

## JESUIT KADDISH

### Encounters Between Jesuits and Jews and Why These Might Matter to Us

A Lecture Presented at the College of the Holy Cross  
by James Bernauer, S. J.  
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#### 1) Introduction: Some Jesuit-Jewish Voices

Fr. Roger Braun, S.J. (d. 1981)  
Fr. Stanislaw Musial, S.J. (d. 2004)  
Fr. L and Saul Friedländer (*When Memory Comes*)  
Fr. John S. (Fortunoff Video Archive)  
Fr. Gustave Weigel (d. 1964) and Rabbi Abraham Heschel (d. 1972)

#### 2) Original Injustice and Asemitism:

Original Injustice: 1593 ban on admission to Jesuits of all with “Hebrew or Saracen” stock

*Monita Secreta* (1615):

Will to power with goal of political governance (means: manipulation of powerful; accumulation of wealth)

Will to knowledge (means: technology of confession)

*Protocols of the Sages of Zion* (1897-1899):

Will to total power (means: manipulation of elites);

Will to knowledge (means: education into secrets of social structure)

A rival: “The Jesuits alone might have compared with us, but we have contrived to discredit them in the eyes of the unthinking mob...”

#### 3) From *Protocols* to Nazism:

Anti-Jesuitism, Anti-Semitism: “Jews and Jesuits will move heaven and hell against you.” (Karl Lüdecke in conversation with Hitler); Dieter Wisliceny; Houston Stewart Chamberlain; Erich Ludendorff; Dietrich Eckart; Alfred Rosenberg

#### 4) Jesuits: Making Amends

Abolition of 1593 Prohibition (1946)

Petition of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (April 24, 1960) to the Preparatory

Commission for upcoming Vatican II

Cardinal Bea (1881-1968)

## Yad Vashem Jesuits as Bridge-builders?

### Meetings of “Jesuits in Dialogue with Jews”

1998 in Krakow: “Towards Greater Fraternity & Commitment”

2000 in Jerusalem: “The Significance of the State of Israel for Contemporary Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue”

2005 in Zug, Switzerland: “The Importance of Modern Jewish Thought for Jewish-Christian Dialogue”

2007 in New York: “Diaspora, Secularization, and Modernity”

2012 in Boston: “The Tragic Couple’: Encounters Between Jews and Jesuits”

2017: Paris? Jerusalem?

### Concluding Issues:

- 1) Was “Nostra Aetate” a spiritual breakthrough or a cease fire?
- 2) Continuing cognitive comfort of religious paranoia?
- 3) Is there a Jewish Jesuit Spirituality? (Jewish Jesus & principle of accomodation)
- 4) Is there need for a Jesuit apology?

### ***A POSSIBLE STATEMENT OF REPENTANCE***

*We Jesuits have sinned against God and the Jewish people and we wish to repent for our failures and we ask all Jews to hear our prayer. When we requested approval for our religious community from Pope Paul III in 1540, we stated clearly that we wished our Society to “be designated by the name of Jesus.” Inspired by our founder, Ignatius of Loyola, we have tried to follow Jesus who was born, lived, worshipped and died as a Jew. In following him, we should have met Judaism as a living faith but this was not the case. We repent that for most of our history we excluded those of Jewish ancestry from our ranks and this in defiance of our founder’s explicit mandate and despite the fact that so many of our most illustrious early Jesuits were of that lineage. May our current openness to all races be seen as an effective sign of our sorrow and contrition. Although at times Jews and Jesuits have enjoyed fraternal relations, most often in our dealings we*

*have embraced an enmity toward the people from whom our Savior came and we saw no reason for Judaism to continue in history. We saw synagogues and temples go up in flames and, not feeling a loss, we were silent. We have now listened with care to the question which Rabbi Abraham Heschel posed to our brother Gustave Weigel: "Is it really the will of God that there be no more Judaism in the world? Would it really be the triumph of God if the scrolls of the Torah were no longer taken out of the Ark and the Torah no longer read in the synagogue, our ancient Hebrew prayers in which Jesus himself worshipped no more recited, the Passover Seder no longer celebrated in our lives, the Law of Moses no longer observed in our homes? Would it really be ad maiorem Dei gloriam to have a world without Jews?" We confess our blindness and we celebrate the vitality of the Jewish people and faith and the everlasting validity of God's covenant with this people. We Jesuits continue to serve under the banner of the Cross not as a mark of aggression toward others but as a sign of love of our neighbors and of resistance to evil doers. We recall the crosses that Christians fought the Nazis to keep in classrooms; we remember the crosses with which the Polish people confronted their Communist oppressors; we honor the action of the innumerable young people who greeted Pope John Paul II on his 1979 Polish voyage with thousands of raised crosses. We thank God for the many Jesuits who served under the Cross in fighting Nazism, for men such as Augustin Rösch, Rupert Mayer, Lothar König, Henri de Lubac and our many martyrs, especially Yves de Montcheuil and Alfred Delp. We thank God for the reconciling ministries of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II, and our own Cardinal Bea. And we especially recall those Jesuits who have been honored by the State of Israel as "Righteous Among the Nations." We thank them for saving Jewish lives, for giving*

*refuge to children, for providing food and false documents for people who were being hunted. We honor them for the risks they took, for the beatings they endured, for the fears with which they had to live. We are grateful for the relationships they developed and the organizations they established in order to enhance Jewish-Christian friendship. May the witness and sacrifice of the Jesuits recognized by Yad Vashem form the foundation of the new relationship between Jesuits and their Jewish brothers and sisters. This is our prayer.*