories in some form prior and subsequent to their date of publication under their respective titles. Their titles "monita" (Latin for warnings) and “protocols” promise to reveal the secret strategies of despised groups and of course the revelation of secrets is a favorite device of writers of fiction. But the main reason for their appeal was their spurious justification for the fear and loathing that were the preconditions of hate circulating before and after the documents were published. Were there no suspicions that Jesuits circulated secret protocols to further their ambition for world domination, and no fears that Jews harbored a secret plot to use their wealth to reestablish the kingdom of Zion on a world scale, these two documents would have languished as quaint fictions suitable only for a collection of occult writings. Such is sadly not the case as dozens of hate sites on the Internet attest. Even today, citing the *Protocols* as evidence of Jewish world ambition has become a pastime in Iran and Egypt, and American born-again Christians are urged to read the secret instructions of the Jesuits as a warning against Jesuit world ambition.

The *Monita* survived sporadically throughout the 18th century before exploding into the public consciousness in the mid-19th century. In *The Jesuit Myth* Geoffrey Cubbit cites an 1820 first modern edition in French of the *Monita secreta* around the time of an anti-Jesuit resurgence that back in the 18th century expressed anxiety mainly about the missionary work of the Society that was fraught with controversy. In the following years

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7 According to Cubbit, there were three waves of anti-Jesuitism in the 19th century, the first in the 1820s, the second in the 1840s that produced acrimonious debates about education in France, and the third at the end of the 1870s that represented not simply a new form of hostility but a continuous tradition dating back to the previous centuries and which was “deposited over the centuries by successive waves of Protestant, Jansenist, philosophe, and now liberal and republican critics ... It was a durable ingredient in the mental make-up of successive generations and varying shades of liberal, republican and democrat” (ibid., 8). The animosity against them was out of proportion to the number of Jesuits who resided in France in the 19th century and so it is safe to say that the conspiracy theories that grew in
visions of hate

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... especially with the rise of the serial novel are disproportionate to the actual power that the Jesuits possessed. 8 For more on Pierre Charles’s articles on the subject of the Protocols, see Maurice Olender, Race and Erudition (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2009), 14–20. 9

... The fear of the Jew and the fear of the Jesuit, as the Belgian Jesuit Pierre Charles astutely noted in his deconstruction of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in 1921, 8 are in many ways analogous hysterical obsessions. Agreeing with Charles, in Race and Erudition, Maurice Olender remarks that the two “can be found allied in a specular relationship, understandable only from the standpoint of the Other, the always excluded third party.” 9 This Other is the phantasm of a group imagined as a coherent identity, a “pure fiction,” as Olender describes it, that plumbed the depths of Jewish and Jesuit perfidy; a phantasm that exposed believers to certain signs and metaphors that were endlessly repeated and refined thanks to the fiction of popular writers such as these. Glossing Father Charles’s work on the Protocols, Olender describes the Monita secreta as its “ancestor.” The following quotation lays bare the analogous goals commonly ascribed to both conspiracies:

Imagine an association whose members have broken all the ties of family and country that had attached them to other men, and whose efforts would
tend toward a single and fearsome goal: the growth and establishment of its
domination by every means possible over all the nations of the earth. ... 
Constantly driven off, they constantly return; and gradually, clandestinely,
they establish themselves and set down vigorous roots in the shadows.
When their property is confiscated, their losses are soon replaced. They
practice both the inveigling of inheritances and extremely risky business
ventures. Confessors, wholesalers, usurers, traffickers in pious knickknacks,
they invent new ceremonies of devotion to create markets for themselves.
Meanwhile they meddle in politics, cause upheaval in states, and make
princes tremble on their thrones.10

Depending on the year in which this quote would find itself as an anony-
mous document in the hands of the gullible, the image conjured up could
be either of either Jesuits or Jews. In this case, the quote is actually from
C. Sauvestre’s introduction to the 1862 edition of Monita secreta Societatis
Jesu: Instructions secrètes des jésuites [The secret instructions of the Society
of Jesus].11 “Make no mistake—asserts Olender—these are neither ‘elders
of Zion’ nor ‘Freemasons’ but rather ‘Jesuits,’ whose ‘secret instructions,’
supposedly revealing the strategy that was to assure them universal domi-
nation, had been intercepted, or so it was said.”12

In addition to versions of the Monita and other sporadic texts that
maligned Jesuits and deplored the corruption of core Christian virtues,
anticlerical campaigns pursued in the great serialized novels of mid-
century also owed much to the work of the influential historian and peda-
gogue Jules Michelet and his colleague at the Collège de France Edgar
Quinet.13 When the Catholic church mounted a campaign spearheaded by
members of the banned order to reinstate their previous role in higher
education, these two professors counteracted with a ferocity that would
be echoed a few years later in the raw attacks of Eugène Sue’s The
Wandering Jew and repeated in the fiction of Sue’s imitators for decades to
come. In 1844, Quinet and Michelet published 12 lectures entitled Des
jésuits [Of the Jesuits] on the social and political role of the Society of Jesus
since its inception which they appended with extensive notes. In these

10 Ibid., 21.
11 Charles Sauvestre, Introduction: Monita secreta Societatis Jesu—Instructions secrètes
des jésuites (Dentu: Paris, 1862).
12 Olender, Race and Erudition, 21.
13 Michelet was among an emboldened group of liberal intellectuals who challenged
the role of the Jesuits in the contentious educational debates of the 1840s. Between 1828
and 1850, the Orléans government forced the Jesuits to suspend educational activities in
France, and at the time of these lectures the number of Jesuits in all of France was approxi-
mately only 770, occupying 55 houses. But many Jesuits remained unofficially in France
and even managed to continue as educators.
annotated lectures they refuted the Jesuits’ assertions that they were victims unjustly denied their educational posts because of their banishment, and they warned of the creeping danger of Jesuit education that they speculated would produce a nation of spies working within the family to create disharmony:

Jesuitism, the spirit of police and of approvership, the mean baseness of the spy pupil, once transferred from school, college, and convent into community at large—how hideous the spectacle! ... A whole nation living like a Jesuit seminary; that is to say, the whole community acting the spy upon one another—treachery at your very fireside, the wife the spy on the husband, the child on the mother ... no other sound heard than a sad murmur and rustling of human beings confessing the sins of others and absorbed in mutual harassing and backbitings.14

The spying, treachery, dissension, harassment, and backbiting that Michelet impugned to Jesuits seeped not only into French fiction of the 1840s but also into dozens of serial novels abroad throughout the century.

One work they obviously inspired besides Eugène Sue’s The Wandering Jew was his censored novel Les Mystères du peuple [The people’s mysteries, 1849–57] that in volume 7, covering the years 1534–1640, describes Ignatius Loyola’s secret meeting with a group of clerics to announce the founding of the Society of Jesus. In the meeting that takes place in the dead of night in a grotto near the Abbey of Montmartre, Loyola announces that the goal of the new organization will be to curb the people’s demands for liberty and knowledge, “cette pestilentiellemémanation de l’humanité déchue” [this pestilent emanation of decayed humanity],15 and their principal strategy will be to win over followers through the sacrament of confession. By forgiving even the worst of sins, Jesuits will endear themselves to the people who will then turn their children over to them to be educated with an iron hand. No pope or king will then dare to question their authority. They will work to overthrow the monarchies of the world by inciting revolt. A period will follow in which the nobles and bourgeoisie will take power and form a republic, but then, in a later stage, the Jesuits will destabilize the government again and incite civil wars: “Tous les pouvoirs ainsi annihilés, détruits les uns par les autres, l’Église catholique restera seule debout, impérissable, et dominerà ces ruines” [All powers being

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15 Eugène Sue, Les Mystères du peuple ou Historie d’une famille de prolétaires à travers les ages, vol. 7 (Imprimerie Larpin et Coendoz: Lausanne, 1856), 267.
annihilated, the one destroyed by the other, only the Catholic church will then remain standing, imperishable].

Because the end justifies the means, it will be permissible even to hire assassins to do their work, anything at all that will help them to achieve their goal of conquering “l’empire du monde” [the empire of the world]. At the end of this conventicle, Loyola divides the world into four cardinal points and charges each deputy with a different one: Jean Lainez [Diego Laínez] is to be his loyal soldier in Russia, Germany, and England; Rodriguez of Acevedo [Simão Rodrigues de Acevedo] will reside over missions in Turkey, Asia, and the Holy Land; Alphonse Salmeron [Alfonso Salmerón] will be in charge of America and the Indies; Inigo de Bobadilla’s [Nicolás Bobadilla’s] domain will be Africa, Italy Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearic Islands; and Pierre Lefevre [Pierre Favre] will remain in Paris. In succeeding volumes Les Mystères goes on to show how the new order came to exercise its power, adopting the nefarious methods that Sue was so adept at inventing.

As ubiquitous as the nefarious Jesuit was, however, starring in novels like the above-mentioned El judío errante en España or Ceferino Tresserra’s La judía errante [The Wandering Jewess, 1862], for some writers he was an insufficient vehicle to embody the latent fears of revolution and the exploitation that was a consequence of Europe’s emerging capitalism, and so some ultraright novelists devised a better scapegoat. In France, Jacques Collin de Plancy vilified the Wandering Jew in Légende du Juif-errant. Paul Féval, staunch defender of Jesuits, gathered a whole group of unsavory Wandering Jews bent on punishing Isaac Laquedem, alias Ahasuerus, for converting to Christianity in his novella La fille du juif errant [The Wandering Jew’s daughter, 1863]. In Spain, where it was fashionable to demonize the French Revolution as well as the materialism of the new age, the Jew in some cases provided a more “realistic” scapegoat. The arch-conservative Antonio Navarro Villoslada, inspired by Eugène Sue and Alexandre Dumas, replaced the Jesuit with an antichrist, a repugnant world banker named Ezequiel Widergott who, together with his coconspirator Adalberto Rosenberg, plots to control the Spanish monarchy in his novel El Ante-Cristo [The Antichrist, 1845]. A few years later Julio (Jules?) Tournefort, in a novel with the same title, El antecristo [The

16 Sue, Les Mystères du peuple, 270.
17 All these were the first companions of Ignatius of Loyola whom he recruited during his studies in Paris. They became the nucleus of the Society of Jesus in 1540.
18 According to editors of the Spanish edition, Tournefort’s novel was translated from the French but it is mysteriously unavailable in the original. The Spanish version was
Antichrist, 1848], followed suit with his equally despicable characters Micael, a usurer who keeps money under his bed so he can fondle it when no one is watching, and his son Landeau, the head of an international banking house in Paris modeled after the Rothschilds. Inspired by polemicist Alphonse Toussenel who complained in his widely read treatise *Les Juifs, Rois de l’époque. Histoire de la féodalité financière* [The Jews, kings of the era: a history of financial feudalism, 1845] that the “Israelites” were taking over the world, these writers were discarding the Jesuit villain and offering the public new villains more in keeping with the times.

Meanwhile, other cenacles and conspiracies like those of the Jesuits and Jews populating the novels mentioned above were circulating in European fiction, some that would eventually coalesce around a group of 12 rabbis that the *Protocols* claimed were conspiring to take over the world. In Alexandre Dumas’s novel *Mémoires d’un médecin. Joseph Balsamo* [Memoires of a Doctor. Joseph Balsamo], 1846–48, the villain Cagliostro conspires with a conclave of universal Freemasons on Thunder Mountain to gain world power, and in a similar scene in José Riera y Comas’s *Los misterios de las sectas secretas* [Mysteries of the secret sects, 1864–65] new initiates swear allegiance to the Freemasons in a macabre scene that takes place in a subterranean, steel-vaulted room in Madrid. Prussian novelist Hermann Goedsche (a.k.a. Sir John Retcliffe), inspired by a version of Maurice Joly’s 1864 *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel* [Dialogue in hell between Montesquieu and Machiavelli] replaced Joly’s plotters for world power with a group of Jews meeting at night in a cemetery in Prague there to pledge all their resources to reestablish the kingdom of Zion in his 1868–78 trilogy titled *Biarritz: historisch-politischer Roman aus der Gegenwart* [Biarritz: an historical–political novel of today]. In it the elders of Zion, a group of rabbis representing the 12 tribes of Israel, meet nocturnally in a cemetery to conspire to take over the world. Their strategies are lifted straight out of Machiavelli’s prescriptions, including the basic proposition that “L’instinct mauvais chez l’homme est plus puissant que le bon … la crainte et la force sont sur lui plus de l’empire que la raison” [Man’s instinct for evil is stronger than that of good … fear and force hold more sway over him than reason].

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Napoleon’s dependence on a combination of “force and cunning” for success in governing translates into the rabbis’ credo that force and hypocrisy are the most expedient means by which to acquire world power, which is the ultimate goal of the rabbis’ deliberations. And so it was that, as Umberto Eco succinctly put it in his *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, “the fictive meeting invented by Dumas, embellished with the projects invented by Sue, and attributed by Joly to Napoleon III became the ‘real’ discourse of the great rabbi.”20

All these conspiracy novels directly or indirectly lent their conspiratorial cabals to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* forgery, which Binjamin Segal and Richard Levy have dubbed with reason “the world’s strangest book.”21 Its genesis is a source of endless fascination to me, a fascination that I share with Umberto Eco whose latest novel *The Prague Cemetery* (2011) similarly resurrects a sheath of 19th-century texts in which Freemasons, Jews, and Jesuits alternate as villainous conspirators. In *The Prague Cemetery*, 19th-century anti-Semitic rhetoric rises like an oily plume of stereotypes to the surface of the narration where it mixes with anti-Jesuit and anti-Freemason allegations to form a nauseating mass of hatred that Eco exploited to the good in the labyrinthine tale that he assembled from dozens of sources, including most of those I have mentioned here, all showing, as he puts it, how “hatred alone warms the heart.”22 In concluding his earlier essay on the topic, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, Eco pondered how we should deal with the intrusion of fiction into real life once we understand the dreadful impact that it can have. His recommendation is that we continue walking in the fictional woods—which are very deep as his novel shows—as a form of “therapy against the sleep of reason, which generates monsters.”23

By excavating the moral imagination of 19th-century fiction in order to fathom the origins of hatred and fanaticism it is possible to demonstrate not only the way conflicting ideologies discursively overlap, endlessly recycling conspiracy theories and their accompanying stereotypes, but also the way that symbolic constructions perpetuate the hatred

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that resides not just in real conspiracies but in the “fictional woods” where fictional conspiracies take shape. But rather than walk in the “fictional woods,” as Eco does in *The Prague Cemetery*, I believe we should continue walking in the nonfictional woods of vital research on conspiracy theory.
Bolshevism, therefore, is the result of the transference of Jesuit maxims to revolutionary tactics; its spirit is the same as that of the ecclesia militans of Ignatius Loyola. In both we find the principle that the end justifies the means ... Man, therefore, if he is to be happy in the Bolshevik sense, must obey not the inner truth of conscience, but the commands of a number of authorities who claim to be able, as being cleverer, to weigh soberly what is best and most useful for the community.1

Introduction

On the night of 17 July 1936, approximately half of the Spanish military, including General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde, began an armed uprising in Spanish Morocco. Almost immediately the world press began to present this complex civil war in fairly black and white terms: General Franco’s combined forces of conservative nationalists and Falangists were pitted against liberal, democratic (and sometimes Bolshevik) Spanish Republicans. In Nazi newspaper reports, General Franco and his allies were represented as waging a battle to save Spain from a Jewish–Bolshevik conspiracy which threatened to spill over into the rest of Europe, if not the entire world. Nazi propaganda helped to contribute to an atmosphere which asserted that “Jewish–Communist influence” had to be contained, that Jews had to be restricted in their social, political, and economic life, and in which contempt or indifference to Jewish persecution was entirely acceptable.2 Nazi propaganda in Der Sturmer and Das Schwarze Korps used the backdrop of the Spanish Civil War to undermine the power and authority of the episcopacy of the Catholic church,

attempting to sway readers into believing that Catholicism had become “infected” with “Judeo-Bolshevik ideology.”

For many leaders in the German Catholic church, supporting General Franco’s forces seemed to be the only possible choice because the Republic’s side, for many of them, was composed of “Jewish Bolsheviks and Liberals,” who were portrayed as out to control the world, working to destroy Christianity in the process. What seemed like a perfect opportunity for the Catholic church to draw itself closer to an alliance with Hitler’s regime, turned out to be quite challenging, for the church would find itself working to prove to Hitler that Catholics had always fought against Bolshevism, while simultaneously experiencing attacks by the Nazi regime which argued that Catholic church religious leaders, including the Jesuits, were in fact linked with, and supportive of, that same “Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy.”

In this chapter I examine two leading Nazi newspapers, Der Stürmer (DS), edited by Julius Streicher, and Das Schwarzes Korps (DSK), published by the SS leadership (but available to the general reading public as well). Der Stürmer was reportedly one of the most widely circulated papers in Nazi Germany, and Hitler himself claimed that it was the only paper he read from cover to cover.³ Both of these Nazi publications used the Spanish Civil War to reinforce their government’s propaganda message that, if General Franco’s forces were defeated, then Spain would fall into the hands of a Jewish–Bolshevik gang of thugs who would eradicate Western Christian civilization: “In Spain, as in Russia of 1917, and in all other countries, it is the unpatriotic and Jewish wire-pullers who cause and lead Bolshevist revolts. If they are non-Jews, they have completely lost their feeling of patriotism.”⁴ Connecting this message with Nazism’s claims to protect “positive Christianity,” Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels asserted:

On this spot last year I gave an exact account of how many clergymen had been murdered in Russia and pointed to the danger of such a procedure being repeated in other countries. But even ecclesiastical circles in outside countries poo-pooed this warning. They expressed the naïve view that Bolshevism had changed and that in the future it would guarantee freedom

⁴ See in particular Joseph Goebbels, Bolshevism in Theory and Practice, a speech delivered at the Nuremberg Party Rally, 10 September 1936, 28–32 (http://archive.org/stream/BolshevismInTheoryAndPractice1936Ocr/JosephGoebbels-BolshevismInTheoryAndPractice1936#page/no/mode/2up). Direct quote is from p. 33.
of worship to religious denominations. Meanwhile, events in Spain have shown only too clearly that I was right.\(^5\)

What then played out in Nazi propaganda was the regime putting forward the message that only National Socialism truly understood the nature of the battle between Christianity and “Judeo-Bolshevism.” That translated into article after article in both DS and DSK portraying the Catholic church as under the threat of complete eradication in Spain, while simultaneously portraying the Catholic church leadership—from the Vatican to local Jesuit priests—as working to find agreements with Jewish Bolsheviks. Time and time again, articles, cartoons, and photographs depicted the institution of the Catholic church as corrupted by “Jewish influence,” in league with international communism, and, at times working in unison with liberal Freemasons. Clearly, the message to German readers was that they could no longer trust religious leaders in the Catholic church to understand the true nature of the conflict. In contrast to this, Goebbels invoked images of Hitler as the new Crusader, “a true knight without fear of reproach, he seized the banner of culture, humanity, and civilization; ... he has assumed the role of Europe's spiritual pioneer in its struggle with the subversive forces of destruction and anarchy.”\(^6\)

Both DS and DSK asserted that the Jesuits in particular were a harmful and threatening presence in Catholicism. Most of the “revelations” include familiar imagery that Jesuits are militant, cunning, greedy, lascivious masters of disguise working with the Devil to promote Catholicism in Nazi Germany.\(^7\) What DS and DSK amplified in this series of tropes was the false connection that the Jesuits had been infiltrated by Jewish and Bolshevik sympathizers and that they were all plotting world domination. In August 1938, Das Schwarze Korps reprinted the well-known 19th-century Swiss writer Gottfried Keller's poem, ”Jesuitenzug,” in full. Here is just one stanza to highlight the anti-Jesuit message:

The March of the Jesuits
Conscience, honor, and loyalty they take from the German man//
And make him shameless//
And his wife's underskirt hangs on a flag on a stick: We're coming, the Jesuits!\(^8\)

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\(^5\) Ibid., 22.
\(^6\) Ibid., 36.
\(^7\) See especially the work of Róisín Healy, *The Jesuit Specter in Imperial Germany* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), passim.
\(^8\) *Das Schwarze Korps* 31 (4 August 1938): 16.
With the March 1933 appointment of Joseph Goebbels as minister of propaganda and enlightenment, newspaper staff across Germany found themselves facing new sets of rules. The creation of the Reich Chamber of the Press and the 4 October 1933 Editors’ Law restricted what newspapers could print in Germany. Editors were made fully responsible for the content of each article, in effect making each editor responsible for censoring material before it ever appeared to the public. Goebbels told the members of the press, now limited to “Aryans” only, that they should receive their information at his ministry, but “you should also get your instructions. You should not only know what is happening but also what the government is thinking and how you can most usefully explain this to the people.”

To help the journalists with their endeavor in covering the Spanish Civil War, Goebbels wrote a popular booklet, *The Truth about Spain*, which was based on his September 1937 Nuremberg Party Rally address. In this booklet, Goebbels told his German and Spanish readers—it was translated into Spanish and distributed in war-torn Spain—that Spain “went liberal” and then fell under communist hold, led by Jews and Bolsheviks:

> Bolshevism has become a convenient camouflage for International Jewry to carry on its politically and morally criminal activities ... For the international character of Bolshevism has been principally determined by the Jewish element. In point of fact it is the Jew who finds Bolshevism a working foundation for his activities, because it is the incarnation of evil.

Goebbels also added that only the Führer could “save us from the red storm flood.”

For the German Catholic church hierarchy, if the Führer was the only man to cure the evil engulfing Spain, then they were eager to join him in the fight. In August of 1936, a month after the uprising in Morocco had begun, German church leaders met at Fulda for their annual conference. The discussion of the Spanish Civil War dominated the meetings. Every one of the churchmen present offered to share in the fight against the spread of Bolshevism. To alert German Catholics to this fight, the bishops
produced a joint pastoral letter in which they accepted their government’s presentation of the role of Bolsheviks in the civil war. The letter stated:

We start from the obvious fact and conviction that Communism and Bolshevism are at present trying with diabolical determination and toughness to advance into the heart of Europe, putting it in grave danger. Therefore, German unity should not be sacrificed to religious antagonism, quarrels, contempt, and struggles. Rather our national power of resistance must be increased and strengthened so that not only may Europe be freed from Bolshevism by us, but also that the whole civilized world may be indebted to us.12

This pastoral letter was not allowed to be published under the Nazi regime. Despite the letter’s call to unity, it also contained a weakly worded protest asking Hitler to stop the persecution of the church and its institutions in Germany. The German episcopate did not seem to understand that in Nazi Germany, only one man, Hitler, and only one institution, the NSDAP, could be credited with stopping the spread of “Judeo-Bolshevism.” There would be no competitor for this title; in fact, the Catholic church leadership would find itself lumped together with the “forces of evil” it was claiming to have historically fought against throughout the world.

Der Stürmer

Although the Spanish Civil War sharply divided individuals within nations, in Nazi propaganda the story of the war was portrayed consistently as a necessary battle for the protection of Christianity and Western civilization. Goebbels forbade the German press to call General Franco’s forces “rebels,” nor could they refer to the insurrection as a coup or a rebellion. Furthermore, the ministry directives instructed reporters to refer to the legal Republican faction in the struggle as simply “the Bolsheviks.” It was understood that Hitler would be portrayed as the leader to join in the defeat of “the Bolshevik forces.”

In Der Stürmer, anti-Catholic articles were already present in almost every edition. The editor, Julius Streicher, firmly believed that “true” Germans were evangelical Lutherans, and his newspaper pursued the line that Martin Luther had sought to eradicate “Jewish influence” from the spirit of the Catholic church. In a special edition of Der Stürmer, from

March 1937, two articles in particular attempted to sway their readers to disavow their loyalty to the leaders of the Catholic church. (It is also no coincidence that these attacks on the Catholic church were published once the papal encyclical, *With Burning Sorrow*, had appeared in Germany.) One article, “A Jew on the Papal Throne,” argued that Pope Alexander VI was “by race a Jew.” Related to the Spanish Borgia family, Alexander VI is not only labeled as “of Jewish blood,” he is also accused of all sorts of immoral crimes, from poisoning cardinals, committing racial defilement with a widow, to incest with his daughter, Lucrezia. The article’s main thrust is that there was a “Jewish pope in the Church” and since then the Catholic church has been infiltrated with other leaders of a “Jewish spirit.” This article is followed by “the development since the Reformation,” where it is argued that in the 400 years since the Reformation there have been many Jewish popes and that the German monk, Martin Luther, wanted to fight against the “Jewish spirit” he discovered within the Catholic church. Out of his desire to purify the church, Luther founded the evangelical Lutheran church.13

Since the time of Luther, the article continues, there have been many more Jewish popes (none of them are named) who have betrayed the spirit of “true Christianity.” According to *DS*, Luther’s Germanic spirit turned against the “Jewish spirit in Rome.” Providing a brief “history” lesson, *DS* traced how Queen Isabella tried to expel the Jews from Spain, but many Jews chose baptism because they did not want to emigrate. The article continues its argument by stating that Jewish blood flows through the Christian church in Spain and that Jews became priests and cardinals, including Alfonso Borgia and his nephew, Pope Alexander VI. The history lesson proceeds with a quick examination of the French Revolution and the emancipation of the Jews, who ostensibly received their liberty thanks to the works of Freemasons, parliamentarians, and the French press. Jews are then connected to the founding of Marxist thought, atheism, and the Great War. All revolutions are linked back to Jewish influence as well. Finally, the article returns to the main point, that some people recognize that the Catholic church has been corrupted by Jewish influence. It praises a 1928 book by a doctor in theology, Alois Kofler, *Katholische Kirche und Judentum*, which argued that the Catholic church must fight to free itself from the Jewish spirit within its institutions.14

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13 *Der Stürmer*, Special Number 6 (March 1937): 11–12.
14 Ibid., 11–12.
Connected to this string of articles is a full-page photo of Ignatius Loyola (c.1491–1556). Under his picture is a caption which reads, “Baptized Jew: Founder of the Jesuit Order.” On the very next page of DS, one can find a photograph of anonymous men in a line, labeled as “Jews and Bolsheviks,” shooting up a statue of Christ at a church in Madrid. One could imagine a reader looking back and forth at the pictures of Loyola, accused of being a Jew who infiltrated the Catholic church, and modern-day “Jews and Bolsheviks” and their total disrespect for the church in Spain. Other articles, both before March 1937 and after, link the civil war in Spain to an infected Catholic church, controlled by Jewish Bolsheviks, funded and supported by the Comintern in the Soviet Union.

What was journalistic “gold” for Der Stürmer was the case of a Father Beckers. The article comes replete with Beckers’s photograph, claiming that, although Beckers is a Roman Catholic priest, he is no full German. With copies of birth certificates and other documents, Der Stürmer lays out its case to show how Beckers is truly a Jew who has infiltrated the Catholic church. It claims that Beckers’s father was born Samuel Levy, was baptized as a Catholic, and changed his name to Hubert Beckers. The article says that this proves that Father Beckers is a “Talmud Jew, a Bolshevik, a notorious race defiler ...” and it ends with the warning, “A Jew always remains a Jew.” Implicit in this article is the underlying idea that the Catholic church accepts without reservations “Jews” posing as Catholics, even allowing them to become leaders in the church.

In April 1936, Der Stürmer ran a two-page article, “In Spain—The Criminal Bolshevik Jews,” featuring the very real burning of Catholic churches, the desecration of cloisters and monasteries, the plundering of church images, and so on. The article connected the violence in Spain to earlier attacks on Christianity in Hungary, Mexico, and Russia. It argued that the whole non-Jewish world should see Spain as a warning that the “enemies of Christ are at work in Spain.” Who are some of these enemies? Page two of the article answers this question: the enemies are the Jews who were baptized in the 15th century and remained “inwardly Jews”—they intermarried, and were finally able to place racial Jews in the Catholic church. For a more up-to-date explanation of enemies within Spain, the article says that with the 1930 “Spanish Revolution” synagogues were built in Spain, thus proving that the Spanish revolution was Jewish.

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15 Ibid., 14.
16 Ibid., 15.
17 Der Stürmer, Special Number 4 (January 1936): 8.
18 Der Stürmer 17 (April 1936): 1–2.
By August 1936, *DS* asked, “Spain’s Murderers: Who are the Wire-Pullers of Bolshevik Unions?” In this article *DS* argued that the Spanish people wanted only peace and quiet, but Jews, Bolsheviks, and “Marrano Jews” in the Catholic church have combined their forces with Freemasons, atheistic Jewish comrades, and the Soviet Union in order to destroy the Spanish people. The “Marrano Jews,” it claims, have been secretly hiding in the Catholic church, holding onto their race and so-called religion, and now they are waging a war without mercy. The article ends with the ominous warning that the world is on fire, but the gentile world refuses to learn from this story.19

These same themes were picked up again in the special edition of *DS* issued during September 1936 (when the Nuremberg Party Rally was held). In this edition, photographs of destroyed Spanish churches with captions such as “the war against the Christian religion in Spain”20 were coupled with articles such as “Destruction of Belief in God: Proof! Spain and the Soviet Union.” In this hair-raising account, the Soviet Union has brought ideas of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” to Spain, and along with it the communist revolutionaries have rooted out believers and destroyed churches. Jews, with the help of the Freemasons, political parties led by Jews, and the weak church leaders, will strip Spain of religious worship just as they have done to the Russian people. The article goes further by predicting that the Vatican will be overthrown and the papacy will be destroyed because the “Marrano Jews” have infiltrated the church in order to destroy it. As proof of this theory, the paper asserts that Catholic political leaders endorsed a Republican–Socialist Republic for Spain in 1931.21 What might have thrown off their “proof” would be the fact that the supposedly “Jewish Jesuits” had been dissolved by the Spanish Republic in 1931.

All of these articles are accompanied by cartoons featuring Spain being destroyed by fires and caricatures of Jewish men perpetrating crimes. In one cartoon a priest is depicted pouring baptismal water on the head of a Jew. The caption reads: “What is an impossibility? To baptize a Jew so he is no longer a Jew.”22 In the October 1936 edition, the cartoon featured a half-naked woman, tied to a burning cross with the word “Inquisition” on

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20 *Der Stürmer*, Special Number 5 (September 1936): 6.
21 Ibid., 11.
22 *Der Stürmer* 7 (February 1937): 7, or see *DS* 38 (September 1936): 7 or *DS* 26 (June 1935): 7.
it. The caption: “Spain Formerly: That was the Love the Jesuits once Preached.”23 Despite the negative portrayals of Jesuit priests, some Catholic priests were not regarded as too terrible. For example, one article quotes an older Catholic priest who wrote that 60 years ago his church taught him that the Jews were an “odious people,” but today’s church says that Jews are now “God’s chosen people.” He said that the church’s mission to the Jews nowadays is to baptize them and to make them believe that they are not Jews any longer. The article ends emphatically with “What a change in the short time span of sixty years!”24

Throughout Der Stürmer, the Catholic church leadership is portrayed as criminal, Jewish, or at the very least, too weak to protect its followers. The theme is that German Catholics should not place their trust and faith in their religious leaders. Some articles approach this theme from the perspective that the Catholic church has fallen into the trap of preaching that Jews are God’s chosen people, and that Christian love of neighbor means to love and protect Jews as well. A 1935 article, “Church and Jew,” argues that priests should tell Catholics to exhibit love towards the men of National Socialism. It asks a series of rhetorical questions—“Don’t you see how Christ has been rooted out of Russia? Don’t you see how in Russia and Spain arsonists burn churches and cloisters? The Jew is always our deadly enemy. He is the leader of Godless propaganda.”25 This article is followed on the very next page with examples of “courageous priests” who speak out and encourage the fight against the Jews who, according to Bishop Dr. Johann-Maria Sullner of Linz, wrote among other things that the “degenerate Jews” are in league with the Freemasons, capitalists, socialists, and communists.26

Most of the articles in Der Stürmer, however, see the Catholic church as too weak to fight against Judeo-Bolshevism. Many of the articles and cartoons aim at degrading priests and nuns, implying they are guilty of sexual and other immoral crimes. One such article, attacking Karl Bernardt, a priest accused of molesting children, claimed that the priest in question was influenced by Ignatius Loyola’s Confessions and forced young boys to come to his apartment to confess their sexual thoughts.27 Besides suggesting the death penalty for this priest, the article also picks up on another

23 Der Stürmer 40 (October 1936): 7.
24 Der Stürmer 39 (September 1936): 5.
26 Ibid., 2.
27 Der Stürmer 9 (February 1937): 3.
theme found throughout the publication: the distinction between “Priester” (priests) and “Pfaffen.” In the case of Father Bernardt, *DS* argues that he hid behind priestly robes but in reality he was a “Pfaffen.” This untranslatable word is one of derogatory meaning that appears repeatedly in *DS* in its attempt to separate Catholic laity from their priests. During the time of the immorality trials, *DS* ran several articles saying that “the German people are capable of distinguishing between priests and ‘Pfaffen.’” But, to make it clear, the article delineates how priests save people’s souls and understand the teaching of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar’s while “Pfaffen” are unworthy of the name of priest.

Pfaffen are portrayed as political careerists who poison people's souls; they engage in the sexual corruption of children, they kneel before Jews, and they are fanatical opponents of the Nazi Weltanschauung. To reinforce this imagery of weak “Pfaffen” who do not understand the threats to the church, *Der Stürmer* placed a cartoon at the bottom of the same page, titled “In Spain.” The cartoon depicts a communist thug with a knife on top of a cardinal, clearly about to stab the priest. The cardinal, for his part, holds a crucifix aloft and, asking for pity, exclaims: “We still have things to do for you!” The communist killer simply answers, “Cardinal, that is your bad luck.”

Other articles repeatedly stress that good German people know that the church can be divided into two groups: priests and “Pfaffen.” In one article, appearing in June 1936, priests are portrayed as true deputies of God on earth who serve their parishioners, stress love and service to the church, and, most importantly, priests are those who understand the biblical injunction that commands Christians to render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, clearly implying that priests should keep out of the political sphere. This was something that Hitler commanded: the only acceptable religious activity should be concealed behind the walls of a church, saying, “The religions and the Churches will maintain their freedom. But we are in charge of politics.”

Articles in *DS* stress how “Pfaffen” do not know their place; they are not only corrupting the youth of Germany and violating the currency exchange laws of the Reich but they also often intercede for Jews, struggling against National Socialist ideology. They are portrayed as being

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29 Ibid.
30 *Der Stürmer* 25 (June 1936): 7.
outside of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, obviously incapable of understanding the German people.\textsuperscript{32} To Hitler, mocking and debasing the leaders of the church was just one way of separating lay Catholics from the church. Following the publication of the papal encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge*, Hitler reportedly exclaimed, “I will not put the bishops in prison, but I will drown the Catholic church in ignominy and shame by opening the secret archives of the monasteries and revealing the filth that lies hidden there.”\textsuperscript{33}

Finally, another theme present in *Der Stürmer* is that of the Catholic church religious who, for various reasons, work openly with Jews, the eternal enemy of the German “race.” Time and again cartoons appear depicting Catholic priests, nuns, and/or monks engaging with Jews in one way or another. Typically the religious members are depicted as already morally corrupted. One such cartoon, “The Cloak of Christian Love of Neighbor,” shows a priest with an outspread cloak. On the cloak are patches which are meant to show his “crimes,” such as violating currency exchange laws and paragraphs 174 and 175 (crimes against homosexual behavior).\textsuperscript{34} In another cartoon, two frames are shown side-by-side: one shows a priest with a young nun while the other frame shows a young woman drinking and smoking with a Jewish man. The accompanying caption reads: “Both are lost to the *Volksgemeinschaft*.”\textsuperscript{35} The article that follows this cartoon provides sordid details about Carmelite nuns and Franciscan brothers accused of molesting boys at their institutions.\textsuperscript{36} In still other cartoons, priests kneel and worship before obese male Jews,\textsuperscript{37} while in others nuns, priests, and Jews dance around a golden calf that is excreting coins which the dancers greedily put in sacks.\textsuperscript{38} At the time of the September 1935 Nuremberg Laws, a cartoon appeared where two priests readily help a man with communist symbols on his pants up onto a horse which has been branded with the Star of David on its hindquarters, helping put “Communism peacefully into the saddle.”\textsuperscript{39} Reinforcing the image of Catholic priests being duped into helping Jews, one cartoon shows a

\textsuperscript{32} *Der Stürmer* 25 (June 1936): 7.

\textsuperscript{33} Quoted in Emma Fattorini, *Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican: Pope Pius XI and the Speech that was Never Made* (Polity: Malden, Mass., 2011), 122.

\textsuperscript{34} *Der Stürmer* 29 (July 1936): 7.

\textsuperscript{35} *Der Stürmer* 30 (July 1936): 1.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} *Der Stürmer* 33 (August 1935): 1.

\textsuperscript{38} *Der Stürmer* 35 (August 1935): 8.

\textsuperscript{39} *Der Stürmer* 38 (September 1935): 3.
Jewish man walking away from his baptism, with long rosary beads, saying, "I've made myself a Catholic, but I remain a convinced Jew."\textsuperscript{40}

Of course, cartoons were not enough for \textit{Der Stürmer}, so photographic evidence was also supplied. In December of 1935, a photo was taken of a Catholic priest walking outside with a group of Jewish men. The caption states that a "true servant of Christ would hand over the descendants of Christ's murderers."\textsuperscript{41} Photos of destroyed Catholic churches in Spain are also often accompanied by photos of Jewish synagogues that were not destroyed in the violence. In one article with such photographic evidence, the reader is told how Jews are Bolsheviks who are trying to destroy Spain and religion with slogans such as "There is no God!" "Down with Religion!" but the church stands helpless and weak because the leaders of the church refuse to see the dangers all around them. They do not see that world Jewry is engaging in a holy war with the church.\textsuperscript{42} Other articles take a similar approach, with one such article, "Jews and Rome," arguing that the Catholic church condemns Nazism as pagan, before going on to "prove" that supposedly Catholic organizations, such as the student unions, are in fact in league with the Jews. To drive home the point, the article says that in some German towns where signs of "Jews not wanted here" were posted, Catholics added "wanted by God" underneath.\textsuperscript{43} Yet another article depicts nuns with their benefactors—Jews—saying that despite the fact that Jews are murdering religious people in Russia and Spain, the Catholic sisters and "Christ-Killer Jews" in the Saarland have reached a peaceful understanding. The article warns parents not to allow their children into such dangerous communities, ending with the injunction regarding the Jews, "Your father is the Devil."\textsuperscript{44}

\textit{Das Schwarze Korps}

Not to be outdone by \textit{Der Stürmer}, \textit{Das Schwarze Korps} had its own attacks to level against Catholic church leaders, and in particular the Jesuits. Defamations of Catholic priests and nuns appear constantly, such as a cartoon in the January 1937 edition where a school is shown, and a picture of Pope Alexander VI is in the background (implying Jewish infiltration of
the church) with a priest and a Jewish-looking man standing together. The caption reads, “Since when is incest a hindrance to raising someone to the priesthood?” The cartoon encourages the reader to look at page 17, where there is an article about incest and the church, claiming that Pope Alexander VI, a Borgia, had an incestuous relationship with his daughter, and has since allowed priests and nuns to have a double standard regarding moral behavior. The case of Alexander is used to smear the entire membership of the religious orders of the church. Pope Alexander VII also appears in a painting with an enormously long list of crimes associated with his name in yet another edition of the paper.

In its attempt to drive a further wedge between average German Catholics and the Catholic church leadership, DSK featured numerous smutty cartoons, including one which, frame by frame, mocks the idea that the Catholic church is being persecuted in Germany, ending with a priest labeled a “Sodomite” chasing after a pig. This was in keeping with Nazi propaganda efforts to “prove” that the church was drowning in sexual perversities and immoral fiends.

Reacting to a famous speech given by Cardinal Mundelein in Chicago, Illinois, where he denounced the persecution of Catholics in Nazi Germany, DSK responded forcefully with their version of the story: “Naked Lies,” which ran in June 1937, attacked both Cardinal Mundelein as well as Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna, asserting that the Vatican had not condemned the words of the cardinals, while the church allowed the “Roman Catholic immoral traitors to work with Jewish Bolsheviks, selling their Red and Black lies to the people,” all while true Christians are being harmed in Spain and Russia. Even former Chancellor Heinrich Brüning comes under attack as a man who remembers the words of Ignatius Loyola, and who worked for two years with the “yellow, heavenly blue and red parties” against the NSDAP. Brüning is further condemned for living in America and teaching at Harvard University.

DSK utterly refused to accept the idea that Catholics were being persecuted in Nazi Germany. They ran a two-page spread in June 1937 with the sarcastic headline “The Poor Persecuted,” followed by numerous photographs taken at Catholic processions in Germany, obviously attempting to

45 Das Schwarze Korps 3 (21 January 1937): 1.
46 Ibid., 17.
47 Das Schwarze Korps 44 (4 November 1937): 11.
48 Das Schwarze Korps 23 (10 June 1937): 7.
49 Das Schwarze Korps 24 (17 June 1937): 10.
50 Ibid., 2.
show that Catholics have freedom to worship and practice their faith as they wish.\textsuperscript{51} In a case where a young man was chosen to receive an award for being an exemplary Catholic Youth leader, \textit{DSK} denounced both the young man—who \textit{DSK} claimed was actually a Jew—as well as Cardinal Faulhaber, arguing that there is no persecution, it is simply that Faulhaber “loves to play the role of the martyr,” even while he encourages the Catholic Young Man’s Association to work with Jewish Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{52} Further responses to Vatican claims of church persecutions led to the article, “They Lie! They Lie!” which argues that because the German government initiated currency exchange trials against clergy, the church has retaliated by calling Germans neopagans and the Antichrist. To drive home their point, the \textit{DSK} author has a table of statistical figures which show the number of brothers and sisters entering into religious houses in Germany and how their numbers have risen since 1918. And this is in spite of the fact that Germans know that the church is in league with Jews, Bolsheviks, and anarchists.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{DSK} also provided photographic “evidence” to its readers regarding the position of the Catholic church in Spain. Priests were shown in “friendly talks” with “Bolshevik hordes” in Spain. \textit{DSK} argued that despite the fact that the papacy had issued an encyclical against Bolshevism, in reality the church allows Catholics to work with communists. In Spain, \textit{DSK} continues, Catholic brothers have been caught with communist propaganda and anti-Nazi materials. The article continues with the argument that both Catholicism and Marxism are against the “national idea,” whereby “Catholicism supplies the dogma and Marxism the practical work against the national idea.” They quote a Spanish (Basque) priest at the Cathedral of Córdoba, who claims to be on the side of the people because Christ would not be on the side of the rich! \textit{DSK} points out that Basque Catholics tend to side with the Reds, “the deadly enemy destroying Christian culture,”\textsuperscript{54} while completely ignoring the Basque separatist reasons for fighting on the side of the Republic.

Following along these lines, \textit{DSK} makes an effort to show how Catholicism is a foreign religion in Germany. In one article \textit{DSK} asserts that “there is a Roman Catholic language,” and it is not like the German mother tongue.\textsuperscript{55} Articles likewise stress that “foreign religions, i.e. those

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} \textit{Das Schwarze Korps} 22 (3 June 1937): 10.
\item \textsuperscript{52} \textit{Das Schwarze Korps} 10 (11 March 1937): 14.
\item \textsuperscript{53} \textit{Das Schwarze Korps} 23 (10 June 1937): 1–2.
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{Das Schwarze Korps} 8 (25 February 1937): 1–2. Quote of priest appears on p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{55} \textit{Das Schwarze Korps} 37 (16 September 1937): 2.
\end{itemize}
that come from Rome" are not in keeping with the national character of the German people. The claim of the Catholic church to be a supranational institution, where one nationality cannot be held superior to another, had supposedly formed a common bond with the universal claims of Bolshevism. In this particular article, Jesuits, Lenin, and Rhineland Catholics are all tied together saying that, to Catholics, their international home is Rome while Christians are its people—Lenin gets the proletariat.56 Most of these types of article attack the church for claiming that National Socialism is guilty of idolizing race and blood, stressing that the Catholic leadership attacks the Nazi racial laws on a daily basis, while Jesuit missionaries endorse the idea that "all races are important for Christianity."57

Related to racial purity, an article asked, "Does the Church promote hygiene?" Citing Jesuit priest Hermann Krosse for his "Jesuitical craftiness," the article says that the priest skewed statistical data on the number of Catholic children born versus the number of evangelical Lutheran children born as it related to the Nazi "Marriage Loan Scheme." The answer to the headline was an emphatic "No." The church does not practice racial hygiene as it should.58 Other articles found individual priests who seemed to be against the ideology of blood and soil,59 or those who preached the idea of "love of neighbor" but applied it only to Jews and not to the "Volksgenossen."60 In a series of drawings and articles about how the church finds the "finger of God" in the handicapped and deformed, one drawing depicts a priest standing next to a blushing young lady. In front of the couple is a little baby boy who has the exact same face as the priest. The caption says that this pious young lady felt "out of sorts," prayed to St. Ignatius Loyola and asked him to give her son his face. "The Holy Ignatius granted part of this petition and in his goodness gave the little boy the face of a zealous earthly man."61 Finally, articles stress how the church is Jewish by using words such as "Amen-Amen-Amen!" and referring to Catholics' belief in Old Testament (read Jewish) sayings such as "an eye for an eye," while depicting "degenerate" Jews in Austria versus perfect "Aryan" Austrians in photographs.62

56 Das Schwarze Korps 30 (25 July 1937): 11.
57 Das Schwarze Korps 5 (4 February 1937): 1–2, quote from missionary on p. 2.
58 Das Schwarze Korps 21 (27 May 1937): 12.
59 Das Schwarze Korps 27 (8 July 1937), and DSK 28 (15 July 1937): 17.
60 Das Schwarze Korps 37 (23 September 1937): 10–11.
Time and again, the phrase “Jesuitical cunning” appears in articles in *Das Schwarze Korps*, all of which imply that Jesuits, like stereotyped Jews, are clever and sneaky and are certainly not to be trusted. A Father Nolte, in trouble for criticizing the Nazi state, used “Jesuitical cunning” by arguing that he is against the times, not the state. The article accuses Father Nolte of preaching that Nazism is a godless movement while remaining silent about all of the problems of the Catholic church.63 In other articles, uttering “pious falsehoods … are the thing Jesuits do and it has little to do with morals.”64 When referring to the political leader of Austria, Herr Schuschnigg, an article claims he is not above using murder, fraud, terror, forgery, extortion, and so on, before suggesting that “behind the icy mask of these Jesuit masters, perhaps there is still some personal decency?” No, he is only using religion to further his domestic control, engaging in typical “Jesuitical” acts of conspiracy and power.65 Jesuit priests are also “exposed” in *Das Schwarze Korps* for being two-faced hypocrites, as in one article where it is claimed that a Jesuit in Austria said that the Catholic political parties had to work with the Marxists because Social Democrats want the same thing for society as the pope does.66 In still another article, *DSK* says that even though Catholicism and Bolshevism are supposed to be opposing worldviews, the Catholic church wants to compromise with the Bolsheviks even while General Franco and his National Spanish Movement are trying to save Christian culture and Catholicism before the Bolsheviks can destroy his country. In another article on the same page, *DSK* documents the destruction of churches and the murder of priests and suggests that “perhaps the Vatican should not be working with Communists.”67 Finally, one priest, referred to as a “Pfaffen” by *DSK* for “preaching hatred against National Socialism,” is told to ask someone how his comrades are doing in Red Bolshevik Spain.68

**Conclusion**

Throughout the years of the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi press was able to conflate the ideas of Judeo-Bolshevism with anti-Jesuit “enlightenment.”

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63 *Das Schwarze Korps* 25 (24 June 1937): 17.
64 *Das Schwarze Korps* 11 (18 March 1937): 11.
65 *Das Schwarze Korps* 49 (8 December 1938): 12.
66 *Das Schwarze Korps* 41 (14 October 1937): 12.
67 *Das Schwarze Korps* 29 (22 July 1937): 2.
By stating that Ignatius Loyola was racially a Jew, the entire Jesuit order was put into the category of having a “Jewish spirit.” In addition, by stressing that the Catholic church had allowed racial Jews to become popes, both newspapers allowed readers to conclude that the entire church institution had been corrupted and was foreign. Falsely attributing the motto of “the ends justifies the means” to the Jesuit order and claiming that Jesuits were out to conquer the world allowed Nazi propagandists to connect Jesuits to the Jews (also out to control the world) and ultimately to the Devil. The convenience of Ignatius Loyola and the Borgias having been from Spain, while Spain was erupting in horrible civil war, made the job of Nazi propagandists easier to “prove” that Catholicism and its leaders were against the “Aryan Germanic spirit.”
PART FOUR

IN THE SHADOW OF 20TH-CENTURY CATASTROPHE
A. French Conflicts
FRENCH JESUITS AND ACTION FRANÇAISE

Peter J. Bernardi

In the early decades of the 20th century, the counterrevolutionary, neo-monarchist political and cultural movement known as Action Française [henceforth, AF] exerted a beguiling influence on many French Catholics, including members of the Jesuit order. In 1926, the Holy See peremptorily moved to terminate this “ambivalent alliance.” The condemnation of AF by Pope Pius XI, followed by severe disciplinary measures to insure compliance, caused tremendous consternation among French Catholics and not a few underwent a grave crisis of conscience. Though many submitted quickly, others resisted openly or clandestinely. Even the French episcopate and the major religious orders were divided in their response. The Jesuit order was accused of “half-heartedness” [tiédeur] in its response to the papal directives. The sudden resignation and unceremonious departure from Rome of the eminent French Jesuit theologian Cardinal Louis Billot was perhaps the most notorious development. Not so well known is that French Jesuits were subject to a special internal investigation. This doloreuse affaire deeply marked the church in France and still rankled decades later. It is not an exaggeration to assert that the Roman condemnation and its aftermath was a defining moment in 20th-century French Catholicism. Its significance in the religious history of France has been compared to the impact of the Dreyfus affair in the general history of France. How could an antidemocratic, anti-Semitic political movement attract significant Catholic and Jesuit support?

A detailed study of the French Jesuit engagement with AF, both its Jesuit supporters and its detractors, has yet to be written. My chapter will

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highlight some important dimensions of the relationship of French Jesuits with AF. First, I will review some of the background necessary for understanding the attraction that AF had on French Jesuits and, more generally, French Catholics. Secondly, I will summarize one French Jesuit’s qualified apologia for Catholic collaboration with AF. Thirdly, I will treat the papal condemnation with special attention to the secret investigation into the compliance of French Jesuits with the papal directives. Finally, I will offer some observations about the French Jesuits and anti-Semitism and the larger significance of the condemnation of Catholic collaboration with AF.

**Action Francaise and French Catholicism**

Most French Jesuits in the early decades of the Third Republic (1875–1940) favored a restoration of the monarchy. Jesuits had good reason to feel alienated by a series of fiercely anticlerical measures that had effectively annulled them as a corporate presence on the soil of France. Their troubles had notably begun in 1880 when their extensive school system was suppressed. They were forced to remove their formation houses from French soil to Belgium, Spain, and Great Britain (including Wales and the channel island of Jersey). In these circumstances, the Jesuit editorial staff of *Études* had given a lukewarm reception to Pope Leo’s call, in 1892, for French Catholics to “rally” to the Third Republic. By 1900, it was evident that the *ralliement* had failed to galvanize sufficient Catholic electoral strength to reverse the tide of anticlerical measures. Catholic disaffection grew as the radical–republican coalitions holding sway pressed their agenda. Laicization of education, liberalization of divorce laws, and a variety of other anticlerical measures were constant reminders of the “de-Christianizing” of France. In 1901, another flare-up of anticlericalism resulted in a complete ban of “unapproved” religious orders, among whom
the Jesuit order was a primary target. Some Jesuits became diocesan priests; others maintained their Jesuit affiliation in the guise of diocesan priests. During the first decade of the century, the majority of French Jesuits were living in forced exile, though perhaps one-fifth of its membership continued to live and work in France.

The anticlerical legislation reached its peak in 1905 when the Law of Separation was enacted that unilaterally abrogated the Concordat between the French state and the Roman Catholic church. It seemed to many Catholics that grave harm had been inflicted on the church and its interests. Forced entries, plundering of property, and expulsions were the order of the day. From Rome, Pope Pius X (pope 1903–14) issued *Vehementer nos* in which he resolutely refused all accommodation to the Law of Separation and its humiliating measures. Pius X adopted an uncompromising stand of “religious defense” that set the tone for the remainder of his pontificate. On another—but not unrelated—front, the pope declared war on modernism in its many forms. These papal responses strengthened an *intégriste* reaction which received encouragement from the highest levels of the Vatican. At this low ebb in the church’s institutional fortunes, Charles Maurras opportunely presented himself as its staunch defender.

Charles Maurras (1868–1952) was a brilliant young intellectual who had come to Paris in the late 1880s to make his career. Though baptized Catholic, he lost his faith (and his hearing) as a teenager. In his search for intellectual moorings, he appropriated the agnostic positivism of Auguste Comte (1798–1857) as the foundation of his worldview. However, for Comte’s “religion of humanity,” Maurras substituted the “Fatherland” [*la patrie*] as the supreme reality. Maurras then committed his considerable polemical talents to the cause of the “salvation” of France.

Pertinent to this context was the publication in 1886 of the highly anti-Semitic *La France juive* by Catholic journalist Edouard Drumont who

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8 ASS 39: 3–16 (11 February 1906).
9 See *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* [On the Doctrines of the Modernists] (8 September 1907) and *Lamentabili Sane* [Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists] (3 July 1907), ASS 40: 593–650.
also founded the anti-Semitic daily *Libre Parole* that published “the original insinuations, regarding an Alsatian Jewish officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus.” In the 1890s, the Dreyfus affair divided French society over the guilt or innocence of a Jewish military captain accused and initially found guilty of betraying military secrets to the Germans. In this extremely polarized climate, marked by anti-Semitism, Germanophobia, and political pessimism, the ultranationalist movement of AF was founded to champion the security and sovereignty of the French state. Charles Maurras, who became its intellectual leader, convinced his associates to adopt a royalist political agenda to give concrete form to their uncompromising “integral” nationalism, given impetus and sharp focus by the Dreyfus affair. Maurras argued that the restoration of the monarchy was the only “scientifically” apt vehicle to save French society from the miasma of revolutionary, “liberal” individualism and to restore France to her classical greatness. His genius was to weave together the strands of counterrevolutionary traditionalism, nationalism, and positivism into a coherent and cogent social and political vision.

Essential to Maurras’s plan for a restored France was the indispensable role that he accorded to the historic institution of the Roman Catholic church. He appealed to Catholics to make common cause with himself and other agnostic positivists for the salvation of France. He won their favor by defending the church and the religious orders against the anticlerical legislation. In 1906, the noisy demonstrations by AF’s *camelots du roi* at the time of the infamous “inventories” elicited a wave of sympathetic Catholic reaction. Furthermore, when AF founded an institute in Paris to propagate its ideology, a “Chair of the Syllabus” was established to teach Catholic social and political doctrine.

Maurras’s antiliberal ideology was movingly expressed in a small volume entitled *Le Dilemme de Marc Sangnier* which aroused passionate reaction, especially in Catholic circles. This book was largely a compilation of Maurras’s journalistic essays that attacked the democratic notions of Marc

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Sangnier and his recently launched national political movement of “the greater Sillon.” Maurras heaped scorn on this charismatic visionary who preached that democratic values were the evolutionary fruits of Christian civilization and that democracy was the only political structure in accord with evangelical values. He viewed Sangnier as an unwitting propagator of the socially corrosive, egoistic individualism and liberalism that had its sources in the ideals of the French Revolution and the Protestant Reformation. He correctly predicted that Sangnier’s movement would be condemned by the church. This was an assessment that was bound to appeal to the intransigent Catholics who refused all compromise with political liberalism. For Catholics demoralized by the Third Republic’s anticlerical policies, *Le Dilemme de Marc Sangnier* was exhilarating reading. The volume was dedicated “to the glory of the Roman Church, to the Church of order.” Maurras heaped unstinting praise on the Roman church as a bulwark against barbaric disorder. He declared that only the restoration of the alliance between church and state could defeat the enemies of France. Maurras’s political program offered a concrete and practical outlet for those who despaired of reversing the inimical, anticlerical policies by constitutional means. “Order, discipline, and hierarchy” were the positivist’s watchwords. His sociopolitical program was designed to restore these traditional values. Maurras considered the root malady afflicting French society to be the destructive “individualism” unleashed by the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution. The diagnosis pointed to the remedy. As “the apostle of tradition,” Maurras would save France from pernicious liberalism and democratic parliamentarianism by returning to the traditional institutions that were the foundations of her past greatness. The restoration of altar and throne, with a program of decentralization, was the antidote to France’s predicament. Maurras’s antiliberal and counterrevolutionary views resonated with the Roman Catholic church’s dominant restorationist, intransigently antimodernist mentality.

However, for Maurras to pose as a paladin of the beleaguered Roman church was problematic, to say the least, since he was a notorious “unbeliever and atheist.” Catholics had legitimate grounds for hesitation at the prospect of embracing Maurras as their political ally. Maurras’s appreciation of the “true spirit” of the church was scandalous. Scattered among his published works were flagrantly anti-Jewish and anti-Christian remarks.

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Indeed, from its origins, “the conception of Catholicism defended by AF associated [its] anti-Christianity to anti-Semitism.” While expressing his loathing for the “inhuman Jewish monotheism,” the “tumultuous sentences of the prophets,” and the “venom” of the Magnificat, Maurras extolled the achievement of the Roman Catholic church. In short, what Maurras praised about the Catholic church was its supposed resemblance to the pagan, polytheistic Hellenism that Maurras held up as an aesthetic ideal.

Maurras’s ideology posed other problems as well. Very troubling was the ethical import of his *cris de guerre*: “Politique d’abord” and “Par tous les moyens” [To overturn the Republic by any means necessary], professed by new members. The situation called for someone familiar with Catholic doctrine to undertake a careful study of Maurras’s positions and to make a judgment about their compatibility with Catholic belief.

*An Apologia for Catholic Collaboration with AF*

Pedro Descoqs, SJ (1877–1946), undertook this task in the pages of *Études*, the most important French Jesuit periodical of that era. In a five-part series entitled “A travers l’œuvre de M. Ch. Maurras: Essai critique,” Descoqs offered a qualified apology for Catholic collaboration with the agnostic Maurras and his movement. Descoqs contended that though Maurras did not acknowledge the supernatural realm, that did not negate the validity of his sociopolitical program. One of Descoqs’s key arguments was to highlight the remarkable affinity between the positivist’s vision of social reconstruction and the social Catholicism of René de La Tour du Pin. Left unsaid was that La Tour du Pin identified Jews with

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18 Prévotat, CAF, 24.
19 Maurras and AF had received criticism in the Catholic press. See Sutton, *Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism*, 103–04.
revolutionary liberalism and lauded the anti-Semitic work of Drumont. Counterrevolutionary social Catholics and Maurras agreed that the only way to overcome revolutionary individualism and liberalism was to refound society upon its traditional bases, especially religion. The congruence of their social prescriptions was a strong, prima facie guarantee that Maurras’s agnostic methodology secured results with which a Catholic could cooperate, even if incompatibilities remained between Maurras’s agnosticism and Catholic dogmatic principles.

Descoqs composed his series to answer a practical question on a theoretical level: Was there any insurmountable obstacle in theory to prevent Catholics from collaborating on the sociopolitical terrain with the avowed “unbeliever” Maurras and AF, his neomonarchist, political movement? However, he disclaimed giving advice on whether such cooperation was opportune. That depended on a host of factors, some of which could only be discerned in consultation with a spiritual director.

Descoqs sketched the different dimensions of Maurras’s cultural and political perspective that many French Catholics found so attractive. On the positive side, Descoqs identified the notion of “order” as the “dominant passion” of the Maurrassian oeuvre. His sociopolitical program was designed to reinstall the traditional values of “order, discipline, and hierarchy.” On the negative side, Maurras diagnosed the root malady afflicting French society: “Protestant and revolutionary individualism and liberalism in all its forms are the two great errors, or more exactly the unique error from which our society suffers and dies.” And as “the apostle of tradition,” Maurras would save France from pernicious liberalism by restoring the traditional institutions of altar and throne.

The centerpiece of Maurras’s system was his political philosophy and program. The “starting point” was his doctrine of nationalism. Here Descoqs did not hesitate to point out that Maurras’s doctrine lacked a proper metaphysical grounding. Having appropriated the “experimental” method of


26 Sutton convincingly argues that Descoqs failed to grasp the crucial role of Comte’s notion of “subjective synthesis” in Maurras’s doctrine of integral nationalism. Apparently Descoqs made no independent study of Comte in assessing Maurras’s philosophy. He relied on the secondary work *Le Système politique d’A. Comte* by Montesquiou, a Catholic AF member.


28 Ibid., 170.
Auguste Comte, which rejected any a priori metaphysics, Maurras appealed to the authority of the “facts” for constructing his social and political philosophy. This methodology held that universal reason is able to glean from the data of experience those principles according to which society best functions.

Maurras termed his method “empirisme organisateur” [purposeful empiricism] which, besides Comte’s positivism, drew on Frederic Le Play’s (1806–82) defense of the key social institutions of family, religion, and property. Maurras used the Dreyfus affair to illustrate the importance of choosing between “the individual as an end in himself and society that guards the general interest.” To opt for the individual, which was done in the “Declaration of the Rights of Man,” is “to recognize no other law than the interior and subjective law of his conscience.” In contrast, Maurras stressed the superiority of the general interest as necessary for the survival of society.

While praising Maurras’s stress on the general interest of society, Descoqs expressed uneasiness with certain “paradoxical formulas” that seemed to leave the individual vulnerable to the power of the state. Descoqs’s misgivings were assuaged by Maurras’s contention that a properly constituted state would be respectful of the rights of conscience in order to maintain a contented citizenry. Most of all, Descoqs was reassured because Maurras intended to restore the Roman Catholic church to its traditional status in a reconstituted monarchical state. Maurras averred that the state would be obliged to “ordain nothing that is prejudicial to the precepts of Catholic morality.” Finally, Descoqs lauded Maurras’s views on decentralized government, family, and corporatist organizations that would presumably limit the power of the state.

In his second installment, Descoqs culminated his exposition of Maurras’s system with this “most important” question: “In his blueprint [for social reconstruction] has Maurras reserved any place for Catholicism, and, if so, what is this place?” Though recognizing that this “Catholic atheist” did not recognize the supernatural constitution of the church, Descoqs lauded Maurras’s esteem for the church as “the rampart of order” to which he assigned a privileged position in his reconstituted polity. But Descoqs did not deceive himself regarding the limits of Maurras’s

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32 Ibid., 339 and 343.
appreciation of the church. “The Church appears to him, from his relativist perspective, both as the guarantee of civilization and the guardian of nationality.”33 Being a consistent positivist, Maurras justified the church’s privileged role in his monarchist state by adducing its historical role in maintaining social order and cohesiveness. Thus in contrast with the anticlerical “barbarians” who deposed the church from its official public role, Maurras proudly called himself “Roman” and championed the cause of the Catholic church as the historic bulwark of social order.

Descoqs cautioned moreover that “in the thought of Maurras, the term ‘Roman’ is not to be confused with the term ‘Catholic.’” Indeed, Maurras’s use of the term “Catholic” was not to be confused with the term “Christian.” His appreciation of the “true spirit” of the church was peculiar to say the least; he seemed to oppose the spirit of the “Roman” church to the spirit of its founder. And he had expressed his contempt for the spirit of the biblical prophets and even Jesus in certain of his early works. These passages were a scandal to any Christian who might contemplate an alliance with Maurras’s movement. This was the second major impediment that Descoqs had to address if collaboration between Catholics and Maurrassian positivists was to be deemed acceptable.

On the one hand, Descoqs extenuated the incriminating passages in which Maurras expressed his loathing for the “tumultuous sentences of the prophets” and the “venom” of the Magnificat. Maurras was simply castigating the “exegetical extravagances” of the [Protestant] Reformation that “revolutionaries and democrats” have employed to sanction their ruinous programs of social equality.34 On the other hand, after conceding to Maurras that the Gospel can give rise to “dangerous interpretations,” and benevolently inferring from Maurras’s praise of Rome the necessity of a magisterium to guard against “every fantastical interpretation,” Descoqs firmly repudiated any suggestion of a dichotomy between the church and its founder that Maurras’s writings might suggest.35

Apart from “these fundamental divergences” between Maurras’s views and the church’s teachings, Descoqs opined that Maurras gave the impression of being “almost one of her sons.”36 Descoqs found it inexplicable why this “Catholic atheist” stopped short at the threshold, refusing to enter the temple whose lines he so much admired. Descoqs evidently hoped

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33 Ibid., 344.
34 Ibid., 336.
36 Ibid., 345.
that Maurras would one day return to the church. The Jesuit found no insuperable impediment in Maurras’s positions that precluded his reconciliation with the church. So much did Descoqs resonate with Maurras’s fundamental critique of society and prescribed solutions that he occasionally stepped over the line of objective analysis and assumed the role of apologist, without making any explicit reference to Maurras’s anti-Semitism.

There were more AF sympathizers among Jesuits of the Paris Province whose membership was “rather largely aristocratic,” and whose older members had a sort of “instinctive opposition to the current political regime [i.e. the Third Republic] but more generally to the current social regime, [that is] to the democratic evolution of societies.” 37 Étienne Fouilloux remarks that many French Jesuits, whether scions or not of the petite nobility, were “proches” to AF, before and after the Great War. 38

One notable sympathizer was the theologian Pierre Rousselot, killed at the front in 1915. 39 He admired AF for its “bold and clear positions” and was particularly pleased by the close link in Maurras’s doctrine between the social and the political. Although he felt that AF as officially defined did not pose any danger for the Catholic faith, he was not uncritical. He thought that the connection between Maurras’s anti-Christian thought and AF’s official doctrine needed to be clarified. 40 In contrast to Rousselot, Léonce de Grandmaison (1868–1927), the Études editor and perhaps the most influential French Jesuit of his generation, was not a sympathizer. 41 He had second thoughts about the decision to publish Descoqs’s articles.

The Jesuit province of Champagne was very conflicted over AF. It was the home of Action Populaire, an organization which, under the leadership of Father Gustave Desbuquois, SJ, was “resolutely hostile to AF and showed democratic tendencies, as the word had been defined and allowed by Leo XIII.” 42 The provincial Father Henri de Pully, an AF sympathizer,
was compelled to send a special letter to the Jesuits under his charge who were at odds over AF that they should avoid giving scandal.⁴³

AF also found significant support at the highest ecclesiastical levels.⁴⁴ In Rome, the intransigently antimodernist Jesuit Cardinal Louis Billot extolled AF as the best defense against liberalism and democracy.⁴⁵ Summoned to teach at the Gregorian University by Pope Leo XIII and made a cardinal by Pope Pius X, Billot represented a certain type of Thomism that, during the modernist period, often became a sort of weapon in the hands of ecclesiastical orthodoxy “police.” Maurras won the favor of this camp by championing Aristotle and “Thomism.”⁴⁶ Philippe Chenaux remarks that it was “a certain reading of St. Thomas, strongly tinged by Aristotelianism, which insisted on the autonomy of reason and the perfection of the natural order, that permitted the collaboration of Catholics with Action Française.”⁴⁷

Crucial prewar support also came from the Vatican. Pius X refused to promulgate a decree drawn up by the Holy Office of the Index that condemned some of Maurras’s more flagrant anti-Christian (and anti-Jewish) writings.⁴⁸ To a papal confidante who pleaded on behalf of Maurras and AF, the pope is said to have called Maurras “a good defender of the Holy See and of the Church.”⁴⁹ Maurras and his movement seemed to have cast

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⁴³ See Poulat, _Intégrisme et catholicisme integral: Un réseau secret international antimoderniste_, 388–89.
⁴⁵ Billot favorably cited from Maurras’s _Libéralisme et Liberté_ in _Tractatus De Ecclesia Christi_, vol. 2 (Libreria Giachetti: Prati, 1910), 361–371. This citation was excised from the third edition (1929). Billot did take Maurras to task for the “paganism in its ugliest nakedness” expressed in Maurras’s _L’Etang de Berre_. See Sutton, _Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism_, 319. n. 120.
⁴⁸ On 15 January 1914, the consultores of the Index agreed to condemn five works of Maurras, but were unable to reach accord on two others. On 26 January the cardinals added the journal _L’Action Française_ (but not the AF daily newspaper). On 29 January, Pope Pius X ratified the decree, but indefinitely deferred its publication. “Damnabilis, non damnandus,” the pope remarked. See Poulat, _Intégrisme et catholicisme integral: Un réseau secret international antimoderniste_, 402.
a spell over important sectors of the church hierarchy and the French Catholic laity.50

The Condemnation of AF51

AF reached its apogee of influence following the First World War. In the postwar period, authoritarian, nationalist movements like AF gained favor amidst growing political, economic, and social malaise, compounded by the fear of Bolshevism. In 1922, Cardinal Billot openly declared that “against liberalism and democracy, there was nothing better than Maurras.”52 But the dark side of AF was largely ignored: “between the two [world] wars, AF was the principle foyer and the 'spearhead' of French anti-Semitism.”53

The power and popularity of AF peaked in the summer of 1926.54 But the spell of AF was about to be broken. The Holy Office of the Index decree of condemnation of Maurras's publications had languished in a Vatican file for 12 years. Though Benedict XV (pope 1914–22) was decidedly less sympathetic to intégriste movements than his predecessor Pius X, the outbreak of the First World War deferred taking any action against Maurras and his ultranationalist movement. Though his political goals remained elusive, “Le Maître” continued to enjoy enormous influence.

Then, in 1925, three years into the pontificate of Pius XI (pope 1922–39), the Vatican became alarmed by the results of a Belgian survey which indicated that Maurras was the greatest single influence on Catholic youth.55 After personally perusing the Holy Office’s AF dossier, the pope decided to act.56 When Cardinal Charost, an AF supporter, declined to intervene,

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50 It was said that Maurras had a say in the naming of French bishops. See N. Fontaine [Louis Canet], Saint-Siège, “Action Française” et “Catholiques intégraux” (Gamber: Paris, 1928), 40–44.
51 See CAF, 263–342; for primary documents and a chronology, see ibid., 671–708.
52 Cited by Pierrard, Juifs et catholiques français: D’Edouard Drumont à Jacob Kaplan, 236.
53 Ibid., 235–37. Pierrard remarks that Vichy’s anti-Jewish legislation is contained in germ in Maurras’s opinions expressed in the newspaper L’Action française (27 November 1920).
54 See Weber, Action française, 163.
Cardinal Andrieu, a veteran ecclesiastic known for his loyalty to the Vatican as well as his intransigent opposition to the Third Republic, took the initial step on behalf of the Vatican. In 1926, he issued a pastoral letter to French youth that denounced the “atheism, agnosticism, anti-Christianity, anti-Catholicism, [and] amoralism of the individual and society” taught by the AF directors.\(^57\) The pope quickly expressed his approbation. These statements proved to be a prelude to a definitive condemnation. Neither document explicitly mentioned anti-Semitism.

The autumn of 1926 was a time of anxious uncertainty about the exact nature and scope of the Holy See’s intentions.\(^58\) Descoqs considered reissuing his book, supplemented with a new chapter.\(^59\) A widely circulated report of a private audience between Yves de La Brière, SJ, and the pope suggested that a solution short of outright condemnation might be possible.\(^60\) The pope made it clear that he had no problem with monarchist politics per se. But the papal warning “concerned the question of moral and religious influence.”\(^61\) The uncertainty ended on 20 December 1926, when, in a solemn allocution, Pius XI forbade Catholic participation in AF.\(^62\) He recommended that Catholics unite on the religious terrain for the defense of religious liberties in a national Catholic federation.\(^63\) Four days later, the AF leadership responded: “Non possumus.”\(^64\) To cut short the AF’s appeal to the memory of Pius X, the Holy See promulgated the
original 1914 decree of condemnation. In 1927, a decree of the Sacred Penitentiary mandated stiff penalties for those who refused to break with AF, including denial of the sacraments, excommunication, and refusal of a Christian burial.66

It would be difficult to exaggerate the dismay among French Catholics who were convinced that their participation in AF was simply the exercise of their just liberty in an area that did not concern the proper sphere of spiritual authority.67 Most Catholic adherents were unfamiliar with Maurras’s anti-Christian writings and rather viewed him as a penetrating critic of the ills afflicting French society and a champion of the rights of the church.68

The Holy See’s Campaign

In the months following the condemnation of AF, the Holy See promoted a campaign to enforce obedience to its directives.69 These efforts were hampered by inaccuracies that marred the original letter by Cardinal Andrieu and by confusion concerning the precise reasons for the condemnation.70 AF polemicists vociferously charged that the Vatican acted from political motives, alleging pro-German sympathies on the part of highly placed ecclesiastics.71 Initially, asserting that the pope was being misled by
his closest advisors, AF vilified the Vatican Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri and the nuncios Bonaventura Cerretti and Luigi Maglione who served in Paris during these years. Much to AF’s chagrin, Jacques Maritain, who had been an AF sympathizer, quickly manifested his ecclesial *bona fides* by publishing *Primauté du spirituel* in which he defended the exercise of papal authority.\(^{\text{72}}\) Having earned the Vatican’s confidence, Maritain’s efforts were solicited on behalf of a collaborative volume that examined different aspects of the AF affair.\(^{\text{73}}\) When Maurice Pujo wrote a response, these authors collaborated again in defense of the papal condemnation.\(^{\text{74}}\) One of the contributors was the well-known Jesuit and AF sympathizer Paul Doncoeur (1880–1961).

Given the AF sympathies of many French bishops, in response to the Vatican, 117 (out of 120) French bishops signed a declaration that approved the condemnation.\(^{\text{75}}\) Ecclesiastics who demurred were severely disciplined. Most famously, in the fall of 1927, Louis Billot, SJ, was compelled to resign the cardinalate and quit Rome.\(^{\text{76}}\) A second fixture on the Roman scene was also punished when the Spiritan Henri Le Floch, longtime rector of the French national seminary and an ardent AF supporter, was forced to resign.\(^{\text{77}}\) These dismissals sent a strong signal that the Vatican would brook no public dissent.

Crucial to the Vatican’s efforts to effect a complete break of Catholics with AF was to marshal the energies of the major religious orders in support of its policy. Receiving the vigorous backing of the French Jesuits was the linchpin. Yves de La Brière, an *Études* member and professor at the

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\(^{\text{74}}\) Comment Rome est trompée (Fayard: Paris, 1929) and Clairvoyance de Rome avec une lettre d’approbation du cardinal Gasparri (Spes: Paris, 1929).

\(^{\text{75}}\) This was published in *La Croix* on 3 March 1927. See CAF, 395. Prévotat concludes that, of the total number of archbishops and titular bishops, 42 were favorable to AF and 44 were not favorable. Many of those favorable had been appointed by Pius X. See “Les réactions de l’episcopat français devant la condamnation de l’Action Française (vues à travers Les Semaines Religieuses) (1926–1927),” in EM, vol. 5, part 1, 373–94.


Institut Catholique, led the way by strongly defending the papal intervention. Not surprisingly, Jesuits associated with Action Populaire and the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française rallied to the papal condemnation of AF. Father Gustave Desbuquois had had an important meeting with the pope in 1925 in which he strongly criticized AF’s dangerous influence on the apostolate. Soon after the Holy See’s initial censure, Action Populaire published articles by Jean Boulier, SJ, which strongly criticized AF. However, some prominent Jesuits, including Father Henri du Passage, the editor of Études, regarded Boulier’s approach as one-sided and intemperate. These Jesuits urged a more pastoral and conciliatory approach towards those Catholics who in good faith had supported AF. Jesuit colleges had tended to draw their students from milieus sympathetic to AF. There was no desire to alienate them unduly. Though Études published pieces in support of the papal condemnation, there was a perception that not enough was being done and that even the Jesuit officials in Rome were not fully supportive of a campaign to defend the Holy See’s policy. Cardinal Maglione reportedly said on more than one occasion that “the Society [of Jesus] had not done its duty.”

In the summer of 1927, the Holy Father expressed his regret that the Jesuit order had not done more to support the Vatican’s condemnation of AF. An anonymous report sent to the Holy See in 1927 stated: “The truly serious harm is in the sulking silence of a great number of priests, of religious, of Jesuits.” After having been reviewed by the pope himself, Cardinal Gasparri sent the report to the head of the Jesuit order, Father Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, who was stung by this criticism. Two days later, he appointed Father Joseph Demaux-Lagrange, SJ, to serve as a

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78 CAF, 453.
79 See Prévotat, Thèse, 1149.
80 CAF, 235.
81 These articles were reprinted as a monograph: L’Église et l’Action Française (Spes: Paris, 1926).
82 Between the fall, 1926, and the end of 1927, Études published eight major articles on the AF question as well as several bibliographic notices. Official Jesuit correspondence shows a high degree of concern over the responsiveness of Études to the papal condemnation. There was in Rome less than full appreciation for the tactics adopted by Études which sought not to inflame the controversy imprudently.
83 Prévotat, Thèse, 1143.
84 See HRFC, 309.
85 The report accuses several Jesuits of failing to obey the papal directives, including Pedro Descoqs (ARSI, Dossier no. 1027, folder “1927”: “Note sur les Jésuites français et l’AF” [unsigned four-page report, dated 16 December 1927]). This report was annotated in red by the pope and forwarded immediately to Father Ledóchowski who annotated it in black.
special “visitor” to investigate the situation. Without advertising the precise purpose of his trip, which took place between December 1927 and January 1928, Demaux-Lagrange interviewed scores of Jesuits and ecclesiastical authorities in France to ascertain the level of Jesuit compliance with the papal directives. He then composed two reports. Shortly after his return to Rome, the father general wrote the superior provincial of the Paris Province: “I know for a fact that the Holy See is not satisfied with what the Society has done up to now about this matter ...” Father Joseph Demaux-Lagrange’s 15-day visit was then followed by a briefer investigation by Father Enrico Rosa, SJ, editor of La Civiltà Cattolica and papal confidante, who traveled to Paris in 1928 to gather his own impressions and report to the Holy See.

Was the Jesuit order “halfhearted” in its response to the papal directives? Even before Father Ledóchowski received the critical report from the Vatican, he had endeavored to enforce obedience in response to reported instances of recalcitrance. A strict discipline had been imposed that necessitated, for example, special permission to read the AF newspaper. However, was he fully appraised about what was happening in France? His French assistant Norbert de Boynes and the latter’s secretary were viewed as “ardent AF partisans.” Ledóchowski relied on them for his information.

Father Demaux-Lagrange’s shorter report responded to specific accusations made against individual French Jesuits and their apostolates. The second, longer report noted a “tendency to conservatism,” especially among the Paris Province Jesuits, on account of family and generational affiliation. It candidly acknowledged a generalized opinion that “the Society is halfhearted in its campaign against AF.” It reviewed the cases of a number of individual Jesuits who were reported to have publicly disented from the papal directives. The report concluded that there are “a certain number, reduced but very dangerous,” of Jesuits who have not submitted; a “larger number of sympathizers, more or less silent according

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86 Demaux-Lagrange was not an AF sympathizer. A former provincial superior of the Toulouse province, he was serving in Rome as the secretary of the Jesuit order.
89 Prévotat, Thèse, 1142.
90 Among others, this report responded to accusations made against Doncoeur, Descoqs, and La Brière. See ARSI, Dossier no. 1027, “Reponse Au Memoire du 16 Decembre 1927”). The report defended Études.
91 Ibid., 6.
92 Ibid., 38.
to their character and circumstances”; “a too great number of directors who are weak and too concessionary: either by ignorance of the true scope of the condemnation or by defective direction; [and] partisans of a rather reserved public tactic.”\(^\text{93}\) While the report did not recommend a radical change of general tactics concerning the papal directives, it did recommend an intensification of the Society’s response, including personnel changes. Furthermore, it recommended that Father Ledóchowski stress the gravity of the circumstances to the four French provincials and address a letter to all of the French Jesuits to clarify the doctrinal nature of the condemnation.\(^\text{94}\) Ledóchowski then wrote to each provincial concerning the recalcitrant Jesuits under their charge. Some were transferred within France. Father de Raucourt, a prominent member of the Paris Province who served for many years as province consultor and as rector of the college in Évreux, was reassigned to the China mission. Another was sent to Madagascar. One non-ordained Jesuit was dismissed from the order. On 27 January 1928, Ledóchowski wrote to Cardinal Gasparri to respond to the accusations that had been made and the actions that had been taken. On 29 January he addressed a letter to all the Jesuit priests in France to summon them to a more perfect obedience.\(^\text{95}\)

Father Rosa’s report was much briefer and simply reviewed his visits with Parisian Jesuits and ecclesiastics. He recorded that Cardinal Dubois of Paris (no friend of AF) was “more helped by the Jesuits ... than by all the others.”\(^\text{96}\) On 14 February 1928, Father Rosa reported to Father Ledóchowski about the audience he had just had with the pope in which the latter expressed his “great satisfaction” with the Society of Jesus.\(^\text{97}\)

**Conclusion**

One of the harshest judgments on the Jesuits was expressed by Hannah Arendt: “It was the Jesuits who had always best represented, both in the written and spoken word, the anti-Semitic school of the Catholic
clergy.” What about the Vatican’s perception that the Jesuit order was halfhearted in enforcing the papal sanctions? In the wake of the condemnation, the investigation carried out by Demaux-Lagrange concluded that out of a total of 1,900 French Jesuits, only a small number, perhaps 30, were uncooperative.

Can it be said that French Jesuits were generally favorable to AF? Jacques Prévotat, the most authoritative scholar of this history, responded that they were certainly not. Prévotat traced the resistance of some French Jesuits to the papal condemnation to the dissenting response to Pope Leo’s call to rally to the Republic and to Christian democracy. Overall, the prohibition of Catholic participation in AF was a watershed, resulting in a shift of the dominant Catholic mentality from “Catholic anti-Modernism” to what has been termed “Christian progressivism.” The condemnation of AF helped free Catholic thought from the marriage between Maurrassian positivism and scholasticism and gave a stimulus to currents of renewal. French Catholics were energized to renew society from within. “Catholic Action,” which avoided partisan politics, was the pope’s chosen instrument of social renewal. The years following the condemnation were a period of exceptional innovation by the church in France. Perhaps the most notable example of an individual “conversion” was Jacques Maritain who, after cutting ties with AF, became a leading proponent of an “integral humanism” and Christian democracy that had a far-reaching impact.

However, the church’s condemnation of the alliance between Catholics and AF was not the final word on the matter. In 1939, after the AF directors issued a complete submission to the spiritual authority of the church, the Holy See lifted the interdict on AF. When the Vichy government was installed in 1940, Maurras remarked “Quelle divine surprise!” There was an obvious affinity between AF’s ideology and the

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99 Prévotat, Thèse, 170.
100 See Chenaux, Entre Mauroras et Maritain, 11.
101 See ibid., 13–14 and 133–61.
102 See CAF, 504–09.
105 See CAF, 461.
collaborationist government of Vichy. If Vichy was a model of the sort of church–state relationship promoted by AF, its history proved to be an immense scandal for this type of ecclesiastical mentality. The anti-Semitism that characterized AF proved to have fatal consequences for thousands of Jews deported from France to the Nazi death camps. The 1990s trial of Maurice Papon, the Vichy administrator found guilty of deporting some 1,800 Jews, was a stark reminder of this tragic era.

And what can be said about French Jesuits during the Vichy era? Norbert de Boynes sought to enforce loyalty to Vichy among the French Jesuits. But courageous Jesuits like Pierre Chaillet, Gaston Fessard, Henri de Lubac, Yves de Montcheuil, and Jacques Sommet refused to cooperate with Vichy’s immoral policies. They understood what was at stake.

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107 Norman Ravitch asserts “It was only the moral, ethical, and spiritual delinquency which the Vichy regime and the German Occupation required of Catholics that finally removed the blinders from the eyes of enough of them to enable them to see the modern world as it really was” (The Catholic Church and the French Nation: 1589–1989 [Routledge: London, 1990], 133).


A JESUIT SPIRITUAL INSURRECTION: RESISTANCE TO VICHY

James Bernauer

*Blind Spot* was the title of a 2002 documentary film which was made up of interviews with Hitler’s secretary Traudl Junge. Junge claimed that she had thought that, as Hitler’s secretary, she was at the center of the world and at the heart of what was knowable. Only later did she come to the realization that she had actually lived in a blind spot, a place of ignorance. The interviews left a strong impression on me because they seemed to capture the feelings that so many exhibited after the war that, despite their positions, they had missed what was really going on. Was the Catholic church a sort of blind spot from which to observe the events of that time? Vincent McCormick, the American Jesuit rector of the Gregorian University in Rome, complained in his diary of the blindness of numerous Jesuits in that city; he was stupefied that so many seemed to hope for a Fascist victory in the war. Protected in the Eternal City which was thought to have such superior international communications, these Jesuits were obviously not observers of the bloodlands of Europe.

Fortunately, this chapter will deal with a contrasting phenomenon, the clear-sightedness shared by a group of French Jesuits during that dark time. Its title derives from a remark of Jean-Marie Soutou, a French layman who joined with the Jesuit Pierre Chaillot in the establishment of the group “Amitié Chrétienne” in order to assist victims of the Vichy government and of the German occupation of France. In a conversation Soutou described such activities as a “genuine religious insurrection.” We should do justice to the participation of approximately 50 French Jesuits in this

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1 *Blind Spot: Hitler’s Secretary*, a film by André Heller and Othmar Schmiderer (2002).
3 Soutou makes the remark in a conversation with the documentary filmmaker Pierre Sauvage in his *Three Righteous Christians* (2011). The figure of 50 French Jesuits (30 from Lyon Province, 20 from the other provinces) is the estimate given by Bernard Comte in his “Jésuites lyonnais résistants,” in *Les jésuites à Lyon XVIe–XXe siècle*, ed. Étienne Fouilloux and Bernard Hours (ENS Editions: Lyon, 2007), 202. There were approximately 3,000 French Jesuits at the time, 2,000 of whom resided in France and 1,000 in mission territories. Of course, there were many Jesuits who were pro-Vichy and anti-Semitic. See Dominique Avon and Philippe Rocher, *Les jésuites et la société française XIX–XXe siècles* (Editions Privat: Toulouse, 2001).
religious insurrection, their description of it as a “spiritual resistance,” and thus a refusal to reduce their activities to a mere engagement with politics or even a moral resistance. What was this spiritual resistance? In my view, it embraced at least six features: an intensified self-relation; an immersion in the historical moment; a subversive critique of claims to religious status; a reaching out to other spiritual communities; a direct confrontation with anti-Semitism; and, finally, a commitment to action, especially to the task of saving Jewish life.

First, it entailed for the resister a critical relationship with himself, a fresh self-invention. They were thinkers and actors “without mandate,” as Pierre Chaillet put it, and at a time when the church labored under an omnipresent regime of authoritative orders. In fact, it was their absence of ecclesiastical mandate that sometimes attracted episcopal denunciation, for these Jesuits were not authorized to speak for the church or to publish materials that had not been approved. One bishop voiced his disdain in 1943 for “the anonymous theologians who had circulated without mandate, handbills of opinion. They are usually styled as ‘eminent.’ As if the bishops are not theologians themselves …. ” Some of those mandate-less theologians argue, however, that it was precisely their religious commitment to obedience that sensitized them to what they felt were divine imperatives and that relativized the customary ecclesiastical as well as civil submissions. The statements from the French bishops regarding the respect owed to the legitimate civil authorities did not distract these thinkers without mandates from the discernment of spirits to which they were committed. As the Jesuit Yves de Montcheuil pointed out, “obedience did not mean turning off one’s personal conscience.” Henri de Lubac captured their energy: “Fessard, de Montcheuil and Chaillet were not dreamers or visionaries; they were profoundly religious men who breathed

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5 J.P. and M.L. Blum, “Le prêtre de demain,” a 1965 conversation with Chaillet. In the Chaillet file in Jesuit Archives, Vanves, France. I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Jesuit archivist, Father Robert Bonfils, for his warm welcome and assistance during a 2010 visit.
6 Bishop Martin of Puy cited in *La Croix* (August 1943), as reported in the Office of Strategic Services document “Basis for Accusation of Collaborationism by French Bishops” (27 February 1945). United States National Archives, OSSRG 226, entry 210, box 415, folder 3. I am indebted to Dr. Marian St. Onge for giving me access to this document.
the great air of catholicity, and their doctrinal work already invited those whose path they were striving to enlighten to a better-informed, more profound fidelity.8 This air of catholicity is a foundational notion for De Lubac and, in his view, for understanding the spiritual insurrection. This air breathes a universal love and has an international outreach that relativizes ethnic and national identities. De Lubac writes of it as a Jesuit charisma and holds up as exemplars of it the missionary style of figures such as Matteo Ricci who embraced an oriental mentality and Robert de Nobili “who made himself a Brahmin among the Brahmins.” Catholic universality is demanding: “Much more than a mere outward adaptation is required: a whole inner transformation, a real exodus from the secret places of the soul: ‘leave your country, your family and your father’s house, to go to the place that I shall show you.’”9

Secondly, this self-invention was not fabricated in a vacuum but rather in a very concrete grasp of the moment, whether they described that moment as fascist, communist, or totalitarian. Both Father Gaston Fessard and Father Yves de Montcheuil had attended the 1934 Nuremberg rallies and the former composed his first published work as a response to it and as a plea for universal fraternity.10 Chaillet wrote of the spectacle of the triumph of Hitlerism: “We know the disgust and indignation aroused in the civilized world by this shameful hunting down of people treated like unclean beasts.”11 Henri de Lubac described Nazism as an “anti-Christian Revolution” and warned of the neopagan cult of the state that it proclaimed. He very astutely observed that the goal of Nazism is “less to destroy Christianity completely than to debase it.”12 And de Lubac appreciated the weaknesses of Christianity in face of Nazi ideology and practice: “Are there not priests who imagine that a Hitlerian order would favor religion? And have they not gone to the point of spreading word in the presbyterates that, in case of a German victory, a concordat could be signed that would assure salaries to the clergy?”

He claimed that there were two essential weaknesses, the first of which was a faith that had become merely habitual and traditional and thus lacked a “principle of life and invention.” The second weakness was that

8 De Lubac, *Christian Resistance to Anti-Semitism*, 244.
11 Cited ibid.
those very ones who sincerely remained believers were often no longer concerned with Christian virtue and Christian spirit except within the limits of their private life, as if Christianity were deprived of principles for governing the life of either state or business.13

Thirdly, this spiritual resistance found itself in the situation of criticizing precisely what was being heralded as a return to Christian values in the regime of Phillippe Pétain. This regime advocated “order, hierarchy, discipline, and respect for religious and traditional values,” and thus took on the “imprint of a moral order and made public expressions of deference to the church. No Vichy public ceremony was complete without some form of religious observance.”14 This atmosphere of religiosity seduced many church leaders, including the leader of the Jesuits in France, into a largely uncritical embrace of Pétain and his program.15 This is part of the statement which that leader, Father Norbert de Boynes, ordered to be read in every Jesuit community and is dated 12 July 1941:

Here are the directives I feel duty-bound to give you to help you confront the difficulties we now face. There is in defeated France a legitimate government whose leader, universally respected by honest folk for his patriotism, and disinterestedness, is Marshall Pétain. Outside his government there is no other French government ... Alongside the established government, there is the fact of dissidence, which works to destroy French unity. What should our attitude, as members of the Society, be? We must first of all accept the established government and obey it in all that is not contrary to the law of God, whatever our own political preferences. In no case may we oppose it, whether within our communities or outside. We must even use our influence ... to guide souls toward the practice of that obedience which everyone, and above all Catholics, owes to the Head of State.16

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13 Ibid., 434, and “Christian Explanation of Our Times (1941),” in Theology in History, 441–42.
15 The general assistant for France was Norbert de Boynes [he was the second vicar general after the death of Ledóchowski and presided at General Congregation 29 in 1946] who was adamantly opposed to resistance activities. See Les jésuites et la société française XIXe–XX siècles, 153–63. Vincent McCormick quotes in his diary of 7 April 1943 a lament of de Boynes that conveys the latter’s attitude toward France as it suffered from German occupation and Allied attacks: “Well, surely France has deserved this; a nation that for forty years has refused to come back to God” (Hennesey, “American Jesuit in Wartime Rome: The Diary of Vincent McCormick, S.J., 1942–1945” 43).
Both totalitarianism and the Vichy regime reinforced the conviction among resisters that what was at stake in the activity was their very “soul,” a motif constantly sounded in their communications. The title of the first issue of *Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien* captured the thrust of the resistance campaign: “France, Guard against Losing your Soul.”

In 1944, de Lubac would explicitly wonder whether the French bishops’ administrative concern with the “body” of the church led them to neglect its soul. This charge was contained in a confidential analysis that he had written 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 Pétain—he recalls one bishop who spoke of Pétain’s inspiration and another who confessed that, when in the Marshal’s presence, he had to restrain himself from falling to his knees and asking Pétain’s blessing; finally, de Lubac judges that the bishops tended to think of themselves as functionaries of the state rather than as exercising shared leadership in the international Catholic church and he compares them very unfavorably with the courage of German bishops.

The fourth trait of this spiritual resistance was its communal character and ecumenical reach. Clergy and laity worked together as did Catholics and Protestants in projects such as *Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien* that was itself open to diverse alliances for, as de Lubac pointed out, its editors and writers never claimed a “monopoly on spiritual resistance.” In the second and third issues there were excerpts, for example, from Karl Barth, from letters of the German bishops to the pope as well as a collective statement from the Dutch bishops, and a statement of the Protestant bishop of Württemberg. This diversity continued in future issues.

Fifthly, this spiritual resistance was characterized by its frontal assault on racist ideology and on the anti-Semitism justified by it. As far as racism

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is concerned, the Jesuit Pierre Lorson, who wrote under the pseudonym Lucien Valdor, published a book-length study in French on racism and especially targeted its “Aryan” version. The copies of Lorson’s text were sought after by the Germans during the occupation and destroyed. It seems that only four have survived but fortunately the Library of Congress has guarded one of those. Lorson drew attention to some of the racist currents that had influenced the Christian milieu, especially in the attitude toward the Hebrew Scriptures. He emphasizes the role that God has allotted to the Jews in the history of salvation and God’s inspiration of, and self-revelation in, those writings. Lorson was not alone in appreciating how racism might infiltrate theological positions, and there is a noteworthy alertness to the toxicity of speech against the Jews. De Lubac had warned in his 1941 letter to his superiors that anti-Semitism was “gaining ground among the Catholic elite, even in our own religious houses.” Certainly the anti-Semitism of the Dreyfus affair and of the later Action Française had prepared many Catholics and Jesuits to appreciate the venom of Nazi racism. Equally significant was the Jesuit scholarship that created a new regard for the Jewish roots of Christianity. There was the establishment of the series “Sources Chrétiennes” to which Jesuits such as Victor Fontoymont and Henri de Lubac made major contributions. And then there was Father Joseph Bonsirven’s scriptural studies as well as the philo-Semitic writings of Jesuits such as Auguste Valensin and Michel Riquet. Father Riquet, first a student and then a friend of Jacques Maritain, created a network of friendships with the Jewish community and was probably the best known Jesuit among French Jews. He was chaplain to the Catholic medical students of Paris and, from the beginning of the German government’s anti-Semitic persecutions in 1933, he led prayers for the German Jews. He became an advisor to the resistance and came to suffer for his commitment to the protection of Jews with imprisonments in the Mauthausen and Dachau concentration camps.

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20 *Le Chrétien devant le Racisme*, 96–97.

21 “Letter to My Superiors (Lyons, April 25, 1941),” 438.

These Jesuits had developed an informed awareness of the unity of the Bible’s two testaments and this made them particularly sensitive to Nazi efforts at separating a New from an Old Testament. Once again, here is de Lubac in 1941—in speaking of Jesus’s critics, he writes that:

We must now recognize that his adversaries are often right when they see in many points of his doctrine a contribution owed to Israel and first inscribed in the Jewish Bible. So the defense of Christ would be incomplete if it did not extend to those who prepared for his coming, and to the whole order of things which he himself proclaimed that he had come, not to abolish, but to fulfill. Would the New Testament be understood without the Old?23

Jesuits such as these had become partisans of a new relationship with Judaism.24 And Joseph Bonsirven probably deserves pride of place in the leadership of this campaign because he was so advanced in understanding the dignity and treasures of Judaism. Assorted interventions from Rome, some of which he attributed to mere anti-Semitism, made him pay dearly for his regard of the Jewish scriptures and religion.25 And this partisanship for the religious witness that had preceded Christ may have opened the way to a broader grasp of the dignity of life itself. Yves de Montcheuil cites Teilhard de Chardin’s insight and approves it: “Without this ‘love of life,’ without this ardor of the soul, this overflowing of vitality, there is no intense religious life, but only apathy and mediocrity.”26 Was it this love for life that led the Jesuits we are discussing to a heightened empathy for those who were being deprived of that gift of life? And did not that empathy give witness to their overcoming of dualisms, that of time versus the eternal, nature versus the supernatural, the spiritual versus the worldly, the blindness of Jews opposed to the vision of Christians?

The sixth feature in this spiritual insurrection was that it was oriented to action and contributed to a very effective rescue of Jewish people from...
the jaws of Nazi murder: 75 percent of French Jews survived the Holocaust. And was it not this activity of rescue which served as one of the principal roots for the new relationship that developed between Christianity and Judaism and of the theological reflection that articulates it? Let us look at some of this effective practical action.

The Jesuit Pierre Chaillot is an imposing figure and, as founder and leader of Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien, he has been called the “conductor of the clandestine orchestra” of the spiritual resistance and a “hero in the armies of spirit.” Trained as a specialist in modern German theology, he had forged an international sensibility by living in six different European countries as well as in northern Africa and the Middle East. During his time in Austria he saw Nazi brutality up close, and his reflections on Austria’s suffering became one of his first books. He claimed that the military defeat of France should not lead to collaboration and successive capitulations. In the special issue of Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien on anti-Semitism in June 1942, Chaillot writes that Nazi propaganda has created the so-called Jewish problem and argues that anti-Semitism is actually “treason” which should be punished because it is trying to divide the French people after the military defeat of 1940. He explicitly rejects silence and what he calls a false prudence in the face of Nazi hatred of the Jews: “Christians, we have the urgent duty to witness before all of our brethren the following of the essential principles of our faith and proclaim that anti-Semitism is incompatible with Christianity.”

In the next issue of Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien (August 1942) Chaillot denounces compromises with Nazism and asserts that National Socialist neopaganism perverts God’s created order and, thus, forces the church to repudiate it or warns that the church itself will die of suffocation. Twenty years after the end of the war Chaillot preached a sermon at Notre Dame both celebrating the Christian martyrs of Nazism and condemning the broad compromise with totalitarianism by so much of
Christianity during the occupation.33 Although Chailllet will probably be most remembered for his establishment of *Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien*, his saving of Jewish life is his most significant theological act. While he provided Jewish refugees with forged papers and helped them enter Switzerland, his greatest deed was the rescue of 108 Jewish children, an act for which the French government confined him to a psychiatric hospital. Unfortunately, when he was to be honored for his courage in 1957 in New York by the Anti-Defamation League, the Jesuit superior general forbade his attendance at the New York ceremony for reasons that have never become public. Would his attendance have drawn attention to the collaboration of higher religious authorities?34 When Yad Vashem declared him a Righteous among the Nations on 15 July 1981, it was a posthumous recognition that followed a few months after the naming of a square in Paris as Place Père Chailllet.

In concluding, I would like to draw attention to two important developments that certainly bear relationship to this spiritual insurrection. The first is the abrogation of the 1593 prohibition on the admission into the Jesuits of any who are descended from “Hebrew stock,” which was interpreted as banning all Jews who had not been proven to descend from five generations of Christians. The 1946 General Congregation of the Jesuits adopted a decree abolishing the prohibition, and its formulation is terse—it states that the

> present Congregation did not wish to retain it ... but substituted for it a statement reminding the provincials ... of the cautions to be exercised before admitting a candidate about whom there is some doubt as to the character of his hereditary background or his lack of Catholic education, raising the question whether he is suited for the life of the Society or is likely to persevere in it.35

There is no account of why the prohibition’s targeting of those from Jewish ancestry was being lifted, but several members of the Congregation are noteworthy. Henri de Lubac was an elected delegate from France to that Congregation; the Belgian delegate Jean-Baptiste Janssens had been very effective in rescuing Jews during the war and he was to be honored

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33 Sermon at Notre Dame on 7 November 1965. Pierre Chailllet dossier, Department of the Righteous, Yad Vashem, Israel.
later by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. At this Congregation Janssens himself was to be elected the leader of the Jesuits. A third name that stands out in the membership of this 1946 Congregation is the Jesuit from Munich, Augustin Rösch, who had been a leader in the anti-Nazi German resistance. In addition to these individuals there had been petitions to the Congregation from various sectors in the Society in Europe, America, and Asia that the ban be lifted because it was now perceived on the horizon of racism and anti-Semitism.

The second development to which I would point is the 24 April 1960 petition of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome to the Preparatory Commission for the upcoming Vatican II Council. Although the impetus for the Council to address the issue of the Catholic church’s relationship to the Jewish people was certainly due to Pope John XXIII, the petition of the Jesuit-staffed institute is the first request by a scholarly body to call for a conciliar declaration. It stands in sharp contrast to the episcopal sentiment of the day about which John Connelly writes: “In over 800 pages of notes from Dutch, Belgian, French, English, Polish and German bishops, not a single suggestion was made to consider Christian–Jewish relations at the Council.” The most learned commentator on the history of the decree Nostra Aetate claims that the “line of thought and manner of expression suggest that it was written by Fr. Stanislaus Lyonnet, S.J.,” the French Jesuit biblical scholar. The petition includes a section “On the avoidance of anti-Semitism” [De antisemitismo vitando] and pointedly states that the Jewish people should not be presented as rejected by God. Paul’s Letter to the Romans is put forward as a teaching that counters the prejudices generating anti-Semitism. The petition challenges sermons and instructions that erroneously teach that the Jewish people are accursed, rejected by God, and that they share a collective guilt for the death of Jesus. The petition makes reference to the writings of Paul Démann, a convert from Judaism who became a priest but who advocated reconciliation of Christians and Jews and not the conversion of the latter. The seeds of

37 Connelly, From Enemy to Brother, 182.
Nostra Aetate were sown here in this Jesuit-authored petition, which marks an important step in the post-Holocaust journey both of Jesuits and Jews and of Jews and Christians. The Council declares that the passion of Jesus “cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today ... and they should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures.” The Council goes on to affirm: “Moreover, mindful of her common patrimony with the Jews, and motivated by the gospel’s spiritual love and by no political considerations, she deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source.”

Appendix: French Jesuits of Yad Vashem

When the Israeli Knesset passed the Law of the Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority in 1953, Yad Vashem was established in Jerusalem as a memorial to the 6 million Jews killed during the Shoah. Among the duties assigned to the Institution was to discover and commemorate those non-Jews who had risked or lost their lives in efforts to save Jewish people during the period of the Holocaust. They were to be named “Righteous of the Nations,” an expression that was borrowed from the ancient literature of the Jewish sages. Among those righteous are now recorded the names of 14 Jesuits, five of whom are French. They are listed here as embodiments of the spiritual resistance with which this chapter has been concerned. The information here on the Jesuits comes from three sources: The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust: France, edited by Israel Gutman and, as volume editor, Lucien Lazare (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003); the Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem; and the Archives of the Society of Jesus in France in Vanves, France.

Father Roger Braun (1910–81) served as chaplain for the detention camps of Gurs and Rivesaltes in southern France. He succeeded in helping numerous Jews escape the camps and in preventing others from being deported. He provided hiding places for many and forged identity papers for others. Testimony was presented to Yad Vashem that on every occasion he gave witness to his solidarity with the Jews. Thus it is recorded that in

September 1942 Father Braun persuaded the commander of the Rivesaltes camp not to deport 30 Jewish children, but rather to entrust them to Secours Suisse. “He also helped get Jewish children transferred to Switzerland and Spain and had Jews hidden in Catholic establishments. He gave refuge to young Jews in a secondary school run by the Jesuits in Toulouse and thanks to him the students of a rabbinical seminary took refuge in a hiding place in a church in Limoges.” On 13 July 1972, Yad Vashem recognized him as “Righteous among the Nations.”

Father Pierre Chaillet (1900–72). We have already commented on this well-known Jesuit resister. While others were stressing obedience to civil authority, he declared that “saving an innocent person is not a rebellious act but rather compliance with the oral unwritten precepts of law and justice.” He cofounded Les Cahiers du témoignage chrétien, which was the “only underground journal in France that pointedly condemned anti-Semitism and countered the authorities’ anti-Semitic propaganda with its own propaganda. This effort, orchestrated by Chaillet, gathered momentum across France and continued until liberation.” On 15 July 1981, Yad Vashem recognized him as “Righteous among the Nations.”

Father Jean Fleury (1905–82). After his friend Rabbi Elie Bloch was deported to Auschwitz, Fleury assumed his duties and became a liaison between the outside world and the Jews who were imprisoned in the camps. When Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer approached him in 1965 about making a documentary on Oscar Schindler, the then Director of Yad Vashem recommended that it would be better for the film to focus on Jean Fleury as more deserving of the recognition. With the assistance of gypsies to whom he always paid tribute, Fleury provided false travel passes and basic assistance to Jews who were in hiding. One survivor wrote: “Father Fleury took action to save anyone in trouble, to the limit of his abilities, irrespective of whether the person was a Jew, a gypsy or a Communist, and he did so while endangering himself. He did this out of love of humanity.” His unpublished memoirs, The Difficult Duty to Become a Man, exhibit Fleury’s indebtedness to the writings of mystics for his own spiritual nourishment. Wondering to himself how his involvement in the resistance might be considered a “spiritual action,” he responds that it was action trying to “save lives.” On 24 March 1964, Yad Vashem recognized him as “Righteous among the Nations.”

Father Emile Joseph Marie Plancaert (1906–2006) served as a chaplain in prisons after his own escape from German captivity. He made it his mission to alleviate the plight of Jewish prisoners at great personal risk and sacrifice. He was fearless in his preaching and publicly condemned the
attitude toward Jews of the occupation authorities. He provided false identity cards and found hiding places for those in need through his network of associates. “In 1943, Plancaert joined Father Théomir Devaux of the order of Notre-Dame de Sion and helped him rescue many Jewish children. Planckaert and Devaux arranged refuge for children whose parents had been arrested by placing them with non-Jewish families.” On 16 April 1972, Yad Vashem recognized him as “Righteous among the Nations.”

_Father Henri Révol_ (1904–92) lived in a town very close to the Swiss frontier. As a result he was able to assist many Jewish refugees who came to the area in order to escape by crossing the border. “Many refugees came to Father Revol, who guided them along difficult mountain trails. Among those whom Father Revol smuggled into Switzerland were the Najman family, a couple by the name of Buikovsky, and Mme. Edberg Révol refused to accept any compensation for his efforts, even a donation to the poor people of the parish.” In a 1976 letter to Yad Vashem, Révol stated simply that “I have kept a profound sympathy for the Jewish people since those times, a people to whom I am spiritually linked by Jesus.” On 24 January 1978, Yad Vashem recognized him as “Righteous among the Nations.”
B. Italian Struggles
THE ANTI-SEMITISM OF LA CIVILTA' CATTOLICA REVISITED

David Lebovitch Dahl

Anyone who wants to address the relations of the Jesuit order to Judaism in the modern era must inevitably take account of La Civiltà Cattolica. The world’s leading Jesuit journal and a leading Catholic journal throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries since its start in 1850, La Civiltà Cattolica is reputed for its severe anti-Semitic legacy. Hannah Arendt wrote in 1951 that La Civiltà Cattolica was “for decades the most outspokenly antisemitic and one of the most influential Catholic magazines in the world. It carried anti-Jewish propaganda long before Italy went Fascist, and its policy was not affected by the anti-Christian attitude of the Nazis.”

Her statement was informed by an early work by Joshua Starr, and followed by a series of studies mostly focusing on the journal’s support of the blood libel and of anti-Semitic movements in the late 19th century. The Jesuit journal has been seen as not only exemplary but as seminal for Catholic diffusion of anti-Semitism in the 19th and 20th centuries. The entry “La Civiltà Cattolica” in Encyclopaedia Judaica gives an idea of the prevailing image of the Jesuit journal’s attitudes to Jews:

From the outset, the review attacked Freemasonry, liberalism under all forms, and, above all, the synagogue which “had put Man-The-God on the Cross” (vol. 46 (1895), no. 1, 262), thus bringing about the dispersion of the Jews and causing their “irritating” presence throughout the earth. With the accession of Pope Leo XIII (1878), the casuistic approach was replaced by systematic defamation. Civiltà wrote of “Jewish hatred ... against mankind—Jews excepted” (vol. 32 (1881), no. 5, 727); of the “anti-social spirit of Judaism”; and of the “necessity of hating it” (ibid., no. 6, 603, 608). Worst of all was the review’s attitude concerning the blood libel.4

Historians have explained the anti-Jewish attitudes of *La Civiltà Cattolica* as a counterattack against modern civilization and as a reaction to Italian anticlericalism. In Italy, the final emancipation of the Jews was concomitant with the final loss of the temporal power of the Papal States when the Italian army invaded Rome in 1870. The emancipated Jews, therefore, came to be seen as symbols of all in the new order that was adverse to Catholicism.5 The Italian Jesuits, however, were not merely passively rejecting liberalism and Italian unification. They actively promoted an alternative Italian nation-building project. One of the strategies used in this struggle by members of *La Civiltà Cattolica* was to claim to represent the “real” Catholic nation, while characterizing the liberal leadership, the “legal” nation, as Jewish or foreign. During the 1860s and 1870s, the Catholic intellectuals’ urge to define the “real nation” increasingly led them to label Jews as foreigners and enemies.6

Studies have confirmed the presence of anti-Jewish statements in the Jesuit publication over long stretches of time. From 1850 onwards Jesuits at *La Civiltà Cattolica* contributed to the formation of a hybrid discourse regarding Judaism and the “Jewish question” by fusing religious, racist, and nationalist elements.7 The continued diffusion of anti-Semitism by the publication far into the 20th century is well documented.8 What, however, needs further inspection is just how systematic the journal’s

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8 Taradel and Raggi, *La segregazione amichevole*; Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews*. 
anti-Semitism was. “Systematic” is the term used in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* to describe the Jesuit periodical’s defamation of Jews starting around 1880, and this notion was adopted by later influential studies. Both Giovanni Miccoli and Ruggiero Taradel and Barbara Raggi characterize *La Civiltà Cattolica*’s position after 1880 as “systematic,” while David Kertzer talks about the “campaign” started by *La Civiltà Cattolica* at that time.9

The apparent shift around 1880 is mainly attributed to a change in Vatican policy due to the accession of Leo XIII.10 In other words, the anti-Semitism of *La Civiltà Cattolica* after 1880 is regarded to be not only systematic but also the result of a shift guided by the Vatican. This judgment, however, rests mainly on studies of the published journal. Here, I would like to refocus attention from the published articles to the question of whether anti-Semitism was institutionalized within *La Civiltà Cattolica*. How deeply anti-Semitism penetrated the institution, or whether it became part of its culture or was systematic, is a complex question to answer. I will therefore divide it into three, more precise, questions. Was the anti-Semitism of *La Civiltà Cattolica* the product of a concerted strategy? Was it shared by the members? Was it expressed in a conventionalized discourse?

By the first question I mean whether there was a plan designed by the Vatican, the Society of Jesus, or the members of *La Civiltà Cattolica* to approach the “Jewish question” or anti-Semitism in a determinate way. The intention of the second question is to address whether anti-Semitism was supported or diffused by the majority or a minority of the journal’s writers, and by the third I mean whether there existed a typical way of addressing the “Jewish question” or anti-Semitism in the published journal.

Regarding the first question, there is no evidence that a strategy of this kind existed, since no trace of any official or semi-official policy concerning the “Jewish question” has been found in the ecclesiastical archives. Nor is there any hint of such a strategy in the published issues of *La Civiltà Cattolica*. On the contrary, there are signs that there was no plan. One of the accusations that members of *La Civiltà Cattolica* made most

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9 Miccoli, “Santa Sede,” 1414; Taradel and Raggi, *La segregazione amichevole*, xi (the word “systematically” is used in the preface written by Riccardo Di Segni, but reflects the book’s description of *La Civiltà Cattolica*’s position after 1880); Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews*, 134–36.

insistently, and which was common in the intransigent or ultramontane European Catholic press more broadly, was that Jews and Freemasons formed an anti-Christian alliance. However, numerous articles in La Civiltà Cattolica treated Freemasonry without alluding to the role of Judaism.\textsuperscript{11} This leaves the impression that the coupling was used tactically and was not a consolidated belief or strategy. My stance, therefore, is that the reply to the first question must be negative until evidence proves the contrary. I will return to this and the last two questions later.

What particularly spurred my interest in the question of the institutionalization of anti-Semitism in La Civiltà Cattolica was the discovery in the Jesuit archives of a case of disagreement among the writers of the journal concerning the publication of anti-Jewish articles in the beginning of the 1880s.\textsuperscript{12} The main figure of the controversy was a Neapolitan Jesuit and a member of La Civiltà Cattolica since its beginning, Giuseppe Oreglia di Santo Stefano. Since the entire journal was published anonymously in the 19th century, and due to the Jesuit editors’ collegial working rules—an aspect that I shall return to later—relatively little attention has been paid to the individuals involved in and the particular circumstances surrounding the publication of anti-Semitic statements in the periodical. Oreglia stands out, however, since it is well known that he wrote a long series of anti-Jewish essays in the first half of the 1880s. At a time when anti-Semitic movements emerged in Europe, discriminating laws were being discussed in the German parliament, and riots and pogroms broke out in Central and Eastern Europe, Oreglia chose to use his polemical talent to convince his readers that Jews conspire against Christianity and commit ritual murders of Christian children. In fact, the claim that a shift towards a systematic anti-Jewish policy took place in La Civiltà Cattolica around 1880 is


founded on his article series alone. It is largely Oreglia's series or campaign, therefore, that provides the basis for the view that *La Civiltà Cattolica* was seminal for the Roman Catholic church's involvement in modern anti-Semitism, or even, as David Kertzer put it, "crucial to the rise of modern anti-Semitism." The precise context of the publication of that series, therefore, is of general interest, both for the history of relations between Jesuits and Jews and for the history of relations between the Catholic church and anti-Semitism.

It is well known that Oreglia, in March 1882, defended his writings in two letters to the assistant general of the Jesuit order, Anton Anderledy. Due to Superior General Pieter Beckx's old age, Anderledy was in the process of taking over his duties, being appointed vicar general in 1883 and superior general in 1887. Oreglia's letters were both replies to a letter from Anderledy, in which the assistant general had warned Oreglia that there was growing criticism of his anti-Jewish articles. It has been assumed that the criticism had come from the press, or at any rate from outside the Jesuit order. In fact, however, the critique came from the writers of *La Civiltà Cattolica* themselves. Some of the members had asked a Jesuit from Rome, Luigi Nannerini, to persuade the assistant general to put a stop to Oreglia's anti-Jewish articles. Nannerini's letter to Anderledy contained a strong indictment of Oreglia's writings. The fathers of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Nannerini stated, disapproved of Oreglia's articles and asked to have them removed from the journal because they "incite hatred against Jews," and were "apt to excite political hatred, governmental difficulties, and international troubles, without either the church, the Jews, or the Christians taking real advantage of it." Anderledy, however, did not order Oreglia to stop his articles, but instead warned him about mounting protests. Oreglia replied in strongly defensive terms, claiming that he had support in the Vatican for what he wrote. After having received Oreglia's reply

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15 This letter has never been found, see Dahl, “A Case of Disagreement.”
16 Ibid.
17 *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* [ARSI], Rom. 36–VII, 7, Letter from Nannerini to Anderledy, Rome, 15 February 1882.
Anderledy decided not to pursue the case further. The exchange of letters between Oreglia, Anderledy, and Nannerini, however, only reveals part of the debate that took place within La Civiltà Cattolica. Besides writing to Oreglia, Anderledy also talked with the journal’s director, Francesco Berardinelli, and Berardinelli asked Oreglia to stop his series on the trial over the murder of Simon of Trent. A close reading of the articles published by Giuseppe Oreglia before and after the exchange of letters bears indirect testimony to an ongoing resistance to his approach that forced him to justify, defend, and modify his project—a resistance that with all likelihood culminated in the definitive suppression of his article series in 1884.

Perhaps the first signs that there were objections to Oreglia’s writings appeared as early as May 1881—that is, while he was still elaborating on Judaism’s conspiracy with Masonry but before he had started to write about ritual murders. Midway in one of his essays, he explained in his characteristically convoluted and ambiguous style that he had used the contemporary anti-Semitic agitations as an occasion to expand his treatment of the Jewish conspiracy. Not, however, as a “fire to blow into or promote, nor, if nothing else, to justify in the way, in the form and in the spirit, in which this now manifests itself, not, however, among the Catholics, but among the Protestants.” Moreover, he stated that he was:

not at all persuaded either of the goodness of the spirit that inspired this antisemitic agitation, or by consequence of the goodness of the results that it will lead to. One may on the contrary, perhaps, see some more or less lengthy vents of anger or vengeance; more or less also, if one wants, if not justified, at least excused by the provocations of a race that is so oppressive wherever it is able.

The purpose of citing these ambiguous formulations in this context is not to attempt to reassess Oreglia’s support of anti-Semitism. He did not write these sentences in order to reject anti-Semitism but rather to defend his

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19 Dahl, “A Case of Disagreement.”
22 Ibid.
support of anti-Semitism against criticism that he was “blowing into a fire,” a phrase that is most likely an echo of reproaches from other Jesuits. The excuse that anti-Semitism took place in non-Catholic countries served the same purpose. A clearer sign of the presence of a Christian debate over Oreglia’s articles emerged in February 1882, just before the exchange of letters among Nannerini, Anderledy, and Oreglia. In an article in the series of essays on Jewish ritual murders, which Oreglia published during the summer and fall of that year, he argued that:

by hammering the theme of the Jewish infanticides there is no danger of revealing anything new that may damage that race, which, now more than ever, damages, rather than fears, the Christians, who are abandoned to it [the Jewish race] by the anti-Christian governments. May they, therefore, at least leave us *labia circa dentes* as they did to Job. And one should not fear for the Jews, who know not only how to defend themselves, but to oppress, alone, without the help of any good Christian.23

This statement was likely his defense against Jesuits who had expressed concern that Oreglia’s articles were harmful to the Jews. What is more, it reveals that Oreglia had anticipated that his articles might be censured. In the following article, he stated that he would omit the last piece of his treatment of the Trent ritual-murder trial, explaining that it would not add anything new.24 In reality, as he himself would confess in his first letter to Anderledy, Father Berardinelli had asked him to stop the series at that point. Obviously, Oreglia’s defense had not convinced his superiors. Oreglia on his side had not been convinced by the advice of his superiors. He obeyed the order to stop the series on the Trent trial, only to then insist on the veracity of the blood libel in his very next report. It should already be commonly accepted, his argument went, that Jews ritually murder Christians, but due to the machinations of the Jews, “unfortunately often seconded by Christians,” the truth was concealed.

One sees in fact now the steady advance of the new fashion of historical charity, born with the [Protestant] Reform and magnified with Masonic liberalism. A fashion of revealing and confessing even the merely possible sins


of the Catholic Popes and Kings, while wholly concealing and excusing even the evident sins of the heretics, liberals and also of the Jews.25

Oreglia concluded that, given the crushing testimonies against them, it is natural that the Jews attempt to destroy books and other evidence of their crimes and prevent the writing of new ones:

For which purpose they make use of the good Christians themselves, who they put into play as Marionettes in Jewish service, with the usual excuse of badly intended charity. This [charity] however demands that no injustice of any kind is made to the Jews and that on the contrary good is done to them: but it does not oppose itself to civil and historical justice, which curbs their possible misdeeds and reveals facts for common education.26

It is difficult not to read Oreglia’s comments on Christians, who helped the Jews in concealing the truth of the blood libel, as a caustic reply to his Jesuit critics. His mention, twice, of the concept of charity is an indication that his opponents had appealed to this principle. This assumption is supported by a comment Oreglia made in his first letter to Anderledy. Here Oreglia wrote that he had already received criticism of a similar kind to the one his superior referred to. Still, he had not found occasion to listen to the “chatter of many, also Ours,” who “always talk bad about Ours out of charity, and defend the Liberals and the Jews out of charity. A bit of calm, fair historical justice is as beneficial as charity.”27 Oreglia’s formulation, indeed, suggests that Anderledy had referred to the principle of charity in his written admonition to Oreglia.

Oreglia was thus adamantly pushing his own agenda forward despite resistance from within La Civiltà Cattolica and the Jesuit order. In the following reports he returned with increasing boldness to the topic of the blood libel, accompanying his defamation with apologias of various kinds as he had before.28 In May, however, it seems he crossed a line in an article in which he attacked in unprecedentedly direct terms the contemporary Jews in Italy.29 Thus on 22 June he suddenly and altogether abandoned the

26 Ibid., 738.
28 Dahl, “A Case of Disagreement.”
29 Giuseppe Oreglia, “Roma (Nostra corrispondenza) Il Processo di Damasco, del 1840, dimostra che gli ebrei si servono anche ora, più volte l’anno, del sangue cristiano nei loro riti religiosi. Vane arti ebraiche per eludere o schiacciare quanto loro si oppone sopra tal


33 Dahl, “A Case of Disagreement.”

Vatican looked favorably on his campaign. However, we only have Oreglia’s imprecise allegation as evidence. It therefore remains exceedingly uncertain who, if anyone, in the Vatican sympathized with his approach, and it is possible that Oreglia construed conversations he had had with Vatican officials in order to lend authority to his own positions. It is true that the Vatican exerted control over the publication. This control was not formalized in the college of writers’ constitution or in any written set of rules. However, according to unofficial routines, the director of the journal met bimonthly with the pope to discuss the content of each issue and the journal was censured in the Vatican. The problem is that we do not know how regular the meetings were or how broad and strict the papal or Vatican control was, since there is no available documentation. We therefore do not know, and do not have any particular reason to assume, that the “Jewish question” was discussed with the Vatican. Incidentally, in the first half of the 1880s, the college of writers at La Civiltà Cattolica was divided. Most of the writers, including the director, who was responsible for the publication of the journal, resided in Florence, near the Jesuit curia in Fiesole, while the rest, including the rector, who was responsible for the religious discipline in the community, and Oreglia, stayed in Rome. The college of writers had been split since the invasion of Rome in 1870 when the Jesuit curia moved to Fiesole. In the early 1880s, therefore, the director was unable to meet with the pope, and the rector probably assumed this task. This situation might have compromised the incisiveness of the Vatican’s control over the publication. Nevertheless, Oreglia’s articles cannot have passed unnoticed. Some Vatican censors might have read them before they were published without finding reason for commenting on them. To what degree this was due to negligence, indifference, or sympathy with the anti-Jewish attacks is impossible to establish. At any rate, however, the fact that so many of Oreglia’s articles were published is telling of what was considered acceptable in the Vatican at that time. But it does not prove that Oreglia’s campaign was the result of a Vatican strategy. Incidentally, there is no sign that Oreglia was held in high esteem within the Vatican. On the contrary, Leo XIII is known to have referred to Oreglia as a “fanatic.” In addition, the fact that the pope’s encyclical *Humanum genus*, which he published against

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Freemasonry in 1884, did not refer to Judaism indicates that Oreglia had failed to influence the pope. If there was one thing that Oreglia had strived to achieve with his campaign, it was to render the connection of Freemasonry with Judaism commonly accepted.

Similarly, nothing indicates that Oreglia’s campaign was the result of a Jesuit plan. The college of writers at La Civiltà Cattolica, it should be mentioned, was a unique Jesuit institution in that it was not subordinated to the Province of Rome but only to the superior general and the pope. This gave La Civiltà Cattolica an unusual degree of independence within the Society. Although Anderledy did not act resolutely to stop Oreglia’s campaign, there is no sign that he personally endorsed Oreglia’s series, and it seems altogether improbable that he in any way directed or promoted it. Thus he presumably advised Berardinelli to admonish Oreglia and probably played a role in the later suppression of Oreglia’s campaign. It might be that he considered stopping the campaign in 1882, but that he was held back by Oreglia’s claim of having the support of the Vatican. Oreglia was one of the oldest members of La Civiltà Cattolica at that time, and apparently not very approachable. According to Nannerini, the reason why the fathers of La Civiltà Cattolica had appealed to him instead of talking directly with Oreglia was that Oreglia inspired fear in his companions.37 In addition, Giuseppe Oreglia lived in Rome, in greater proximity to the Vatican than Anderledy himself, and Anderledy may have believed Oreglia when he said his views were supported. It might have been out of a wish to avoid troubles, therefore, rather than out of sympathy with Oreglia’s ideas, that Anderledy refrained from stopping Oreglia’s series in 1882. We know little about the opinions within the wider Society concerning Oreglia’s articles, except that Oreglia knew of Jesuits outside of La Civiltà Cattolica who opposed his approach, and we might assume Nannerini was among them.38

The idea that Oreglia’s anti-Jewish campaign was orchestrated by La Civiltà Cattolica is equally implausible. As shown, there is evidence that part of the college of writers protested against Oreglia’s “incitement to hatred.” We do not know exactly who and how many opposed Oreglia, but it is credible that it was an important section if not the majority of his colleagues.39 This also at least in part answers the question as to whether

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39 Dahl, “A Case of Disagreement.”
the anti-Semitism of *La Civiltà Cattolica* was shared by its members. It is remarkable that only Oreglia wrote about anti-Semitism or the “Jewish question” in the early 1880s. Some reports from foreign correspondents in the Chronicle express support for anti-Semitic views, but none of the other members of the College wrote against Jews. It therefore seems that the majority of the institution either opposed or did not actively share Oreglia’s views.

This conclusion may appear to be undermined by the formal rules of the College. These were designed to ensure that all that was published in *La Civiltà Cattolica* was the product of a collegial effort. The rules of the journal established that all articles should be revised by at least two other members appointed by the director and that the final decision concerning publication should be taken at bimonthly meetings of all the writers. These guidelines, however, described an ideal situation of collective-working practices. In reality, things were dependent on contingent factors, such as how individual members carried out the rules, and especially on the leadership of the director. The Jesuit archives contain documents showing that, at certain periods during the late 19th century, the director assumed excessive powers, reducing the revisions and collective meetings to mere formalities. These reports do not explicitly address the situation in 1882, but they reveal how the actual practices sometimes diverged markedly from the principles set forth in the official regulations. The situation in 1882 was certainly not conducive for a strict application of the rules. Due to the College’s division, and the conditions of Italian infrastructure at that time, it is inconceivable that the entire group of members met bimonthly. In addition, it is uncertain whether or how the director appointed revisers for articles written by the members in Rome, and whether the fathers in Rome and Florence could at all discuss the revisions in any detail with each other. It therefore remains an open question as to what extent Oreglia’s articles were subject to internal revisions.

The articles Oreglia wrote against Jews in the early 1880s until 1884 were, without any exception, published in a column in the journal’s Chronicle, entitled “Rome (Our Correspondence).” The Chronicle was devoted to current affairs reports, and the reports marked as “Our Correspondence” were usually sent from observers from abroad, who were

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not members of the Jesuit college of writers, and the journal regularly denied responsibility for the opinions held in them. Oreglia’s “Rome (Our Correspondence)” was his own personal domain, possibly his own invention, given that he was its only author from the beginning until the end. The title suggests that Oreglia’s task was to report on current affairs from Rome. Instead he wrote broadly about Freemasonry and the “Jewish question.” Possibly, Oreglia had succeeded in creating a platform for himself that had left him with an extraordinary degree of independence.

Rather than an image of a systematic anti-Semitic campaign guided by the Vatican, the Jesuit order, or the institution of La Civiltà Cattolica, a picture starts to emerge of an old and unapproachable Jesuit who abused his seniority and relative independence to launch an idiosyncratic crusade against Jews. As this analysis shows, a process of resistance from Oreglia’s peers was met by him with defiance and counterattacks as his campaign was gradually suppressed. Yet his superiors and the Vatican hesitated to ban the campaign, even though other members of La Civiltà Cattolica denounced its “incitement to hatred.” Oreglia was therefore allowed to diffuse hatred for months and years. Whatever the reasons were for the Catholic leaders’ reluctance to act, this bears witness to a striking permissiveness towards anti-Semitism within the Roman Catholic hierarchy at a time when this ideology became a political force in Europe. By failing clearly to denounce his anti-Semitism, the Catholic leadership indirectly legitimized Oreglia’s campaign and permitted it to become a part of the heritage of La Civiltà Cattolica. Indeed, to this day Oreglia’s campaign and the later support of anti-Semitism diffused by the Jesuit journal were never forcefully denounced by La Civiltà Cattolica, the Society of Jesus, or the Vatican.\(^42\) The absence of an acknowledgment of the past support of anti-Semitism within this important Jesuit college of writers has contributed to the persistence of its image as a strongly anti-Semitic institution.

TRANSFORMING ANTI-SEMITISM: THE CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA AFTER THE SHOAH (1945–65)

Elena Mazzini

Introduction

In this chapter I shall attempt to identify the mechanisms through which the long tradition of Catholic anti-Semitism survived in the period between the end of the Second World War and the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council (October 1962).

This timeframe bookends the close of the war and of the Shoah, and a date equally meaningful for the Catholic—and non-Catholic—world; one that witnessed the promulgation of Nostra Aetate regarding non-Christian religions, including Judaism. This declaration marked the beginning of a historical development that led Catholicism partially to disown modern anti-Semitism, and, at least to a certain extent, acknowledge the theological—religious autonomy of Judaism.¹

I have analyzed the Italian Jesuit journal La Civiltà Cattolica,² highlighting passages that shed light on its anti-Jewish tradition. My research


regarding the survival of anti-Semitism in the postwar context is guided not so much by an interest in confirming the idea of an eternal anti-Semitism, founding genome of Christian Europe, but, rather, by a desire to explore how this "genetic material" has shown up in its various permutations. In other words, I reject the extrapolation of 19th-century anti-Semitism to the last century, which presented a very different historical context, marked by the memory of a "total" war and genocides.

The political, cultural, and social caesura caused within the national community by the Second World War must be taken into account when selecting instruments with which to interpret anti-Semitism. The crux of this chapter, then, is the classic problem of the historian: an investigation of the continuity and discontinuity of a phenomenon with its changing and permanent features; identifying the foundational traits that a cultural tradition bears, removes, or transfigures due to internal and external pressures. I would now like to outline my reasons for having undertaken this research.

First, I wondered how the Jewish “Otherness,” which for the Catholic world has played a central role on both theological and cultural grounds, has been redefined and reformulated in the specific context of Italian Catholicism. As is widely known, the “Jew” has, for a long time, been a unifying and antithetic figure for Christianity, for whom “Otherness” was always tantamount to infidelity.4 Further, anti-Semitism was sometimes understood as an idée reçue capable of creating a sense of solidarity and consensus among believers. The ideological and “sanitary”5 justifications linked to anti-Semitism, of which the idée reçue is an example, succeeded, in part, thanks to a complicated ramification of themes, myths, and beliefs lying dormant throughout the centuries. This complex provided the scaffold upon which post–French Revolution anti-Semitism could take root and spread widely in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries.6

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4 “Christianity” is here defined as the ideology developed by the church, in reaction to the French revolutionary movement and to the consequent apostasies in the modern world, which saw in medieval Christianity the example of a perfect society regulated by Christian ideas, for which the church was the sole legitimate depositary. This interpretation has been extensively discussed by Giovanni Miccoli, “Chiesa e società in Italia fra Ottocento e Novecento: il mito della cristianità,” in Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione: Studi sul rapporto chiesa-società nell’età contemporanea, ed. Giovanni Miccoli (Marietti: Casale Monferrato, 1985), 21–92.


6 See Daniele Menozzi, La Chiesa cattolica e la secolarizzazione (Einaudi: Turin, 1993).
The historical transformations of the stereotype of the “scapegoat” have not weakened the sharp distinction between those who were “active” and “saved” and the “passive” and “damned.” Around these dynamics and in different periods, contact and separation rites—salvation rites of the “community in danger”—were developed: by isolating and expelling the subject, perceived as the bearer of evil and damnation, the community “brought itself to safety.” The Jew became for Christianity the mirror–image figure, an image supported on both theological-doctrinal grounds and sociopolitical ones—in either case the Jew was seen as “irreducibly” and “stubbornly” singular.

The crucial concepts behind the anti-Jewish clichés have been examined to determine how much a “negative” tradition can delay an objective assessment of historical transformations because it utilizes ideologies perceived as immutable. Anti-Semitism was a “legitimate” theoretical and practical notion widely accepted in Europe until the Second World War. To understand the conceptual stability and the mutations of such a heterogeneous ideological complex, which includes beliefs, collective mythology, and pseudo-historical narratives, one must tease out both the continuities and the ruptures in its historical development. These beliefs, mythologies, and narratives effected change in anti-Semitic ideas both old and new.

Observing the formalization of 19th-century Catholic anti-Semitism enables us to determine more accurately Catholicism’s relationship with the values and juridical emancipation that derived from the French Revolution. A modern figure who appeared in Europe just after the revolutionary movement of 1789 was the emancipated Jewish *citoyen*, equal on the juridical and political level to the majority. The “civilized” Jew has been the object of a serried anti-Semitic dispute in the Catholic sphere that saw in this granting of equality to the “deicidal people” one of the many cultural and social consequences promoted by the Revolution itself, advocate of an indiscriminate concept of equality extended to those considered disrupters and enemies of the central and undoubted assumptions of Christianity.

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This type of dispute determined the *forma mentis* with which a few sectors of Italian Catholicism continued to conceive Judaism despite the Shoah. Traditional anti-Semitism was divested of its most blatant features, but, between 1945 and the beginning of the Second Vatican Council, the stereotyped representations of the Jew were virtually uncensored and were even reproposed in authoritative cultural arenas such as *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

**Selective Memory and Religious Language: The Context of the 1950s**

During the post–Second World War period Italy, like the rest of Western Europe, was committed to eliminating the persecutory Fascist regulations from the new republican constitution. Once the anti-Semitic legislation had been abolished, the memory linked to the chapter of the racial laws and the Shoah was completely elided from institutional controversies and national politics, focused as they were on the new state and governmental structure deriving from the 1946 referendum, and even more so from the political elections in 1948.

The historical period examined in this chapter is characterized by a political leadership searching for stability and national reconciliation through the construction of collective mythologies which could legitimate the new republican structure, cleansed from the Fascist experience, considered, at best, as Benedetto Croce put it, a “moral illness” in the organic frame of Italian history.\(^{10}\) As previously stated, it is hard to believe that the perception of the Jew, shaped not only under Fascism, but also in the post-Fascist period, would have changed as a result of legislative abolition. The analytical approach chosen for this chapter, mainly aiming at examining the coincidence of culture and mentality rather than that of politics and institutions, will therefore focus on revealing linguistic and symbolic changes in the representations of Jews and Judaism in the *Civiltà Cattolica*.

The leadership role that the *Civiltà Cattolica* assumed within Italian Catholicism derives on the one hand from the journalistic excellence of the authors, and, on the other hand, from the ties between the *Civiltà Cattolica* and the Vatican.\(^{11}\) These ties were so strong that the journal is considered an unofficial mouthpiece of the Holy See in Italy.

\(^{10}\) On the interpretation given by Benedetto Croce to Fascism as a parenthetical phenomenon, see Claudio Pavone, *Alle origini della Repubblica: Scritti su fascismo, antifascismo e continuità dello Stato* (Bollati Boringhieri: Turin, 1995), 3–69.

\(^{11}\) For the biographical references, see Roberto Sani, “Un laboratorio politico e culturale: *La Civiltà Cattolica,*” in *Pio XII*, ed. Andrea Riccardi (Laterza: Rome-Bari, 1984), 409–36;
Giacomo Martegani, editor-in-chief of *La Civiltà Cattolica* in 1945, had joined its ranks in 1937 and directed it from 1939 to 1955. Martegani’s editorial committee included Riccardo Lombardi, Antonio Messineo, Angelo Brucculeri, and Salvatore Lener: famous figures and well known to the readers of the periodical.

The doctrinal–political approach of the Martegani editorship identified in the defense of Catholic orthodoxy and of papal teaching the central points of the presence and role of the church in contemporary society. Alongside the project of the *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, in which Martegani participated, and the development of a new Catholic publishing house, Delfino, the editor-in-chief’s program was to institute “a reintroduction of Catholic culture in Italy.” “This project”—he explained—“appears to be viewed favorably by Pius XII who, as it is well known, shows a certain interest in initiatives that are destined to break the hegemony of secular cultural tendencies.”

Another short digression is necessary before directly engaging our topic. *La Civiltà Cattolica* was well known for its marked anti-Semitism that, beginning from its inception in 1850, was manifested on numerous occasions. For instance, besides the publication in installments of the anti-Semitic novel, *L’ebreo di Verona*, written by the Jesuit Antonio Bresciani, which enjoyed considerable success and was widely read, at the beginning of the 1880s the so-called Jewish question arose and became so prominent that it transformed itself into a central theme of *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

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13 Briefly, the roles within the journal were divided in the following way: Father Lombardi wrote articles that were mostly directed at refuting Marxist theories and keynote guidelines of the Italian Communist Party; Father Messineo was in charge of the section on foreign and Italian politics, along with Father Brucculeri. Salvatore Lener mostly wrote articles of a legal nature.
14 Founded in 1950, the publishing house Delfino, after releasing the monumental *Bibliografia Filosofica Italiana dal 1900 al 1950* in four volumes, interrupted its publications in 1956 due to lack of funds. See Sani, *Da De Gasperi a Fanfani*, 7–11.
15 Ibid., 8.
Examples are myriad. From the writings of Father Giuseppe Oreglia di Santo Stefano about ritual homicide\(^{17}\) to those of Father Raffaele Ballerini covering the international Masonic Jewish conspiracy,\(^{18}\) from the militant participation in the anti-Dreyfus front\(^{19}\) to the writings of Father Rosa in the 1930s,\(^{20}\) the anti-Semitism promoted by the *Civiltà Cattolica* constituted a pivotal axis around which reflections of a religious, political, and social nature were organized.

The corpus of anti-Jewish stereotypes following the Second World War is yet to be studied. I certainly do not expect to fill this lacuna with a single chapter. However, research that allows us to catch glimpses of continuity and discontinuity in the pre- and postwar periods seems like a useful first step.

I have identified three thematic absences in the periodical worthy of note. The first is the paucity of openly anti-Jewish writings; the second coincided with the absence of a reflection on the role effectively carried out by *La Civiltà Cattolica* in divulging anti-Semitism under the Fascist regime;\(^{21}\) and the last pertained to the public memory of the Shoah. The memory gaps about the Jewish genocide must be understood within the Italian context of the 1950s, in which the political memory of the last war, if it existed at all, focused on other subjects and historic national moments. In Western Europe and America, the Shoah only became a public, shared memory in the 1960s.\(^{22}\)

Hence the Catholic world did not behave differently from the rest of Italian society, but within this “collective amnesia” it is possible to identify

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17 Oreglia’s serial writings were published with the title “Uso fatto dagli ebrei nei riti del sangue cristiano,” in the *Civiltà Cattolica* from 1881 to 1883. On this topic see Francesco Crepaldi, “L’omicidio rituale nella moderna polemica antigiudaica di Civiltà Cattolica,” in *Les racines chrétiennes*, 61–78. Regarding the historical reconstruction of this stereotype in Europe, see: Furio Jesi, *L’accusa del sangue. La macchina mitologica antisemita* (Bollati Boringhieri: Turin, 2007); Ruggero Taradel, *L’accusa del sangue: Storia politica di un mito antisemita* (Editori Riuniti: Rome, 2002).


19 On the political use of the case in the Catholic sphere see Miccoli, “Santa Sede, questione ebraica,” 1494–511.


transforming anti-semitism

various factors that led to that compact and generalized silence. For example, if a position on the persecution and destruction of European Jewry was neither taken by the ecclesiastic leaders nor by the Holy See, the Italian church and the Vatican did not deem it necessary to speak of the issue once the conflict had ended. In fact, Pius XII never failed to justify his papal conduct; all that could and needed to be done had been done.

La Civiltà Cattolica followed this tone and spoke cautiously and with circumspection about the establishment of totalitarian regimes and the relationship between these and the church. Besides a defense of the terms on which the Vatican maintained relationships with the Nazi regime and a definition of the openly adverse position of the Holy See towards the neopagan racist ideology propagandized by the Third Reich—a position in reality much more ambiguous than was asserted in the postwar period—a recurring theme within the journal was the praise for the “merciful” work done by Pius XII and his predecessor, Pius XI, just before and during the world conflict in favor of the victims of “various” persecutions. The authors of these papers pointed to the real and widespread help that the Holy See provided for the persecuted, while they softened the outlines and nature of the relationships between the Holy See and the regimes responsible for the persecutions, thereby managing an eloquent opacity in judging the Fascist regime.

In accordance with the speeches on the Nazi regime delivered by the pontiff starting from the immediate postwar period, La Civiltà Cattolica stressed the irrelevance of both Catholicism and the church to the discriminatory practices and cultures of the Third Reich. In the relevant articles dealing with the Second World War any reference to the Shoah, explicit or implicit, was excluded. The ways in which the authors commented on the attitude of the Catholic people and of the Holy See towards the mounting neopagan Nazi threat became the prevailing approach in all the articles on this topic.

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23 Raggi and Taradel, La segregazione amichevole, 49–67.

24 Widely present within the journal, the subject has been the focus of numerous articles throughout the years: I only quote the writings that provided the layout on which the following ones have been built: see Francesco Cavalli, “Aspetti dell’opera caritativa del Santo Padre,” Civiltà Cattolica 96 (1945): 25–36; Francesco Cavalli, “Documentazione dell’opera dell’Ufficio Informazioni del Vaticano,” Civiltà Cattolica 97 (1975): 112–17.

25 See the speech delivered by Pius XII on 2 June 1945 and broadcast by Vatican Radio entitled “La via sicura per eliminare ogni violenza e le note essenziali di una vera pace,” in Discorsi e radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII (Vita e Pensiero: Milan, 1946), 65–78.

26 See “Radiomessaggio di S.S. Pio XII per la fine della guerra,” Civiltà Cattolica 96 (1945): 217–18; Francesco Cavalli, “Aspetti della Resistenza dei cattolici tedeschi contro il
Things were quite different when it came to the Fascist regime, with regard to which the major task of *La Civiltà Cattolica* was to support that government’s legality: the church’s principal interest was to legitimate and protect, in republican Italy, the Concordat stipulated with Mussolini in 1929. These pieces, written mostly by Father Salvatore Lener, point out the substantial differences between Fascism and Nazism, and express explicitly negative opinions on the “purging politics” adopted by the prevailing republican class towards the Fascists.

Other Catholic platforms, equally representative and influential, might be described in similar terms. For instance, it is sufficient to read the entry “Fascism” in the *Enciclopedia Cattolica* to understand the degree to which Catholic apologetics colored its depiction of Fascism which, through the 1929 Concordat, “meant to regulate the conditions of the religions and of the Catholic Church in Italy, giving up the secularization of the State and applying the first article of the Albertine Statute, thus paving the way in Italian legislation for what is the church’s right and mission.”

In the articles in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, there are two aspects: on the one hand, a strong condemnation of the Fascist regime in its attempt to take control of Catholic associations, and, on the other, the positive assessment of the Lateran Pacts and the Concordat which had resolved the age-old “Roman Question” and initiated church–state relations. One might ask: if this was the dominant interpretation of the 20 years of Fascism, how did the Jesuit periodical formulate its reflection on anti-Jewish persecution and on the ambiguous manner in which the church related to it?

Two aspects emerge from my research. First, the silence which was supported by a portion of Italian Catholicism, *La Civiltà Cattolica* included, enabled the avoidance of uncomfortable questions regarding the support given, by some important sectors of Italian Catholicism, to anti-Semitic Fascist propaganda. Second, the “Jewish Question” did not constitute, in a
democratic Italian context, a force that could transmit, as it had in the past, a wake-up call to modern Catholicism.

Though the “ghosts” that populated Catholicism’s collective imagination concerning the “enemy” took on different forms—the anticlerical, the Jew, the Communist, and so on—the goal of this negative construction of the Other has always been the same: to exclude or include Otherness with the purpose of confirming the church in its role of sole legitimate depositary of transcendent truths. From the point of view of the church, she herself is the only entity that can regulate the worldly and spiritual life of mankind.\textsuperscript{29} The Jew had been the object of a doctrinal, cultural, and political maelstrom that, supported by historical circumstances, translated anti-Jewish language into persecutory practices. By way of contrast, in the post–Second World War milieu, the communist, atheist, and anti-Christian represented the “enemy.” Indeed, \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica} dedicated a large number of articles to the theme of communism.\textsuperscript{30} Some of the stereotypes developed and fixed by the Catholic church in modernity starting from 1789 resurface in the second half of the 20th century with different linguistic modalities, although they have the same homogenizing purposes regarding Christian identity. As the communist was the adversary according to the columns of \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica}, the Jew did not emerge clearly as a hostile target. This does not mean to imply that the Jew had been demythicized. Instead, it is plausible to assert that anti-Semitism was not as vital and visible a symbolic system in the second postwar period as it had been in the first half of the 20th century, and that it survived by migrating to other contexts and expressing itself in more obfuscated and less militant terms. However, in some writings appearing in \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica} after 1945, anti-Semitism is considered acceptable in its defensive form, as explained above.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} The symbolization of the figure of the eternal enemy of the church and Christianity, which in the Sacred History is incarnated by Satan, found, in the profane dimension, different mythical representations in which the Jew constituted only one of the moments of the Good vs. Evil confrontation. See Miccoli, “Santa Sede e Chiesa Italiana,” 171–72.

\textsuperscript{30} To have an idea of the presence and recurrence of the communist issue within \textit{Civiltà Cattolica} it is sufficient to look at the “Analytical Indexes” 1941–60, 1960–80, in which the only entries “Communism” and “USSR” occupy a wide space, with almost obsessive outlines.

In 1945, for example, in a review of a book on the so-called Jewish question one can read as follows:

The author leans towards a defense of the Jewish cause based on respect for personality, humanity, and civil tolerance. However, he does not interpret with sufficient impartiality the, at times excessive, measures the governments thought they had to take in defense of Christian society, no matter how excessive they were. Nonetheless, the excess and the cruelty not infrequently shown by some governments and more often by the population, were absolutely deplorable. In Italy though, he registers more moderation, a reflection of the balance and sense of justice and charity so typical of our nation, especially of the Papal States ... However, he denies that the Popes' attitude towards the Jews can be summed up in two words: charity and justice, both meant in a Christian way and strictly endorsed. We have already expressed our point of view, based on justice and charity, which does not rule out a prudent and moderate defense.32

The defense of the popes' work through the centuries; the charity and justice—carried out prudently—and a defense of the Jew; the “balance” of the Italian people's attitude against the persecutory excesses—a balance which was achieved mostly in those states that the author calls, with a pre-unification linguistic code, “the States of the Church”: the conclusions drawn by the author encapsulate precisely the interpretations used by the journal to analyze the history of the relationship between Jews and Christians. Beyond demonstrating to the believer the well-known protective attitude towards Judaism, the journal claimed and reaffirmed the religious supremacy of Christianity over the former.

The finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides a clear example of this attitude. In the spring of 1947, the first in a long series of manuscripts containing passages of the Old Testament were discovered 12 kilometers south of Jericho. Other manuscripts containing passages of the Old Testament, but also apocryphal, ascetic, and liturgical texts were found during archaeological campaigns in 1949–53. The Dead Sea Scrolls’ discovery caused a doctrinal firestorm. According to La Civiltà Cattolica, the ancient biblical writings offered an opportunity to reinforce the traditional Christian interpretation of Christianity as the religion preached in the Old Testament, the fulfillment of Judaism. For example, one can read that

32 See “Intorno alla questione ebraica,” in Civiltà Cattolica 96 (1945): 273. The reviewed book was Ernesto Orrei, Intorno alla questione ebraica (Consorzio Nazionale: Rome, 1942). This anonymous article ended with an appeal to the reader to read also the other articles published in Civiltà cattolica between 1937 and 1938 by Father Barbera, in order to gain, “a fair insight on the question.” Concerning these articles see Taradel e Raggi, La segregazione amichevole, 72–77.
Among the Jewish manuscripts found in 1947 in the Ain-Fescha cavern, there is one that recounts the war between the “Children of the light” and the “Children of darkness,” perceived as two opposing domains, the first faithful to God and the latter its antagonist. The clash between Jesus (light) and the Jews (darkness) is the pivotal moment of a struggle as ancient as mankind, which has declined and become divided into two opposing domains. In parallel with the archeological findings, the journal published a corpus of writings dedicated to the subject of conversion and the significance attributed to it by the Catholic church’s 1,000-year-old catechesis. A review of the drama Processo a Gesù was one of those writings. This play, performed in the main Italian theatres, starting in 1955, was written by the famous Catholic author Diego Fabbri. The article focused on the character of Daniel, a Jew who, once converted to Christianity, first experiences the aversion of his former co-believers, and then dies at the hands of a Nazi, thanks to a Jewish informer. In both the drama and the review, the accusation of deicide was proposed as theologically sound. In fact, the suffering of the Jews are depicted as no more than the consequence of the guilt of having crucified and killed Jesus.

In 1955, the editorial management of La Civiltà Cattolica shifted from Martegani to Calogero Gliozzo. Gliozzo, as the Jesuit historian Giacomo Martina pointed out—perhaps too dogmatically—“did not have the necessary experience to direct a prominent scientific institution: during those years the conservative orientation became inevitably more marked.”

Attempting to assess the first ten years of La Civiltà Cattolica after the Second World War, one can detect the periodical’s two specific political–cultural orientations. First, Catholic culture was reposited within...
democratic post-Fascist Italy: a sort of rewriting of the Christian tradition inspired by the values to which the nation itself looked once Fascism had fallen. This move, a necessary adaptation to the new era, was accompanied by the usual and codified aversions that the church expressed towards the liberal regimes from the Sillabo onwards and which resurfaced in other parlance in the writings published on the topic by the periodical during the postwar period. The second orientation pertained to the systematic omission of references to the atrocities, including the Shoah, carried out by the Fascist regime during its 20-year dictatorship. Focusing attention exclusively on the Second World War, the journal could generically condemn the war tragedies without having to deal with their historic specificity.

In Defense of Pius XII: The Early 1960s

At the beginning of the 1960s, the public perception of the Shoah changed, thanks to well-known events: the trial of the Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann in 1961, and the 1962 inauguration of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. In addition to this, in 1963 the drama of the young German playwright Rolf Hochhuth, Der Stellvertreter, was performed and, amidst heated debate, published. Although nowadays its historical limitations are obvious, the book did criticize the exculpatory Vatican attitudes towards the Shoah. La Civiltà Cattolica dedicated a long review to the drama, highlighting, in defense of the Holy See, its decisive role in helping, protecting, and hiding many persecuted Jews. As evidence of this, laudatory statements were marshaled from a number of Jews.

The same interpretation of the persecution was used by Jesuits in the review dedicated to the book by Saul Friedländer on Pius XII and the Third Reich. The historian proposed a thesis similar to the one of Hochhuth about the ambiguous politics pursued by the Vatican during the war, but

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40 Five-act drama, Der Stellvertreter, was presented for the first time in Berlin on 20 February 1963. Dedicated to the memory of Father Kolbe, interned and killed in Auschwitz, the book was an accusation against pro-Nazi Vatican policies and the indifferent attitude of Pius XII.


based his research on an unpublished set of documents, including the reports written by the nuncios of the countries occupied by Germany and sent to the pope informing him about the ongoing Jewish genocide.\textsuperscript{43}

In the face of such accusations from all over the world, the Vatican’s answer was not long in coming. In 1965, the \textit{Actes ed documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale}, which constituted the official version of the events debated, were published under the editorship of Pierre Blet,\textsuperscript{44} a Jesuit and a columnist of \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica}. These documents, based on archival material from the Vatican Secret Archives, were made public in order to attest the active and widespread help given by Pope Pius XII and by the ecclesiastical institutions to the persecuted Jewish population.

Additionally, the promulgation of \textit{Nostra Aetate} represented a turning point of unequivocal importance in the history of Catholicism in its relations with non-Christian religions and therefore Judaism. This declaration offered for the first time a basis for a dialogue between Christians and Jews freed from the Christian imperative for the latter to convert. There was, however, resistance to this document and its promulgation.\textsuperscript{45}

The Council text received only one, albeit authoritative, comment in the columns of \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica}, written by the Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea.\textsuperscript{46} Considering that the Council’s proceedings were fully followed by the journal, as can be seen from the numerous articles published about them,\textsuperscript{47} the minor attention granted to \textit{Nostra Aetate} may have reflected a desire not to follow completely the Council’s injunctions and guidance.

This study has revealed that in the period under consideration, the positions of the \textit{Civiltà Cattolica} on the topics here analyzed were characterized by extreme paucity of material: very few contributions challenged a resounding silence on the questions that this chapter has addressed. The unfortunate result is persistence of traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes.

\textsuperscript{43} See Friedländer, \textit{Pie XII}, 154–58.
\textsuperscript{44} Pierre Blet, \textit{Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale} (Libreria editrice Vaticana: Vatican City, 1965). The volumes that were subsequently published appeared between 1965 and 1974.
\textsuperscript{45} Opposition that led to expurgations of the definitively approved textual expressions contained in the original draft such as “condemnation of anti-Semitism,” which then became “disapproval,” or the disappearance of the word “deicide.” On this, see Miccoli, “Due nodi,” 200–01.
\textsuperscript{47} Instead of quoting article by article, I think it is more useful to point out that starting from December 1960 until the end of 1965, \textit{Civiltà Cattolica} dedicated a specific section to the preparation and development of the Second Vatican Council.
VATICAN RADIO AND ANTI-SEMITISM DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Raffaella Perin

In this essay I shall present the initial results of an ongoing research project on the attitude of Vatican Radio towards the Jews and anti-Semitism during the Second World War. For quite some time historiography has dealt with the position of the Catholic church on the Shoah, a question that remains controversial in both anti-Semitism studies and contemporary church history. The debate over Pius XII’s “silence” has generated inquiries focused mainly on the figure of the pontiff and the actions of the Roman curia, while a few other studies have been dedicated to the attitude of the national episcopates and the Catholic press. I would like to add a piece to this puzzle by highlighting what was propagated by a particular mode of communication that has not yet been well studied: the radio station of the Holy See.

Vatican Radio was founded in 1931 by order of Pius XI, who was aware of the importance of providing the Holy See with this new, powerful medium, and he entrusted the radio station to the direction of the Society of Jesus.1 In 1934, following the death of the first director, Giuseppe Gianfranceschi, Father Filippo Soccorsi took over and met numerous requests for programming. From this point on, Vatican Radio acquired an increasingly solid structure, culminating in the formation of an editorial staff constituted exclusively by Jesuits.

When the Second World War broke out, the radio station of the Holy See could rely on proven programming of daily shortwave broadcasts in different languages, spreading news of the Catholic church throughout the world. Between 1940 and 1941, five Jesuits were employed as correspondents in the main European languages (Italian, English, French, Spanish, and German) while others were assigned to broadcasts in Portuguese, Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Russian, and for South America.

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Besides the regular transmission of radio programs and the pontiff’s speeches, Vatican Radio became the voice of the Vatican Information Office, whose task was the investigation of missing civilians and soldiers.

The importance, then, of Vatican Radio during the war is clear—hence the need to clarify its position with regard to anti-Semitism. The continuing difficulty, however, in uncovering sources, and the closure of the Vatican Secret Archives on Pius XII’s pontificate, restrict us to hypotheses based on a limited number of available documents.

We may begin with an overall statement regarding the broadcasts themselves. In all the foreign-language broadcasts, it is possible to identify points of view, nuances, and sporadic information about the Jews that are discernible in neither Pius XII’s public stances nor in the Catholic press. Moreover, despite anti-Semitic stereotypes attributable to the Catholic tradition, there were occasional attempts to rethink the relationship between Catholicism and Judaism; this represented an attitude almost totally absent from the mainstream Catholic press. The degree to which these attempts were made was dependent upon the sensitivities of each individual Jesuit correspondent, although it is possible to speculate about a unified, common orientation of Vatican Radio, which had the discretion to be more outspoken on certain topics. On the other hand, regarding the persecution, deportation, and extermination of Jews, a certain caution can be observed in the dissemination of news, resulting not only in omissions, but also in delays in the reporting of those events.

Vatican Radio and the Anti-Semitic Laws

Studies conducted on the Catholic press in Italy have shown that national or local newspapers and magazines were reticent to denounce, comment on, and even condemn apertis verbis the racial laws gradually introduced in a number of countries during the 1930s. Moreover, during the war, even the newspapers which had previously demonstrated greater sensitivity about this question withdrew into a reserved silence.

Compared to the press, Vatican Radio could rely on a vast international audience. Broadcasting in many languages, it was easier to elude

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censorship, despite the protests of the German government.\(^3\) Though the transmission was often jammed, the English press and, to a certain extent, the French press, regularly drew on broadcasts of a certain political relevance. Additionally, the BBC often rebroadcast newscasts.

A crucial question, then, is whether Vatican Radio endorsed the attitude of the print media on anti-Semitism, or if it grappled with the anti-Semitic policies.

The examples that follow are drawn from a variety of broadcasts for different countries. Content was country-specific; a broadcast for Germany was different from one for France. Nonetheless, one can discern an overarching goal of these broadcasts—which makes sense given that all were supervised by the director of the programs and the director of the Radio.

On 8 January 1940, an Italian broadcast for Italy transmitted a Christmas address to the faithful by the archbishop of the Hungarian diocese of Kalocsa, Gyula Zichy.\(^4\) Mgr. Zichy announced the establishment of a committee of Catholics that, under his leadership, would work for “the moral and spiritual protection of the converts affected by the anti-Semitic legislation.”\(^5\) His call to support the committee appealed to the Christian value of solidarity to “not abandon our co-religionists” and to rush to their aid.

A few months earlier, on 5 May 1939, the Hungarian parliament enacted the Second Jewish Law governing the Jewish presence in national, political, and economic life. The law imposed a limit of 5 percent for the governmental posts that could be filled by Jews, a restriction that also applied to other occupations and the number of Jewish-run businesses—in contrast to the 20 percent stipulated in the First Jewish Law. Cardinal Jusztinián György Serédi and Archbishop Gyula Glatterfelder, members of the Upper House Catholic episcopate in the Hungarian parliament, passed both anti-Semitic laws, yet complained that the laws considered even those baptized after 1 August 1919 to be “Jews,” though they were in fact Catholics.\(^6\)

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\(^4\) “Vatican City, in Italian for Italy,” *Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts*, 11:30 a.m., 8 January 1940.

\(^5\) “Catholics Form Group to Aid Converts Hit by Law,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 24 December 1939.

On 3 October 1939, Hungary's Catholic episcopate approved the creation of the Holy Cross Society to provide legal and social protection to converted Jews. On 9 January, the English broadcast relayed the news of the creation of the Society. According to the BBC digest, the committee was founded with the sole purpose of defending the Catholic faith, which meant ensuring that the faith of Catholic Jews was not "undermined."8

The denunciation of the anti-Semitic policy in Hungary made by Father Francesco Pellegrino, the Italian announcer of Vatican Radio, gains significance when contrasted with the clearly limited protest of the Hungarian episcopate, whose concern was exclusively directed towards the protection of Catholics of Jewish background affected by anti-Semitic laws. In fact, if we compare news printed in L’Osservatore Romano during the same period, we notice that the Holy See’s newspaper did dedicate some space to Hungary, though only to emphasize the successful result of the Italian–Hungarian talks held in Venice.9 No mention was made of racial laws, which was the main point of the Vatican Radio broadcast on the situation in Hungary in that period.

In another Italian broadcast, Father Pellegrino denounced the German anti-Semitic policy.10 Vatican Radio coverage of cultural events provides another window from which to glimpse its attitudes toward anti-Semitism. For example, from 15 December to 21 January, an exhibition sponsored by Rudolf Hess and directed by Alfred Rosenberg was arranged at the Friedrich Museum of Berlin. The purpose of the exhibition was to demonstrate that the Catholic church was the enemy of women and motherhood. After giving a few examples, Father Pellegrino lingered over the attempt by Berlin’s neopagans to represent the church as a great persecutor: "We do not deny that there are black pages in the history of the church. But we also recall the present day procedure of Germany against Jews, and apart from this it is hardly possible today, anymore, to speak of persecution." Clearly, the speaker’s words exhibit restraint.11 The reference to the
manner in which Jews were treated under the Third Reich was designed to defend the church against the charge of Jewish persecution. Nevertheless, Vatican Radio proved to be openly critical of German anti-Semitism, unlike, for example, many Italian Catholic press outlets, which abstained from expressly denouncing it.12

A French broadcast of the 1940s provides another example of how Vatican Radio handled the matter of anti-Semitism. French broadcasts gained particular importance during that summer because, as historiographer Renée Bédarida has highlighted, they provided essential support to the Christian spiritual resistance promoted by a group of Jesuits gathered around the Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien.13 The cruelty of war and the armistice signed with Germany, along with the division of France and the birth of the Vichy regime, shocked the French population. The Vatican Radio speaker in charge of French broadcasting, Belgian Father Emmanuel Mistiaen, aimed to provide his French audience with spiritual support and inspire them with courage.

Only 12 days after Marshal Pétain came to power as head of state of the free zone, Vichy enacted the first law that constituted a commission responsible for the review of every instance of citizenship granted since 1927, as well as the authority to revoke French citizenship from anyone deemed undesirable. 6,000 Jews lost their citizenship in this manner. A succession of laws intended to deprive Jews of civil rights followed, until the issuing of the Statute on Jews on 3 October, which specified who was considered Jewish in the eyes of the French state, and excluded her or him from the practice of any profession that could influence public opinion.14

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Father Mistiaen transmitted several broadcasts against racism. He alternated his own texts with bishops’ pastoral letters which dealt with this matter. Though racism was repeatedly condemned, in the broadcasts for France no explicit mention was made of anti-Semitic laws. A broadcast aired at the end of November 1940 is the sole example of one that included a reference to anti-Jewish discrimination. The text was published by *La Croix* on 7 December.\(^ {15}\) This broadcast aimed to condemn racism on the basis of the unity of mankind and, therefore, of the common descent of all men from one God. Father Mistiaen noted that attempts to prove the radical divisions among men could be found even in the early centuries of the church. Pagans had posited the existence of several gods, each one regulating the fate of humanity. On the other hand, the church held fast to the dogma that guided and steadied its whole theology and functioned as the foundation of its universalism: the existence of one God. In the mid-2nd century, Father Mistiaen continued, Marcionism raged against this truth. The Jesuit then seamlessly introduced an analogy between the present situation, the Marcion controversy, and the explanation of his theories:

We have not yet finished listening today to calls to a particular God for some chosen races. It is a fact that, to ease his task, Marcion constructed his own Scripture: he rejected the whole Old Testament and kept only the Gospel of Luke. All that is Judaizing is omitted by him. None of this is achieved by means of science and criticism ... Here we find the theme always taken up by those who need to make their own truth. *They are the elect; the others are doomed to a lesser life.*\(^ {16}\)

Father Mistiaen’s choice of passage is purposeful. He recalls the 2nd-century Marcionite heresy to allude to present-day anti-Semitism. The Marcionite anti-Semitism, characterized by a rejection of the Old Testament and the distinction between an evil Jewish God and a good Christian one, led the Belgian Jesuit to a comparison with modern racism: “In front of unbridled Marcionism, the church defends the only truth that can satisfy all men, save them from divisions and fratricidal struggles, give them a common purpose and assert the essential equality of human nature: one God for all. ... It is our first answer to those who want to divide men.”

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\(^ {16}\) The suggested texts from French broadcasts are in the original in French.
The denunciation of a conception of the world based on racism had already been heard several times from ecclesiastical hierarchies and had been solemnly ratified by pope Pius XI’s encyclical letter, *Mit brennender Sorge*. What was missing, however, was the next logical step: a *tout court* condemnation of anti-Semitism. Father Mistiaen, comparing the racist heresy to the Marcionite one, implied that the renewed controversy against Judaism met once again with the reproach of the church. This example represents the only (even) semi-explicit reference to French anti-Semitism in this first year of war. It was not until 1942 that Father Mistiaen revisited this theme, pointing out the strict relationship between God and his elected people. And it was only in 1943, that, decrying the heinousness of racial discrimination, the Jesuit cited the verse from the Epistle to the Galatians wherein Paul states that there are not Greeks or Jews because all are one in Christ.

**Vatican Radio and the Denunciation of the Deportation of Jews**

In evaluating Vatican Radio reportage of the ongoing deportation of Jews in Europe during the war, it is useful to compare contemporary accounts found in *L’Osservatore Romano*, the main source of information for Vatican Radio. Neither the newspaper nor the Radio enjoyed official status, though both were certainly under the authority of the Holy See. Both media agencies prioritized information originating from the Soviet-occupied territories, because communist ideology was still considered by the Catholic church the most dangerous of the so-called “errors of Modernity.” The Holy See, indeed, feared the expansion of the Soviet regime to the West.

In *L’Osservatore Romano* the criticism on the situation of Jews in the territories under German control was characterized by restraint. In this Catholic newspaper the articles published during the first months of war reported without any comment on the deportation of Polish Jews, never employing the word “deportation” (it used “population transfer” or “emigration”) and remaining silent about Nazi violence against the Jews. The sterility of these reports (which were often just paragraphs and not actual articles) stands in strong contrast to the much more detailed descriptions

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18 “Vatican Radio, in French for France, 9:00 p.m.,” *Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts*, 25 June 1943.
of how non-Jewish civilians, mostly Catholics, were treated in German-occupied Poland. The tenor of the reports was such that the readers of L’Osservatore were not able to grasp the unfolding tragedy of the Polish Jews. Vatican Radio, on the contrary, did denounce more directly the persecution of the Jews.

An example begins with a more general description of atrocities. On the morning of 22 January 1940, BBC Monitoring Service picked up a Vatican Radio broadcast in Italian for Italy. The Daily Digest editor noted that the speaker compared the plight of the population of the German-occupied zone to that of the Spanish people under “communist” rule in 1936. The broadcast reported the emptying of entire villages and the deportation of Poles in freight trains to unknown destinations, and highlighted that “Poles realize that Germans want to annihilate them by such methods.”

During the night of 21 January, in the English broadcast for North America, Father J. Edward Coffey provided a more detailed description of the persecutions. The text was subsequently published on 23 January, both in the New York Times and in The Times. The speaker insisted on emphasizing that the violence of the Germans against elementary principles of justice sometimes exceeded Soviet-perpetrated atrocities. The statement takes on greater significance when considered in light of the above-mentioned focus that was usually put by Catholic media on news coming from Soviet-occupied territories. During the broadcast the denunciation of the barbarities committed by the Germans against the Poles was associated with the same persecutions against the Jews:

A system of interior deportations and zonings is being organized in the depths of one of Europe’s severest winters on principles and by methods that can be described only as brutal. And stark hunger stares seventy percent of Poland’s population in the face as their reserves of foodstuffs and tools are shipped to Germany to replenish the granaries of the metropolis. Jews and Poles are being herded into separate ghettos, hermetically sealed and pitifully inadequate for the economic subsistence of the millions destined to live there.

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20 “Vatican City, in Italian for Italy. 11.30 a.m.,” 22 January 1940, Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts.
21 “Vatican denounces Atrocities in Poland; Germans Called Even Worse Than Russians,” New York Times, 23 January 1940, 1 and 5. The following quotations are taken from this version with slight, insignificant differences from the one in The Times.
The specific order to Vatican Radio to “give some information on the conditions of the church in Poland” came directly from Pius XII. The pope came to this decision after reading two reports that Cardinal August Hlond, primate of Poland, had presented to him the previous December. Protests by the German embassy regarding the anti-Nazi Vatican Radio broadcast drove Pius XII, through his Secretary of State Maglione, to silence the broadcasts on the Polish situation.

Vatican Radio did not include the short remark on the Jews’ deportation in its programs in other languages; nonetheless, the information was also delivered in an Italian broadcast from May, informing listeners that “five thousand Poles, Ukrainians and Jews have been deported.” Additionally, Radio London retransmitted the whole broadcast in the Italian Service, with Harold Stevens acting as mouthpiece.

The importance of the previously quoted statement lies mainly in its diffusion in the English-language press, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The Times article was quoted in an editorial by Father John Murray in the February issue of The Month, the monthly journal of the English Province of the Society of Jesus. The Catholic weekly, The Tablet, of 27 January, reprinted the Vatican broadcasts on the Polish situation along with extensive commentary, excluding the sentence on the Jews. A subsidiary to The Tablet, the English Catholic Newsletter did publish it, however. The newsletter was tasked with summarizing the opinions of the English Catholic press on events concerning the war, in accordance with the Ministry of Information and released as well in the United States and Canada. Moreover, The Tablet might have echoed the Vatican Radio denunciation in its 2 March article where, after recalling the condemnation of German
policy in Poland by the Holy See radio station, it was reported that in those territories “those who are not dangerous and not useful to the Nazis, the aged, the very young, the Jewish elements, are transported into the reserves created for them.”  

One year later the broadcast text containing the reference to deportations of Jewish people was republished in a volume edited by “The Sword of the Spirit,” the London group formed around Cardinal Arthur Hinsley of Westminster. It contained the translation of the two reports of Cardinal Hlond and included a collection of documents illustrating the persecutions practiced by the German authorities against the Catholic church, its clergy, and the Polish population.

The initial phase of the Nazi extermination project had just begun. Vatican Radio did not hesitate in condemning the beginning of the deportation of the Polish Jews. Available sources, however, show that while many programs were broadcast on the terrible situation of the Polish Catholics oppressed by the German policies, no mention was made about the extension of the Nuremberg laws to the new Reich territories, the introduction of badges for Jews, and the creation of ghettos. After the two cited remarks, in English and Italian, there were no further reports about the restrictive measures against the Jews adopted by the general government. In all of 1941, no program reported on the condition of the Jews in Europe. Some reports, mainly in German and French, often drawing on articles from L’Osservatore Romano, denounced German racism based on the fact that “all men of whatever language or origin have the same rights as children of the Church.” Only Catholics were mentioned in the context of discussions of neopaganism or racism, while the Jews were merely mentioned in relation to Nazi accusations that “the Jewish race has created a so-called prophetic religion,” from which Christianity was derived.

The French programs broadcast by Vatican Radio were pivotal both for their opposition to the Vichy government and, certain limitations notwithstanding, for their condemnation of anti-Semitism. Yet after the reference to Marcionism in November 1940, Father Mistiaen did not mention the Jews among the victims of racism, although he had the opportunity to

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30 “Mgr. Orsenigo for Poland,” The Tablet, 2 March 1940, 193.
31 “Vatican Broadcasts on Persecutions in German-occupied Poland,” in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in German-occupied Poland (Burns Oates: London, 1941), 121–23. The volume was promoted also in The Tablet (9 August 1941, 87).
32 “Vatican Radio, in German for Germany, 7:45 p.m.,” 20 February 1941, Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts.
33 As broadcast by a Vatican Radio broadcast in German, “German Paganism and Christianity,” The Tablet (15 February 1941), 130.
do so on more than one occasion. The broadcast from 14 September 1942, while not identifying the Jews among the victims of racism, included some details worthy of mention.

On that day, at eight in the evening, a BBC operator picked up a French program with very poor reception. To summarize the first sentences that were captured, the operator noted that “each individual was entitled to the same rights and privileges as his fellows.” As soon as he did so, the quality of the broadcast worsened until he was only able to grasp a few words. In the BBC bulletin, besides the transcription of the comprehended sentences, perhaps to compensate for the lack of content, the tone of the Vatican speaker was also described: “His voice rising in tones of anger and indignation, the commentator is then heard mentioning the words ‘Jews’ and ‘treason,’” adding: “What right has one section of humanity—after twenty centuries of Christianity to ... with the freedom of the children of God?” The operator, though cognizant of the subject, missed the crux of the talk:

Our Lord Jesus Christ has always shown an immense respect for every man in particular, and for all mankind in general. He bestowed all his love upon all his beloved sheep. But, most of all, on those sheep belonging to his chosen people, the Jewish people, on all the people of his own race from which came the salvation of the world, to which his mother belongs, as do his friends and his apostles. He granted a never-ending love to his Jewish people.

What follows is an appeal for the love of God for all the mankind on the basis of the recognition of their equal dignity in which Father Mistiaen wondered:

With what right, yes, with what right, after twenty centuries of Christianity, can a man still make distinctions among men; with what right can he declare himself a judge of mankind ...? How can we hope, then, after all those lessons of history, how can we hope to succeed by dividing mankind and debasing a substantial part of it?

He concluded by inviting each of the faithful to do what a true Christian was called to do, that is: “to proclaim more respect, sympathy and affection for the poorest, most abandoned, and persecuted. ... We do not have

34 “Vatican Radio, in French for France, 8:00 p.m.,” 14 September 1942, in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts.

35 La Voix du Vatican, n. 28, 3–4. The title of this broadcast in the underground booklet was Ne traînons pas nos frères. The quoted text is in the original French.
the right, without committing a very grave error, to participate in the misfortune, in the degradation, of the people for whom our Lord died."

Father Mistiaen was speaking to a France that in the previous months had undergone radical political changes that resulted in a dramatic turn in the destiny of the French Jews. Historians are interested in the tone of the Vatican speaker’s voice because this information implies a mood which could suggest the Jesuit’s level of awareness of events. The heartfelt words through which Mistiaen described the relationship between God and the Jews was an attempt to call particular attention to the Jewish situation. Nevertheless, between his remarks on the Jewish people, and wondering how it was possible to debase a part of mankind, while warning the Catholics from participating in its degradation, he inserted a generic speech about the coming of Christ for man’s salvation. The inclusion within this context of such a value-neutral message makes it difficult to affirm that Mistiaen was clearly condemning the persecution of French Jewry. While he certainly aimed for this, it is impossible to overlook the evasive manner in which he denounced Vichy’s policies against the Jews. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that the Holy See and the French episcopate reacted very cautiously to the roundups of Jews in the summer of 1942, first in Paris and then in the free zone. The Holy See did not want to annoy the Vichy government. In fact, the loyalty of the Catholic church to Pétain remained unquestioned, and was fully reconfirmed between September and October by the ecclesiastical hierarchies.36 Mistiaen personally wrote the texts for his broadcasts, which were subject to review by the director of Vatican Radio, by the father general, and the Secretariat of State.37 Documentation that certifies the modifications made to the texts is lacking, but even if not directly censored, they were certainly constructed along the guidelines proposed by the secretary of state, the Jesuit general, and the director of the radio. It is very likely that Mistiaen received a clear message not to denounce the deportation of the French Jews openly. This supposition is supported by the absence of the word “deportation” in his speech. Moreover, only well-informed people

37 See Father Dauchy’s account confirming that the written text of the broadcasts had to be submitted before 10:00 a.m. to have the Secretariat of State’s approval. Bédarida, La Voix, 238. Probably one of the internal censors was also the Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi. See Alberto Monticone, “La radio vaticana tra fascismo e guerra (1931–1944),” in Chiesa e società dal secolo IV ai nostri giorni: Studi storici in onore del P. Ilarino da Milano, vol. 2 (Herder: Rome, 1979), 681–727, at 703–04, n. 50.
could have linked the Jesuit’s statements to the roundup of the previous summer.

Croatia provides another example that lends itself to speculation about the relationship between the Vatican Radio and the Secretariat of State, a relationship that reveals the attitude of the Catholic church towards the persecution of Jews. In 1943, in a German broadcast for Germany, Vatican Radio transmitted the message of the archbishop of Zagreb in Croatia, Aloysius Stepinac, on the anniversary of Pius XII’s ascent to the papacy. A summary of this broadcast made by the BBC on 12 May was sent to The Tablet, which published it in its 22 May issue:

In Croatia, early in March this year, all Jews, including those who had become Catholics but who, according to the Nurnberg Laws, are still regarded as Jews, were requested to register with the police. As it was feared that they would be taken to concentration camps, the Archbishop of Zagreb lodged an energetic protest with Dr. Pavelitch [Pavelić] as soon as the order was published. On the following Sunday the Archbishop defined his attitude to this order in a sermon. He said: “No worldly power, no political organization, has the right to persecute a man on account of the race to which he belongs. Christian bishops oppose this, and will fight against such persecutions.” A few days later the orders were withdrawn by the State authorities.

Stepinac was a controversial figure. He gave immediate support to the Ustasha government led by Ante Pavelić, who established the newly independent Croatian state in 1941, in spite of the Vatican’s prudent avoidance of recognition, though the Croatian Fascists had embraced Catholicism as the state religion. On the other hand, he was unquestionably committed to denouncing and condemning anti-Semitism and, above all, opposing the Croatian racial laws, a task which he attempted to fulfill by insistently broaching the issue with governmental authorities, the Holy See, and the Apostolic Visitor, Ramiro Marcone, as well as with the public through sermons held in the cathedral which were even broadcast outside the Croatian borders. For example, the protest to which the Vatican Radio speaker was referring originated in one of Stepinac’s letters to Pavelić on 6 March 1943 after the announcement in Zagreb and provinces of new

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38 “Vatican Radio, in German for Germany, 9:45 p.m.,” in Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 12 May 1943; “An Archbishop and the Jews,” The Tablet (22 May 1943), 247.


40 Besides Vatican Radio it seems that also Radio London and US radios reported Stepinac’s sermons. See Fiorello Cavalli, Il processo dell’arcivescovo di Zagabria (La Civiltà Cattolica: Rome, 1947), 86.
measures against “non-Aryans.” On 14 March the archbishop issued his protest against the violation of “the elementary rights of man [and] of the sanctity of the family or of a marriage which has been concluded on the foundation of the natural and positive law of God.” Stepinac succeeded in assuring that Jewish spouses and their children were neither arrested nor sent to concentration camps. It is worth remembering, however, the limit of his protest. At first, the archbishop deemed the negative influence of the Germans responsible for the adoption of racial legislation in Croatia. In 1943, he finally admitted to the guilt of the Croatian government but imputed it only to “irresponsible and unwelcome elements.” This attitude of reticence was evident in the Vatican Radio broadcast.

In June, again in German for Germany, Vatican Radio broadcast some passages of another Stepinac sermon, which once again echoed with a long account. The speaker opened the program by observing that “at the present time it is more necessary than ever to point out the inviolability of human rights granted by God,” and for that reason Vatican Radio would broadcast, along with the pope's speeches, also the declarations of priests and of the Catholic church on this issue. That night the radio station gave voice to someone “who has constantly reminded the population of Croatia of the inviolability of man's rights.” After having reminded the listeners that the Croatian bishops, together or individually, expressed their opinion in that regard, the speaker described Stepinac as follows:

One of the best-known fighters for the rights of man and moral freedom ... In many sermons he has branded the violation of morals and of the doctrines of the Church. In innumerable written memoranda and verbal interventions he fought the cause of all those who are unjustly persecuted.

42 Pattee, The Case, 274.
43 Shelah, The Catholic Church, 334.
44 Pattee, The Case, 311–12. In this regard, see also Miccoli’s observations in Le Dilemmes, 372–78.
45 “Vatican Radio, in German for Germany, 9:45 p.m.,” Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 6 July 1943; “The Archbishop of Zagreb and the Jews,” The Tablet (7 July 1943), 31.
46 Actually, the Croatian Episcopal Conference, held from 17 November to 20 November 1941, produced a resolution to submit to the government that exclusively concerned the converted Jews. See Pattee, The Case, 305–06. As Shelah stressed, two-thirds of the Croatian Jews were rounded up from July to December 1941 and led to concentration camps in Croatia. The majority was killed; a minority was imprisoned in other camps including the one in Jasenovac. See Shelah, The Catholic Church, 330.
be they Jews, Serbians, gypsies or Catholic Croats. He was, and is, the only refuge for these people.

The broadcast continued, citing some passages of the sermon given by Stepinac on the occasion of the Feast of Christ the King:47

What are the races and the peoples of the earth before God? This is a question we must all ask, since the theory of race has become the subject for discussion by all peoples. The first thing we assert is that all peoples are as nothing before God. ... The second thing we assert is that all races and peoples come from God. ... The third thing we assert is that every people and every race which has been formed on earth today has the right to a life and to a treatment worthy of man. ... No one is allowed to exterminate the educated classes of this earth because that might be good for the working classes. Neither can this be done with the Jews and the Gypsies merely because they are regarded as inferior races.

The speaker continued by asserting that Stepinac would preach that sermon after a state decree had ordered the registration of all the Jews, the obligation to wear a distinctive badge, the confiscation of their property, and, eventually, their internment. He ended with a quote from another sermon of 14 March 1943, in which he focused on the pain of wives who had to witness helplessly the destruction of their families caused by the racial laws, eroding the validity of mixed marriages.

Actually, the implementation of anti-Semitic measures denounced by Vatican Radio in 1943 dated from April and May of 1941. It was well known by the Holy See that the Croatian government was to enact a planned deportation of Jews, Gypsies, Serbs, and political prisoners in a few weeks. On 30 April 1941, 20 days after the birth of the Croatian Fascist state, the first anti-Semitic law defined those who were to be considered “Jews.” Other laws followed, including the prohibition of mixed marriages, of having “Aryan” servants, of engaging in commercial activities as well as the obligation for Jews and Jewish-owned shops of bearing a distinctive marker. The letters that Stepinac addressed to Andrija Artuković, the minister of the interior, written in order to complain about the obligation to wear the yellow star, but mostly to urge intercession on behalf of Jews converted to Catholicism, who were also affected by the laws, date back to the spring of 1941. As a result, by the autumn of 1942 the “Jewish problem”—to use the inappropriate expression of a Polizeiattaché at the German embassy in Zagreb—could have been described as “mostly solved.

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47 It concerns of course the Feast of Christ the King of the previous year, so Pattee must be corrected when dating the sermon 25 October 1943.
in Croatia.” This meant that Vatican Radio broadcasts amounted to an effort in futility. Why did Vatican Radio vacillate for two years before issuing the protests of the archbishop against the Croatian anti-Semitic measures?48 On 2 April 1943, the secretary of state, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, wrote to the Visitor of Croatia, Marcone, that Serbian-Orthodox propaganda was accusing the Catholics in general, and the episcopate in particular, of not having protested against the treatment of the Serbs by the Croatian government.49 Therefore, he considered it appropriate to call the attention of the visitor because “certain environments disposed to give credence to those accusations could cause serious damages to the prestige of the Catholic name.” For this reason, he asked him to refer to Stepinac given “that in the present delicate circumstances it is both possible and proper to highlight the lack of foundation of such claims” and so thus invited him to collect and then communicate to the Secretariat of the State “all those elements that are useful, should the circumstances require it, to properly enlighten the public opinion.” In reply to the requests of Maglione, the archbishop of Zagreb, at the time of his visit to Rome, from 24 May to 4 June, brought with him the documentation to prove his own, as well as the Croatian church’s work, in favor of the Serbian and Jewish minorities.50 The Secretariat of State drew up a list of 34 points on 31 May.51 A few weeks later, in recognition of the effort the Holy See was exerting in favor of the Jewish people,52 Meir Touval-Weltmann, delegate of a relief committee in Istanbul for the European Jews, sent expressions of gratitude to the Vatican, via Angelo Roncalli, Apostolic delegate in Turkey. One of the attached memoranda thanked Stepinac for his work.

It is consequently likely that the same Secretariat of the State, with which Vatican Radio was constantly in touch, encouraged Father Soccorsi to broadcast Stepinac’s sermons. The necessity of informing the public about the actions of the Catholic church against the oppression inflicted upon the Eastern Jews because of racist ideology clearly convinced the Holy See of the efficiency of the radio. Once the messages were broadcast

48 See Miccoli, _Le Dilemmes_, 373 and n. 550.
49 ADSS, vol. 9, doc. 130, 218–19.
50 Ibid., Annexe II and III, 221–29.
51 For the cover letter and for Stepinac’s memorandum refer to Shelah’s observations in his _The Catholic Church_, 335–36; see also Miccoli, _Les Dilemmes_, 377. Both note that the archbishop tried to highlight the good done by the Croatian government for the Catholic church and the persistence of anti-Jewish topics in Stepinac’s memorandum apparently excusing in part some measures taken against Jews.
52 ADSS, doc. 226, 337.
in Germany, the most difficult country to reach both because of continuous signal-jamming and the infliction of punishment upon those who were caught listening to foreign programs, Vatican Radio could count on a wide diffusion of its broadcasting in the English-speaking countries, taken care of by the English media. Moreover, as occurred between 1940 and 1941 in regard to complaints of the German chargé d’affaires, it was always possible to reply that Vatican Radio was not the official radio of the Holy See, and, therefore, the Secretariat of the State could not be held responsible for the contents of its message.

Conclusions

It is finally possible to outline an initial, provisional report on Vatican Radio’s attitude towards Jews and anti-Semitism. The radio station attempted to convey news about the situation of European Jews that did not always appear in the Catholic press, even the ones closest to the Holy See. Counting on broadcasts in various languages, Vatican Radio could select news to transmit to different countries, releasing points of view partly reflective of the sensitivities of the Jesuits in charge and partly reflective of specific policies, previously determined for each country. The French broadcasts illustrate the effort of a Jesuit, Father Mistiaen, to oppose anti-Semitism, despite all the restrictions imposed by his superiors. The German situation was a more sensitive case—transmissions hardly succeeded and German officials often complained to the Holy See. Nevertheless, the broadcasts provided news and information on important topics, such as anti-Semitism, delivered to whoever was able to tune in to the Vatican Radio wavelength.

Vatican Radio contrasted on various occasions the long-standing biases against the Jews. For example, the positive role of Jews in the history of Christianity was emphasized in a German broadcast by stressing the part played by the Jews in establishing the foundations of the teachings of Christ. It is no coincidence that this change, however small, was opposed in Germany, where anti-Semitic laws were first introduced.

Other examples reveal, however, the persistence of a certain dualism within Vatican Radio. Despite the tendency to emphasize the benevolence

54 “Vatican Radio, in German for Germany, 8:30 p.m.,” 15 June 1940, *Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts*. 
of the church and its sense of protection towards the Jews over the centuries, stereotypes reflective of a dissatisfaction with the social centrality of Jews in general, and in the economic sphere specifically, were insinuated—a *topos* dear to the racist campaigns of the 1930s.

With regard to the denunciation and condemnation of anti-Semitism, we find in the broadcasts the dichotomization that was typical also in the print media: a repeated denunciation of racism coupled with a reluctance to condemn anti-Semitism explicitly. Jews were hardly mentioned along-side Catholics as victims of neopagan and racist theories. Denunciations, when they occurred, often came late. The close link between Vatican Radio and the Holy See led to the belief that, despite a degree of freedom in regards to its management, the Jesuit general, the Secretariat of State, and Pius XII were informed daily about the texts of broadcasts to be aired, and they often decided what would or would not be released. Their behind-the-scenes role in the broadcasting should lead, then, to further investigations on the position held by Vatican Radio during the war, which could in turn give rise to new research hypotheses regarding the Holy See's attitude towards Jews during the Second World War.
PIETRO TACCHI VENTURI, MUSSOLINI, PIUS XI, AND THE JEWS

David I. Kertzer

In the controversial relationship between Pope Pius XI and Benito Mussolini, no one played a more crucial role than a Jesuit priest, Pietro Tacchi Venturi, who had no official position in the Vatican Secretariat of State office. From shortly after Mussolini came to power, the Jesuit became Pius XI's personal emissary to the Italian dictator and, over the course of the next 16 years, until Pius XI's death, he met privately with Mussolini well over 100 times, regularly bringing papal requests and, not infrequently, papal complaints. Even after the 1929 Lateran accords led to the appointment of a papal nuncio to the Italian government, the pope continued to entrust the most sensitive matters in his dealings with Mussolini to Tacchi Venturi, and, while Mussolini viewed the nuncio, Francesco Borgongini Duca, as something of a devout simpleton, he had great respect for the Jesuit emissary. For his part, Tacchi Venturi often described himself to Mussolini as a loyal Fascist. It is impossible to understand the evolving nature of the relationship between the pope and Mussolini without understanding Tacchi Venturi’s relations with both, yet studies of the Jesuit’s role and his relationships with the two men are almost entirely lacking.¹

In a book on the relationship between Mussolini and Pius XI that should appear soon, I explore Tacchi Venturi’s complex role in detail.² In this chapter, I look only at one aspect of the role he played: his attempts to get Mussolini to view the Jews as a dire threat to his regime and to the welfare of the Italian people. Although I will here have little to say about the role of the Jesuits more generally in the demonization of the Jews in this period, it is worth mentioning at the outset two or three elements necessary to place Tacchi Venturi’s role in some context.

¹ The major exception to the lack of studies of Tacchi Venturi is provided by Robert Maryks’s book, “Pouring Jewish Water into Fascist Wine”: Untold Stories of (Catholic) Jews from the Archive of Mussolini’s Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi (Brill: Leiden, 2012).
Fig. 8. Pietro Tacchi Venturi in an undated photograph.
In dealing with political matters, Pius XI relied heavily on three Jesuits: Tacchi Venturi, Enrico Rosa, longtime director of the *Civiltà Cattolica* collective, and Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, superior general of the Jesuit order. Benedict XV named Rosa head of the journal in 1915, and on Pius XI’s ascension to the papacy he became one of the new pope’s most trusted advisors. Rosa oversaw the journal during its fierce attacks on the Jews in the early days of Pius XI’s papacy and Mussolini’s rule. When delicate matters concerning the Jews arose, it was Rosa whom the pope called upon to explicate them in the pages of the journal, as he would right up to his death in the fall of 1938. His pieces, like those of his Jesuit colleagues in the journal, charged the Jews with “scheming to achieve their world hegemony” and called for governments to take action to limit their rights in order to protect Christian society.

No one close to the pope was more eager to spread the word of the Jews’ pernicious influence than the Polish superior general of the Jesuits, Włodzimierz Ledóchowski. Ledóchowski could also be relied on by the Italian Fascist government to stamp out any Jesuit criticism of the Fascist regime. When, for example, in January 1936, Mussolini was angered by a critical piece in the American Jesuit weekly, *America*, during the Ethiopian war, he had his ambassador to the Holy See, Bonifacio Pignatti, speak to Ledóchowski, asking that he fire Wilfrid Parsons, the Jesuit editor, and replace him with someone more kindly disposed toward the Fascist dictatorship. This the Jesuit general immediately promised to do.

At a secret meeting at the beginning of 1923, Mussolini, who had become prime minister of Italy only a couple of months earlier, and Pietro Gasparri, the Vatican secretary of state, decided that the relationship would work best between the Holy See and Mussolini if there were a secret go-between, and it appears that it was at this meeting that Tacchi Venturi was agreed upon.

By 1926—a dozen years before Mussolini would publicly identify Jews as a national threat and introduce the draconian “racial laws”—Tacchi

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4 ASMAE (Archivio Storico del Ministero per gli Affari Esteri, Roma), Ambasciata Italiana presso la Santa Sede, busta 102, Pignatti, "Esteri, Roma," 31 gennaio 1936. As Charles Gallagher shows in his chapter for this volume, the new editor, Francis X. Talbot, SJ, installed in March 1936, reversed the magazine’s critical position toward the anti-Semitic radio priest, Charles Coughlin.
5 Giovanni Sale points out that while a number of historians have identified the January secret meeting between Mussolini and Gasparri as the moment when the decision was made to have Tacchi Venturi become the secret intermediary, there is no clear documentary evidence for this (Giovanni Sale, *Fascismo e Vaticano prima della Conciliazione* [Jaca Books: Milan, 2007], 36, 54–55.)
Venturi was already warning him of the danger posed by Italy’s Jews and Jews internationally. In September, he gave the Duce a recently published 15-page pamphlet, *Sionismo e Cattolicismo*, a publication that carried a dedication to Tacchi Venturi himself. The author warned that “no one can doubt the Jewish sect’s formidable, diabolical, fatal activity in all the world.” The Jews, he warned, sought revolution, bolshevism, and “to destroy current society and dominate the world by themselves, as their Talmud prescribes.”

In trying to get Mussolini exercised about the Jewish threat, Tacchi Venturi was always careful to identify the evil conspiracy as one that was jointly aimed at both the Catholic church and the Fascist state. The Jews and Protestants were not simply enemies of the Catholic church, the Jesuit envoy would continually tell Mussolini, but enemies of the Fascist regime as well.

The ink of the Lateran treaties had barely dried in February 1929, when the pope sent Tacchi Venturi with a new kind of request. Mussolini had scheduled an important plebiscite on his regime for the next month and, now that he had struck his deal with the Vatican, he was eager to get strong church support. In the place of multiparty parliamentary elections, for the first time there was to be a single slate of 400 deputies, with people to vote simply yes or no to the whole slate.

On 17 February, only six days after the signing of the accords, Francesco Pacelli, the pope’s negotiator of the Lateran Pacts—and brother of Eugenio, who would later become Pius XII—sent Mussolini a letter. The pope would only offer church support for the plebiscite if the Duce first changed the list of candidates he was planning to name. The pope was displeased by the current list, and called on him to substitute candidates “free from any tie with Freemasonry, with Judaism and, in short, with all the anticlerical parties.”

Three days later, Mussolini summoned Tacchi Venturi to discuss the papal request. The Jesuit impressed on the Duce how upset the pope was by his planned list of candidates and handed him a written account he

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6 Tacchi Venturi a Marchese Giacomo Balucci, capo di gabinetto, 6 settembre 1926, followed by a reply to Tacchi Venturi telling him that Mussolini had appreciated receiving the booklet, also found in the file: Filippo Maria Tinti, *Sionismo e Cattolicismo* (Bari, 1926); ASMAE, Gabinetto, b. 32.

7 Tacchi Venturi a Gasparri, 1 dicembre 1926, lettera con allegati, ARSI, fondo Tacchi Venturi, b. 8, fol. 446.

8 This file is found in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Segreteria Particolare del Duce, Carta Riservata, b. 68.
had prepared—and which Gasparri had subsequently reviewed and approved—of the pope’s points. Three-quarters of the 1,000 nominees whose names had been forwarded to Mussolini by various Fascist organizations, from whom he was to choose the 400 candidates, were not fit to serve as “worthy representatives of a confessional State.” He then took out another sheet of paper and handed it to the Duce. It contained the Vatican’s list of recommended candidates.9 It was only after Mussolini made the changes that the pope had wanted that the Vatican organized a massive mobilization of the church for a “yes” vote in the plebiscite.

Six years later, a week after Mussolini launched the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the League of Nations, in an overwhelming 54 to 4 vote, imposed sanctions on Italy.10 As they increasingly came into effect and worldwide hostility toward Italy’s invasion grew, the pope—who was not happy with Mussolini’s decision to wage the war—hoped to play a role in brokering a deal. On 30 November, Tacchi Venturi went to see Mussolini with the pope’s latest proposals.

The Jesuit first spoke in general terms of the pope’s desire to help bring about a settlement. But he then turned to a subject that he clearly felt deeply about—the Jewish threat. He cited recent articles in a French journal, telling the Duce that they clearly demonstrated, in Tacchi Venturi’s words, “that Freemasonry, tied to the communists and Bolsheviks, has constructed a unified front with the goal of trying to bring about the end of Fascism, of Mussolini, and bringing about revolution in Italy. It is a revolution that it considers—not wrongly—the indispensable means of installing a Bolshevik empire in Italy.”

But before Mussolini could reply, Tacchi Venturi added another layer to the dark picture he had painted: “Believe me, Excellency, we are dealing with a terrible trap plotted with the complicity of the League of Nations, which is under the domination of the Jews and the masons.”11 It was a

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9 Tacchi Venturi a Gasparri, Roma, 21 febbraio 1929, Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), AESI 630a, 63, 88v–89v. Apparently word had gotten out that the pope’s Jesuit emissary had the power to get loyal Catholics added to Mussolini’s list of candidates. His files contain letters from various people vaunting their credential of being a “good Catholic” and asking that they be put on the list. Gasparri sent Tacchi Venturi other names for the list (ARSí, FTV, fasc. 1037).


11 Tacchi Venturi, “Relazione dell’Udienza avuta col Capo del Governo il 30 novembre a Palazzo Venezia, alle ore 17,” ASV, AESI 1867/II, 187v–88v. Renzo De Felice (Mussolini il duce: Lo Stato totalitario 1936–1940 [Einaudi: Turin, 1981], 291 n. 85), Italy’s foremost historian of Fascism, many years ago concluded that Tacchi Venturi had likely helped lead Mussolini to subscribe to the theory of a plot of “international Judaism” against his Ethiopian war effort.
conspiracy theory embraced by many in the church at the time, including
the papal nuncio to Italy, and both the pope’s official and his unofficial
ambassador to the dictator through these years kept pushing the theory of
a Jewish–communist–Masonic plot on Mussolini.

Let me skip here to one of the most controversial episodes involving
Pius XI, Mussolini, and the Jews, namely the imposition of Italy’s anti-
Semitic “racial laws” beginning in early September 1938. In July of that
year, Mussolini had surprised many by announcing a new racial ideology
aimed principally at Italy’s Jews. The pope despised Hitler and viewed
Nazi racial theory as in conflict with Catholic teachings, which viewed
religion, not race, as the crucial discriminant between good and evil. He
had criticized Mussolini on various occasions for trying to imitate Hitler’s
racial theories, and Mussolini was worried that Pius XI might denounce
any attempt to put the newly announced Italian racial theory into prac-
tice. If the pope were to oppose the new anti-Semitic laws publicly, it
risked not only undermining the campaign, but destabilizing the Fascist
regime. At the same time, to put pressure on the pope, Mussolini was
again making noises about acting against Catholic Action in Italy, dear to
the pope, but accused by the dictator of involving itself in politics.

Pius XI had long relied on Tacchi Venturi to negotiate deals with
Mussolini on sensitive subjects such as this. Most notably, seven years ear-
er, Tacchi Venturi and Mussolini signed an agreement ending a bitter
dispute over Italian Catholic Action, ushering in a period of great har-
mony between the Vatican and the Fascist regime.

In mid-August 1938, as Mussolini was formulating the anti-Semitic laws
that he would start announcing early the next month, the Jesuit met with
him to strike a deal. The deal Tacchi Venturi struck was simple: if Mussolini
would let up the pressure on Catholic Action, and leave the church alone,
the Vatican would voice no objection to his planned campaign against the
Jews.

“Three Points of an Agreement Happily Reached the Evening of August
16, 1938, between His Excellency the Honorable Mussolini and Father
Tacchi Venturi S.I., in order to Restore Good Harmony between the Holy
See and the Italian Government that was Disturbed in Recent Weeks.”
This was the title of the three-page typed document that Tacchi Venturi
drafted with Mussolini, sent the next day to Vatican secretary of state,
Eugenio Pacelli. The points of disagreement had focused on whether
Mussolini’s racial campaign would embrace Nazi racial theories, deemed
heretical by the pope, and on the recent Fascist pressures on Catholic
Action.
Points two and three of the agreement both dealt with Catholic Action, recording Mussolini’s instructions that Catholic Action be allowed to continue its activities in full, that all actions recently taken against its local groups cease, and that those Catholic Action members whose Fascist Party membership had been withdrawn have it immediately restored. The third point recorded Mussolini’s acceptance of the pope’s demand that the head of the Fascist Party in the northern city of Bergamo, who had been persecuting Catholic Action there, be fired.

In exchange, on behalf of the Holy See, Father Tacchi Venturi recorded the agreement he reached with Mussolini in point one, “The problem of racism and Judaism.” Mussolini agreed that the new anti-Jewish laws would not be any harsher than those that the popes had imposed on the Jews as long as they were in a position to do so, which in Rome had ended only in 1870 with the fall of papal rule. In fact, some of the restrictions imposed by the popes were specifically to be excluded. The text read:

As for the Jews, the distinctive caps—of whatever color—will not be brought back, nor the ghettos, much less will their belongings be confiscated. The Jews, in a word, can be sure that they will not be subjected to treatment worse than that which was accorded them for centuries and centuries by the popes who hosted them in the Eternal City and in the lands of their temporal domain.

This was the dream of the Jesuits of the Civiltà Cattolica, one shared by Tacchi Venturi and the Jesuit superior general, Ledóchowski. The Jews, who, notwithstanding the strenuous protests of the Holy See, were given equal rights in one country after another in Europe following the French Revolution, would at last be subject to the restrictions that would protect Christian society from their noxious influence, restrictions that the Vatican’s unofficial journal had been advocating for decades.

In exchange for Mussolini’s promise to remain within the bounds of church-supported restrictions on the Jews, the Holy See was to agree in advance not to criticize the upcoming anti-Semitic laws, as the third and final paragraph of the section specified.12

12 “Having said that [i.e. that the restrictions on the Jews would not be worse than those imposed in the old Papal States], it is the strong wish of the Honorable Head of the Government that the Catholic press, the preachers, Catholic speakers, and the like abstain from discussing this topic in public. The Holy See, and the Holy Pontiff himself, do not lack the means to come to an understanding directly with Mussolini via private means and to offer him those observations believed to be opportune for the best solution of the delicate problem.” ASV, AESI 1054/730, 40r–41r. Years before the Vatican archives for the papacy of
Fig. 9. “L’Accordo felicemente concluso”—the texts of an agreement between Mussolini and the Vatican regarding the racial laws, which was mediated by the Jesuit Tacchi Venturi. Courtesy of ARSI.

Pius XI were open to scholars, Father Angelo Martini, SJ, was given access and reported the existence of this document. Although he quoted its text, he gave little background and judged it “unfortunately so generic as not to inspire confidence.” Giovanni Miccoli (“Santa sede e chiesa italiana di fronte alle leggi antiebraiche del 1938,” Studi Storici 29 [1988]: 487–48), in reporting Martini’s finding and his comment, and not at the time having access to the archive, noted the significance of the document and disagreed with Martini’s attempts to minimize it. However, it was only with the 2006 opening of the Vatican
Over the next months, with help from Vatican Secretary of State Pacelli, nuncio Borgongini, and Father Ledóchowski, Tacchi Venturi would do all he could to get the pope to abide by the agreement that he had negotiated. His efforts were placed in danger by Mussolini’s own decision not to abide fully by the deal, as the Duce insisted that the anti-Semitic laws be extended to prevent the marriage of Catholics who had been born Jews with other Catholics, directly contravening the Concordat he had signed in 1929. But even through the tense days when the pope was irate over this shameless trampling of the Concordat, Tacchi Venturi did all he could to patch up relations and prevent the pope from speaking out publicly against the racial laws.\textsuperscript{13}

Pius XI died the following February, and his successor, Pius XII, moved quickly to tamp down Vatican tensions with Mussolini and voiced no public opposition to the anti-Semitic campaign being waged in Italy. All Jewish children were thrown out of Italian schools, as were all Jewish teachers. Jews were fired from their positions in the government and the military and prohibited from practicing their professions and owning large properties, among other measures taken against them.

And even when—as we have known since the publication over three decades ago of the volumes of Vatican correspondence dealing with the Second World War—Mussolini was deposed in late July 1943, Tacchi Venturi again swung into action to try to negotiate a new deal on the racial laws, retaining all of their anti-Semitic measures but dropping the one provision the pope had so strenuously objected to: the treatment of Catholics who had converted from Judaism as Jews, not Catholics.\textsuperscript{14} His efforts were overcome by events, as German troops seized Rome in early September, ushering in the darkest months in modern Italian history.

\textsuperscript{13} How he did this is recounted in my forthcoming book. The 1929 Concordat had accorded the church the right to determine what constituted a valid marriage and to have all such marriages transcribed automatically into the civil marriage register.

\textsuperscript{14} The documents are found in Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, ed. Pierre Blet, Angelo Martini, and Burkhart Schneider, 11 vols. (Libreria editrice vaticana: Vatican City, 1970–81), vol. 9, 1974: n. 289, Tacchi Venturi au cardinal Maglione, 10 août 1943; n. 296, Cardinal Maglione au père Tacchi Venturi, 18 août 1943; n. 317, Tacchi Venturi au cardinal Maglione, 29 août 1943.
On 27 November 1941, Rabbi Carlo Zelikovitz of Fiume (Rijeka) wrote to the Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi:

Father,

the infinite goodness and exquisite kindness, with which you have always accepted the cases I dared recommend to you, encourage me to draw your attention to a pitiful case, which I take liberty to expose to you. This time it is about, to put it simply, saving a human life of a good and distinguished person, whose only guilt is to be a Jew. He lives in Vienna and he is threatened to be deported to Poland, which means that he would die of hunger and cold, for these abandoned souls get gathered under an open sky in concentration camps, without a minimal assistance, totally abandoned to their fate. Because he has a serious heart condition, he wouldn't be able to cope, not even for a short time, with the discomfort that is to be expected there. We, therefore, thought of providing him with a visa that he could use to go to Italy in order to visit his only daughter, who, seriously ill, lives here in Fiume since her wedding. Once arrived here, we could later present a request of internment for him and save him this way from the sad fate that he would otherwise find in Poland. I don’t know, Esteemed Father, to what extent are these conjectures based on reality and how much you want and can do for their realization. But you know, as much as I do, the Talmudic saying, “When you save one life it is as you saved an entire world.” So, if the above plan is undoable, I would ask that you use your high authority to obtain for that abandoned person an oral support from the Vatican, for I am convinced that if the Vatican takes interest in him, my recommended will not perish, not even in Poland. Dear Father, I know your big heart and your companionate unshaken soul, and I dare hope that you will do what you can on behalf of such an abandoned being.¹

¹ Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu [ARSI], Fondo Tacchi Venturi [FTV] 2564.
the concentration camp in Kovno (Lithuania), where he had been killed,\(^2\) even before Zelikowitz wrote his letter to Tacchi Venturi. I have found Rabbi Zelikowitz’s letter, and thousands of other documents related to the persecution of about 800 Jewish families from Mussolini’s Italy, in the personal archive of the Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi.\(^3\)

His rich archive contains a wide range of documents:

- Original typed letters from the Vatican Secretariat of State to P. Tacchi Venturi, usually from Cardinal Luigi Maglione (1877–1944), who succeeded Cardinal Pacelli (later Pius XII);
- Drafts of letters by Tacchi Venturi to the Vatican Secretariat of State, usually to Cardinal Maglione (they are written by Tacchi Venturi’s Jesuit secretary Brother Santiago Lucas, but always with many emendations by Tacchi Venturi himself);
- Original letters from Catholic hierarchs, priests, and Jesuits, as well as other prominent personalities to Tacchi Venturi, soliciting him to intercede for the Jews who had asked them for help;
- Documentation (originals or copies) supporting the Jewish cases sent to Tacchi Venturi either directly or via the Vatican, Catholic hierarchs, priests, and Jesuits (personal and official letters, family histories and genealogies, legal certificates, notes, and a few photographs);
- Drafts of letters by Tacchi Venturi to high-ranking Italian governmental officials, most of them to Guido Guidi Buffarini (1895–1945) and Antonio Le Pera (1890–1970) of the Fascist Ministry of the Internal Affairs;
- Original governmental responses to Tacchi Venturi’s intercessions for Jews;
- Typed or handwritten notes by Tacchi Venturi on the cases he followed;
- Documents related to various initiatives concerning Jews, in which Tacchi Venturi had been involved (for example, Tacchi Venturi’s law bill concerning the change of names for converted Jews and his attempt to amend the 1938 racial laws to the advantage of the mixed families; the Vatican’s attempt to stop the Italian government from sending Jews, at least those converted to Catholicism, to the concentration camps, etc.);

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\(^2\) His name is also listed in the catalog of Holocaust victims and survivors at the US Holocaust Museum and Memorial.

\(^3\) For a presentation of the first portion of this documentation, see Robert A. Maryks, “Pouring Jewish Water Into Fascist Wine”: Untold Stories of (Catholic) Jews from the Archive of Mussolini’s Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi (Brill: Leiden, 2010).
· Applications (originals or copies) for “discrimination” and “Aryanization” that Jews residing in Italy submitted to the Fascist government in order to be exempted from the racial laws;
· Original letters (typed or handwritten) by Jews to Tacchi Venturi; and
· Drafts of letters by Tacchi Venturi to his Jewish correspondents.

These numerous documents (about 3,000 in total) are an important source of information concerning the persecution of Jews by the Mussolini government and the engagement of the Fascist Jesuit Tacchi Venturi (either entrusted by the Vatican or church hierarchs to do so or of his own initiative) in helping Jews to avoid or to at least alleviate the harsh consequences of the racial laws.

The convoluted and incoherent racial legislation defined the “Jewishness” of an Italian citizen as follows: if a person was born of two Jewish parents, if a person was born of Jewish father and foreign (“Aryan”) mother, and if a person was born of mixed marriages who professed the Jewish religion, but not who, as of 1 October 1938, professed another religion than Judaism. The racial laws made illegal for Jews, among other things, contracting mixed marriages, keeping “Aryan” servants in their households, holding public offices, and working and studying in public and private Italian schools. Additionally, foreign Jews were not allowed to stay in Italy, unless they had obtained Italian citizenship before 1919.

Tacchi Venturi’s main role during the racial persecution by Mussolini’s regime was what he had learned well since 1922—to intercede on behalf of the recommended with the Fascist government. He did so by writing numerous letters to Fascist officials in order to obtain for those whom Mussolini’s laws had determined Jewish either “discrimination” or “Aryanization,” lost citizenship, residence and entry permits, jobs, transfers from Italian concentration camps, passports to emigrate, and licenses to marry.

The documents from Tacchi Venturi’s archive reveal that his relation to Jews was much more complex than previously portrayed by scholars of Italian Fascism. For obvious reasons, most of the people who sought and received the Jesuit’s help were those Jews who converted to Catholicism. Some of them abjured Judaism several years before the promulgation of the racial laws in the autumn of 1938 but many more just before or even after the beginning of the anti-Semitic campaign by the Mussolini regime. No precise data is yet available, but at least a few of them were baptized by Tacchi Venturi himself, who—following the example of early Jesuits, such as Diego Lainez, Alfonso Salmerón, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, and Antonio
Possevino—worked for the conversion of Jews in the Roman Casa dei Catecumeni. Most of these Jews were baptized because they were married or desired to be married to their Catholic partners (those couples were typically made of Jewish males and Catholic females) or because they were children of mixed couples.

But there are not a few documents testifying to Tacchi Venturi’s attempt to help those Jews who kept their ethnic or religious identity and did not show signs of being willing to change it. It is interesting to observe that one of the most copious correspondences preserved in Tacchi Venturi’s archive comes from the “actual” Jew, Eugenio (Giacobbe) Berger. The Jesuit’s intercession helped Berger, who was originally from Hungary, regain his Italian citizenship but, sadly, he had not enjoyed it for a long time. Eugenio and his wife were arrested in Venice on 20 August 1943 by Italians and Germans and were detained at the San Saba camp. From there they were deported in January 1944 to Auschwitz and killed upon arrival on 2 February 1944. Eugenio’s son Bruno, with his eight-year-old son Alberto (b. 10 November 1936), followed their path.

The Jesuit’s records show that he dealt with both individuals and larger groups of persecuted Jews. For instance, the folder 2103 contains papers on an initiative of Eugenio Boggiano-Pico, an Italian diplomat, supported by Tacchi Venturi, to transfer 10,000 Jews of Vienna to Lebanon (after Hitler’s Anschluß of Austria), and the folders 2550, 2659, and 2632 include documents related to the Jesuit’s efforts to save the German, Slovenian, Albanian, and Croatian Jews. But who was this influential Jesuit? Highlighting just a few pivotal moments in his life should help us better understand his controversial attitude towards Jews and the racial laws.

Pietro Tacchi Venturi was born to Antonio Tacchi Venturi and Orsola Ceselli in San Severino Marche on 12 August 1861—“the memorable year in the history of Italy for the proclamation of the reign of Vittorio Emanuele II,” as the Jesuit wrote in the beginning of the memoir that he began to compose some decades later. The highlighting of this synchrony is significant for our understanding of Tacchi Venturi’s mindset, for it determined his negative interpretation of the role of the Risorgimento—or the process of Italian Unification—in relation to the papacy, an interpretation

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4 See FTV 2381.
6 On 15 March 1938, Tacchi Venturi wrote Mussolini a letter, asking him to take care of “three Austrian personalities” (see FTV, *Diary 1938*, 15 March). Their fate was probably related to Hitler’s Anschluß of Austria (see also *Diary 1938*, 26 May).
that he inherited from his father; it also determined his profound antipathy toward “the spirit of laicism” that, in his view, characterized the post-1870 regime, and which a significant number of Italian Jews supported because of the emancipation it had produced. Some Jews became even prominent in the Italian government, such as Isaac Artom (1829–1900), the private secretary of Count Cavour, and Giuseppe Ottolenghi (1838–1904), the minister of war and a senator.

Tacchi Venturi described his father as “a Guelph of pure blood,” or a convinced supporter of the authority of the pope against the lay ruler. The Jesuit recalled years later that as a child he used to play at home with the heavy rifle that his father still kept from the time of the flight of the Garibaldi troops from Rome in 1849. Unhappy with the occupation of Rome by the Piedmontese and their new government, Antonio Tacchi Venturi, like the father and grandfather of Eugenio Pacelli, preferred to render service to the Vatican as a lawyer and would later refuse a position in the state justice system, even though it meant that he had to sell a portion of his land in order to keep feeding his large family. In his unpublished autobiography, Tacchi Venturi liked to highlight that his baptismal name of Pietro had been given to him because of his father’s “devotion to the Prince of the Apostles and as a sign of his immutable fidelity to the successors of the Saint in the Roman pontificate.”

For the Tacchi Venturis, this devotion to the pope meant at the same time their stubborn skepticism toward the liberal government that “took Rome from the pope” in 1870. Pietro Tacchi Venturi reflected his family’s political views when he wrote in his autobiography that “the devoted Catholic families of the City [of Rome], eager to educate their children according to their traditions of sincere faith and unaltered devotion to the Roman pontiff,” were deeply worried about the new government’s severe anticlerical policy, “which—influenced by the Masonic sects—aimed to subvert all pious customs of the Christian nation.” This reflection helps provide a better understanding as to why Tacchi Venturi would become such an eager supporter of the Concordat between the Catholic church and the Mussolini regime.

Tacchi Venturi departed in 1878 for the Jesuit novitiate, located in western France. There, he discerned during the Ignatian spiritual exercises his

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8 *Autob.*, 9. See also an unsigned (probably by Tacchi Venturi himself) and undated (probably from 1929) document about the alleged role of “Judaeo-Masonic plutocracy” in Italy that is found in Tacchi Venturi’s archive (FTV 430a).
9 *Autob.*, 17–18.
“response to God’s calling to leave the world and consecrate himself for life and death to His service,” a devotion that would permeate his spiritual diaries until his very death. Due to what Tacchi Venturi called the influence of Masonry on the anti-Jesuit measures of the French government of Jules F.C. Ferry (1832–93) in the 1880s, he and his confrères had to abandon France. Pietro was transferred to Naples to complete his novice formation.

As soon as he finished his studies at the Jesuit Gregorian University in 1895, Tacchi Venturi received from his superior general the first major mission: to write a history of the Jesuits in Italy. Tacchi Venturi would continue to work on this project intermittently until his 90s. For the next 15 years he traveled extensively through Europe to hunt archival and library materials to be used as sources for his new publication. The first part of the first volume of La Storia della Compagnia, La Storia religiosa in Italia durante la prima metà della Compagnia di Gesù was published in 1910, when the Jesuit was 49. The second part of the second volume was published in 1951, when Tacchi Venturi was 90, before he became almost blind and died five years later. This work contains important primary documents and analysis dealing with the Jesuits’ approaches to Jews and conversos and thus sheds some light on Tacchi Venturi’s relation to the Jews under Mussolini.

With the beginning of the Great War, Tacchi Venturi’s activity as a writer was interrupted, for Superior General Franz Xavier Wernz (b.1842), shortly before his death in 1914, appointed him secretary general of the Society. This office, which he held until 1921, became particularly crucial when the new Superior General Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1866–1943), who—exiled in Switzerland—left much of the order’s daily government affairs in the hands of Tacchi Venturi. This is when the aristocratic Jesuit—well connected to many prominent families—began weaving the wide and dense web of contacts with the Vatican and governmental officials of Rome, which allowed him to emerge as a skilled behind-the-scenes mediator.

In 1956, The New York Times wrote in Tacchi Venturi’s obituary that the Jesuit had “engineered the Lateran Pacts.” Indeed, the Jesuit’s role in the

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10 *Autob.*, 19–23.
12 “Priest Who Aided in Creation of Vatican City Dies,” *New York Times*, 19 March 1956. See also Salvatore Cortesi, “Italy to Indemnify Church, Rome Hears,” *New York Times*,

reconciliation between the Vatican and the Italian state is abundantly documented, yet insufficiently studied. Tacchi Venturi’s archive contains an ample file of correspondence between the governmental officials and himself, and the notes Tacchi Venturi took during his numerous audiences with Mussolini, which reveal Tacchi Venturi’s zealous and constant engagement in the church–state affairs that led to the Lateran Pacts and its subsequent preservation.

In his vision of Italian society as traditionally Catholic, Tacchi Venturi sought not only the reconciliation of the church–state animosity that had resulted from the role the liberal and anticlerical Risorgimento had played in the limitation of the papal temporal power (which was supported by influential Italian Jews) but also the conciliation of Fascist ideology with Catholicism, which for him would guarantee society’s Christian moral order. It is unsurprising, therefore, to see Tacchi Venturi eagerly collaborate with the Fascist government in a number of affairs aimed to keep Catholic culture and morality dominant, if not exclusive, in Italian society. Tacchi Venturi’s archive contains numerous dossiers concerning his correspondence with the Fascist government on an astonishingly broad range of issues, in which he mediated between 1922 and 1943. Tacchi Venturi saw this commitment as an expression of faithfulness and love, with which he “sincerely served Mussolini as a poor priest of Christ.” The Duce recognized the Jesuit’s merits in 1931 by awarding him—in the aftermath of the major crisis between the Vatican and Mussolini’s Fascist government in connection to Azione Cattolica—the highest state decoration, the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus.

Some journalists speculated that Tacchi Venturi had an even closer relationship with Mussolini as his confessor and advisor. After all, in 1923 he baptized Mussolini’s three children and blessed his marriage with Rachele Guidi in 1925. In 1928, the Jesuit received a letter from Munich

11 February 1928, 4; Blet et al., Actes et documents, 113; Giannini, “Padre Tacchi in funzione diplomatica,” 232–35; and Francesco Margiotta Broglio, Italia e Santa Sede dalla grande guerra alla conciliazione; aspetti politici e giuridici (Laterza: Bari, 1966), esp. 110–11, 151–70.

13 See his memories on Tacchi Venturi’s role in Giannini, “Padre Tacchi in funzione diplomatica,” 227–36.


15 See FTV 1, folder 11; 4, folders 257 and 269; 1018, docs. 88–290; and 46, folder “I miei ricordi (1861–1891–1931).”

16 See Tacchi Venturi’s letter to Mussolini from 4 November 1938 in FTV 2159.

17 See FTV 1534.

18 See Philip V. Cannistraro and Brian R. Sullivan, Il Duce’s Other Woman (Morrow: New York, 1992), 343 and 517.
informing him that a German paper had published an article which claimed that the Jesuit confessor of Mussolini exercised a role similar to Rasputin’s at the imperial court of Russia.19 The Jesuit maintained in his personal writings, however, that he “did not play the role assigned to Pier delle Vigne (c.1190–1249) in the reign of Federico II [1194–1250],”20 which means that Tacchi Venturi did not have the keys to Mussolini’s heart.21 Whatever the true character of their relationship was, which is worthy of a monograph, it is clear that not everybody in Italy was happy about the access Tacchi Venturi had to the Duce. In Tacchi Venturi’s archive, there is a curious document illustrating it. It is a postcard from an anonymous sender mailed after the Lateran Pacts had been signed in 1929. The caption beneath the photograph of the Roman statue “Judas’s Betrayal” was changed into “the Jesuit’s Betrayal.” On the other side of the postcard, the sender (proverbial Pasquino) wrote a rhymed verse: “Fin che campa Tacchi Venturi/ Speriam la cosa duri/ Ma se more il sor Benito/ Anche S. Ignazio è bello e ito” [As long as Tacchi Venturi is alive/ We hope the affair will last/ But when Sir Benito dies/ Also St. Ignatius is gone forever]. Unsurprisingly, it has been suggested that Tacchi Venturi’s political engagement was the motive for his attempted assassination with a paper knife in 1928,22 which both The New York Times and Time Magazine did not fail to report.

Beyond his unofficial diplomatic engagement that combined the functions played by both the papal nuncio and the Italian ambassador to the Vatican, Tacchi Venturi was also an author of many articles in Treccani’s monumental Enciclopedia Italiana23 and a writer for La Civiltà Cattolica,

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21 In Dante’s Inferno, Vigne compared his relationship to Emperor Federico II to that of Dante and Virgil with the following words: “I am he that held both keys of Frederick’s heart,/ To lock and to unlock; and well I knew/ To turn them with so exquisite an art” (translation by Sayers, lines 58–60).
22 Tacchi Venturi’s archive contains 879 documents, mostly condolence letters, related to this attempted assassination. See FTV 1009, docs. 201, 204–06, 212–13, 231, and the entire folder 1010. On the alleged responsibility of Masonry for this attempted assassination, see Margiotta Broglio, Italia e Santa Sede dalla grande guerra alla conciliazione, 524–27.
23 See FTV 1012, doc. 493; 1013, doc. 111; 1014, docs. 446 and 516; 1015, docs. 96 and 103; 1015, docs. 148, 149, and 151; 1017, doc. 368; and 1018, doc. 82. See also Lucia Armenante, “Inventatio analitico delle carte [del] P. Tacchi Venturi relative all’Enciclopedia Italiana conservate in Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu,” in FTV 49a; Gabriele Turi, Il mecenate, il filosofo e il gesuita. L’Enciclopedia Italiana, speccchio della nazione (Il Mulino: Bologna, 2002), passim; and Alberto Guasco, “Chiesa Cattolica e totalitarismo,” in Pius XI: Keywords—International Conference Milan 2009, ed. Alberto Guasco and Raffaella Perin (Lit: Berlin, 2010), 97.
on whose pages he published more than 100 articles, most of which are on various topics of early modern religious history. Curiously, there are no articles dedicated to the so-called Jewish question.

On 4 October 1938 the Fascist newspaper of Cremona, *Il Regime Fascista*, founded and published by “Italy’s official Jew-baiter” Roberto Farinacci (1892–1945), published an article entitled “Adaptation that Surprises.” In it, the Fascist newspaper expressed its astonishment at the sudden change in the Catholic church’s policy towards the Jews. Even though “the papal encyclicals, the canons of councils, and the bishops’ pastoral letters demonstrate, without exception, that the church persecuted the Jews sometimes cruelly and mercilessly,” now the Vatican claims that it should have a philo-Semitic spirit and that “the men on earth are all brothers ... who belong just to one race of mankind.” This new opportunistic approach, which has a taste of anti-Fascism—certainly inspired by the Jesuit Tacchi Venturi who, oscillating between the Vatican and his [Superior] General, must have asked his colleagues [at *La Civiltà Cattolica*] to *pour much Jewish water into Fascist wine*—appeared to contradict the thesis of the author’s article that “the Jesuits were undoubtedly our predecessors in the Jewish question.”

Indeed, the article described the relation between Italian Fascism and the Jesuits as a perfect love, which was “suddenly overshadowed by a cloud.” The article’s author argued that to earlier Jesuits the Jew had been “a plague of mankind,” as *Il Regime Fascista* has shown in its analysis of a Jesuit study on “the Jewish question” that was published in *La Civiltà Cattolica* back in 1890. Its vision of “the spectacle of the Jewish invasion and bullying” was so appealing, wrote Farinacci, that this study was

27 FTV 1014, doc. 664. The italics are mine.
entirely reproduced in Mazzetti’s book, *La questione ebraica in un secolo di cultura italiana* [The Jewish question in a century of Italian culture]. This portrayal of the Jew, which inspired the Fascist racial laws but which the Jesuits now seemed to de-emphasize, remained true for the author of the article, who continued to regard the ethical–religious doctrine of the Talmud as an expression of the “depraved madness of the Jewish race.” The Jewish promise “to dominate the world in less than a century,” which was allegedly revealed by *La Civiltà Cattolica* in 1922, could be now fulfilled because of the infiltration of rich Jews within the ecclesiastical ranks, even at the highest level. The Jesuits are implicitly responsible for allowing the infiltration, concludes the article.

Farinacci’s unhidden animosity towards the Jesuit Tacchi Venturi—apparently caused by the latter’s zealous intercession for Italian Jews after the promulgation of the racial laws—appeared again on the pages of the same newspaper just a few months later. In a well-written article filled with appealing sarcasm, entitled “A Singular Man,” Farinacci attacked Tacchi Venturi with the following words:

We want to talk about Father Tacchi Venturi. He is a phenomenon, he is a super-phenomenon. For him the day is made of sixty hours. He handles everything for everyone, and all. A lawyer, an engineer, a historian, an accountant, a businessman, and with extra time, he also cares about religion and his religious order.

Now you see him in the antechamber of a minister, now on the stairs of the military departments, now at his desk to write left and right in favor of

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30 Compare the contrasting view on Tacchi Venturi’s activity expressed by Eugenio Boggiano-Pico in his preface to Castelli’s book (see Castelli, *Storia segreta di Roma Città aperta*), xxxii: “[Tacchi Venturi] ci pare emergere già e sempre più alta, nella Storia della Chiesa ed in quella d’Italia ... soprattutto la sua azione di apostolo e di diplomatico sagace e vero Nunzio Pontificio in partibus fino al Trattato del Laterano di cui fu massimo artefice e negoziatore ... Egli romano, non poteva essere assente, nello spirito di San Paolo, agli avamposti segreti della difesa e dell’incolumità di Roma Cristiana, come nella difesa degli indifesi, dei deboli e perseguitati israeliti, nel turbine dell’ultima guerra mondiale ... Asceta, umile e santo come nei tempi aurei del Cristianesimo, la Chiesa, un giorno ne eleverà il nome agli altari, benedetto da tutti. I miracoli sono già accertati nel cuore e nell’anima di migliaia di beneficiati di ogni regione d’Italia, risorti alla speranza ed alla fede nella sua parola, nella purezza del suo apostolato, all’esempio di amare il prossimo, dopo Dio, più di se stessi, in ogni giorno ed in ogni ora della sua vita quasi centenaria, di meditazione, di povertà e di azione altamente sociale, ignorata tuttora nella più vasta cerchia delle masse e dell’opinione pubblica. L’Italia lo riconoscerà tra i più degni, insigni italiani dell’epoca nostra.”
his recommended. His age, which is a bit advanced,\textsuperscript{31} does not prevent him from taking off from time to time, running from one city to another to deal with criminal investigations or civil suits, and other affairs.

Now his fame in Italy no longer has borders. All run to him: the candidate for the Senate, for the National Council, for the most prominent lay canonries. And how many detainees have had his protection? To say nothing of the Jews who try to be “discriminated” against or want to show their merits: all found in him the perfect defender. We believe that in the Ministry of Interior Affairs not a few Jews\textsuperscript{32} have a word of introduction and recommendation signed by this too dynamic Father. For which profane affairs the Reverend Father justifies himself by saying that he needs a lot of money for his temple.\textsuperscript{33}

And someone will ask the purpose of our free “ad.” A perfectly fair question. We want Father Tacchi Venturi to get as many customers as possible with only one hope: that one day ministers and non-ministers will get fed up with him and tell him once and for all to care a bit more about religion. Also because many people complain that his interfering for the benefit of one person causes damage to another and because the sound and honest clergy does not like this mixture of sacred and profane in the same man religious, who seems too fervent a fixer.

We speak without hatred, with a good aim.

Using the image of diluting wine with water from the former article, Farinacci’s newspaper portrayed Tacchi Venturi’s role as softening the Catholic church’s traditional alliance with Italian Fascism against the Jews\textsuperscript{34} and even accused the Jesuit periodical \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica} of becoming philo-Semitic. But Tacchi Venturi’s approach to Mussolini’s racial laws was much more complex. We can attempt to comprehend it by an analysis of a few documents written by the Jesuit himself. The first one is a memorial he prepared and submitted to the Fascist government on behalf of the Vatican in September 1938:

\begin{quote}
The Hon. Head of Government has solemnly declared in Trieste that the Jews of Italian nationality who have indisputable military or civil merits
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} He was 77 at that time.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Tacchi Venturi’s archive contains at least 800 cases of victims of the racial laws that he followed.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Tacchi Venturi was a long-term (1918–40) rector of Il Gesù in Rome, the first Jesuit church, located next to Palazzo Venezia, Mussolini’s residence. He used to call it “my dearest Farnese temple.” Indeed, he procured money for various renovations of this church, which had been funded in the 16th century with the help of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, a major early Jesuit patron. Tacchi Venturi also negotiated the purchase of the adjacent Casa Professa at a favorable price from the Italian government.
\item \textsuperscript{34} For the shared views on Jews of \textit{La Civiltà Cattolica} and \textit{Il Regime fascista}, see Kertzer, \textit{The Popes Against the Jews}, 278–79.
\end{itemize}
toward Italy and the [Fascist] Regime will find understanding and justice. His proposal, worthy of the applause of all the honest, has consoled the father’s heart of His Holiness, but has failed to make him totally serene. Along with the Israelites who in the last two wars, the Great War and the most recent with Ethiopia, earned merits toward Italy, and thus deserved, according to equity, appropriate recognition of their military and civil merits, there are no small number of those who, even at the cost of heroic sacrifice for obeying the voice of their conscience enlightened by God, became detached from the Synagogue, asking and receiving baptism. Now the Church, who before incorporating them willed that each of them abhor Jewish perfidy and reject Jewish superstition, cannot forget these children of hers, many of whom come genuinely to the Christian faith and observe its laws more exemplarily than so many of the Aryan race who had received it from their fathers.

Moreover, these Christians of Jewish race many times had to suffer harsh persecutions from their relatives who consider them faithless and deniers of their own blood.

Therefore, the common Father of the Faithful and Head of the Church, obliged in conscience to consider her children all those who profess the faith and the law of Christ, whatever the blood flowing through their veins, cannot not care about the fate of those faithful who have come to the light of Catholic truth from Judaism, nor can avoid to intercede to secure recognition of singular merit that they had by not closing their eyes to the light, confessing the true Messiah and Son of God Jesus of Nazareth, whom their ancestors condemned to death on the cross.

Much credit should be properly acknowledged by Who [i.e. Mussolini] with a laudable sense of justice has to take account of possible military and civil merits of the Israelites, which are certainly less important than the great merit of renouncing the blindness and obstinacy in error, without which a Jew could not become an outspoken Christian.

For these reasons the Holy Father hopes that the next fair rules for the “discrimination” of Jews in the Italian State do not include the baptized Jews, who through baptism became living members of the Catholic Church no less than any other true Aryan.

This is a decision that every Christian state should adopt, especially Italy, which in the 1st article of the Statute of the Kingdom, confirmed by Art. 1 of the Concordat with the Holy See, which recognized only one religion of the state: the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion.

Consequently His Holiness hopes:

That the Jews of Italian nationality and of the Catholic religion be not included in the provisions to be applied to non-baptized Jews;

That foreign Jews, but baptized, have the right to reside in Italy like any other honest foreign individual of Aryan lineage; and

That the officially recognized private schools [istituti scolastici parificati], differently from state or accredited ones [governativi and pareggiati], be free
Eccellenza.

L’Emo. Cardinale Segretario di Stato mi commette di presentare riverentemente a Vostra Eccellenza, a fine di averne opportuna soluzione, due casi pratici di politica razzista, e ciò fo confidando che l’alto senso di sussita moderazione, col quale è Vostra costume di risolvere le più spinose questioni, si rivelera anche in questa delicatissima della quale la Chiesa cattolica, per la sua soprannaturale missione, non può in modo alcuno disinteressarsi.

I casi che passo subito ad esporre, provengono da perecchi Presule di principali città, tra i quali nominerò soltanto il Card. Arcivescovo di Torino e il Vescovo di Trieste.

Eccoli chiaramente esposti.

I°. Vi sono fanciulli di razza ebraica, battezzati nella loro infanzia o perché uno dei genitori era cattolico ariano, o perché entrambi, pure essendo israeliti si fecero dopo le nozze cattolici e conseguentemente battezzarono i loro nati. Stando alle disposizioni razziste fin qui note, questi bambini, specie se figli di padre e madre ebrei, vengono esclusi dalle Scuole dello Stato ed avranno soltanto accesso a quelle da aprirsi per bambini di stirpe israelitica. Ognun vede la somma sconvivenza che questi piccoli che dai loro genitori vennero tolti dalla Sinagoga e cominciarono la loro formazione cristiana sotto le cure della Chiesa vengano ora gettati in braccio alla Sinagoga per essere ebraicamente educati, cioè per rinunziare alla fede che incominciarono a professare negli albori della lor vita.

Sembra dunque necessario disporre che siffatti fanciulli...
to allow to enrol teachers and students of the Jewish race but turned Christians.\textsuperscript{35}

The second document is a letter from October 1943 to Cardinal Maglione of the Vatican Secretariat of State to intervene with the German

\textsuperscript{35} FTV 2153.

Not a few applications of Jews—which in these last five years were entrusted to me by the Holy See to discuss with the governmental authorities—have made my poor name too notorious among them. Consequently, very frequent are requests that I have been receiving in order to intercede for them with the paternal infinite love of the Holy Father.

In these days, due to the iniquitous, barbaric treatment used by the Germans against these unfortunate people, the demands have been extraordinarily increased in number and intensity.

I am being especially asked to assure that the Holy See makes an urgent demand to at least know where so many Jews—and also Christians, men and women, young and old, teenagers and children—who were deported last week from the Military College in Lungara in such a barbarous way, almost like beasts to be slaughtered, ended up.

A step of this kind made by the Holy See, even though without unfortunately obtaining the desired result, would certainly increase the veneration and gratitude towards the August Person of the Holy Father, always the revenger of dishonoured rights.\footnote{Blet et al., *Actes et documents*, 9: 458. See also Andrea Riccardi, *L’inverno più lungo: 1943–44: Pio XII, gli ebrei e i nazisti a Roma* (Laterza: Rome, 2008), 112–13.}

The third one is a lecture Tacchi Venturi delivered on 27 March 1940 in the Borromini Hall in Rome to members of the Institute of the Roman Studies, which commemorated the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540. The paper, entitled “St. Ignatius Loyola, the Apostle of Rome,” was subsequently published in the association’s official periodical in August of the same year.\footnote{See Pietro Tacchi Venturi, “S. Ignazio Loiola Apostolo di Roma,” *Roma. Rivista di studi e di vita romana* 18 (August 1940): 245–64.}

To prove his argument, which echoes the writings of early converso Jesuits, the Jesuit historian quoted two accounts of Ignatius’s propensity for the Israelites that are contained in the first official biography of the Jesuit founder written by his disciple, Pedro de Ribadeneyra (d.1611), who himself was of Jewish ancestry, although Tacchi Venturi was most likely


\footnote{See Pietro Tacchi Venturi, “S. Ignazio Loiola Apostolo di Roma,” 250.}
unaware of that. These accounts portray Loyola as a “spiritual Semite”—to borrow the expression from Henry Kamen—who justified his philo-Semitism by his desire to be of Jewish origin so that he could become a relative of Christ and his Mother. The problem with Ribadeneyra's testimony, the only source of this information, is, however, that it is not fully reliable, as is the case with many other testimonies about Ignatius that he manipulated, such as the narrative of Loyola's incarceration in Alcalá, which according to Ribadeneyra was caused by accusations other than Ignatius's alleged Judaizing.

But Tacchi Venturi never challenged Ribadeneyra's testimony and he argued in his article that those who had this kind of approach to the Jewish people could not avoid doing what would be most acceptable to Christ, namely to work toward their conversion to Christianity. To make the Jews more eager to convert, it was important not only to converse with them kindly—as portrayed in the 17th-century illustrated biography of Loyola—but also to remove obstacles to their conversions by the appropriate state legislation. The Jesuit historian found an example to imitate in the approach of Pope Paul III to the Roman Jews. Under the sway of Ignatius of Loyola, in 1542 the pontiff promulgated the bull *Cupientes Iudaeos*, which—among other benefits—gave Jewish converts the right to keep their property. This new law stood in contrast to the long-established papal legal tradition of the Middle Ages that—in Tacchi Venturi's view—was “contrary to the venerable traditions of the nascent Church.” Interestingly enough, he did not mention the anti-Jewish legislation of Paul IV at all in his article. However, Loyola had many copies of Carrafa's most discriminatory bull, *Cum nimis absurdum* (1555), shipped to Jesuit houses, and he ordered that it be observed. Among the many economic and religious restrictions for Jews in the Papal States, the pope's document established the first Roman ghetto and forced Jews to wear a distinctive yellow hat (males) or kerchief (females), for, as the pope put it, “it is completely senseless and inappropriate to be in a situation where Christian piety allows the Jews (whose guilt—all of their own doing)—has
condemned them to eternal slavery) access to our society and even to live among us.”45 Similar need for segregation was expressed in September 1938 in a letter Cardinal Fossati wrote to Mons. Tardini of the Vatican in regards to a Jew who converted and sought “discrimination”: “By unavoidable mingling with Jewish groups will he not risk to lose his faith?”46

Loyola’s or Tacchi Venuri’s empathy—or, whatever it was—toward Jews obviously did not obliterate their negative judgment about Judaism as a religion superseded by Christianity. Even though separated by a span of 400 years, both Loyola and Tacchi Venturi moved within the same Catholic ecclesiological and soteriological vision of Catholic society, in which the church would have a supernatural mission, as Tacchi Venturi wrote to Mussolini in October 1938. Thus they were primarily motivated by the eschatological concept of salvation of the faithful, which—according to the Catholic doctrine—can be exclusively achieved by the means of sacraments, especially baptism and matrimony, whose lawful custodian was the Catholic church alone—Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam [There is no salvation outside the church].47 Strongly convinced of the absolute truth of this doctrine, Tacchi Venturi himself prepared to baptize several Jews, including the mistress of Mussolini, Margherita Sarfatti and her two children, and blessed matrimones of people with Jewish roots, including the one of the famous Italian writers Alberto Moravia (alias Alberto Pincherle, 1907–90) and Elsa Morante (1912–85), who was the Jesuit’s penitent. In a letter to a Catholic woman, Clotilde Schioppa, who was married to the Jew Massimiliano Cohen of Naples and did not have their three children baptized at birth, Tacchi Venturi wrote:

As was my duty, I could not fail to observe that your current suffering could be avoided, had you have baptized early in their life the children that God has given to you, precisely because this is the expressed condition, under which the Catholic Church, to which God has granted you the grace to belong, can only allow, and in fact allows, to a Christian woman contracting marriage with a man who belongs to another religion.48

Not surprisingly, Tacchi Venturi dubbed the Jews as “infidels” in his lecture49 and in his personal letter to Mussolini from 4 October 1938, while

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46 FTV 2153.
47 See this kind of explanation in regard to the Vatican policy toward Hitler and Mussolini in Wolf, *Pope and Devil*, 1–3.
48 FTV 2263.
expressing his preoccupation with baptized children of Jews who converted to Catholicism, he emphasized that:

these little kids whom their parents took away from the Synagogue and began their Christian formation under the care of the Catholic Church now [after the introduction of the racial laws that prohibited Jewish children to frequent non-Jewish schools] would be thrown in the arms of the Synagogue to be educated Jewish. ... In the face of this danger the Catholic Church cannot remain indifferent, nor cease invoking to eliminate it, even though in the veins of these new children of hers runs the Semitic rather than Aryan blood.50

Although one could accuse Loyola or Tacchi Venturi of anti-Judaism—contextually understandable or not—one cannot simplistically dismiss either man as a power-broker anti-Semite, unless one defines anti-Judaism as theological anti-Semitism, to be distinguished from biological anti-Semitism.51 As a close ally of Mussolini and an architect and relentless defender of the reconciliation between the Catholic church and the Fascist state, which privileged Catholicism and discriminated against religious minorities, especially Jews, Tacchi Venturi did not denounce Mussolini’s anti-Semitic legislation tout court as unjust. Based on the principle of equity and the legal agreement expressed in the Concordat, respectively, he called for the exemption from the racial laws for those Jews who had civil or military merits and especially for those who were baptized, for he believed that converted Jews would become even better Catholics. When Tacchi Venturi’s official and personal diplomatic efforts with the Fascist regime to prevent the promulgation of those parts of the racial laws that hit the Catholic Jews proved fruitless, he devoted most of his time to intercede for the Jews who were affected by such legislation, regardless of their religious association, whether they were secular or practicing Jews, or Jews that had converted either to Protestantism52 or Catholicism. As Archbishop della Costa of Florence wrote in his letter to

50 FTV 2153. See also FTV 2309 and 2591, and Diary 1938, 4 October.
51 See, for example, Olaf Blaschke, Offenders or Victims? German Jews and the Causes of Modern Catholic Antisemitism (University of Nebraska Press, for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism [SICSA], the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Lincoln, 2009), 1–10.
52 For obvious reasons, there were much fewer Protestants than Catholics in Italy. Most of those Tacchi Venturi dealt with were foreign Jews residing in Italy. The archives of the Jesuit contain, for example, the files of Gertrud Baumgarten (FTV 2283), Adele Zangen Chodroner and her daughter Eugenia Dittrich Chodroner (FTV 2397) who were German Jews converted to Protestantism, and of the German Lutheran, Dr. Max Sommerfeld (FTV 2176).
Tacchi Venturi recommending the case of Walter Cardoso, in helping the victims of the racial laws they were both fulfilling their obligation as ministers of charity.53

Although Tacchi Venturi certainly did not have the prophetic voice of those few Christians who opposed the Fascist or Nazi persecution of Jews, it should be recognized nevertheless that the Fascist Jesuit represented a shift—albeit a too-slow one—in the Catholic church’s approaches to its centuries-long tradition of the policy of purity of blood, of which the Jesuits were foremost promoters.

It is still unknown what role Tacchi Venturi may have played in the process, but the Society of Jesus quietly abrogated its law discriminating candidates of Jewish ancestry in 1946. The whole church officially recognized the groundlessness of the racial discrimination only in the groundbreaking declaration Nostra Aetate of the Second Vatican Council 20 years later. It stated, referring to the same New Testament, which in many Christians had inspired vindictive anti-Judaism, that “one is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth” [Italics mine].

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53 See FTV 2299.
C. American Contrasts
The anomalies were rife. Dressed in black, the Roman Catholic priest asserted that he would be “locked-in” at the New York Athletic Club. He was preparing a speech, he assured the 50 reporters present, which would address “something about the labor question, something about money.” A total of 1,065 extra New York City Police Department patrolmen were slated to be on hand at Madison Square Garden to keep the peace for a speech by a “man of peace,” who that night expected to rally 25,000 avid listeners to his proto-political party, the National Union for Social Justice (NUSJ). With cropped hair, coolly holding a cigarette, in a “number three” collar more reminiscent of a Protestant minister than a Catholic priest, the surprisingly chiseled features of the 44-year-old priest stood out amid the smoky backdrop of an Associated Press interview. “I am the National Union for Social Justice,” he declared of his nearly 9-million strong followers. The number was merely a fraction of what some have estimated to be a 40-million listener audience. Ending the interview, the Radio Priest quashed a rumor that he soon would be running for president.1

Father Charles Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan, was a religious cult hero of the depression, a demagogue, and due to his skills as the weekly radio presenter of “The Golden Hour of the Little Flower,” he was “the biggest thing that has happened to radio,” as Fortune magazine once reported.2 Although a Catholic priest, he spurned the control of bishops by using the new technology of the airwaves to circumvent the medieval terrestrial juridical concepts of Roman Catholic canon law, and push outward the borders of Catholic public speech.

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Disturbing many liberal Catholics at the time, Coughlin showed a predilection for anti-Semitism as early as 1931, when in a published sermon he “introduced the theme that international financiers had caused the 1929 stock market crash and attributed the crash to the inspiration of a Jew, Karl Marx.”

Coughlin’s anti-Semitism reached its peak in 1938, when in late November he broadcast (and later rebroadcast) a speech which blamed the Jews of Germany for their persecution on Kristallnacht. In Coughlin’s twisted historical view, Nazism was simply acting as “a defense mechanism against communism.” In turn, communism before it was nothing more than a separate “defense mechanism” aimed at subverting the centuries-long serfdom of Europe to “atheistic Jews” in “high finance.” These Jews had subjected “millions in the midst of plenty,” to their servitude of overcharging usury and money wringing. With this outlandish twice-removed theory of historical culpability, Coughlin argued, “in all charity,” that German Jews brought Kristallnacht upon themselves. From late November 1938 until March of 1939, Father Coughlin’s counterarguments and crosstalk played out over the nation’s airwaves and precipitated what I call “the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938.”

Coughlin’s Kristallnacht speech was explosive, deluging radio stations with telegrams and letters. For the next month, Coughlin’s broadcasts harped on the controversy—spinning Catholic–Jewish tensions higher and higher. When the National Broadcasting Company asked Coughlin to be the center of a “Town Hall” meeting on the subject, the Radio Priest balked. Although NBC’s American Town Meeting of the Air was the “jewel in the crown of NBC’s public service broadcasting,” Coughlin argued (rightly) that “his program had the largest audience of any radio program on the air,” and that he did not want to “hand it over” to another network.

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5 Ibid. Surprisingly, there has been little explication of the November 1938 speeches of Coughlin.
By 1939, the priest’s most popular and best-selling sermon became the anomalously entitled “Am I an Anti-Semite?”

Coughlin’s open anti-Semitism was described contemporaneously as both “poisonous” and “Fascist,” yet, when it came time for Catholic leadership—American Catholic leadership—to rein him in, surprisingly little was done. As Coughlin began to monopolize the popular culture ambit of US Catholic media from 1930 to 1940, the national Catholic press, much of it in the hands of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), was forced to come to terms with the priest from Royal Oak. Over the decade, and especially throughout the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938, initial Jesuit ambivalence turned into heel-digging support for Coughlin. After the crisis of 1938, as Jewish groups placed mounting heavy pressure on Coughlin, the Jesuit relationship to Coughlin turned from public tepidity to behind-the-scenes collusion.

The Jesuits held much clout in the American Catholic and larger religious landscape by 1930. Although US Catholics remained parochial and working class, a surging Catholic literary revival and the growing reputation of Jesuit-led outlets such as America magazine (the US Catholic answer to Britain’s cultural and political journal The Tablet), and The Queen’s Work, a sodality magazine, placed American Jesuits at the forefront of reporting and shaping Catholic public opinion. The Jesuit journal Thought, established in 1926, added intellectual heft within the corridors of the academy. But it was in their role as public Catholic intellectuals where Jesuit opinion held most sway. The weekly journal America led the way in this sphere. “America,” London’s Catholic Herald commented in 1938, “has an influence on intelligent opinion all over the United States.” Historian Thomas Doherty has characterized America magazine of the 1930s as “a sort of New Republic for the Catholic intelligentsia.” Given the broad influence of both Father Coughlin and Jesuit media outlets at the time, it is surprising that no study exists of the relationship between

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7 American Jewish Committee, Father Coughlin, His “Fact” and Arguments (American Jewish Committee: New York, 1939), 53. For a powerful speech analyzing Coughlin’s Fascist bent see the speech by the former US ambassador to Berlin, William E. Dodd, “Coughlin—The Nazi Hero,” 24 April 1939, radio address over CKLW, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Coughlin and the Society of Jesus. The dearth of study on the connections of American Jesuits to Father Coughlin is even more astounding because this nexus evolved into an interrelationship—a mutually constructive and coordinated association which provided benefits for both media entities. Astonishingly, while it cast some doubt on Coughlin’s economic program early on, America magazine shielded and supported Father Coughlin both during and after the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938.9 America’s lay-controlled counterpart, Commonweal magazine, was one of the first periodicals to hit hard at Coughlin soon after he became anti-Semitic. “Father Coughlin is eager,” Catholic University of America economics expert Father John A. Ryan wrote in Commonweal shortly after Coughlin’s speech, “or at least willing, to promote anti-Semitism in the United States.”10

But at America there was no such naming of anti-Semitism. Over the years, Coughlin cemented relationships, both direct and indirect, with its two most powerful editors of the era—Rev. Wilfrid Parsons, SJ, and Rev. Francis X. Talbot. After Parsons took his final vows as a Jesuit in 1923 he was appointed assistant editor, and in 1925 as editor of America magazine. Theologically minded and deliberative, Parsons maintained the editorship from 1925 to 1936. Francis X. Talbot, SJ, then already an accomplished author of popular spiritualized historical monographs, held the editorship from 1936 to 1944. Both men would be forced to deal with the problem of Father Coughlin. Both men thoroughly failed to confront Coughlin’s anti-Semitism, but for different reasons.

Parsons, susceptible to the perniciousness of 1930s Catholic anti-Judaism, decided to bypass and overlook Coughlin’s growing anti-Semitism up to 1936.11 One key reason Parsons refused to attack Coughlin publicly on anti-Semitism may be connected to Parsons’s psychological predisposition of resentment toward the US press. Parsons believed that

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9 Joseph Koterski, SJ, has written that America "remained consistently critical of the anti-Semitism of Father Charles Coughlin," but my reading of the America magazine archives and the Coughlin correspondence with America does not bear this out. To the contrary, the magazine worked to bolster Coughlin throughout the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938. See “America,” in Encyclopedia of Catholic Social Thought, Social Science, and Social Policy.


11 “These Jews seem to think of nothing but money and sexual indulgence,” Joseph I. Breen wrote to Parsons in 1932 (quoted in Doherty, Hollywood’s Censor, 193). In a 1927 letter from Patrick Scanlan, editor of the Brooklyn Tablet, a diocesan newspaper, to Parsons, Scanlan wildly indicated that a number of New York Jews had traveled to Mexico and “paid off” the government there to avoid a persecution. See Scanlan correspondence 1927–28, in Rev. Wilfrid Parsons, SJ, Papers: Box 5, Folder 22, Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center, Washington, D.C.
the US media refused to cover Catholic persecution by communists in Mexico and Spain with the same gusto as the growing Fascist persecutions and injustices against Jews. Lauren Langman and Douglas Morris believe that religion plays a major role in strengthening the perception by groups of believers that they can be harmed by state injustices. Catholic resentment toward Jewish cohesion at the expense of Catholic publicity, coupled with anti-Judaism, contributed to Parsons’s growing blind spot.

For example, over the course of his editorship, Parsons carried out a lengthy correspondence with Patrick Scanlan, editor of the pro-Coughlin Brooklyn Tablet. The two editors consistently underscored to one another that outlets such as The New Republic and many publications of the US government were “in favor of the Jews and Armenians,” and their plight, while no mention was ever registered “of course, in favor of Catholics.” Parsons felt “there was a motive” behind this disequilibrium. Such resentment made Parsons recoil from using his editorial pages on behalf of Jews. But still, Parsons found Coughlin disturbing in other ways. What Parsons feared was Coughlin’s melding of his own skewed political values with the tenets of Catholic social teaching. Rather bravely on this score, Parsons attacked Coughlin repeatedly in 1935 and has since become known as one of the Radio Priest’s greatest foes.

Francis X. Talbot, on the other hand, showed no critical thinking whatsoever on Coughlin. To the contrary: before, during, and after the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938, Talbot worked to encourage Coughlin personally, to shield him from criticism, and to support him secretly when he came under scrutiny from his local bishop. For Father Talbot, Coughlin was fighting communists, advancing Catholic thought into the public sphere, and beating “the Jews” at their own media game. In Talbot’s eyes, Father Charles Coughlin held prophetic value. Strangely, Coughlin seemed captivating to a number of American Jesuits.

“He is a Marxist and a Hegelian,” one observer wrote, “who gets ready for his speeches by reading excerpts of the Discourses of Epictetus.” Before

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13 Wilfrid Parsons to “Pat” Scanlan, 21 November 1938, Rev. Wilfrid Parsons, S.J. Papers: box 5 folder 29, Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center, Washington, D.C.
14 Many commentators have since conflated Parsons’s 1935 attacks on Coughlin’s economic plans with a presumably congruous attack on his anti-Semitism. But the record shows no castigation of Coughlin by Parsons for Coughlin’s growing anti-Semitism.
each speech, the speaker always introduced himself as “the ex-Jesuit priest, E. Boyd Barrett.” During 1935 and 1936, the eccentric Barrett launched a mini-public speaking campaign in favor of Father Coughlin. His was an outdoor, soapbox-style series of talks in the heart of New York City. Hustling from Columbus Circle to Union Square, the irascible former Jesuit proudly gave sidewalk talks on such issues as “Does Father Coughlin Speak for the Pope?” and “The Significance of Father Coughlin.” Surrounded by communists in Union Square, Barrett exhibited true allegiance to the Royal Oak pastor. “It is true,” Barrett conceded amid boos and hisses, “that some of Father Coughlin’s program may be slightly Fascistic, but labor has in him a good friend.”15

E. Boyd Barrett’s presentation of himself as an “ex-Jesuit” in favor of Coughlin’s policies made him no friends within the New York Province of the Society of Jesus. Partly due to Barrett’s faux Jesuit apologetic street talks on Coughlin, and partly due to Coughlin’s meteoric rise in fame, the Society of Jesus felt compelled to state its position on the Radio Priest, particularly on his economic policies. To this end, the Jesuits turned to America magazine and its then decade-long editor, Rev. Wilfrid Parsons, SJ.

Father Parsons was an odd choice to serve as the Jesuit spokesman against what was coming to be termed Coughlinism. Ordained a priest in 1921, Parsons’s first assignments were connected to teaching theology in the Jesuit school at Woodstock, Maryland. More of an academic than a media wonk, after two years of teaching (1922–24), he was tapped to be the editor of America. Parsons published a well-researched study of church–state relations in Italy the same year that Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty. He emerged in the media as a public expert on Catholic matters and Mussolini’s Fascist state. This work made him sensitive to Coughlin’s Fascist proclivities, perhaps more than any other American Catholic cleric. At the same time as Coughlin was in the midst of his meteoric rise, Parsons was consumed, if not obsessed, with writing a new study on communist persecutions of Catholics in Mexico, published in 1936 as Mexican Martyrdom. His immersion in the subject also allowed him to sympathize with Coughlin’s ever-increasing anticommunism. However, since Parsons seriously investigated both fascism and communism, his wariness of Coughlin balanced both issues.

Parsons was eager to gather information on Coughlin, but wished to do so quietly. As early as 1932, Parsons had been invited to meet personally

with Coughlin, but he demurred. The more he began to see Coughlin as an economic and political embarrassment for Catholics, the more the studious Parsons needed to gather the facts and arrive at an informed opinion. Parsons took matters into his own hands in April of 1935, at an unlikely gathering of Jesuits.

In the spring of 1935, Parsons was asked to give a talk to the New York chapter of the St. Mary’s College, Kansas, alumni. The now-defunct St. Mary’s College in St. Mary’s, Kansas, was an obscure but relatively influential institution of internal Jesuit higher education. Since 1931 St. Mary’s operated as a “theologate” of the Jesuit order—a Vatican-sanctioned institution where young men went to attain their degrees in theology. After receiving their theological training in the hermetically sealed confines of St. Mary’s, the men would be ordained priests and sent to their first assignments. Over the years, many ended up in New York City.

With Coughlin’s silvery-throated musings grabbing the attention of Catholics nationwide, Parsons decided that rather than giving a talk to the gathered priests, he would devise a “Jesuit Roundtable” on topical issues related to Coughlin. All of this was to be kept confidential. For his agenda, Parsons asked the priests present to provide an examination and analysis of at least five of Father Coughlin’s “16 points” of the National Union for Social Justice creed. In this way, Parsons was provided with immediate access to expert theologians, lawyers, authors, and trained philosophers. Over the course of an entire Saturday, these Jesuits explicated Coughlin’s program and provided Parsons their responses. The results of this “Roundtable on Father Coughlin,” were extraordinary.

After much discussion, Parsons and his St. Mary’s Jesuits concluded that half of Coughlin’s points were directly connected to Catholic social teaching, but that the other half seemed to have no grounding in Catholic philosophy or church–state relations at all. To Parsons, it was here where Coughlin was going out on his own, creating a quasi-religious justification for his proposals about state planning. “We found his language often vague and imprecise,” Parsons wrote in his final report of the meeting, “and even with the help of his printed addresses, we were not able to understand just what he does mean.” Where Coughlin was clear, the Jesuits processed

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16 Rev. Joseph A. Luther to Parsons, 30 March 1933, Rev. Wilfrid Parsons, SJ papers, box 4, folder 36, General Correspondence, Joseph A. Luther, 1933–35, Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center, Washington, D.C.

17 Wilfrid Parsons to Mr. J.J. McQuade, SJ, 13 April 1935, America magazine archives, box 12, folder 30, America Magazine Archives: box 12 folder 30, Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center, Washington, D.C.
the implications. For example, Coughlin’s call for the nationalization of oil and gas utilities “and other God-given resources” struck the Jesuit lawyers in the crowd not so much as nationalization, but as federalization. The upshot of the day’s deliberations was a distillation of Coughlin’s distinctive points which highlighted his political program. When he interspersed these points with authentic Catholic social propositions, he garnered the ability to sway the faithful speciously. This, for Parsons, was Coughlin’s supreme sin.

When composing his final report, Parsons mentioned that two areas of concern outside of the “16 Points” were, firstly, Coughlin’s perceived animosity towards organized labor, and secondly, “his privately expressed (and scarcely veiled public) opposition to the Jews.”18 This was the only reference which Parsons made to Coughlin’s anti-Semitism. As a courtesy, Parsons sent a copy of his Roundtable report to the Rector of St. Mary’s. The idea was to share its contents with the current crop of Jesuit scholastics (men training to be Jesuit priests) at St. Mary’s. One scholastic thanked Parsons for sending the report since “Quite a number of the men have signed up with the National Union and are ardent ‘Coughlin’ fans.”19

The significance of this behind-the-scenes work by Parsons is profound. By organizing the Roundtable and sending the report to St. Mary’s, Parsons was not only signaling the importance of Coughlin for Jesuits but he was also gaining intelligence on how the next generation of Jesuits-in-training would view Coughlin and his anti-Semitism. The feedback Parsons received from Kansas was mixed. There was a strong cluster of young Jesuits who supported Coughlin, and more importantly, who turned a blind eye to his anti-Semitism. They chose to rely on Coughlin’s dissimulations of his own anti-Semitic statements, and believe the Royal Oak priest when he protested against being tagged as an anti-Semite. This perception is significant, because it recalled Jesuit seminary training in Europe during the 1900s through the 1930s when Catholic and Jesuit writers in Austria and Germany set the tone for how many younger priests in the Society of Jesus would think about racism.20

“In general,” one anti-Coughlin scholastic wrote from Kansas in April of 1935, “the ... theologians are partisans of Father Coughlin.” But Parsons

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18 Parsons report, “Roundtable on Father Coughlin,” America magazine archives, box 12, folder 30, America magazine correspondence regarding Charles Coughlin.
19 Mr. J.J. McQuade, SJ, to Wilfrid Parsons, 26 April 1935, America magazine archives, box 12, folder 30, America magazine correspondence regarding Charles Coughlin.
also was gratified to hear that his *America* articles were beginning to turn some scholastics away from Coughlin. Perhaps the most important was a young Father Leo Brown, “a very good economist ... who thinks Coughlin’s ideas, especially his money theories, are wrong and dangerous.” More importantly, when the minutes of the New York Jesuit Roundtable on Father Coughlin arrived at St. Mary’s, the seminarians began to analyze and assess the results.

Parsons’s correspondent, Jesuit scholastic Arthur E. Gleason, SJ, reported that many of the scholastics at St. Mary’s were in denial that Coughlin was against the Jews. At St. Mary’s, “his opposition to the Jews is denied on the ground that several Jews have spoken on behalf of Father C. and his program.” Gleason, in fact, indicated to Parsons that he “assuredly,” had “never heard that Father C. opposed ... in a veiled way, Jews.”

“As for the Jews,” Parsons responded almost as an aside, “very large numbers of them here are against him, since they are firmly convinced that he is against them.” Then, in a revelation that indicated Coughlin’s anti-Semitism was not a matter for Catholics or for the Catholic press, he observed in a “we–them” fashion that “their religious press has been fulminating against him for weeks.” For Parsons, whatever Coughlin said against the Jews was not a matter for the Catholic press to investigate. This was a problem for Jews to solve.

In his entry on Parsons for *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, the historian John L. Morrison characterized Parsons as “tending to support New Deal reforms and ... also a sharp critic of Rev. Charles E. Coughlin.” Morrison’s characterization was probably based on a series of articles that Parsons wrote on Coughlin in May and June of 1935. The New York Jesuit Roundtable on Coughlin served as the basis for Parsons’s composition of these articles. Although Jewish concerns had been addressed within the confidence of the meeting, Parsons chose to ignore Jewish matters as he

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21 Rev. Leo Brown, SJ, would later go on to become a Jesuit voice for human rights, desegregation, and civil rights activism in the Missouri province of Jesuits during the 1950s. On Coughlin in 1935, he seemed to be a lone voice.

22 Coughlin always asserted that his “Radio League of the Little Flower,” was “composed of Catholics, Protestants and Jews as well as nonreligionists.” See “Radio League of the Little Flower,” pamphlet, *America* magazine archives, box 12, folder 33, *America* magazine correspondence regarding Charles Coughlin.


set out to compose his articles. Parsons's only concern was to dissect Coughlin’s economic policies. Coughlin’s simmering anti-Semitism was bypassed.

In addition to his anti-Semitic blindness, the problem with Parsons's 1935 economic articles on Coughlin was that they were far too sober, analytical, and deliberate. Akin to a dry academic discourse, few of Coughlin’s supporters were convinced. Also, by prescribing such doses of theoretical gravity to the wacky doctrines Coughlin preached, Parsons unwittingly gave intellectual credence to theories which were largely grounded in demagogy. For example, in his article “Father Coughlin and the Banks,” Parsons pointed out that Coughlin often conflated his disdain for “bankers” with his thoughts on the banking system as a whole. “When he does this,” Parsons pointed out, “he makes his proposals to abolish the [banking] system more valid than they are.”26 Such logic was of little concern to Coughlin’s core followers.

Even more meticulously, Parsons took issue with Coughlin’s assertion that all private banks were unconstitutional due to the reservation to Congress of “free coinage” in Section 8, Article 1 of the US Constitution. “I have been able to find no constitutional authority to support this theory,” Parsons opined. “Private banking has always been allowed, and was even before and after the Constitution was written.”27 In his follow-up article, “Father Coughlin’s Ideas on Money,” Parsons attacked Coughlin’s oft-repeated premise that “credit is immoral.” Using a school child rendering of the credit cycle, Parsons judged Coughlin with clarity. “I am stumped,” Parsons wrote. “I simply am unable to say whether Father Coughlin considers this process immoral.”28 On Coughlin’s economic theories, Parsons wanted America to be clear. “If there is one thing that comes out of this series,” he wrote hopefully, “it is that Father Coughlin’s theories are those of an individual, not the Church.”29

By 1936, Parsons’s attitude on Coughlin was becoming evermore confrontational. A Catholic publication in Buffalo, where Coughlin was heard on flagship station WGR, dubbed Father Parsons one of the nation’s foremost “anti-Coughlinites.”30 While Parsons overlooked and sidestepped Coughlin’s burgeoning anti-Semitism, he was nonetheless aware of its existence. That he might move toward a position of sympathy with Jews as

27 Ibid., 151.
28 Ibid., 175.
29 Ibid., 176.
30 The Echo, 4 July 1935, 4.
Coughlin’s rhetoric heated-up was at least an outside possibility. Parsons, however, never got the chance to test his conscience with respect to Coughlin’s most heated exchanges on anti-Semitism.

For reasons which are unclear, but which were probably connected to Parsons’s confrontational editorial policy, Parsons was relieved from his editorship in early 1936. Global political forces may have been at play. According to historian David Kertzer, in January of 1936 Benito Mussolini was so angered by a critical editorial in America on the Italian invasion of Ethiopia that he had his ambassador to the Holy See lodge a complaint to the Jesuit superior general, Włodzimierz Ledóchowski. According to Kertzer, Bonifacio Pignatti asked Ledóchowski to “fire the Jesuit editor and replace him with someone more kindly disposed toward the Fascist dictatorship.”  

Correspondence regarding the quick change in editorship is lacking, but the fortunes of Father Parsons seemed unexpected in 1936. Parsons was moved to Georgetown University for one year of teaching in the political science department, before alighting permanently at the Catholic University of America in 1938. If the Kertzer scenario holds true, in Father Talbot General Ledóchowski certainly got his man. Historical theologian Paul Misner has categorized Talbot as one of “the foremost apologists for anti-democratic governments of the right” of the era. Historian Patrick McNamara suggests that Talbot, whose energy and talent as a young Jesuit fueled a veritable Catholic literary revival in the 1920s, was by 1936 so viscerally disturbed by “the dominance of the communists in Spain and by the dissolution of the Jesuit order there, and the seizure of [Jesuit] property by the Republican government,” that he gladly steered America toward many aspects of Franco’s program. After 1936, America under Talbot would staunchly defend US neutrality, tussle with Roosevelt’s emerging internationalism, and strongly endorse Franco. Contrary to Parsons, rather than voice skepticism of Coughlin’s political and social platform, Talbot not only endorsed Coughlin’s anticommunism but by
supporting him through the entire anti-Semitic crisis of 1938 he also signaled approval of his anti-Semitism. In this sense, Coughlin could not have received a greater present if it had dropped from above. Over the next four years, Coughlin would exert an almost mystical allure on Talbot.  

In the face of Parsons’s critique, an olive branch was extended to Royal Oak in August of 1936, when Talbot allowed an editorial entitled “Father Coughlin and Reluctant Catholics.” “Reluctant Catholics” were those who failed to swing-in behind Coughlin. Talbot asked these Catholics “not to be alarmed” at the sight of a Catholic clergyman speaking about “social conditions and the use of wealth.” The gist of the editorial was that if “impropriety” and “alarm” became a means for others to squelch Coughlin, “it will put an end to the forcible proclamation of social justice [teaching] for years to come.” In one sense, Coughlin represented all that Talbot had hoped for American Catholics since the pre-First World War years—masculine public profession of Catholicism, on the national stage, and shaping a national discourse. For Talbot, Coughlin’s fame—Roman collar and all—showed convincingly that Catholics had arrived in the public square. Coughlin had his peccadillos—close association with political candidates and lack of attention to the “Negro question” (as relations with African Americans were then called)—but these could be overlooked because Father Coughlin was doing American Catholicism a service.

“I can only congratulate Father Coughlin,” the column closed admiringly, “on walking in and taking the place left open to him by the scarcity of vigorous and authoritative pronouncements on social justice among Catholics.”  

Far from creating chaos, Coughlin fulfilled an ideal. Privately, Talbot wrote to one Coughlin fan that he considered Father Coughlin to be “doing a tremendously fine piece of Catholic Action.”

America’s support for Coughlin was resolute and firm. “Every statement that we have made during my term of editorship in regard to Father

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35 Coughlin was not officially silenced until 1942, under pressure from the US Justice Department.

36 “With Scrip and Staff—Father Coughlin and Reluctant Catholics,” America 55 (1936): 443.

37 Francis Talbot, SJ, to M. Fox, America magazine archives, box 12, folder 35, America magazine correspondence regarding Charles Coughlin. The idea of Coughlin as a Catholic Actionist is key to understanding why Talbot refused to castigate Coughlin publicly. Since the Catholic Action engagement was delegated by the pope to the oversight of local bishops, Talbot could conceptually fit Coughlin’s work under the umbrella of the Catholic Action movement.
Coughlin,” Talbot related to an inquiring Coughlinit in 1937, “has been sympathetic ... to his cause. ... I myself have the greatest admiration for him and for the apostolic work which he has accomplished. ... It is the penalty of greatness,” Talbot waxed dismissing Coughlin’s critics, “that the great man is open to criticism no matter what he does.” Yet, for the Coughlinites, even the smallest criticism could raise a storm.

In March of 1938, Father Talbot received a letter from Edward P. Kirwin of Astoria, Long Island, registering his complaint that Father Coughlin had been slighted in an *America* cover article by Robert L. Otto on the politics of national health insurance. A throwaway line by Otto stated that insurance would surely not solve all the problems of the day—“the Spanish Civil War, birth control ... divorce ... and Father Coughlin.” Coughlin’s followers were incensed at how their priest had been characterized. They were especially upset that Father Coughlin had been thrown in with the twin scourges of “divorce and birth prevention.”

Apparently, these Coughlin supporters overlooked Talbot’s “Reluctant Catholics” demarche of August 1936. Consequently, Talbot wanted to make sure that Coughlinites were aware of the editorial change. Talbot wrote directly to Kirwin that he was sure the Otto piece did not mean to portray Father Coughlin in any “unworthy sense.” Talbot strained to show that new editorial lines had been drawn. “*America*, during my term of editorship, has never attacked Father Coughlin. ... My own admiration and esteem for him is high,” Talbot stated forthrightly. “We are backing Father Coughlin and wish him all success in his endeavors for the glory of God.”

At *America*, with the change in editors, the evaluation of Coughlin had gone from one of economic crackpot slouching toward Fascism, to one of “high esteem,” and “admiration.” Coughlin was astounded by this change of events, and contacted Talbot personally. “May this brief note convey to you my sincere appreciation,” Coughlin wrote, apparently being informed of Talbot’s sentiments, “of your kind message that just came to my attention.” Talbot’s “kind message” signaled the beginning of a new partnership for Coughlin and the US Jesuits—a partnership which was being cemented precisely as Coughlin was about to spark the anti-Semitic crisis.
of 1938. Armed with the knowledge that \textit{America} was secretly supportive, his boldness in speaking out against the Jews was bolstered.

No one at \textit{America} saw the anti-Semitic crisis coming. “I think on the whole, his influence is good,” \textit{America}’s Associate Editor John LaFarge informed a British audience in May of 1938. “You see, he has brought home to millions of non-Catholic Americans that the Church is the friend of the poor and the champion of Social Justice.”\textsuperscript{42} On the eve of the Coughlin’s anti-Semitic maelstrom, John LaFarge, SJ—perhaps the single most human rights-oriented Catholic intellectual of the day—had fallen in line with Father Talbot’s view that Coughlin’s rise on the US media landscape was configured to the larger acceptance of Catholics in America. “I believe he is performing a part that is very necessary,” Talbot poetically wrote of Coughlin two months prior to the crisis, “in our tragedy, or is it melodrama, in the United States?”\textsuperscript{43}

“I cannot begin to tell you how profoundly Father Coughlin disturbed and distressed people with his address on Sunday,” Rabbi Philip Bernstein of Rochester, New York, wrote to Coughlin’s new bishop, Archbishop Edward A. Mooney. Bernstein came to know Mooney well when Mooney was the bishop of Rochester from 1933 to 1937. After Coughlin’s \textit{Kristallnacht} speech, Bernstein felt compelled to tell Mooney, who had been transferred to the archdiocese of Detroit in 1937 and was then Coughlin’s governing bishop, that “literally hundreds of Jews and non-Jews” had approached him within hours of the speech, expressing “outrage, indignation, and sorrow” over Coughlin’s inflammatory words. Many Jewish parents experienced “a sleepless night” after the speech. “Of course I know that Father Coughlin says that he is no anti-Semite,” Bernstein indicated to a hesitant Mooney, “but how can anyone trust his sincerity or good will when … his attack is obviously threatening the security of the entire Jewish population of the United States?”\textsuperscript{44} The anti-Semitic crisis of 1938 was in full-swing.

As newspaper editors and angered politicians lined-up across the nation against Father Coughlin, many for the very reasons Rabbi Bernstein enumerated to Archbishop Mooney, American Jesuits were forced to reassess their relationship to Coughlin. Under pressure, Rev. Daniel A. Lord,

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{enumerate}
\item LaFarge quoted in \textit{The Catholic Herald} (London), 20 May 1938.
\item Francis Talbot, SJ, to John W. Delehant, 26 September 1938, \textit{America} magazine archives, box 12, folder 35.
\end{enumerate}
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SJ, wrote in *The Queen’s Work* that anti-Semitism was “the forerunner of anti-Catholicism” and warned against “Catholic support for anti-Jewish movements.”\(^{45}\) John LaFarge, SJ, also went on the radio cautioning American Catholics against anti-Semitism.\(^{46}\) But what was striking about both these Jesuit efforts during the anti-Semitic crisis was the refusal of Jesuits to speak against Father Coughlin by name. In fact, in a rather astonishing behind-the-scenes move, Rev. John A. LaFarge, SJ, wrote to a Coughlinite as the anti-Semitic crisis was unfolding that *America* had “no antagonism with Father Coughlin and heartily endorse[d] such work as he has been doing.”\(^{47}\) This was a remarkable admission given that six months earlier LaFarge delivered to Pope Pius XI the daft encyclical *Humani Generis Unitas* [The Unity of the Human Race] wherein he wrote that racial anti-Semitism constituted a violation of the human rights of Jews.\(^{48}\) Perhaps the enigmatic LaFarge was simply following the editorial line Talbot laid down, for Father Talbot had already reached a clear decision on Coughlin. He would support him through the anti-Semitic crisis. Talbot believed Coughlin had been touched by the finger of God.

“I believe and have always believed,” Talbot confessed to Coughlin about a year prior to the anti-Semitic crisis, “that God has placed in you a tremendous power and that you should use this power for his glory.”\(^{49}\) Talbot’s eerie mystical resolve remained in place even after the *Kristallnacht* speech. “I just want to assure you that we are fighting with you on this issue of the radio,” Talbot confided to Coughlin shortly after the rebroadcast of his speech.\(^{50}\) Eliding anti-Semitism altogether, Talbot relayed that his new tactic would be to hold up Coughlin as a victim of censorship—a hero for First Amendment rights. This was an issue of free speech. “My attitude,” Talbot informed querying Coughlinites, “is that the

\(^{45}\) See *Contemporary Jewish Record*, 5 December 1939, 88.


\(^{49}\) Francis X. Talbot, SJ, to Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, 7 December 1937, *America* magazine archives, box 12, folder 35.

\(^{50}\) Francis X. Talbot, SJ, to Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, 10 December 1938, ibid.
fight should be permitted to go on and that Father Coughlin must not be 
gagged.”51

On 20 December 1938, Father Coughlin wrote to Talbot relating news 
that he was now being considered an outright anti-Semite by Archbishop 
Mooney. “Archbishop Mooney has been approached by members of Kuhn, 
Loeb & Company ... he is now of the opinion that I am an anti-Semite.” 
Coughlin insinuated that Talbot ought to assist him in going against 
the assessment of his local bishop. “That is very unfortunate,” Coughlin said 
of his bishop to Father Talbot, “because I have refrained from exhibiting any 
rancor and have carefully differentiated between godly Jews and godless 
Jews.” In a postscript to this letter, Coughlin indicated to Talbot that he 
had just come from a meeting with Archbishop Mooney “to discuss my 
so-called anti-Semitism.” According to Coughlin, Mooney had changed 
his mind “because of the great number of Jewish letters which he has 
received.”52 It was the Jews who had turned Coughlin’s bishop against 
him. He hoped that Father Talbot would not also turn against him as eas-
ily. Coughlin need not have worried.

“I do not believe that your discussions are anti-Semitic,” Parsons 
wrote back to Coughlin. “I have seen and accepted the distinction you 
make about the classes of Jews.” Sacralizing the distinction between 
religious and non-religious Jews, Talbot assured Coughlin: “It is the same 
distinction that I, myself, would make in all charity and with all justice.”53 
Publicly, in order to shield himself from the vulnerability of this new 
perspective, Talbot continued his free speech mantra on Coughlin.

However worn and weak Talbot’s free speech tack seemed to be, this 
is not to say that this line was unable to be appropriated by thinking 
Catholics in 1938. Talbot, an editor since his early days, would have been 
thoroughly conversant with the case of Father Edward McGlynn, a New 
York priest who was excommunicated in 1887 for speaking freely on politi-
cal issues. As historian Gerald P. Fogarty has mentioned, the McGlynn 
case set an “electric shockwave” through an entire generation of future 
American Catholic clerical leaders.54 The muzzling of McGlynn spontane-
ously sent 75,000 Catholics into the streets of New York in protest.

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51 Francis Talbot to Rev. John J.A. Murphy, 6 December 1938, ibid. Talbot’s pro-forma 
answer to numerous questioners included this line of thought.
52 Charles Coughlin to Francis Talbot, SJ, 20 December 1938, ibid.
53 Francis Talbot to Charles Coughlin, undated, ibid.
54 On the force of the McGlynn case and Coughlin see Gerald P. Fogarty, SJ, “The Case 
of Charles Coughlin: The View From Rome,” in Pius XI and the Americas: Proceedings of the
They were objecting to New York’s Archbishop Corrigan—under pressure from the Vatican—squelching the prized American right to free speech. “Why you extol him under the guise of free speech, I cannot see,” one of Talbot’s critics wrote. “Dr. McGlynn of Brooklyn walked the plank for less.” But Coughlin was not about to be excommunicated for his anti-Semitism. Behind the scenes, Father Talbot was writing to just the man who could stave off such an outcome.

Amleto Giovanni Cicognani was an adjunct member of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation in 1924 and 1931 when he took his first two special missions to the United States. As a member of the Congregation, Cicognani had an inside view on the appointment of bishops. Every two years, apostolic delegates from around the world sent to Rome lists of priests who were deemed suitable to become bishops. Given his interest and acquaintance with the United States it was not remarkable that Cicognani was named apostolic delegate to Washington in 1933. Since the apostolic delegate was representative of the Holy See to the episcopacy of the country, Cicognani was brought into the Coughlin affair quite early.

Cicognani had been appraised of the Coughlin affair since the final years of Bishop Michael Gallagher’s tenure. In the summer of 1936, Pope Pius XI sent Monsignor Joseph P. Hurley on a secret mission to meet with Coughlin in Royal Oak. Cicognani may have viewed Hurley’s mission as a usurpation of his own role, and henceforth remained lukewarm to carrying out suggestions from Hurley’s office in Rome. Hurley was sent to Michigan to level a papal protest against Coughlin’s fiery rhetoric aimed at President Roosevelt. Similar to Parsons, in his criticisms Hurley also excised Jewish matters from the list. But as the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938 heated up, Hurley began to eye Cicognani as the real roadblock to getting a definitive statement issued against Coughlin. “Chick of the soft pedal,” was Hurley’s nickname for Cicognani when it came to Coughlin. From his perch in Rome, Hurley derisively deemed Cicognani “the Fascist auditor,” and mused that nothing would be done about Coughlin due to his influence. Hurley may have been correct, but it was the influence of people like Father Talbot who provided Cicognani with the intellectual

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55 John Atkinson to Francis X. Talbot, 24 December 1938, America magazine archives, box 12, folder 35.

and theological backing to do nothing during the anti-Semitic crisis of 1938.

On 10 January 1939—during the very time when Hurley indicated that the Vatican was weighing a public reprimand for Coughlin—Talbot sent a long letter to Cicognani about the attitude Coughlin had “taken about the Jews.” He informed Cicognani that Coughlin even wrote him “a very personal letter” on the subject. Talbot insinuated that in the wake of his Kristallnacht speech, “a very aggressive form of Semitism” had lined-up against Coughlin sponsored by “the efforts of some extreme Jews.” Talbot acknowledged that anti-Semitism had “increased during the past two months,” but placed no blame on Coughlin. Talbot was “shocked” and “terrified” that such anti-Semitism could be manifested “among our Catholic people.”

But Talbot was neither shocked nor terrified about Father Coughlin’s role in the recrudescence of Catholic anti-Semitism. “I believe that, in his intentions and in his attitude toward the Jews,” Talbot argued to an accepting Cicognani, “he was correct and Christian.” For Talbot, it was not the matter of Coughlin’s addresses, but “the difficulty with Father Coughlin is his manner of presentation.” While “he has not been as careful about his facts as he might have been … Father Coughlin is a tremendous force for good in the United States.” “I believe, therefore,” Talbot concluded definitively, “that he should be permitted to continue his radio talks.” The only thing Talbot stressed was that Coughlin “get his facts straight.” Coughlin was doing the Lord’s work. For the Apostolic Delegate to impede or undercut this “apostolic” work would mean undercutting the faith.

Although it is impossible to know just how much influence Talbot’s letter had on Cicognani, for nearly the next three years Coughlin was given free rein to continue his broadcasts. Moreover, in the wake of Talbot’s defense of Coughlin to Cicognani, a strange relationship of support and mutual admiration developed between Talbot and Coughlin. Talbot, who read Coughlin’s Social Justice throughout this period, began to take out advertising space in Coughlin’s sheet. Likewise, surreptitiously Talbot was colluding with Coughlin on such efforts as pushing the US to recognize Franco’s Spanish movement and the provisioning of Spain with US wheat. In these cases, Talbot personally synchronized his editorials with

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57 Talbot to Amleto Cicognani, 10 January 1939, America Magazine archives, box 12, folder 36, general correspondence—Charles Coughlin.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
Coughlin. He was turning *America* into an ancillary arm of *Social Justice*.\(^{60}\) Talbot even assisted Coughlin in funneling money—through *America* accounts—to missionaries in Mexico who were deemed suitably anti-communist. Since Donald Warren proved in 1996 that much of Coughlin’s own funding was being supplied by Nazi intelligence, an unwitting Talbot may have played into the hands of America’s future enemy.

In late June of 1939, Talbot was invited to speak at the Tamiment Economic Institute in Pennsylvania. “Catholics are definitely not anti-Semitic,” Talbot declared to a skeptical audience who then pushed him about Coughlin. For the first time, Talbot was forced to speak publicly on Coughlin’s anti-Semitism. To such an audience, there was no way Talbot could argue that Coughlin himself was not anti-Semitic. “If Father Coughlin is a thorn in the side of the Jews,” Talbot fired out, “he is also a thorn in the side of Catholics.” Inexplicably, Talbot put forth the unequal formula that “if he is arousing anti-Semitism, he is also arousing anti-Catholicism.”\(^{61}\) When he read the newspaper write-ups on Talbot’s statements, Coughlin understood that the Jesuit editor was dissembling in his defense. On 3 July he quietly sent a telegram of “greetings and best wishes” to Talbot asking if there were any editorial observations of his that *Social Justice* could carry the following week. “We stand together,” Coughlin asserted, “against our mutual enemies.”\(^{62}\) If those “enemies” were Jewish, Coughlin did not say. There was no need.

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\(^{60}\) The depth of this relationship, and Talbot’s dependence on Coughlin to drive the editorial line, can be found in *America* magazine archives, box 12, folder 36, Charles Coughlin correspondence file.

\(^{61}\) *Indiana Jewish Chronicle*, 30 June 1939, 1.

\(^{62}\) Telegram [Western Union], Father Coughlin to Rev. F.X. Talbot, 3 July 1939, *America* magazine archives, box 12, folder 36, Charles Coughlin correspondence file.
“ACCEPTED AND WELCOME”: THE UNLIKELY RESPONSE OF THE
JESUITS AT MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY TO JEWISH APPLICANTS
DURING THE INTERWAR YEARS, 1920–40

Michael J. Burns

During the period 1920–40—the interwar years, which was also the end of the Progressive Era—Jews found the doors of American higher education closing to them in most instances. Many public colleges and universities and all of the so-called elite private schools, such as those in what came to be called the Ivy League, had separate lists for Jewish applicants as a means of effectively restricting the numbers of Jewish students. Most Jesuits schools did not have such quotas. Georgetown did not have a Jewish quota list, although during this period they had a limited number of Jews.¹ Fordham and Saint John’s University in New York² clearly did not have Jewish quotas and were well known as places that welcomed Jesuit students. Providence College, which is conducted by Dominicans in Rhode Island, welcomed Jews. The Jesuit schools in the Middle West also did not have quotas, and they were attractive places for young Jews to study. The most attractive and most welcoming school, and the place where young Jewish men and women went in great numbers, was Marquette. In contrast, Jews were either excluded outright or severely limited at Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, New York University, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, among many other such schools. Non-Jesuit Catholic schools such as The Catholic University of America and Notre Dame University also barred outright or restricted Jewish enrollment, as did a whole host of smaller Catholic colleges.

The quota system that restricted Jews at non-Jesuit schools has been well and widely discussed elsewhere.³ The question that this chapter

¹ Georgetown, the first Catholic college in the United States, enrolled Jewish students from its earliest days in the 1790s. For a discussion of early Georgetown students, see Robert Emmett Curran, *The Bicentennial History of Georgetown University: From Academy to University, 1789–1889* (Georgetown University Press: Washington, D.C., 1993).
² Saint John's is not a Jesuit school; it was founded by and is conducted under the auspices of the Congregation of the Mission, known commonly as Vincentians.
raises is how did it happen that Jews were so welcome at Marquette and other Jesuit schools? I posit that it was a fortunate series of strong historical, religious, political, social, and geographical currents and events that moved the Jesuits of the Middle West and Marquette University to be so egalitarian, when such behavior was very much out of step with most of the rest of higher education and the greater American society. The first and most compelling event was the arrival of Dutch and Belgian Jesuits into the American West.

In 1823, St. Louis, Missouri, was a rough but fast-growing French, Spanish, and American village well west of the frontier line. In that year a small group of penniless Dutch and Belgian Jesuits came to St. Louis to evangelize the Native Americans. They were welcomed by the villagers and the natives, but importantly they were also welcomed by Mother Rose Philippine Duchesne⁴ and her community of nuns of the Society of the Sacred Heart. The nuns and Mother Duchesne gave the Jesuits food, housing, warm clothing, and much practical advice. Mother Duchesne, who came to St. Louis in 1818, had caught the American spirit of equality early on. Although Sacred Heart nuns would ultimately become famous in the United States for their work educating the children of the financially well-off, Mother Duchesne saw the need to, and did educate, Native American and black children alongside white youngsters.⁵ In her lengthy conversations with the Jesuits, who viewed Mother Duchesne as a sophisticated French woman as well as a pioneer, the spirit of true American egalitarianism was easily shared and adopted. Like Duchesne, the Dutch and Belgian Jesuits were motivated by faith, and committed to hard, difficult labor in the middle and western United States.⁶

St. Louis was founded in 1764 by French nationals. Its control was passed back-and-forth between the French and the Spanish as each country had possession of the area. In majority population and in culture it was a French place, but in 1803 it became American by virtue of the Louisiana Purchase. Now large numbers of Irish poured in, and a significant number

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⁴ Mother Duchesne was born in Grenoble, France, 29 August 1769, arrived in Saint Louis in 1818, and died at Saint Charles, Missouri, 18 November 1852. She was canonized 3 July 1988.

⁵ Nikola Baumgarten, “Immigrants as Democrats: Education in St. Louis before the Civil War” (Ph.D. diss.: Harvard University, 1993), 31–78.

⁶ For a detailed discussion of the importance of Mother Duchesne and the Sacred Heart nuns to the work of the first Jesuits in the Mississippi and Missouri valleys, see Michael J. Burns, “Accepted and Welcome: The Unlikely Response of the Jesuits at Marquette University to Jewish Applicants during the Inter-War Years, 1920–1940” (Master’s thesis: Harvard University, 2008), 51–73.
of Jews also made their way west to St. Louis. In this far outpost both the Irish and the Jews, and the earlier French and Spanish colonists, got along well, as each group contributed to the evolution of a diverse community. In a real sense, St. Louis was a rare American city where these immigrant groups, vastly different in every way, respected each other and worked together for the greater good of the locale. This communitarian feeling would bode well as an example for the Jesuits who witnessed and participated in it, and who would later promote it in their schools across the American Middle West.

By 1827 when the [Dutch and Belgian] Jesuits assumed control of nine-year-old Saint Louis College, they were well on their way to becoming thoroughly “American” in the best sense of the word. By 1830, Saint Louis College had been raised to university status and title, and within five years opened schools of law and medicine. The entire university welcomed all qualified applicants without regard to religion or ethnicity. Saint Louis University is considered the model for all of Catholic higher education in the Middle West, and although its method of studies was widely copied by virtually all other Catholic schools in the Middle United States, not all imitated its egalitarianism. The first point of branching out in a completely new mission field for the Missouri Jesuits was Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where they went in 1855.

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8 It must be noted that, in the 1840s, when the Native American Party was born, both Catholics and Jews were targeted in St. Louis, as they were elsewhere.
9 Saint Louis College was the first educational institution established west of the Mississippi River.
10 In 1863, the St. Louis Jesuits became a province. Hereinafter in this chapter they will be referred to as Missouri Jesuits.
11 *Studentium Album Collegium Sanctae Ludovici, 1828–1860*. This register of students in Saint Louis University lists students, place of origin, and only sometimes religious affiliation. For the year 1850 there are listed approximately 300 students, with 20 who are listed as “Hebrew.” Many student names do not list any religious affiliation. Personal conversations with leaders of the St. Louis Jewish community in 2004 revealed that a significant number of Jewish families in the St. Louis area have an oral tradition of their ancestors attending Saint Louis University from the earliest days. Virtually all said they believed that in the ante-bellum years substantially more than 20 students at Saint Louis University were Jewish.
12 Jesuits from Saint Louis went to Cincinnati, Ohio, and Bardstown, Kentucky, prior to establishing their Milwaukee mission, but in Ohio and Kentucky they took control of already existing schools. Thus those places were not considered “new missions.” Two Jesuits came from Europe directly to Milwaukee in 1849 but as they could not speak English, and since one died soon after arrival, that mission was ended shortly after it was begun.
In 1843, the Holy See established a Catholic diocese in Wisconsin Territory (which then included what is now Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Dakotas), and set Milwaukee as the diocesan seat. In 1844, John Martin Henni, a Swiss national, came to this frontier area as the first bishop.\textsuperscript{13} Henni was the perfect choice for this new outback post, and as will be seen, for Jews who wished to study at the university level. In his native Switzerland, a country divided by sectarian rancor, the young Henni witnessed real and political skirmishes between Catholics and Protestants. After studying in Rome, he came to the United States as a clerical student and was ordained in the Cincinnati, Ohio cathedral for that diocese. He worked as a circuit-riding priest visiting communities of German Catholics from Cincinnati all the way north to Cleveland. Later he was made pastor of Holy Trinity church which was a prominent parish of German-speaking Catholics in the Cincinnati area. He founded \textit{Der Wahrheits-Freund} [Friend of Truth] which was the first German Catholic newspaper in the United States. In its pages, Henni stressed the need for German immigrants to be faithful to the traditions of their homeland but also to become good Americans, to recognize the sense of fairness and equality that are American ideals, and to be tolerant of others. He opposed overly zealous religious sectarianism and grieved at the constant bickering between German American Catholics and Lutherans. In Wisconsin Territory, although his administration was that of a missionary bishop responsible for 280,000 square miles, one of Henni’s first acts upon arriving in Milwaukee was to set about establishing a Jesuit college. His initial view was that such a college, intended for young German males, would assure the area of an educated professional class of businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and other leaders. As it turned out, by the time his proposed “Marquette College” actually opened its doors in September of 1881, the Great Famine in Ireland had sent thousands of Irish refugees to eastern Wisconsin, and as will be seen, their presence changed the complexity of the area, the archdiocese, and the College itself. Towards the establishment of his proposed college, which he insisted be named after the great French missionary and explorer, Jacques Marquette, SJ,\textsuperscript{14} Henni was given

\textsuperscript{13} Henni was born in Misanenga in the Canton of Graubunden, Switzerland on 15 June 1805. He was appointed bishop of Milwaukee 28 November 1843, archbishop on 15 February 1875, and died 7 September 1881.

\textsuperscript{14} Jacques Marquette was born in Laon, Picardy, France, 1 June 1637. He entered the Jesuits in the Province of Champagne in 1654, was ordained in 1666, and came almost immediately to New France. He studied Native American languages at the Jesuit College in Quebec City, and went west to what is now Michigan and Wisconsin. With Louis Joliet he
traveled the Mississippi River to its confluence with the Arkansas River in 1673. He died at what is now Ludington, Michigan, 18 May 1675. He was one of approximately 325 French Jesuits who came to the United States to work in New France and the French Caribbean. Other Jesuits worked in New France for longer periods and more extensively. Nonetheless, Marquette is the most famous and best remembered of them.

15 This gift came from the Antwerp philanthropist, William Joseph de Boey (1769–1850). De Boey is a footnote in this chapter, and today his name is hardly known, even to the Missouri Jesuits. But that is not as it should be, since his gift to establish Marquette, and his many other gifts to the Missouri Jesuits, importantly supported their work in the middle United States.
Saint Mary's College, which was a French Jesuit school in Saint Mary's, Kentucky. After finishing his college studies, Lalumiere read law in the office of the firm of Lincoln and Herndon in Springfield, Illinois. The senior partner, Abraham Lincoln, attested to Lalumiere's legal proficiency in an extant document which Lincoln signed in 1844. Moving on to St. Louis, Lalumiere practiced law in that city where he again encountered Jesuits, although this time they were primarily Dutch and Belgian. Attracted by the Jesuit way of life, Lalumiere entered the Society at Florissant, Missouri, in 1849 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1857, after which he was almost immediately sent to Milwaukee to take up his life's work. In Lalumiere, Archbishop Henni found a friend and sympathizer who was an enthusiastic promoter of the idea of a Jesuit college in Milwaukee. He also found an educated, savvy lawyer who had been exposed to the courtroom at both the state and federal levels. Immigrants to Milwaukee, especially the Irish in his parish and the Jews who lived nearby, found Father Lalumiere an able counsel who would readily go to court on their behalf and for no charge, since after his priestly ordination Lalumiere never charged for his legal services. Although he generally only helped the indigent, he developed a reputation of freely giving counsel to anyone who sought it from him.

The actual opening of Marquette College was a long and difficult process. Despite the desires of Archbishop Henni, and the labors of Father Lalumiere and the other Jesuits assigned to Saint Gall’s, and the generous gift of the Belgian philanthropist, several key events occurred that blocked forward progress toward opening the school. On 6 September 1860, around 400 Milwaukee Irish men and women, a majority of them members of Saint Gall’s parish, traveled to Chicago on the elegant side-wheeler Lady Elgin. They attended speeches in Chicago on behalf of presidential candidate Stephen A. Douglas, wined and dined in the Windy City and saw the

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16 The French Jesuits at Saint Mary’s came from the Province of Champagne and appear to have been very broadminded, at least for that day. They encouraged students to bring a knife and a shotgun to school for assistance in bagging game for the college larder. They served wine at meals but prohibited the use of Kentucky bourbon. They were opposed to slavery and denied students the claimed “right” to bring slaves as personal servants, as was done at most schools in the South and a few in the North. American Jesuits in Maryland and Missouri owned slaves until they were ordered to cease the practice by their superior general in the mid-1830s.

17 Milwaukee was raised to the rank of archdiocese in 1875—the first one in the upper Mid-West—and Henni was simultaneously elevated to archbishop.

18 In conversations with Jewish families in the early 2000s, I was told that Father Lalumiere was traditionally regarded as “our lawyer” by early Jewish families, most of whom would have been impoverished upon arrival in Milwaukee.
prominent sights, and then reboarded the Lady Elgin for the return trip to Milwaukee. In the early morning hours of 8 September 1860, steaming against gale force winds and substantial waves, the Lady Elgin was rammed mid-ship port side below the waterline by the south-bound wooden sailing schooner, Augusta of Oswego. Three hundred passengers of the Lady Elgin drowned. This enormous tragedy was and still remains the worst single-accident loss of life on the Great Lakes. For days the funerals at Saint Gall’s and Saint John’s Cathedral began at dawn and ran until the early evening hours. The heart of the Milwaukee Irish community was eviscerated. Saint Gall’s Parish was fractured into many pieces of sorrow. In most respects the leadership of the Irish populace disappeared. The strong German community, at least half of whom were Lutheran, came to the fore and for decades ran public life in Milwaukee. Virtually all other major cities between the Atlantic and the Mississippi saw political life swing to the local Irish community after the Civil War. This happened in Boston, New York, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, and on to Saint Louis. On account of the Lady Elgin disaster, it did not happen in Milwaukee. Eventually those other places experienced a corruption that frequently discriminated and always polarized the local community. That also did not happen in Milwaukee.

The Civil War itself was a block against the College opening, since while some financial support would come from the Missouri Jesuits, the bulk of the money needed to get the school up and running had to be supplied by the parishioners of Saint Gall’s, in the same manner that was done elsewhere in establishing Jesuit schools. Such was the standard Jesuit procedure. In 1864, with Father Lalumiere’s legal guidance, the Wisconsin legislature chartered Marquette College, but there was then no hope for actually constructing a school building and beginning classes. Just as the Lady Elgin disaster had riven Saint Gall’s parish, now the Civil War was a form of terror for parish families whose sons were fighting it, and Milwaukee’s economic situation was squeezed by the constraints of financing war needs and supplying food stuffs to Union Army units.

Finally, in September of 1881, Marquette College did open its doors to 35 students. There was no religious test for entrance, and for that reason the backgrounds of the early students cannot be clearly determined. In its first quarter century, Marquette was a fairly routine Jesuit college that stressed the Classics. Virtually all of the members of the faculty were Jesuits and the students came from Milwaukee and its suburbs. In conversations with Milwaukee Jewish families, the regular response was “yes, of course Jews went to Marquette in the early days” since it was “a comfortable place
to study,” and it was “in the neighborhood.” If classes got too boring students could speak with Father Adrian Hoecken, SJ, the famed Dutch Jesuit who spent long years as a missionary to the Blackfeet, Flathead Salish, and Kalispel peoples of Idaho and Montana. (In 1854, Father Hoecken walked with the Flathead Salish people across Idaho and the Rockies to establish their new home at Saint Ignatius, Montana. He died at Marquette on 19 April 1897 at the age of 83.)

Harriet Laura Barker, a great granddaughter of James Barker and Elizabeth Woer Barker, colonists who established Woodstock, New York, in 1757, was born in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1848. By the age of 16, Harriet, an intelligent young woman with an authentic American pedigree, and already having a year of teaching experience in a rural district school, secured a position on the staff of The Evening Wisconsin in Milwaukee. In 1869, she married William E. Cramer, the owner and editor of the newspaper, and together they embarked on a three-year educational honeymoon to Europe where they visited, among other places, most of Europe’s major cities. To this point the young Mrs. Cramer’s life appears essentially “American western routine,” even if very idyllic, since Mr. Cramer was 31 one years her senior and enormously wealthy. He was also blind and deaf from his youth. Upon their return to the United States Mrs. Cramer threw herself into the management of The Evening Wisconsin and into the public life of Milwaukee and the nation. At some point she became interested in Catholicism and studied its tenets with Father Lalumiere, who baptized her in Saint Gall’s church. Now Mrs. Cramer became a strong vocal and financial supporter of Marquette College and the work of the Milwaukee Jesuits. She also developed an interest, perhaps at Father Lalumiere’s urging, in Milwaukee’s Jewish community.

Abraham Flexner was a brilliant young Jew who was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1866. He graduated from Johns Hopkins at age 19, and did graduate work at Harvard and the University of Berlin. He was hired by the Carnegie Foundation to undertake a national study of American medical education. Beginning in 1908, he and his team visited every medical and dental school in the United States, comparing curricula, examining students and faculty qualifications, and inspecting classroom, laboratory,
and hospital facilities. In 1910 the “Flexner Report” was issued. Since the report changed, by way of improvement, healthcare and medical and dental education in the United States and Canada, Flexner can be accurately called the Father of Modern American healthcare. He came to Milwaukee because the 1864 charter that established “Marquette College” was amended in 1907 to “Marquette University.” As a university Marquette now had schools of medicine, dentistry, nursing, and pharmacy and Flexner examined these extensively. While in Milwaukee, where he resided near the university in the Jewish community, Flexner visited at great length with university officials and the faculty and administrators of the schools of medicine and dentistry. When his report was issued in 1910, he graded schools by quality of their programs. Many medical schools all across the country failed and closed. Marquette University School of Medicine was given a “C” rating, together with lengthy and detailed suggestions for improvement. These were made to the medical buildings, and in the early 1920s Marquette built completely new classroom and clinical facilities for the School of Dentistry, and what was billed as the largest single dentistry clinic in the world—with 150 chairs—and this school attracted students, including Jews, from across the United States.

The Jesuits of the Missouri Province could look to excellent state universities being established all across the Middle West. In Madison, during the years 1903 to 1918, Charles R. Van Hise served as president of a rising University of Wisconsin, a school that had admitted women students beginning in 1863, and that was substantially expanding its course offerings on the graduate level beginning in the early 1900s. The Marquette Jesuits could not have missed what was happening in Madison. In 1909, at the prodding of the Most Reverend Sebastian Messmer, archbishop of Milwaukee, Marquette President Father James McCabe, SJ, introduced undergraduate coeducation and Summer School to Marquette. The Marquette Summer School was the first for Catholic schools, and changed the whole complexity of Catholic elementary and secondary education in the United States. Marquette was the first Catholic school to admit women to undergraduate programs. As would be seen later in the 20th century all across the country, women students always made colleges and universities more attractive places to study.

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21 Charles Richard Van Hise was born in 1857, had a distinguished career as a professor of geology at UW Madison, and died in 1918. He had to have been an example for the Marquette Jesuits.
By the outbreak of the Civil War, most major railroads were running trains in and out of Chicago, so that it was soon being called the nation’s rail center. The transcontinental railroad ran through Chicago, and that city quickly eclipsed St. Louis and Philadelphia to become the second largest and most important city in America. Milwaukee, 90 miles to the north, could only benefit from Chicago’s rise, and rail service from all over the country provided easy access to Milwaukee, either directly or through Chicago.

Besides profiting from the rapid growth of rail service, the Marquette Jesuits observed five religious and sociopolitical movements that had great implications for their work and for their worldview. The first was the “German question,” which began in 1886 when Father Peter Abellen, a priest of the Milwaukee archdiocese, presented a letter of complaint to the Holy See, in which letter the signers criticized the manner of appointing members of the American hierarchy, and the treatment of “national parishes,” that is parishes made up of essentially one ethnic group, such as Germans. Father Abellen and his friends were concerned that the overwhelming majority of men being named bishops were either from Ireland or of Irish descent. They were also concerned that as time passed, national parishes were less and less oriented towards their country of origin, and were becoming more and more “American.” This “German question” engulfed the American hierarchy, with bishops taking firm stands on either side. Milwaukee and Wisconsin were often focal points of these battles because of the high proportion of Germans in its population, and the fact that up to this point, the Milwaukee bishops were Germans. The battle over the “German question” raged on in some fashion until the First World War, when it quietly faded away.

The second issue was the Bennett Law, which was passed by the Wisconsin legislature in 1889. It required the use of the English language in teaching most subjects in all public and private elementary and secondary schools in Wisconsin. German Catholics and Lutherans had their own school systems across Wisconsin, and they argued vehemently against Bennett. Other groups, such as Scandinavians and Poles, lived in small communities where the local public schools taught in the language of the local people, such as Polish or Norwegian. In Milwaukee and Green Bay and La Crosse Germans and Poles had large Catholic schools where instruction was in either language and the Bennett Law was mightily opposed by them. The Marquette Jesuits may have had opinions but they did not publicly express them, or at least there is no surviving record of such opinions. The Bennett Law was repealed in 1891.
The third issue was the Americanist Controversy, an amorphous problem that had several centers: the rapid decline of Catholicism in France; Father Isaac Hecker’s and the Paulist Fathers’ attempts to view the Catholic faith through an American lens instead of a Roman one; the growing American support for the separation of church and state. Liberal American bishops tended to side with the so-called Americanists, while the more conservative bishops tended to take the ultramontane view of Vatican officials. Most American Catholics, certainly by far the majority, were unaware of the Americanist controversy, but the priests and bishops were very aware of it since it was widely discussed in Catholic journals and papers, and since its outcome would affect seminary education. Ultimately, Pope Leo XIII in the pastoral letter Testem Benevolentiae (issued 22 January 1899) condemned Americanism and held the church in the United States to a strictly Roman view of matters pertaining both to the faith and to ecclesiastical administration. Most Americanists on seminary faculties found themselves reassigned. There is no surviving evidence that Marquette Jesuits rendered public opinions on the Americanist Controversy, and college theology courses being what they were then—essentially catechism classes—would not have offered the opportunity for discussion in Marquette classrooms.

The fourth issue was Progressivism and its local proponent, Wisconsin Senator Robert M. La Follette (1855–1925). The Progressive Era was marked by social activists and government reformers in contraindication to the Gilded Age. The latter period began soon after the Civil War and ran to the 1890s, when Progressivism began. Progressive leaders were, among others, presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, Governor Al Smith, Jane Addams, and La Follette. Progressives sought to clean up corruption in government, curb national thievery by railroad magnates, establish child labor laws, establish national food industry standards, and improve healthcare. Progressives were in favor of prohibition and woman’s suffrage. Abraham Flexner was the archetype of Progressivism. La Follette worked very hard for Progressivism and Wisconsin became a laboratory for the movement. Again, although they were awash in this national social current and benefited from it in many respects, the Marquette Jesuits appear not to have made any public statements for or against Progressivism or its issues, at least that have survived.

The fifth issue, and one that was very close to home, was the Polish Church War. Similar to the “German question,” but more internecine and much more complicated, the Polish Church War began in the mid-1890s. Briefly put, the Polish people in the United States wanted Polish priests
and bishops as well as Polish-speaking nuns in classrooms of majority Polish students. They were not keen to be directed by Irish priests and bishops, and remembering their painful history in Europe, they emphatically did not want their faith lives directed by German priests and bishops. This so-called war was fought all over the eastern United States, but primarily in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. Like the “German question,” it had more or less disappeared by the end of the First World War.22

In their long history, Jesuits had been persecuted widely, driven out of New France in North America and many European and South American countries, and suppressed entirely by the pope from 1773 until 1814. Doubtless remembering this history, the Marquette Jesuits, like their confrères in other Middle West Jesuit schools, felt it most prudent not to involve themselves publicly in the political and social issues of the day, and certainly not to get involved in Catholic disputes. No books or journal articles or publicly available documents discussing these five topics by Marquette Jesuits have been found.

Between 1890 and the start of the First World War in 1914, about 15 million immigrants came to America from Italy, Russia and Russian Poland, and the Balkans. Several million were Roman Catholic and perhaps as many as a million and a half were Jews. The Jews were essentially Ashkenazi and Orthodox, and like the Catholic immigrants, not well educated. John Gurda, the Dean of Milwaukee historians, says that by 1910 there were 10,000 Jews in Milwaukee.23 The majority of them lived in a several square mile area that was a few blocks north and east of Marquette University. For them it was an easy walk to the Marquette campus, and an even easier streetcar ride. Numerous discussions with members of the Milwaukee Jewish community revealed family history accounts of happy satisfied lives, even if they lived in poverty or near-poverty.

Americans had traditionally flirted with anti-Catholicism to some degree or another. During the colonial period Catholics were discriminated against at several different times in Maryland and New York, and barred outright in the New England colonies. The “Know-Nothing” Movement flourished briefly in the 1850s, particularly in New England and the Middle West. The influx of eastern European immigrants in the late

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22 For the best and most up-to-date work on this issue, see Anthony J. Kuzniewski, SJ, *Faith and Fatherland: The Polish Church War in Wisconsin, 1896–1918* (University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, 1980).

19th and early 20th centuries stirred latent feelings of xenophobia all across the country, and gave rise to a new version of the Ku Klux Klan that was just as opposed to blacks as before, but whose hatred now extended to Catholics and Jews as well. The children of German Jews had been accepted into American colleges in the latter half of the 19th century with little difficulty, and they had done well academically. By 1910 or so, their Eastern European cousins were beginning to apply to colleges in significant numbers. Again, at first they were accepted and did well, so well in fact that by 1920 the leaders of the so-called elite schools were nervous about being considered “Jewish schools.” Alumni of these schools, including Princeton, Harvard, and Yale, were demanding that Jewish applicants be restricted or outright denied admission on the basis of being Jewish alone, without regard for academic qualifications. Suddenly the United States was engulfed in a tsunami of anti-Semitism. Northern businessmen, southern planters and merchants, most mainline and smaller Protestant denominations and even intellectuals preached and lectured against the admission of Jewish applicants to American colleges. The best public universities routinely established “Jewish quota” lists, and freely admitted their existence. Madison, Wisconsin, became a regional center for the revived Ku Klux Klan, and local Protestant ministers decried the presence of Jews on the University of Wisconsin campus, as did students writing in the UW student newspaper and yearbook. The Marquette Jesuits, however, would not look to the University of Wisconsin for guidance on the issue of Jewish students. Private schools devised questionnaires and personal questions in interviews that would force applicants to reveal whether or not they were Jews. “Where were your parents born?” “What kind of name is that?” “Is that a Christian name?” “How long has your family lived in America?” Questions such as these became standard for Ivy League applicants who were thought to be Jewish. When Jewish students did matriculate in many eastern schools during the end years of the Progressive Era, they were most often ostracized by their Christian fellow students. In his fine autobiography, John Morton Blum (1921–2011), professor emeritus of history at Yale, tells how difficult life was for Jews at Harvard and in Cambridge when he enrolled in Harvard in 1939.24

What was the situation at Marquette? No questions concerning ethnic background or religious beliefs were asked of Marquette applicants. By

24 John Morton Blum, A Life with History (University Press of Kansas: Lawrence, 2004). As referenced above, Marcia Graham Synnott and Jerome Karabel tell many similar stories to John Blum’s.
1920, Marquette offered degrees in the arts and sciences, business, engineering, dentistry, journalism, law, medicine, music, nursing, and pharmacy. Students could earn masters and doctoral degrees in many of these fields. This varied curriculum brought young Jews in great numbers to study at Marquette. In the early 1920s, the American Council on Education and the various regional accrediting agencies began to ask schools to gather annual data on the backgrounds of their enrolled students. Marquette issued a voluntary optional questionnaire in the 1924–25 academic year. Of those who took part, 155 undergraduates—6.36 percent of undergraduate enrollment—said they were Jewish. In 1930, Jews constituted 7.34 percent of total students. In 1935, Jews were 9.16 percent of total students. A review of approximately 6,000 letters written to Marquette presidents during the period 1915–40 revealed not one letter from any source complaining that Jews were attending Marquette. There were a few letters, essentially from members of the Roman Catholic clergy and hierarchy, complaining that a constituent of theirs was denied admission, even though the writer said he knew that Protestants and Jews were enrolled. The Marquette presidents replied uniformly that applicants were considered on the basis of their academic ability and that there was no religious qualification or preference for admission. Jewish students could and did participate fully in Marquette student life. They were frequently class presidents and officers of the student body organizations in liberal arts, medicine, dentistry, business, and engineering, among other Marquette schools. They belonged to virtually every fraternity and sorority, and also had chapters of national Jewish fraternities and sororities. Marquette was one of only a few schools to have a chapter of the national student Menorah Society. Jewish students played—and often starred—on Marquette athletic teams. The student newspaper, The Marquette Tribune, and the Milwaukee daily newspapers regularly carried articles and pictures concerning Marquette students, including Jewish students and Jewish student organizations. The clear indication of the articles was that Jewish students were fully and completely a part of Marquette University life. Conversations this writer had with their descendants have confirmed this.

Catholic students at Marquette during the interwar years were required to take several courses in Catholic theology. The descriptions of those courses make it clear that they were essentially advanced classes in the

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25 Marquette University Archives, “President’s Letters,” box 1, 1915, through box 30, 1940.
catechism but not sophisticated theology. Non-Catholic students were excused from this requirement. Marquette had no religious services requirements for anyone, including Catholics. From its university-level days beginning in 1907, students from out-of-town lived in privately owned halls adjacent to the campus. It would be very difficult to require those students to attend daily Mass, as it was in this time at Fordham and Holy Cross, for example, where students lived in campus residence halls. The available records for that period indicate that Marquette officials made no attempts at implementing such requirements.

Most colleges and universities in the early 20th century gave students Wednesday afternoons off, and held class sessions on Saturday mornings. This was not done in the schools of the Missouri Jesuits because the Jesuit priest faculty members were required to help out in local and regional parishes on Sundays. Between traveling to parishes that might be as much as 50 miles away, hearing confessions and preparing sermons, there was no time for Saturday morning classes, so that classes in Jesuit colleges continued on Wednesday afternoons. This was a perfect fit for Jewish students whose Sabbath began at sundown on Friday evening.

During the interwar years, Father Charles Coughlin, a priest of the Diocese of Detroit, was a well-known and widely popular radio commentator listened to by millions all across the United States. At first, his weekly radio broadcasts were strictly about religion, then later religion and economic conditions, then still later economic conditions and rants against national and international figures he disagreed with. His broadcast statements and his writings made it clear that he was anti-Semitic, and his own bishop, Michael J. Gallagher, warned him that he and the Vatican authorities would not tolerate his broadcasting anti-Semitic remarks. Father Coughlin had a huge following among American Catholics, but from most indications, not among Jesuits, and clearly not among Missouri Jesuits.

In 1927, Father Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1866–1942), then the superior general of the Jesuits, sent out a questionnaire to Jesuit college and university presidents in the United States, requesting answers regarding enrollment and employee figures, including how many Protestants and Jews were enrolled and employed on the faculties of American Jesuit

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26 Marquette did not own its own residence halls until 1938.
27 Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Father Coughlin Papers, 1932, box 5; 1939, box 2.
schools. He followed this questionnaire up with a directive that these schools were free to accept any qualified applicants, but they were to cease hiring non-Catholic faculty and administrators. Interestingly enough, in 1930, the next year for which statistics are available, Marquette, Fordham, and Saint Louis University all had more Jewish students and more Jewish faculty and administrators than prior to Father Ledóchowski’s questions and directive.

For Jews, then, their welcome and positive experiences at Marquette University can be summarized as consequences of the following: (1) the European experiences of the Dutch and Belgian Jesuits who established the Missouri Province, which were broader and less parochial than that of the Irish Jesuits who ran the eastern Jesuit schools; (2) the inclusive approach of Bishop Henni and Father Lalumiere, both of whom were thoroughly egalitarian; (3) the strong moral and financial support of Harrier Barker Cramer whose will left most of her fortune to Marquette University, but also significant amounts to the archdiocese of Milwaukee and to the local Jewish hospital; (4) Milwaukee’s central location in the middle of country with first-rate rail service; and (5) the objectionable feuds between German and non-German Catholics, and among Poles. All of these were “Americanizing” factors that moved the Marquette Jesuits to be wholly open and welcoming to all qualified applicants. Jews appear to have begun enrolling at Marquette by the mid-1880s, and the first African American joined the student body in 1910. The Marquette Jesuits were practicing the egalitarianism first learned by Jesuits with the last names of De Blieck, DeCoen, De Meister, De Schryver, De Smet, Stuntebeck, Damen, Van Asche, Van Hulst, Van Sweevelt, Verhagen, Hoecken, and Zealand, among many others, who made an enormous contribution towards building Catholic life in the American Mid-West.

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30 Mrs. Cramer died 7 February 1922. The bulk of her fortune went to Marquette, and made possible a new gymnasium, law school building, science hall, dentistry building, and complete new facilities for the Marquette University School of Medicine and its clinics.
The latter part of the 19th century gave birth to a Catholic philo-Semitic movement announcing a new theological discourse on Jews. For nearly 2,000 years the main answer to the question of the “permanence of Israel in Christian time” had been apologetic. The “deicidal” Jew, rejected by God, deprived of his privileges, wandering and suffering, appeared as the mirror-image of the Christian, while the church, verus Israel, now held the treasured position of the Chosen People. The old theology of substitution offered the “advantage” of considerably simplifying such complex theological subjects as the link between the Old and the New Testament, the Covenant, and the notion of achievement. Reading anew the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, the philo-Semitic pioneers of a new discourse on the Jews exploded a “bomb” in the compact block of the theology of substitution and the teaching of contempt. Indeed, when they avowed God's eternal love for Israel, when they affirmed that he did not reject his people and that his gifts are forever, they initiated a crisis within the standard theology on Judaism. They, themselves, were caught in this crisis: How can one claim that the Covenant with Israel has never been broken and that the Jews who did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah have kept their status as chosen people in the divine design, without discovering the one truth of Christ and his church, without which there is no salvation?

Father Joseph Bonsirven was the first among the pioneers of this new theological evaluation of Judaism in relation to the Christian faith. His thinking, divided as it was between the new and the old, is prototypical of what was held in his time about the “mystery of Israel.”

After presenting a few biographical facts about the Jesuit priest himself, I shall describe his positive vision of Judaism in relation to Christian faith, and how he developed his new vision, while preserving the primacy of Christianity. The following discussion will bring to light some limitations of his theology, its internal contradictions, and the questions that remain to be solved by today's theologians.
Joseph Bonsirven was born in 1880 at Lavaur, a small town in the South of France. He studied at the Seminary of Albi in the diocese of Bishop Mignot, who was open to new ideas and who was a friend of Father Loisy, the “father of Modernism.” Bishop Mignot sent his brilliant seminarian to Saint-Sulpice Seminary in Paris, where Bonsirven was ordained as a priest in 1903. Enthusiastic about Loisy’s work, he described the disastrous state of biblical studies at the end of the 19th century: “From 1880 to 1890, the tone [of biblical studies] is given by people who, either through ignorance, or prejudice, or so-called orthodoxy, are criticizing Fr. Lagrange and those of his group, and particularly Fr. Loisy.”

The young priest went to Rome to study for a master’s degree, and then a doctorate, in Scripture. He suffered from the intellectual environment in Rome, at the time in full modernist crisis, and all the more so in that his main scholarly interests were Judaic sources of Christianity and rabbinic literature. In 1910, the biblical commission refused to hear his thesis titled “Rabbinical Eschatology according to the Targumim, Talmud, Midrash: The Elements they have in Common with the New Testament.” Although the reasons for this refusal are not clearly stated, it seems evident that they were related to the topic of his research. Bonsirven was suspected of “modernism” and barred from teaching. He then wrote Father Lagrange, the head of the Biblical School in Jerusalem, with whom he often corresponded:

My mind is so troubled and yet I feel I am in such good faith, that I cannot write anything orthodox. As a result, I am not allowed to present a thesis on any other new subject and it goes so far that I am being advised to give up biblical studies altogether and any other studies as well.

After administering various pastoral duties, Joseph Bonsirven was drafted in 1914. He was made a prisoner of war in 1916. During this time, Benedict

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2 Between 1909, the year of its creation by a decree of Pius X, and 1916, this Institute prepared students for exams to the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Only in 1916 would the Pontifical Biblical Institute be entitled to deliver a Master’s degree in Holy Scripture, then, in 1930, would the *Quod maxime* motu proprio give the Institute full independence.
XV ordered him to teach dogmatic theology and Holy Scripture in an improvised seminary in the war prison camp of Munster, Germany. After liberation, he returned to the Jesuit community. In 1923, a long sojourn in the Middle East gave him an opportunity to resume his rabbinical studies and also to enter into contact with contemporary Judaism. In 1924, he was appointed professor of Holy Scripture at Enghien, Belgium, but had to wait two years before exercising this new task, due to Rome’s veto of the approval of his thesis and its demand for a new investigation. Bonsirven taught until 1940, transmitting to his students his enthusiasm for the exegesis of the New Testament enriched by the study of its Jewish social background.

Father Bonsirven was a scholar with a deep knowledge of ancient languages and endowed with a prodigious memory. He produced a large number of books, articles published in biblical periodicals and dictionaries, commentaries on the New Testament, and translations. From 1929 to 1938, he was the editor of the “Bulletin on Ancient Judaism” in the journal *Recherches des sciences religieuses* [Research on religious sciences]. Starting from 1924, he published three books: *Le Judaïsme palestinien au temps de Jésus-Christ* [Palestinian Judaism at the time of Jesus Christ], 5 *Exégèse rabbinique et exégèse paulinienne* [Rabbinical exegesis and Pauline exegesis], 6 and a major piece in several volumes, *Les idées juives au temps de Notre Seigneur* [Jewish thinking at the time of Our Lord]. 7

His exegetical research did not prevent him from promoting a better knowledge of Judaism among Christians. In the 1920s, he entered into close contact with the Congrégation des Frères de Sion in Paris and with its newly appointed superior general, Théomir Devaux. Although the conversion of Jews was the primary goal of this congregation, events demanded that it devote most of its activity to fighting anti-Semitism and providing help to Jews chased first by the Nazis and then by the Vichy regime. Bonsirven took part in this fight, which, in a sense, was new to him, as the main motivation for his scholarship was not anti-Semitism but the advancement of the exegetic science. Bonsirven was, above all, a researcher

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and a teacher, which is why he became so sought-after and so valued. He held a deep conviction that the hatred and suspicion between Jews and Christians were mainly the result of ignorance, and that the first task at hand was to teach Christians the history of the Jewish people and the complexity of the religious and cultural life of Judaism.

Between 1926 and 1928, Father Bonsirven published a column on contemporary Judaism in the journal Études. In 1928, he was asked by Father Devaux to contribute to his newly founded periodical Questions d’Israel [Questions about Israel]. That year his new book Sur les ruines du Temple [On the ruins of the Temple] was published. It aimed at explaining the Jewish religion to Christians.

Father Bonsirven was also active as a lecturer. He rigorously and methodically strived at countering the anti-Semites with forceful arguments. He became a member of the supervising committee of the journal La Juste Parole [Right Word], founded in 1935 with Maritain, Mauriac, and Father Desgranges, to oppose the anti-Semitic La Libre Parole [Free Word], founded by the anti-Semite belligerent Drumont and reactivated in 1931. Always aiming at educating his public, he published in 1936 Juifs et Chrétiens [Jews and Christians]. He meanwhile joined a Civic Society of Believers, where Jews, Catholics, and Protestants gathered together with an aim to fight what they called the “spiritual decay of France” in the 1930s.

Inevitably, Bonsirven became the target of attacks from extreme rightists. At the same time, he was strongly criticized by the Catholic hierarchy. Following a complaint from one of his fellow priests after a lecture delivered in Versailles entitled “The Question of Israel among Nations,” a revision of the content of this lecture was demanded. All Bonsirven could write his superior provincial was that “the only thing one could object to is that I never said that the Jews are wrongdoers or corrupters.”

At this point Father Ledóchowski, superior general of the Jesuits, ordered him to sever his relationship with Father Devaux and forbade him to publish any of his works. Greatly disturbed by this new sanction, Joseph Bonsirven fell ill and spent two months recovering.

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8 1926 was the year when Action Française was condemned by Pius XI.
11 It is to be noted that this very same father superior dragged on working on the project of an encyclical ordered by Pius XI on the subject of the unity of mankind. See Georges
In 1937, he was allowed to resume his scholarly activities and published his *Les Juifs et Jésus* [The Jews and Jesus] with the Beauchesne publishing house. Bishop Beaussart, an auxiliary of Paris, then invited him to deliver a series of lectures on Judaism at the Paris Institut Catholique. He thereby aimed at promoting a rapprochement between Jews and Christians. These lectures were very successful and Jacques Maritain planned on having them published by Desclée, with a preface by Bishop Beaussart. The project fell through, again upon the intervention of the same Superior General Ledóchowski. Father Bonsirven wrote his superior provincial:

> My conviction is this: here is a book, of which many say it will be helpful, which has been banned, not on account of its content, but of its order. There is nothing in its content that is against the truth. It could certainly be improved but I seem to get an order not to do it. Why this order? Is it aimed at not upsetting anti-Semites or not upsetting an anti-Semitic General? Opportunism—even less than that! This is a new wound to religious life. I have taken a vow of obedience, but not to a whimsical will.\(^\text{12}\)

At the beginning of the Second World War, Father Bonsirven fled Belgium and took refuge in Lyon, where he taught at the Fourvières Theological College with Father Victor Foytenont and Father Caillet. He was also acquainted with Father Henri de Lubac, theology professor at the Lyon Catholic Faculty, and with Father Gaston Fessard. These Lyon Jesuits, along with Father Chaine, an Old Testament professor and a friend of Father Lagrange, as well as the Sulpician Priest Louis Richard, made up the core of a group strongly opposing Nazism. At that time, Father Bonsirven contributed to the collective book *Israel and the Christian Faith*. It was published in 1942 in Fribourg (Switzerland) by the printing press of Father Charles Journet.\(^\text{13}\) It was circulated secretly.\(^\text{14}\)

Joseph Bonsirven returned to Belgium when the war ended. In 1948, he was appointed professor at the Biblical Institute in Rome, the very place from which he was banned 38 years earlier. That year was the last of Father Augustin Bea's tenure as rector. Bonsirven stayed in Rome only until 1952, as his deteriorating health did not allow him to continue to teach.

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\(^\text{13}\) AFSJ, ibid., letter from Father Bonsirven to the Rev. Father Provincial, dated 22 July 1939, quoted in Deffayet, “Le père Bonsirven,” 40.

\(^\text{14}\) 1942 was the year of the great round-ups of Jews in France, including that of Paris, in July. These events struck consciences and reinforced intellectual resistance in Lyon.

those years in Rome he tried to prepare Father Bigaré to succeed him, but Father Ernst Vogt, the new rector, did not appreciate the need for the study of Jewish subject matter. He sent away Father Bigaré without informing Father Bonsirven. The latter tried to maintain a remote teaching relationship with his disciple for some time, but finally gave up in 1956. Bonsirven concluded his busy and productive life in Toulouse, where he died on 12 February 1958, less than eight months before the beginning of Pope John XXIII’s pontificate.


*Judaism and its Faith in the Old Testament*

Joseph Bonsirven held Judaism and the Jewish people in high regard—not only those Jews of the first centuries but also the contemporary ones, of whom he had intimate knowledge. He attempted to rally Christian interest in the Jews he met daily:

Christians will perhaps be surprised to discover [in Judaism] elements of real beauty, dogmas, morals, pious attitudes that they admire and worship in their own religion: the reason is that both religions stem from the same divine source, the Revelation at Sinai, and the preaching of the Prophets.\(^\text{15}\)

He promoted an idea, very new at the time, that Judaism was not a dying religion. To him, it derived its vitality from the fact that, up to his very day, it, too, was rooted in Revelation. He was strongly opposed to the depreciation and diabolicization of Judaism. To him, the Jewish people were neither under a curse, nor rejected by God.\(^\text{16}\) In his book *Sur les ruines du Temple*, Christians could find his most complete views on Judaism, which he interpreted from a Christian point of view, without hesitating to employ apologetic arguments in favor of his own faith, yet carefully allowing Judaism to express itself.

A glance at the table of contents for his book reveals a great deal. First, he explores core concepts of Jewish faith and thought: the link of the Jewish people to God, the meaning of its election, its relationship to other


\(^{16}\) In *La Question d’Israël*, 1 March 1939, Bonsirven insisted that “no one could survive an eternal divine curse.”
peoples, to the Torah, its thinking about the Messiah, and about the world to come. Then Bonsirven analyzes the details of Jewish prayer, feasts, and morals. A good pedagogue, he often introduces an explanation by citing common Christian clichés about Judaism. For example, to the frequently repeated question “Is not the religion of the Old Testament one of fear, while the one of the New is full of love?” he replies by quoting Jewish texts that show the balance between justice and mercy, and how fear of God and filial trust can be combined.17 To the question about the Commandments: “Would not keeping them be an overwhelming burden? Is it not conforming to an empty formalism, a drying face value, a desolate life?”18 Bonsirven answers that the words “get under the yoke of the Commandments” meant to the Jew of good will a state neither of weariness nor of duress; quite the contrary—they frequently employ the expression “put upon yourself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.” He explained that the Jew sees in the Torah a gift and a sign of the love from his God.19

Bonsirven’s thorough knowledge of the painful history of the Jewish people among the peoples led the priest to exonerate the Jews of their hostile attitude towards Christians:

How can one blame Isaac Abarbanel, expelled from Spain after having rendered so many services to her princes, of which he was the obedient minister, for attacking the Christian religion, which is being so harsh to him and to his brethren? How can [Jewish] refugees, kindly welcome by the Turks, be incriminated for preferring Islam, a simply monotheist and hospitable religion, to Christianity?20

In the second half of his book, Bonsirven directly counters anti-Semitic assertions regarding alleged Jewish immorality and dishonesty, which are identified by anti-Semites as the very essence of the Jewish religion.

In conclusion, there is no doubt in the mind of the Jesuit father that the Jewish people live faithfully according to the Sinai Covenant and that this gives them a title to nobility:

What is to be remembered from those diverse views on Judaism? One first gets the impression of having seen great and magnificent treasures: clear and enlightening assertions of the basic truths about God and the world, truly pure and elevated moral doctrine, and deep religious piety. Is that really surprising? All this wealth derives directly from God, from the Revelation of the Old Testament.21

17 Bonsirven, Sur les ruines du Temple, 143.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 112.
21 Ibid., 368.
Consequently, Christians are asked to consider the Jews as brethren rather than treat them with contempt.

*The Link between Israel and the Church: A Theology of the Origins*

Fighting anti-Semitism was not what piqued Bonsirven’s interest in Judaism; it instead stemmed from his search for the origins of Christianity. To him, the New Testament and Christianity could only be understood within the tradition that had borne them and given them birth. He did not bring Judaism into the field of comparative religions, but linked it directly to Christianity, and therefore to theology. In doing so, he positioned himself directly against the commonly held opinion of his time. The thinking then was that Judaism belonged to history, and that the texts of the first centuries did not present any interest for the understanding of the origins of Christianity.*22*

The ideas of the Jesuit father were difficult for his contemporaries to understand. Catholic thought at the beginning of the 20th century held that the divinity of Christ was far superior to his human and historic nature. It was a time when it was difficult to conceive that Jesus Christ, Son of God—and all the more so, the church he had just founded—could have in any way been influenced by the Jewish environment from which it had escaped by sealing the New Covenant. Daringly, Bonsirven places the teaching of Christ in its original framework and demonstrates how Jewish writings of the first centuries help us understand the making of the New Testament. He thus refutes Christianity’s pretension to be self-sufficient. Further, Bonsirven questions the notion of a harsh and complete rupture between Christianity and Judaism. He notes that Jews and Christians were interrelated in the early period of the church and concludes: “Can a Christian lose interest in the very religion from which his own religion finds its root and gets born?”*23* The idea of rooting presupposes moving beyond the concept of a simple historical succession of two religious communities, each possessed of an impenetrable theological system. To Bonsirven, a community of nature exists between Judaism and Christianity, and it lies within the Old Testament to create the link

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*22* In the already quoted *Dictionary of Catholic Theology*, it is made clear that “... the history of the Jewish religion, inasmuch as it is of any interest to theologians, will be treated under the following various articles...” The heading concludes: “As for Judaism after the beginning of the Christian era, it belongs less to theology than to history of religions.”

between the two religions. “We appeal to the same Fathers, we get our roots from the same Bible, we believe we find the Word of God in the same inspired Scriptures, and we pray out of the same sacred texts.”

Although Judaism changed radically between biblical times and the destruction of the Temple, Bonsirven points out that this new Jewish people still celebrate the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. The same people live according to the same Sacred Scriptures. Furthermore, he stresses that Judaism is useful as it maintains the cohesion and permanence of the Jewish people. This permanence generates another question concerning Israel’s mission after Christ that Bonsirven wants to study from a new perspective: “This survival, in spite of contrary, if not hostile conditions, is for us the sign that Israel remains the eternal people. Could it not be seen that this permanence and this constant development are the will and the secret purpose of Providence?”

The Mission of Israel in the Time of the Church and in View of the Accomplishment of History

In *Sur les ruines du Temple*, only a single question is asked: “What part will they (the Jews) play in the religious destiny of our world?” Bonsirven then has the reader return to the Letter to the Romans, chapter 11; that is to say, the answer is limited to the hope of their being “grafted back to the olive tree” through the mercy of God. He goes no further than that.

Twelve years later, Bonsirven wrote about 30 pages on the permanence of Israel through the time of the church in a chapter titled “The Mystery of Israel,” a part of the collective work, *Israel et la foi chrétienne*. The book was written while the Nazi anti-Semitic persecution was in full swing, and the extent of the Shoah was beginning to be guessed at. The “resisting” theologians meant to warn Christians about the lies of the Nazi ideology and the appearance of Christian values spread by the Pétain regime. In the book anti-Semitism is condemned, and it is explained that attacking the Jewish people will sooner or later threaten Christianity, since tearing up the root can only bring the destruction of the tree it bears. Bonsirven’s chapter is the final one in the book.

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25 Ibid., 376.
26 Ibid.
The author opens with a long description of the history of the Jewish people, beginning with the destruction of the Temple and the loss of its authority over the Land of its Fathers. It does not aim at writing a history book, but to give a theological view on this history. It first reminds us that it is not the first time that Israel suffers from destruction and exile. Nevertheless:

Its faith in the God, Who chose it among all Nations, remains as ever. It has developed the habit of rising from ruins and being restored to life. Get to work! Right now, without stopping, develop the religion of your Fathers, do your best to make a place in the sun among all other peoples.28

However, the catastrophe of the year 70 is entirely unique, as it coincides with the coming of Salvation and the birth of the church. That is why, in spite of the extraordinary spiritual and human vitality of Israel, which the author presents in admiring and positive terms, he notes: “That in spite of the fact that a desperate effort goes on for two thousand years, which brings a time of impressive successes, it invariably ends up in a new collapse: at the end of all these sometimes wide and brilliant schemes is the dead end.”29

The successive collapses mentioned are rooted in historical circumstances the Jews have had to face and which ceaselessly interrupt in a brutal manner their integration into the nations: persecutions, expulsions, failure of emancipation due to the rise of anti-Semitism, refusal of Turkey to support Zionism, resistance of Arabs to the Balfour Declaration. Bonsirven’s historical fresco raises two questions: First, why, for nearly 2,000 years, has this road been tragically blocked? And secondly, what is the meaning of the survival of Israel, in the face of all the attempts at annihilating it? He argues that “Extremely well fit-out these people have tried for two millennia to fight for a place in the sun among nations; after some success they have always been pushed back, plundered, slaughtered; and yet, although they seemed ready to disappear, they are still around.”30

There is a “historical enigma, which has to be studied, in order to arrive at its solution.”31 To Joseph Bonsirven, this enigma bears the name “mystery of Israel,” which comes from an expression used by Bossuet and taken up later by Gabriel Marcel. He tries to bring some light to this mystery. Guided by the writings of Bossuet, he begins by noting the two

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 146.
31 Ibid., 122.
traditional, centuries-old explanations offered for why God seeks to keep his people in history: “Israel has been kept alive to be guardian and witness of Scripture; and Israel has to expiate for having opposed Christ.”

However, these reasons strike Bonsirven as insufficient; he reasons Israel has risen to its universal mission by refusing Christ, God has not yet rescinded its vocation and will call on his people to accomplish it another way.

According to Bonsirven, God does not allow Israel to be restored as a nation now so that it may be kept in reserve “for a task that cannot yet be defined.” He remains standing in the doorway but he has gone quite close to it: the calling of Israel has yet to reach its aim, and is not limited to an apologetic role at the service of Christian truth. God has a project for Israel that the author cannot grasp, but which forbids any anti-Semitic attitude or inclination to suppress the Jews as a people, because “Israel lives on in this world as a consecrated personality that no one can ‘loathe.’ Their tragic, supernatural condition commands respect and dictates the religious reverence due to those who have to take the weight of God’s hand!”

Bonsirven looks positively upon the permanence of Israel, which qualifies as a “consecrated being,” having to bear a supernatural condition, an epithet which in previous writing he reserved for Christianity. Israel is preserved by God to fill a mission in the future, which, for the time being, remains an enigma. In other words, history is far from being finished, and the Jewish people remain a privileged part of it. However, Bonsirven cannot go any further in his search, as he too remains affected by the theological tenet of substitution.

*The Yoke of the Theology of Substitution and the Alleged Sterility of Post-Biblical Judaism*

However innovative Bonsirven proved to be, he was a man of his time. Following his faith, he affirms that “there is no salvation outside the Church,” and also that the whole truth is held within Catholicism. He, therefore, must mediate between his intuitions, his research work, the admiration he holds for the Jewish people, and his Catholic faith as priest.

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32 Ibid., 148.
33 Bonsirven, “The Mystery of Israel,” 150.
34 Ibid.
at the beginning of the 20th century. This constellation of factors will lead to contradictions in his discourse on Judaism. After having indicated that Israel lives off the Revelation and having had the intuition that Israel still has a mission in the history of the world, he states elsewhere that the only reason for Israel to exist at all was to prepare the Coming of Christ, and that “stubborn” Judaism had later gone astray. Bonsirven asserts that the fidelity of Jews is limited, because it is tainted with a basic infidelity: “In refusing to recognize Jesus as his Messiah, Israel has not grasped this truth that this bloody hour was starting a new era,”35 and since they kept on living under the Old Covenant, they rushed down a dead-end. God had concluded his Covenant with the Jewish people with a precise goal of “getting for Himself a holy people, holding the divine truth in the Torah; bound to keep it to itself, and thereby getting sanctification; entrusted with communicating with the world and thereby spreading the kingdom of God.”36

This mission implied that it should be separate from other nations, which induced a tension between particularity and universality:

Thus the chosen people will show two sides, which will appear contradictory as both universal and exclusivist: a universal mission, with a universal theological and moral doctrine, but also a national life, all closed up in a strict specificity. One side cannot be conceived independently from the other: it is in order to remain ready for its mission that Israel must keep away from unclean contact with nations and its contagion.37

Bonsirven avers that at the time of the universal salvation, the Jewish people should have given up their particularity; they, so to speak, should have died so as to accomplish their universal calling. According to the Jesuit father in “The Mystery of Israel,” the one and only mission of Israel was to prepare the coming of the Messiah, after which it was meant to dissolve. We may use the image of a small river so concentrated with color that once it reaches the sea it changes the color of the whole sea while dissolving within it.

But Israel has refused to disappear for the sake of the world and has remained set in its specificity:

The Pharisees had rejected the development and improvement that Jesus came to accomplish; they refused any change; so they will be forced into going through an evolution … with only two solutions: either restricting into a stronger isolation, or widening into infinity. The first way leads to a
dead-end, the second to extinction through dissolution. The first way is the choice of the Pharisees and that is where they lead Judaism.  

According to Bonsirven, the basic error of the Jewish people has been to oppose the Law to Jesus and to have become locked into a separate identity. Nowhere is the incriminating word “deicide” ever mentioned by the Jesuit. The problem does not seem to him that the Jews allegedly killed Jesus, the Son of God, but that they did not fill their mission as “light for the nations.” And to him, Israel’s responsibility rests with its leaders, mediated by the rabbis: “If the leaders of Israel have condemned, have rejected Jesus, it is on account of their particular link to the Law, their blind enslavement to the Letter.”  

On this subject, Bonsirven becomes very harsh and his tone loses all sense of kindness. He blames the Jewish authorities for not having been faithful to the prophets and for having misled their people. Retired within itself and having lost its missionary dynamism, Judaism has become barren and left out of the divine plan. 

When the times reach their maturity, when the Kingdom appears in broad daylight, the Jews will have no part in it; they will not reach what they have been seeking for many generations; deprived from the fruit of their efforts, they will be excluded from the expected boon and this one will go to nations which did not seem to be interested. 

For Bonsirven, Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism, as he states: “it is indeed Christianity which is the continuation of Judaism and that explains the religious sterility of the Synagogue, its lack of understanding of inner life, its infidelity to Prophetic life ... True Israel, Israel according to the Spirit, is the religion of Jesus Christ.”  

The prescriptions of the Law are no longer of any use, Bonsirven continues, since we are now in the era of the new, universal religion. In the time of the church, salvation no longer depends on Israel; its world-mission has been cancelled. The consequence of its false step is that Israel keeps on living in history as “out of true” and “housed into an out of true Messianism.” Modern Judaism is an admixture of “jewels,” coming from

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41 Here lies the explanation for the title of the book: “… better scanning beliefs, more carefully sounding consciences give the impression on an uneasy feeling, an irreparable imbalance: where do they come from? Undoubtedly from the fact that present Judaism has developed on the ruins of the Temple: that is what has completely put it off balance.”
the Old Testament and “glass beads” brought into the course of history by the Pharisees and the rabbis. In the foreword of *Sur les ruines du Temple*, Bonsirven explains the title of his book: post-biblical Judaism is built on ruins. 42

**Conversion as the Only Possible Choice**

In sum, to Bonsirven, contemporary Judaism is a hybrid religion, commingling deviations with revealed truths. According to him, the accumulated rabbinic laws are false riches which are intended to protect the Torah, but which wind up blocking the faith of the Jewish people, even if “beautiful souls have bloomed” in the midst of this strict legal environment. The Jewish people suffer from penury, because they are meant for a higher destiny, and they thirst for a fullness which remains out of their reach. They have, in short, not gone beyond the stage of expectation and preparation, and Catholicism is the only way open for them to reach satiety. 43 Bonsirven had, in fact, a keen interest in Jews converted to Catholicism. He wrote a number of articles on that subject and led inquiries with the father superior of the Fathers of Zion. He marveled at finding within them a kind of superior quality the other Catholics did not have, and attributed this to the idea that they grasped the intrinsic association between the Old and the New Testament, between Judaism and Christianity. This “discovery” strengthens the researcher’s deep-rooted convictions and allows for the coexistence of the paradoxes he has set up: the powerful religious nature of the Jewish person who has remained faithful to the Old Testament alongside the impossibility for Judaism to produce its expected fruit. Only the church can bear this fruit—and let us note here that the church only is mentioned, and not the person of Christ:

What a joy for a Jew to find in the Church, its liturgy, its literature, its dogmas so much legacy, so much of his family heritage put in full value! He can then

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42 “Yet, let not the shine of those splendors dazzle the readers; a better study of these unique jewels will let them appear as wonderful gems, within delicate settings purposely created to show them off; now set in an out of true Messianism and a narrow particularity, they still shine and spark, but reluctantly, like diamonds mixed with glass beads.”

43 For example, speaking of the Jewish prayer, Bonsirven makes the following comment: “It can be said that these people have not lost their genius for praying which stands out in the psalms and biblical canticles. ... Does that mean that all their spiritual needs are filled? A careful study of these books of prayer reveals a sort of penury, of thirst for a higher, more supernatural element” (Bonsirven, *Sur les ruines du Temple*, 246).
be sure he does not have to change his religion, he does not have to convert: one convert, Angress, says: I am a Catholic because I am a Jew.44

The author, skilled in exegesis, remains entirely within the limits of the theology of substitution, wherein the church takes Israel's place. Though he has linked Christianity to Judaism in a common heritage, at no time do we see that the Christian can get anything from contemporary Judaism. The Jew, once he has become a Christian, will not find himself in a position to bring the Christians anything that they have not yet received, and Judaism is therefore respected and studied, as befitting a source. It is useful to gain full acquaintance with the Old Testament, but not to give vitality to the church, as a root still producing the sap of the tree that it bears. Bonsirven goes so far as to write unambiguously: “Israel has been cut off the shoot it had borne.”45 That is a very curious image indeed, as it seems to suggest that Christianity is a separate, autonomous body, cut off its stub and the “old tree” after having given its ultimate fruit. Even though it remains alive, it does not produce anything else. All the more curious is that it seems to contradict what Paul says in his Letter to the Romans.46

Critical Evaluation of the Theology of Bonsirven

Father Joseph Bonsirven was a pioneer in several respects. He rejects the notion of a hiatus between the Jewish people and the Christian people. They are bound to one another, because “both stem from the same divine source, the revelation at the Sinai, the predication of the Prophets.”47 Although he adheres to the theological concept of the root, he maintains both the continuity and similarity of nature between Judaism and Christianity.

Furthermore, Bonsirven uses rabbinical literature as a true source of exegesis for the New Testament. This is very different from the methodologies employed in his time. Even later, the interest in the midrashim, or the aggadot, which slowly appeared among Christians does not necessarily imply that the Jewish tradition might be considered an authorized source by Catholic biblical theology.

44 Bonsirven, Juifs et chrétiens (Flammarion: Paris, 1936), 129.
45 Bonsirven, Sur les ruines du Temple, 7.
46 Rom. 17–18: “But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you.”
47 Bonsirven, Sur les ruines du Temple, 8.
As for Judaism, Bonsirven disagrees with some of the views held in traditional Catholic thought. First, he remains aloof from the notion of deicide. This is a major contribution, because it is the most deeply rooted charge against Jews in the Christian consciousness and it would be a topic of bitter controversy at the Vatican II Council. To Bonsirven, the refusal of his own people to consider Jesus as the Messiah is more an error on their part than a sin. He thus rejects the notion of a collective responsibility of the Jewish people in the death of Christ. The Jesuit is clear here: the religious leaders of the time were blind, and led the people into error. That point would also be hotly debated during the Council.

When he states that Israel still lives off the Revelation on Mount Sinai, Bonsirven is expressing another remarkable view. This position offers theology a basis which hearkens back to the permanence of Israel. Indeed, if the Old Testament has a permanent value, then the people who live according to this book also have a permanent value. That is not only a sociological phenomenon, but a theological datum. Furthermore, if Israel remains faithful to the Covenant, then it becomes possible neither to speak about rejection of the Jewish people by God, nor to bring discredit upon Judaism. This seamlessly moves us to a meaning for the very permanence of Israel in the time of the church. To Bonsirven, the permanence of Israel is not only an apologetic argument. According to him, God does not keep his people in a miserable condition to show proof of the truth of the Christian faith. He keeps them in reserve for a specific goal, and on account of this still mysterious will, he blocks their way when Israel claims to reach their messianic yearnings according to their own wish.

Limitations and Contradictions

The spiritual and theological context of Bonsirven’s time must be fully grasped before evaluating the limitations of his thought. It cannot be ignored that he lived in the religious culture of the 19th century, one strongly marked by Jansenism. As a man of his time, Bonsirven held to traditional clichés about Jews and he made some regrettable remarks,

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48 That would be confirmed by the Vatican Council text, Dei Verbum.
49 For instance: “In spite of their insistence on future rewards, the Jewish mind gives up worldly rewards with difficulty. ... Anyway, a good part of the reward is only differed; about this, the Jewish faith has built up a whole system of balances and current accounting, which bears the mark of a mind which is good at figures.” Bonsirven, Sur les ruines du Temple, 163.
similar to those of some of the fathers of the church. His limitations, which verge on being contradictions, are, however, to be found elsewhere, as one example has just revealed. Bonsirven struggles with the status of the Jews as a people. He does not deny their existence and does not perceive the church as complete without Israel. But he cannot define the Jewish people as a community of faithful. As a consequence, he never mentions a relationship between the church and Israel, but always one between Christianity and Judaism. It follows that the church can achieve its fullness only through the baptism of all the Jews. “All of Israel will end up entering the church, achieving the fullness of the mission of Christ, and reaching the entire completion of the Kingdom of God. It is most likely that this achievement will not be the result of a mass conversion, but rather of individual adhesions.”

Bonsirven might have used contemporary ecclesiological thinking, but ecclesiology of his time promoted a vision of the church as a hierarchical society, and not as a mystery. He also does not avoid the overly strong link woven between the church and the Kingdom of God, which then stood in the way of historical and eschatological thought. Yet Bonsirven outlines a theology of history, not at all commonly held in his time, which leads him to consider the permanence of the existence of the Jewish people as an unyielding fact willed by God. In contrast, though, his reflection on the return of Israel evoked in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, 11, remains a scenario of conversion and is not sufficiently developed as an eschatological perspective in the service of the accomplishment of history. Had it been so developed, it would certainly have resulted in something quite different from the slow dissolution of the Jewish people into the Christian masses.

Another limitation of Bonsirven’s thought is his affirmation that Judaism still lives off the Revelation of the Old Testament, but that it is sterile. If the Tradition developed after Christ takes the Revelation for its basis, can it be sterile for the world? The mission of Israel may have been modified, but it has certainly not been reduced merely to keeping the Jewish people alive, while waiting for the end of times. That does not look like a mission at all! Even if Tradition has become more complicated with

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51 “… There was no course on ecclesiology: it was taught as a part of the course then called ‘apologetics.’ … It aimed at setting the authority of the Magisterium on which the teaching of dogma and morals will be securely based.” Maurice Vidal, Cette Église que je cherche à comprendre (Editions de l’Atelier: Paris, 2009), 16.
the development within Christianity of multiple traditions, such multiplicity of forms does not mean a loss in fecundity for the Tradition itself.

Finally, Bonsirven has trouble grasping the notions of specificity and universality. A Judaism built up around obedience to the Torah and the practice of its commandments has no place in his thought. But the tension between specificity and universality is one of the keys required to fathom the mystery of Israel, and this key remains concealed from Bonsirven.

**Conclusion**

Joseph Bonsirven is a prototypical example of theologians of Judaism in the period preceding the Council. On the one hand, he takes a positive and personalized approach to the Jewish people and to Judaism. He breaks entirely from the old teaching of contempt. He highlights themes that would prove essential for a theology of the mystery of Israel. On the other hand, he feels obliged to disparage Israel, in order to safeguard the superiority of Christianity and the church. He never fully abandons the theology of substitution.

Journée, Maritain, Claudel, the Fathers of Zion, and even some fathers of the Council, as well as some experts within the Secretariat for the Unity of Christians, can be so characterized. Their Christian faith made it difficult for them to make room for the Jew as other than a potential Christian. Men of their time, they could not rid themselves of the current ecclesiology and soteriology. At the same time, acting as true Christians, they sought the Kingdom of God and its justice, and were not afraid of suffering for the Jewish people. We are indebted to them for having broken up the unrelenting logic of the theology of substitution and to have initiated the “return of the sons towards their fathers.” Bonsirven was one of them, and the only one not to receive the reward of attending the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. 
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