

The-Two-Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust

Session Three

Anti-Judaism Spawns Anti-Semitism (1789-1914)

By Anthony J. Sciolino

“The teachings and actions of the Church, including those of the popes themselves, for the better part of a century and a half, from the fall of Napoleon to the rise of Hitler, not only failed to combat anti-Semitism, but actively and purposely contributed to it, lent it authority, and honored some of its most active purveyors, and thus shares responsibility for making the holocaust possible” **David I. Kertzer**

“The darkest and bleakest side of the Christian faith is revealed in the Christians’ treatment of the Jews throughout history. Anti-Semitism is a terrifying prejudice that is rooted so deeply in the church’s life that it has distorted our entire message.” **Bishop John Shelby Spong**

“God of our fathers, You chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations: we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.” **Pope John Paul II**, (Prayer at the Western Wall, Jerusalem, 2000)

Background: Founded in the first century C.E., the Roman Catholic Church (hereinafter “Church”) is the oldest continuously functioning *institution* in the world and, for most of its history, one of the world’s most powerful. The Church steered western civilization through the fall of the Roman Empire, the Dark Ages, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the dawn of modern science and the rise of nationalism. It made deep contributions to philosophical thought through the works of religious philosophers like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas; helped shape civil law, secular institutions, customs, literature, music, art and architecture; and greatly influenced the rulers of empires, kingdoms, principalities and nation states.

For many centuries church and state were twin pillars of “divinely ordained” society; both closely aligned, each promoting and reinforcing the other’s authority. This mutually cooperative arrangement began in 312 C.E., when **Emperor Constantine** converted to Christianity, and was solidified in 380 C.E. when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Constantine and his successors used religion as a means of maintaining political control over

the Empire. The Church, in turn, used state authority to protect its *institutional* interests and to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy. Christian teachings became civil policy; religious conformity became governmental policy. Religious minorities were treated harshly. During the Middle Ages (from the 4th to the 15th centuries) under **feudalism**,* this mutually beneficial arrangement worked particularly well. The Church was at the pinnacle of its power and influence.

*Feudalism was the form of political and social organization of Western Europe from the dissolution of Charlemagne's empire to the rise of absolute monarchies. The political system was composed of a set of reciprocal legal and military obligations among the warrior nobility, revolving around the three key concepts of lords, vassals, and fiefs. The economy was based on "serfdom," i.e. the enforced labor of serfs in the leased fields of landowners. Serfs, in return for their labor and a portion the crops they grew, received protection and the right to work in the fields of landowners.

Church power and influence, however, began to decline during the **Protestant Reformation** (1517-1648) when breakaway *reformed* churches unaffiliated with the Church of Rome were founded, shattering the unity of Western Christendom. It declined further in the 17th and 18th centuries during the **Enlightenment** and the political/social revolutions it sparked. Enlightenment thinkers, casting off the superstition and fear which characterized the medieval world, began to use reason to discover the world around them. The effort to discover "natural" laws governing the universe led to scientific, political and social advances. The "rational" basis of all beliefs was examined and in the process, authority, especially church and state authority, was questioned, then rejected. **Immanuel Kant** expressed the motto of the era as "*Aude Sapere*" (Dare to think!).

The modern state system evolved from the concept of national sovereignty established by the **Peace of Westphalia** in 1648. Before then, sovereignty was assumed to be embodied in autocratic (absolute) monarchs who ruled by divine right. The American "Declaration of Independence" and the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" replaced control by autocratic monarchs with the "sovereignty of the people" as the source of national power and legitimacy.

Enlightenment thinkers substituted *reason* in place of *faith* as an alternative means to establish an authoritative system of aesthetics, ethics, government, and even *religion* -- which empowered *individuals* to obtain "objective truth" unmediated by the Church. The Age of Faith shifted into the Age of Reason. Scientists like **Galileo*** and **Isaac Newton** proposed theories of the universe that conflicted with the Church's cosmology based on Scripture.

*Galileo, the “father of science,” was convicted of heresy by the Roman Inquisition in 1633 for disputing the biblical (geocentric) view of the universe. In 1992, three hundred fifty nine years later, the Church finally acknowledged that the judges who convicted him had erred, but, at the same time, noted that Galileo had also erred in his *arrogance* in thinking that his (heliocentric) theory, first proposed by **Copernicus** in the 16th century, would be accepted without physical evidence.

“Radical” ideas like *separation* of church and state, freedom of religion, and freedom of thought, espoused during the **French Revolution** (1789-1799), encapsulated in the slogan “liberty, equality, fraternity,” seriously challenged church authority based on *Scripture* and *tradition*. Protestant reformers claimed that religious authority was grounded in “scripture alone” “*sola scriptura*.” The pillars of “divinely ordered” medieval society were severely shaken; faith was removed from her pedestal. The advent of **modern science** and the rise of **nationalism** roiled the already turbulent waters. This confluence of historical forces profoundly threatened the Church’s privileged position within society. To protect its institutional interests, particularly after the French Revolution, popes made treaties (**concordats**) with secular rulers -- a practice which continued into the 20th century when concordats were negotiated with fascist regimes in Europe, including **Franco**’s Spain, **Mussolini**’s Italy (1929) and **Hitler**’s Germany.*

*Historian James Carroll terms the **Reich Concordat** of 1933, the Vatican’s treaty with Nazi Germany, a “*foundation stone of the Shoah*.” First treaty to be concluded with Hitler, critics contend it legitimized his regime and vitiated Catholic political opposition to Nazism.

In the first millennium emperors convened early church councils to settle doctrinal disputes. In the first and second millennia emperors and monarchs influenced the selection of popes and bishops. Popes *excommunicated* monarchs, e.g. **Henry II** (1174), **Henry VIII** (1533) and **Elizabeth I** (1570) of England) and even Roman Emperors, including **Henry IV** in 1076. King Otto I in 963 deposed Pope John XII. **Pius VII** excommunicated **Napoleon Bonaparte** (Napoleon I) of France in 1809. **Pius IX** excommunicated **Victor Immanuel II** of newly unified Italy in 1870. In 1962 **Pope John XXIII** excommunicated **Fidel Castro** of Cuba.)

The Church taught the “**divine right of kings**” and from the faithful demanded *obedience* to secular rulers;* secular rulers, in turn, demanded obedience from their subjects to church authority. Beginning in 781 until 1870, popes reigned as *absolute* monarchs of the Papal States in Italy, blurring the distinction between, and often conflicting with, their roles as “spiritual” and “secular” leaders. For centuries power struggles and political intrigue between popes and secular rulers were commonplace. **Lord Acton**, a 19th century Catholic nobleman, charged that the Renaissance papacy’s primary sin was “*power and politics*.”

* When in 1938, the year before the invasion of Poland and beginning of WWII, **Cardinal Adolph Bertram** addressed the 30,000 German Catholics in his diocese of Breslau (now part of Poland), he invoked Scripture on behalf of the Nazi regime: "*There is no need to urge you to give respect and obedience to the new authorities of the German state. You all know the words of the apostle (St. Paul): 'Let every man be subject to the powers placed over him. (Romans 13:1)'*"

Demanding adherence to its teachings, bolstered by state authority, the Church condemned disobedience and religious diversity as it sought to stamp out **heresy**, i.e. any opinion or doctrine at variance with its religious belief, especially dissension from or denial of its dogma.* Religious conformity undergirded church doctrine *and* state policy, both within and outside the Papal States. As an illustration, after the murder in 1208 of a papal legate, **Pope Eugene III** called for the Albigensian Crusade, executed by knights from France and Germany (agents of secular rulers) to eradicate the heresy of Catharism.

* Dogma is defined as “the established belief or doctrine held by a religion or ideology that is authoritative and not to be disputed, doubted, or diverged from.” In Roman Catholicism, for example, “Jesus is the Lord” is dogma; as is papal infallibility, see *infra*.

In addition to the **crusade**,* another means for preserving *orthodoxy* was the **Holy Inquisition** (13th-20th centuries), which, among other things, burned tens of thousands of *heretics* at the stake. Ironically, as historian James Carroll has pointed out, more Christian martyrs died at the hands of Christian emperors than at the hands of pagan ones. A third means for preserving orthodoxy was **excommunication**,* i.e. denial of sacraments to a believer, including **penance** (absolution from sin), banishing him or her from the Church. Excommunication, in effect, condemned an errant Catholic to suffer in hell for eternity, a most powerful disincentive for “sinful” behavior, particularly among a populace characterized by widespread illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. Through **interdict**, the people of a specific group or even an entire kingdom could be excommunicated, e.g. **Pope Innocent III** placed the kingdom of England under interdict for five years between 1208 and 1213 after **King John** refused to accept the pope's appointee as Archbishop of Canterbury.

* The Crusades were a series of religiously sanctioned military campaigns waged by much of Roman Catholic Europe, particularly the Franks of France of France and the Holy Roman Empire. The specific crusades to restore Christian control of the Holy Land were fought over a period of nearly 200 years, between 1095 and 1291. Other campaigns in Spain and Eastern Europe continued into the 15th century.

****Pope Pius XII** did not excommunicate a single Nazi or Nazi collaborator, although many Holocaust *perpetrators*, including Adolf Hitler himself, were Roman Catholics.

At every important moment and turning point in the history of Western civilization, popes were involved as “participants, promoters or critics.” By the 11th century, despite the **East-West Schism** (1054), papal power in spiritual and temporal matters had become *absolute*. In 1517, however, when **Martin Luther**, sparked the **Protestant Reformation** in Germany, as noted previously, a downward spiral of that power began. The Church’s response, the **Counter-Reformation**, specifically the **Council of Trent** (1545–1563), among other things, created a “siege mentality” within the papacy, a strategy intended to defend against the winds of change sweeping across Europe. This “siege” mentality, most fully manifested during the pontificate of **Pope Pius IX** (1846-78) in his “war” against **Modernism**,* see *infra*, continued into the 20th century when Vatican Council II (1962-65) finally declared a truce. Historians contend that Pius IX’s 32 year pontificate, longest in papal history marked the beginning of the “modern” papacy.

* In 1864, Pius IX issued an encyclical entitled “**Syllabus of Errors**,” in which he condemned 80 “errors,” among them -- freedom of religion, separation of church and state, freedom of the press, freedom from church control of public schools; and bible societies, rationalism, socialism, communism and the notion that the papacy ought to reconcile itself with progress, *liberalism*, and modern civilization. During his pontificate, Pius IX restored restrictions on Jews within the Papal States that had been eliminated during the **Revolution of 1848**.

Most Catholics are aware of the many saints, popes, founders of religious congregations, church leaders, clerics and ordinary believers who, throughout history, have faithfully lived the tenets of the Christian faith; who have been a tremendous force for good in the world --feeding the poor, clothing the naked, educating the ignorant, liberating the captives-- as Jesus taught in his “gospel of love.” But what most Catholics and other Christians are not aware of is how, at the same time, church history has harbored a powerful anti-Jewish bias which became, albeit *inadvertently*, a source of evil. Grounded in Scripture and the writings of the **Church Fathers**, this bias, termed **anti-Judaism**, was a deeply ingrained *theological* position of the Church for 1900 hundred years, permeating two of its core doctrines:

- **Supercessionism:** The belief that 1) God rejected the Jews and unilaterally revoked His covenants with them and thereafter favored Christians as the new “chosen people.” 2) Christianity fulfilled and *superseded* Judaism, rendering Judaism *insignificant* in salvation history

- **Collective Responsibility (Collective Guilt):** The belief that *all* Jews, from the first century forward, are responsible (guilty) for the death of Jesus, the Jewish messiah and Son of God.

Tragically, the image of Jews as *God-killers* and their “obstinate” refusal to convert to Christianity has fueled a long tradition of intolerance, hatred and violence. In 66 C.E., for example, the newly Christianized residents of Alexandria in Egypt massacred the city’s Jewish population. When in 70 C.E., the Roman occupiers of Judea under **Emperor Titus** starved and/or slaughtered at least 600,000 Jews in Jerusalem, destroying the city and the (second) Temple, early Christian theologians proclaimed that Jews had brought the massacre upon themselves.* Contemporary theologian **Rosemary R. Ruether** asserts that anti-Judaism was fundamental to the early Christian movement’s self-understanding as the “true Israel,” and of its Lord as the Jewish messiah. She maintains that within two decades of Jesus’ death, anti-Judaism had become “the left hand of Christology.”**

*This is an early example of “blaming the victim” for the victim’s misfortune, which still is common today.

** Christology is the field of study within Christian theology primarily concerned with the nature and person of Jesus Christ.

It is a shameful and indisputable fact of history that since the 1st century Jews have been humiliated, victimized, denigrated, discriminated against, banished from various countries, compelled to wear distinctive clothing, forced to live in ghettos, marginalized, demonized, portrayed as offspring of the devil,* blamed for causing human and natural catastrophes and falsely accused of libels like the ritual murder of Christian children and much worse...by Christians! Regrettably, Nazi propaganda in the 20th century effectively exploited this reprehensible tradition to pave the way for the Holocaust.

**No one need be surprised if among our people the personification of the devil, as the symbol of all evil, assumes the living shape of the Jew.*
Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, (1925)

The dark side of church history chronicles how Scripture has been *misused* to justify *negative* behavior against various groups.* For example, Scripture has been cited to justify intolerance and violence against racial, ethnic or other minorities, including blacks, women, homosexuals and members of other religions, especially Jews (and Muslims). Additionally, Scripture has been cited to bless wars, torture dissidents and even kill in the name of God. “*Anti-Semitism,*”** writes Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, “*is a terrifying prejudice that is rooted so deeply in the church’s life that it has distorted our entire message.*”

* Shakespeare has one of his characters in The Merchant of Venice say: “*The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.*” Ironically, Antonio, the merchant, says it referring to Shylock, the Jew.

The term “anti-Semitism” was first coined by German writer and journalist **Wilhelm Marr in 1879. The word “Semite” actually describes all Arabs, but as used in this term applies only to Jews.

When “liberal” Enlightenment concepts like religious tolerance, separation of church and state, and civil rights for all members of society gained currency in the 18th and 19th centuries, Jews finally achieved “equal” citizenship status in various countries, something denied them for many centuries. Jews then began to assimilate into European society in varying degrees, particularly in Western Europe, including Germany. *Liberalism*, however, did not eliminate hatred and suspicion of Jews. “*Judaeophobia*,” termed “the world’s *oldest* prejudice,” continued unabated into the 20th century, especially in Eastern Europe, where it was particularly ingrained and where the *mass* killing of the Holocaust took place.

When Jesus began his public ministry in the Roman province of Judea circa 28 C.E., the “Jesus movement” became one of several competing Jewish religious/political movements of the time, including the **Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots**, and followers of **John the Baptist**. Most scripture scholars agree that Jesus and his followers considered themselves a *reform movement* within Judaism, not the vanguard of a new religion. Jesus was born, lived and died a Jew. His apostles and original followers were all Jews. Consistent with Jewish rabbinic tradition, Jesus taught -- love of God and neighbor, torah observance (“I came to fulfill the law and the prophets, not to abolish it.” (Mt. 5:17-20)), the need for repentance, liberation of the oppressed and, most importantly, the *pursuit of justice*, especially for society’s most vulnerable members (“What you do for the least of my brethren, you do unto me” (Mt. 25:31-46)).

Although a pacifist who rejected violence, Jesus suffered a violent death, nailed to a cross like a common criminal. It was Roman, not Jewish, power that crucified him and he was killed to prevent public disorder and political upheaval. The Roman occupiers of Judea, in short, feared that a segment of Jesus’ followers (the Zealots), who viewed him as a “political” messiah, would try to overthrow Roman rule, restore the Davidic dynasty and make Jesus “king” of the Jews. Concern for public disorder and upheaval also explains why the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the (second) Temple forty years later.

The tendency to exonerate the Romans and fix blame on the Jews for Jesus’ death intensified as early Christian missionary activity expanded into the Mediterranean world. To make converting non-Jews (Gentiles) easier and less threatening to the ruling authority, Roman involvement in the crucifixion was reduced as Jewish culpability heightened. This is illustrated in the **Gospel of**

Peter, widely read by some 2nd century Christians, although not included in the New Testament canon. The author of this gospel wrote: “*The Jews, the elders, and the priests realized (after the crucifixion) how much evil they had done to themselves and began beating their breasts, saying, ‘Woe to us because of our sins; the judgment and the end of Jerusalem are near.’*” This last phrase echoes the charge made by early Christian theologians that the destruction of Jerusalem and the (second) Temple signified God’s judgment on the Jewish people for their rejecting Jesus as messiah and killing him.*

*Scripture scholars point out that this charge conflicts with the Christian doctrine which teaches that Jesus died for the sins of humanity to bring about humanity’s salvation.

Conflict erupted soon after Jesus’ death, not only within and between early “Christian” groups, but also between Christian groups and various Jewish groups, some of which is recorded in the New Testament. References to persecution of Jewish Christians and Pauline Christians (followers of the apostle Paul) by Jewish groups are also included. Scripture scholars characterize the “squabbling” that occurred among disparate religious groups during this contentious period of early church history as intra-familial, i.e. as a “family feud.” What happened later, however, assumed tragic dimension.

In the New Testament there are numerous passages *misread* to justify persecution of Jews. The favorite text of anti-Semites is found in the **Gospel of Matthew**, written about 70 CE. In this narrative, during the trial scene before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, the Jewish crowd is portrayed as responding to Pilate’s protestation of Jesus’ innocence by proclaiming, “*His (Jesus’) blood be on us and on our children.*” (Mt. 27:25) Based on the “*collective guilt*” implied in these words, Christians have maligned and mistreated Jews for close to two millennia. No other biblical verse has been responsible for so much violence and bloodshed.

In his **First Letter to the Thessalonians** (circa 52 CE), the oldest known Christian document, Paul declares:

“For you, brothers and sisters, become imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.” (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)

In Paul’s **Letter to the Romans** (circa 56 CE), the author, quoting from **Isaiah** 29:10, refers to Jews as those to whom God has given “*a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear down to this very day.*” (Rom. 11:7-8) The **Gospel of John** (90-100 CE) quotes Jesus as saying:

“You (the Jews) are of your father the devil and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell you the truth you do not believe me.” (Jn. 8:44-45).

Whenever the phrase “*the Jews*” appears in John’s gospel, there is a pejorative undertone. When the author of John describes the first post Easter apparition of the risen Jesus, the author states that the disciples are hiding behind locked doors, “*for fear of the Jews.*” (Jn. 20:19) A detachment of temple guards is placed around Jesus’ tomb, according to the author of Matthew, because the chief priests and Pharisees told Pilate that “*this imposter*” has predicted that “*after three days, I will arise again*” (Mt. 27:62ff)

The not so subtle message of the four gospels and other books of the New Testament is that Jews are sinister *evildoers* who purposefully murdered the Lord. Most scripture scholars agree that this is a “*misinterpretation*” of the biblical texts which resulted from reading the words *without regard to their Jewish context*.*

*A “modern” approach to biblical interpretation, known as “historical/contextual criticism” advocates for reading the words of Scripture *in historical context*. Biblical scholars using this approach conclude that passages used to vilify Jews over the centuries are read “out of context.” In Biblical criticism, *Sitz im Leben* is a German phrase roughly translating to “setting in life.” In other words, there can be no authentic meaning of a text without understanding the context within which it was written. Christian fundamentalists, on the other hand, read Scripture literally. The Scopes “Monkey” Trial in Tennessee in 1925 pitted Creationists (fundamentalists) against Darwinists (rationalists).

Misinterpretation of biblical texts helps explain why anti-Jewish animus permeates the writings of the Church Fathers – **Polycarp, Justin Martyr, St. Jerome, and Tertullian** -- to name a few. (The doctrine of *supercessionism* was originally developed by **Justin Martyr** and **Irenaeus of Lyon** in the 2nd century.) A primary motivation of these early church leaders was fear that newly baptized Christians would fall back into their “Jewish ways” or that Gentile converts would find the practices of Judaism preferable to those of Christianity. To combat this so called “Judaizing” of Christianity, the Church Fathers wrote and preached against Judaism in often venomous and inflammatory language. When read today, the words* are still stark and chilling. Jews, for example, were referred to as *evil, vermin, unclean* and *unfit to live* – words widely used in Nazi propaganda. **

*Words, obviously, have consequences, especially when they lead to action, which can be for good or evil.

** Hitler, in his autobiography, **Mein Kampf** (“My Struggle”), first published in 1925, advocates for the *elimination* of Jews from Germany and Europe to prevent defilement of Aryan blood and the corruption of culture, referring to them as *vermin, parasites, maggots, polluters and destroyers of Aryan humanity*.

No one railed against Judaism more vehemently than **St. John Chrysostom** (347–407), Archbishop of Constantinople, who initiated and perfected the “*Adversus Judaeos*” (anti-Judaic) sermon genre. Known for his eloquence in preaching and public speaking, he proclaimed:

“The Synagogue is a brothel, a hiding place for unclean beasts... Jews are the most worthless of all men (who) are lecherous, greedy and rapacious...perfidious murderers of Christ and for killing God there is no expiation possible, no indulgence or pardon. Christians may never cease vengeance,...Jews must live in servitude forever... God always hated Jews. It is incumbent upon all Christians to hate Jews”

He gave a hint of what shaped his rhetoric when he wrote: “*Don’t you realize, if the Jewish rites are holy and venerable, our way of life must be false.*”

A dilemma existed in that without Judaism, Christianity had no independent meaning. Accordingly, Judaism had to be preserved for Christian self-identification, but in a weakened condition where it could do no harm to Christianity. Judaism was denigrated because the existence of an independently thriving Jewish community, which persisted in denying the validity of Christianity by its refusal to convert, gave pagan anti-Christians ammunition for their attacks on Christianity – another reason why early theologians increasingly came to view the Jew as a paragon of evil and a satanic adversary.

The Church Fathers resorted to a process called **value-inversion** to undermine Judaism’s credibility. Theologians turned Jewish values upside-down. Value-inversion was first employed in response to the crucifixion itself. Most ancient people, Jews and Gentiles alike, regarded crucifixion as a demeaning mode of death. The followers of Jesus, however, transformed the “scandal of the cross” into an act of metaphysical and eschatological (“end-times”) importance. A seemingly meaningless execution in the political life of the Roman Empire and Judean politics became, for believers, the most *meaningful* act in human history. Jesus’ death (and resurrection) brought eternal life not only for him, but to all who believed in him.

In the 2nd century **Marcion** of Sinope (85-160 CE) regarded the God of the Jews as a *demonic* figure. He even went so far as to propose that the Old Testament be excluded from the Bible. He and his followers sought to edit all references to Jews out of the New Testament in order to sever Christianity from its Jewish roots. Despite the Church’s rejection of Marcion’s views,

excommunicating and condemning him as a heretic, his brand of anti-Judaism continued to resurface in history.*

* The *Deutsche Christen* were a group of fanatical Nazi Protestants which became a schismatic faction of German Protestantism. Their symbol was a traditional Christian cross with a *swastika* in the middle and the group's German initials "D" and "C." Supportive of Nazi race ideology, their movement advocated de-emphasizing the Old Testament in Protestant theology and removing parts deemed "*too Jewish*." Some adherents sought to eliminate the Old Testament from the Bible altogether.

In 167, **Melito**, Bishop of Sardis, made the first recorded charge of **deicide** (God killing). "*The blood of Jesus,*" **Origen** (185- 254) wrote, "*falls not only on the Jews of that time, but on all generations of Jews up to the end of the world*" (i.e. the doctrine of "collective guilt") **St. Eusebius** of Caesarea (263- 339) taught that Jews *forfeited* both the promises due them under biblical covenants and their special status as God's "chosen people." **St. Cyprian** wrote in 248 that the Jews "*have fallen under the heavy wrath of God because they departed from the Lord and followed idols.*" In 367 **St. Hilary of Poitiers** referred to Jews "*as a perverse people who God has cursed forever.*"

In 380 **St. Gregory of Nyssa** referred to them as "*murderers of the Lord, assassins of the prophets, rebels and detesters of God,. . . companions of the devil, a race of vipers, informers, calumniators, darkeners of the mind, pharisaic leaven, Sanhedrin of demons, accursed, detested,. . . enemies of all that is beautiful.*" In 388 a mob of Christians, at the instigation of their bishop, looted and burned the synagogue in Callinicum, a town on the Euphrates River. In that same year, **St. Ambrose** defended the *righteousness* of synagogue burning.*

* *Kristallnacht*, "*Night of Broken Glass*" (November 8-9, 1938), historical starting point of the Holocaust, included the burning of hundreds of *synagogues* throughout Nazi Germany and Occupied Austria.

The teachings of **St. Augustine** (354-430), on the other hand, provided the theological basis for securing legal recognition for Jews within the Roman Empire. It was this recognition, in part, that enabled Jews to survive under the "rule of Christendom." For Augustine, Jews witnessed to the truth of Christianity and, therefore, had to be sheltered from harm. Accordingly, various popes like **Pope Saint Gregory I** (590-604) and **Pope Gregory X** (1271- 276) attempted to protect Jews, including from *forcible* conversion to Christianity (**Pope Leo VII** in 937, for example, encouraged the newly appointed Archbishop of Mainz to expel from his archdiocese any Jew who refused to be baptized). Unfortunately, however, some of Augustine's teachings were used to justify persecution of Jews as well. For example, Augustine wrote that Jews were possessors of the "*mark of Cain,*" whom God required to wander the earth in "*perpetual servitude*" until they voluntarily converted to Christianity. Referring to Jews as "*slave librarians*" who

exist “*for the salvation of the nation but not for their own (salvation),*” Augustine wrote: “*the Church admits and avows the Jewish people to be cursed, because after killing Christ they continue in impiety and unbelief.*”

The Church taught that Jews were entitled to protection from harm, not only because they witnessed to the truth of Christianity, but also because, according to the **Book of Revelation**, they had a role to play in the “*end times*” (The Second Coming) It was believed that the “*end times*” could not begin until all Jews converted and Judaism ceased to exist. As noted *supra*, however, the Church also taught that because all Jews -- past, present and future -- were responsible for Jesus' death, they had to be “*marginalized*” on the fringes of society, but could escape marginalization by renouncing Judaism and converting to Christianity. Unfortunately, in practice, even if they converted, the “*genuineness*” of their conversion was often suspect.*

*The Nazis refused to recognize “*converted*” Jews as Christians, treating them the same as non-converted Jews. (e.g. St. Edith Stein)

During the patristic age (4th to 10th centuries) theological attacks on Jews were carried out by means of anti-Jewish creeds (teaching prayers) and liturgy. The Church used the liturgy to urge Christians to shun Jews. Until Vatican II ended the practice in 1965,* the Good Friday gospel reading from Matthew 27:25 in the Latin Rite Mass, in which the congregation participates speaking aloud various responses, included language put in the mouths of the Jewish crowd at Jesus' trial, saying: *His blood be upon us and upon our children.****

*It should be noted, however, that in 2007, **Pope Benedict XVI** removed Vatican II's restriction on celebrating the Latin Rite Mass (with its offensive language to Jews.)

**In various Christian communities, it was not uncommon for riots against Jews to break out following Good Friday liturgies.

A prayer for the conversion of the Jews was recited in Catholic liturgies until 1955. It read:

*Let us pray also for the **perfidious** Jews: that Almighty God may remove the veil from their hearts (2 Corinthians 3:13-16) so that they too may acknowledge Jesus Christ our Lord. Almighty and eternal God, who does not exclude from your mercy even Jewish **perfidiousness**: hear our prayers, which we offer for the blindness of that people; that acknowledging the light of your Truth, which is Christ, they may be delivered from their darkness. Through the same Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.*

Pronouncements of church councils and synods of bishops likewise reflected anti-Judaism. In 306 the **Council of Elvira** decreed that Christians and Jews were forbidden to inter-marry, have sexual intercourse, or eat together. The **Council of Nicea** in 325 decreed that Easter and Passover would henceforth be celebrated on different days, stating: “*let us have nothing in common with this odious people...*” In 337 the marriage of a Jewish man to a Christian woman became punishable by death. In 339 converting to Judaism became a criminal offense. From 379 to 395 **Emperor Theodosius** permitted the destruction of synagogues if “*it served a religious purpose.*” The **Third Synod of Orleans** decreed in 538 that Jews were not permitted to show themselves on the streets during Passion Week. Christians were forbidden to patronize Jewish doctors by the **Trulanic Synod** of 692. The **Synod of Toledo** in 681 ordered the burning of the Talmud and other Jewish books.*

*On May 10, 1933 in Opera Square, across from the University of Berlin, the Nazis staged a *book burning* of Jewish authors and of non-Jews suspected of writing in a “Jewish spirit.” Similar events took place in other cities in Germany and elsewhere during the Holocaust.

*“...Where they burn books, in the end it is men that they burn.”
Heinrich Heine

The **Third Lateran Council** of 1179 decreed that Jews were forbidden to be plaintiffs or witnesses against Christians in court cases and forbidden to disinherit their descendants who had converted to Christianity. In 1270 **St. Thomas Aquinas** wrote that Jews sin more in their unbelief than do pagans because they have abandoned the way of justice “*after knowing it in some way.*” In 1434 the **Council of Basel** decreed that Jews could not obtain university degrees. Construction of new synagogues was prohibited by the **Council of Oxford** in 1222. Compulsory ghettos for Jews were instituted by the **Synod of Breslau** in 1267. Christians were forbidden to sell or rent real estate to Jews by the **Synod of Ofen** in 1279. For a Jewish convert to revert to the practice of Judaism was declared to be heresy by the **Synod of Mainz** in 1310.

Secular rulers, with church approval, barred Jews from, among other things, owning real estate, holding public office or civil service positions, attending public schools or universities, hiring Christian servants, and practicing certain professions. Because church doctrine forbade Christians to practice usury, Jews became bankers and jewelers, which created for them an opportunity to become the dominant financiers of Europe. Even kings and popes borrowed from Jewish bankers. Involvement in banking, however, linked to the biblical story of **Judas Iscariot** who, according to Christian tradition, betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, fed the stereotypical prejudice that Jews were venal “money-grubbers.”

It is important to emphasize that anti-Judaism was embraced by all Christians. There were church leaders and lay people who rejected it. In 1247 **Pope Innocent IV**, for example, wrote in defense of Jews: “*They are wrongly accused of partaking of the heart of a murdered child at the Passover. . . Whenever a corpse is found somewhere, it is to the Jews that the murder is wickedly imputed. They are persecuted on the pretext of such fables. . . they are deprived of trial and of regular judgment; in mockery of all justice, they are stripped of their belongings, starved, imprisoned and tortured.*” Another example of a church leader who opposed anti-Judaism is **St. Bernard of Clairvaux** (1090-1153), doctor of the Church and founder of the Cistercian order.

Pope Calixtus (1119-1124) condemned attacks on Jews during the Crusades, opposed forced baptism, and forbade the destruction of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. During the 14th century, when Jews were blamed for causing the Black Death (aka the bubonic plague), which wiped out a third of Europe’s population, **Pope Gregory X** (1271-1276) came to their defense. In 1348 **Pope Clement VI** issued a papal bull refuting the charge that Jews caused the plague, saying that the charge had “*no plausibility.*” **Pope Boniface IX** (1389-1403), expanded papal protection of Jews, including recognizing Roman Jews as full citizens of the Roman Papal State in 1402. **Pope Martin V**, in his “Papal Edict of Protection of 1422,” warned Franciscan friars under the leadership of **Abbot Giovanni da Capistrano**, the infamous “*scourge of the Jews,*” to stop inciting Italians against Jews.

Alexander VI (1492-1503), the corrupt Borgia pope who fathered four children, including the notorious siblings Cesare and Lucretia, was, nonetheless, one of the most pro-Jewish popes in history. Alexander VI created the first chair in Hebrew at the University of Rome, frequently entertained Rome’s chief rabbi at the Vatican, and provided a safe haven for persecuted Jews fleeing from the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. **Pope Leo X** (1513-1521) repealed the onerous obligation of Jews to wear distinctive articles of clothing,* imposed by the **Fourth Lateran Council** (1215) to prevent Christians from *mistakenly* marrying Jews, see *infra*. In 1247 **Pope Innocent IV** promulgated the first of several papal bulls refuting the “ritual murder” libel.** **Pope Gregory X**, in 1272 similarly condemned the libel, as did **Pope Martin V** in 1422 and **Pope Paul III** in 1540.

*Jews were forced to wear the Star of David on their clothing in Nazi Germany and in other Nazi occupied or allied European countries.

** Subsequent accusations of ritual murder continued into the 20th century, see *infra*.

Pope Paul III (1534-1549) encouraged Jews expelled from other countries to settle in Italy and even welcomed *Marranos* (Jews who had feigned conversion to Christianity in order to avoid persecution), promising them

protection from the Spanish Inquisition. His successor, **Pope Julius III**, continued this policy. **Pope Clement XIV** (1730-40) endorsed the rights of Jews to travel freely and manage shops outside the Roman ghetto, to practice medicine, to work as artisans, and to open small silk and hat factories. **Pope Leo XIII** (1878-1903) spoke in their defense, and especially in defense of Captain **Alfred Dreyfus**, the Jewish military officer falsely accused of treason in 1894 France. See *infra*. Despite the beneficence of popes, religious leaders, and lay Catholics, however, anti-Judaism stubbornly persisted within the Church, manifesting itself in ever most violent aspects.

During the **First Crusade**, called by **Pope Urban II** in 1096, anti-Jewish violence reached particular frenzy. Crusaders, on their way to the Holy Land, murdered over 10,000 Jews in France and Germany.* Urban II promised “eternal reward in heaven” to anyone who led a contingent of believers to the Holy Land to kill infidels and to free the holy places. Unfortunately, “*One infidel is as good as another*,” became the motto of some crusaders as Jews (*and* Muslims) were killed along the way. Before death, “infidels” were generally given the choice -- “*convert or die*.” Killing Jews reoccurred during subsequent crusades.

*Crusaders massacred so many men, women and children in Jerusalem that a Christian chronicler, **Fulcher of Chartres**, described an area as “ankle-deep in blood.” While burning Jews alive, some crusaders allegedly sang, “Christ, We Adore Thee.”

In 1205 Pope **Innocent III** wrote:

“...the Jews, by their own guilt, are consigned to perpetual servitude because they crucified the Lord...As slaves rejected by God, in whose death they wickedly conspire, they shall by the effect of this very action, recognize themselves as the slaves of those whom Christ's death set free...”

During 1648-49 approximately 100,000 Jews were murdered and hundreds of communities destroyed in Nemirov, Polonnoye, Tulchin, Volhynia, Bar, Lvov, and other cities in Ukraine. Between 1871 and 1906, especially following the assassination of **Czar Alexander II**, for which Jews were wrongly blamed, close to 200 pogroms* broke out in 160 cities and towns of Russia. (“*Pogrom*” is a Russian word meaning “*devastation*” or “*riot*.”)

**Kristallnacht* (“Night of Broken Glass”) which occurred in Nazi Germany and Occupied Austria in November 8-9, 1938 was a state sponsored pogrom.

Jews were expelled *en mass* from various countries, including **England** in 1290, **France** in 1306, **Hungary** in 1349, **Spain** in 1492 and **Portugal** in 1497. Baseless and vile myths about them circulated freely throughout Europe. They

were crudely stereotyped, ostracized, vilified and demonized. Thirty-four Jews in 1235 were burned to death in Fulda, Germany on a blood-libel charge. Jews of Röttingen, Germany in 1298, charged with profaning the Host (bread used during the ritual of the Mass), were massacred. They were compelled to live in **ghettos**,* including one erected in Venice in 1517 and another in Rome erected by decree of **Pope Paul IV** in 1556. A review of European history clearly demonstrates that for many centuries Jews have been routinely denied rights accorded to non-Jews... with church approval.**

* During the Greater Third Reich Jews were forced to live in hundreds of inner city ghettos, the largest one in Warsaw, Poland.

The **Nuremburg Laws of 1935 stripped German Jews of their civil and human rights. Similar anti-Jewish laws were passed in fascist Italy, Vichy France, fascist Croatia, fascist Slovakia, fascist Romania and other Nazi allied or occupied European countries.

During the Middle Ages, various myths were generated and popularized which incited violence against Jews, including:

Blood libel. In 1144, an unfounded rumor began to circulate in England that Jews had kidnapped a Christian child, tied him to a cross, stabbed his head to simulate Jesus' crown of thorns, killed him, drained his body completely of blood, and mixed the blood into Passover matzos (unleavened bread). The rumor was started by a former Jew named **Theobald** who had become a Christian monk. He reported that select Jews gathered each year in Narbonne, France where they decided in which city a Christian child would be sacrificed next.

The boy involved in the Theobald hoax became known as **St. William of Norwich**. Pilgrimages were made to his tomb and miracles said to have resulted from prayers made to St. William. The myth shows a complete lack of understanding of Judaism because, aside from the Torah prohibition against killing innocent people, the Torah specifically forbids the drinking or eating of any form of blood in any quantity. This rumor lasted for many centuries. Pope Innocent IV ordered an investigation in 1247, which found that the myth was an invention used to justify persecution of the Jews. At least four other popes subsequently vindicated the Jews, however, blood libel accusations, trials and executions continued. In 1817, **Czar Alexander I** of Russia declared that the blood libel was a myth, although accusations of it against Jews did not stop. There are 150 recorded cases of the ritual murder charge, many of which led to violence against Jews.

Host desecration. The host is a wafer (bread) used during the Roman Catholic Mass. At a certain point during the ritual, the consecration, the Church teaches that the host is transformed into the actual body of Jesus, as wine becomes Jesus' actual blood ("Transubstantiation"). The host and wine are consumed by the priest and believers in attendance.

A variation of the blood libel myth developed in Europe early in the 11th century. Instead of accusing Jews of killing an innocent child, they were accused instead of desecrating the host. Sometimes they were accused stabbing pins into the host, or of stepping on it. Other times, they were accused of stabbing the host with a knife until Jesus' blood leaked out or of nailing the host in a symbolic replay of the crucifixion.

Black Death. When epidemics devastated Europe in the mid-14th century, killing more than a half of the population, the Jews were blamed. Rumors spread that Jews caused the disease by poisoning water wells. Hundreds of Jewish communities were destroyed. That Jews died from the plague made no difference as the suspected culprits were tortured until the "confessed" to crimes that they could not possibly have committed. During the **Black Plague** (1348-1350), ethnic Germans slaughtered thousands of Jews, who throughout history have been "scapegoated" for natural and human catastrophes.*

*Jews were scapegoated by the Nazis for, among other things, the Russian Revolution, Germany's defeat in WWI, the humiliating terms of the Versailles Treaty, and the chaotic social, economic, and political condition of post-war Germany during the Weimar Republic.

"Ritual degradation" of Jews during Lenten carnival celebrations was commonplace in various countries. **Gregory XIII** in the 16th century instituted the practice of "forced attendance" at Masses for Jews to hear *conversionary* sermons delivered by particularly gifted preachers. Though officially contrary to canon law, Jews, nonetheless, have been forcibly converted to Christianity for centuries. Jews were among the tens of thousands of people burned at the stake by the Inquisition. During the **Chimelnitski Massacres** of 1648-56, Ukrainians (Cossacks) slaughtered more than 100,000 Jews in cities and towns across Poland. The uprising caused the greatest loss of Jewish lives until it was surpassed by the Holocaust. It is a *painful* truth * that much of what occurred during the Holocaust has antecedents in church history.

** "*Though scandal be taken at a truth, it is better to permit the scandal than to abandon the truth.*" **Pope St. Gregory the Great** (590-604)

Sixteenth century Protestant reformer **Martin Luther**, although initially sympathetic toward Jews, became virulently anti-Jewish in his later years.

Angered by their refusal to convert to Christianity, he wrote a scathing tract “*On the Jews and Their Lies*” depicting Jews as Christ killers and criminals bent on ruling the world.* Luther advocated burning synagogues, schools, and homes, and driving Jews “*like mad dogs out the land.*” The Nazis prominently displayed this tract at National Socialist Party rallies and Hitler was fond of quoting from it.

*The conspiracy to *rule the world* theme reappears in the 20th century forgery and hoax, “**The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**,”-- also a cornerstone of Nazi racist propaganda, see *infra*.

French philosopher **Voltaire** in the 18th century claimed that Jews were “*stubborn, greedy, perverse and particular, kept to themselves*” and could not be assimilated into an enlightened society, no matter what they did.

Anti-Judaism remained an integral part of church doctrine and practice into the 20th century.* As a corollary to its supercessionist doctrine, the Church taught that it *alone* had the “truth” and “exclusive” means to salvation. All other religions, under this view, were false and, as “*error has no rights,*” subject to repression. Coupled with the Church’s teaching that Jews were condemned to suffer for their transgressions, sadly, many Christians concluded that Jesus’ commandment, “*love one another as I have loved you,*” (Jn. 13:34) did not apply to Jews.

* On April 8, 1965, **Vatican Council II** published its 16th document entitled *Nostra Aetate*, (“In Our Age”). With that single act the Church turned its back on 1900 years of official and unofficial anti-Judaism. The document directly repudiates and reverses the age-old teachings on Jews as Christ-killers and as rejected children of God. It declared that “*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.*”

The term “anti-Semitism,” as noted *supra*, first coined in 1879 by **Wilhelm Marr**, himself an anti-Semite, was an attempt to explain why Jews should be reviled as defined by “race.*” Adopting an extreme version of anti-Semitism, Nazi propaganda in the 20th century depicted Jews not only as an inferior race, but as a “demonic” one, whose threat could only be eradicated by their complete elimination from the Greater Third Reich (envisioned to encompass all of Europe). Admittedly, extreme Nazi racist ideology differed from previous anti-Jewish tradition, but Hitler needed to build upon that existing tradition for his virulent brand of racism to gain popular acceptance. Most historians agree that anti-Judaism (based on religion), not only *spawned* anti-Semitism (based on race), but stoked the fires of Nazi anti-Semitism as well. In short, without each reinforcing the other, the Holocaust would not have happened.

*In point of fact, Jews, do not comprise a “race.” Rather, they share a common faith, history, tradition and other cultural qualities. No distinguishing genetic feature or biological marker identifies them as Jewish. Converts, accordingly, are accepted into Judaism

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005), in acknowledging the causal link between church history and the Holocaust said: *“In the Christian world...erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament relative to the Jewish people and their presumed guilt circulated for too long, engendering sentiments of hostility toward this people. That contributed to a lulling of many consciences, so that – when Europe was swept by the wave of persecutions inspired by a pagan anti-Semitism that in its essence was equally anti-Christian – alongside those Christians who did everything to save those who were persecuted, even to the point of risking their own lives, the spiritual resistance of many was not what humanity expected of Christ’s disciples.”*

John Shelby Spong, former Episcopal bishop of Newark, has written: *“Until we (Christians) embrace the depth of the problem and identify what it is in the Christian faith itself that not only gave anti-Semitism its birth but also regularly sustains it, we will continue to violate the very people who gave us the Jesus we claim to serve.*

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-organized persecution and murder of six million Jews, 1.5 million children, -- as well as 5 million members of other targeted groups including homosexuals, Sinti and Roma (Gypsies,) Poles and other Slavic people, Soviet POWs, Jehovah Witnesses, Freemasons, people with mental and physical disabilities, communists, socialists and other political and religious dissidents – by Nazi Germany and its European collaborators. With poison gas, bullets, the noose, gas combustion engine exhaust, clubs, fists, starvation, death marches and overwork, the perpetrators slaughtered *two thirds* of Europe’s Jews and *one-third* of world Jewry.

Although the Holocaust is a unique, clearly defined historical event, its causes, among them – fear, envy, greed, sadism, hatred, ignorance, intolerance, careerism, territorial expansionism, nationalism, wartime conditions, patriotism, bigotry and evil— are still present. The Holocaust happened in “Christian” Europe, the heart of western civilization, little more than 60 years ago. Even today, genocide, “ethnic cleansing” and other state-sanctioned crimes against humanity take place worldwide. Anti-Semitism remains a powerful force and neo-Nazi organizations continue to spring up like noxious weeds.

History is the study of human behavior and the human spirit, even when both have been profoundly corrupted. The Holocaust is an extreme example of what can happen when prejudice and intolerance run amok. It is important, therefore, to study the Holocaust, a human tragedy of unprecedented proportion, to understand how such horrific depravity could have occurred. So that, by learning the lessons of history, in the words of historian **George Santayana**, we can avoid repeating them.

Fr. Michael McGarry, a Paulist priest and rector of the Tartur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, asserts that Christians have a additional reason to study the Holocaust:

“...Christians need to remember that studying the Shoah is not simply reading about what happened to the Jews, but what some Christians...did to the Jews. The Shoah is part of Christian history....Not only do we study what happened to them but what happened to us Christians.”

October 28, 2010

I. Revolution and the Continuing Decline of Papal Power (1789-1850)

A. Popes under Siege

1. The Church Defines Itself

By the 16th century, the Church had established “absolute” authority over Western Christendom with the pope as *supreme* leader (“*Pontifex Maximus*”). According to its worldview, Roman Catholicism was the “fulfillment” of Judaism, the *one true faith* and *only* means to salvation. Other religions were “false” and subject to repression. **St. Augustine** (354-430) in *The City of God*, wrote: “*The church now on earth is both the kingdom of Christ and kingdom of heaven.*” The Church viewed itself as a “perfect society;” sole repository of “truth,” and embodiment of God’s kingdom on earth.

Church leadership was *hierarchical* or *pyramidal* in nature with the pope at the top, then in descending order – archbishops, bishops, monsignors, priests, religious and at the bottom-- the laity. In this model of church, those at the top “possessed” the truth; those below “received” the truth. The laity’s role was said derisively to be to “*pray, pay and obey.*” Modern theologians characterize this model of church as *institutional*,* which remained the prevailing model until it was changed by **Vatican Council II** in 1964. The generally preferred model of church today is “People of God.” Here’s how the institutional model is defined in one religious encyclopedia:

Institutional* model of church --- aspects of: 1. **Clericalism (views clergy, especially the higher clergy, as the source of all power and initiative) tends to reduce the laity to a condition of *passivity* (demanding docility and obedience), and to make the lay apostolate a mere appendage of the hierarchical apostolate (“*pay, pray, and obey*”); 2. **Juridicism** (views church authority in same way as state authority) tends to exaggerate the role of human authority and thus turn the gospel into a new law, characterized by excessive concern with legalistic formalities, to the

neglect of the spirit and of service; 3. **Triumphalism** (dramatizes the Church as an army set in array against Satan and the powers of evil). This model of church seeks to save souls by *converting* them to Catholicism, sees Church as a “perfect society;” It tends to become rigid, doctrinaire and conformist, absolutist, authoritarian and supremacist. This model fostered the “circle the wagons” (or “siege”) mentality that developed after the Council of Trent, the Enlightenment, and French Revolution which formed its pathological fear of *modernism* and *communism*.

Popes were believed to be successors of **St. Peter the Apostle**, the “rock” upon which the Church was built and to whom Jesus had given the “keys of the kingdom.” Accordingly, the pope, *theoretically* in conjunction with church councils, had the power to define Catholic dogma *in errantly*, i.e. without error. This power, termed “**papal infallibility**,”* was declared to be “dogma” by **Vatican Council I** (1869-70) during the pontificate of **Pius IX**. Papal “inerrancy” and reluctance to cause “scandal” among the faithful has made it difficult for the Church to acknowledge problematic practices or behaviors such as those that precipitated the Protestant Reformation. **Vatican Council II** reiterated, however, that the Church is a “pilgrim” church, always in need of reform and renewal (“*semper reformanda*”) because it is made up of *imperfect* human beings.

*N.b. certain conservative members of the Vatican curia, citing the *dogma* of papal infallibility, argued that there was no need for Vatican Council II.

As God’s representative on earth, the pope ruled over a “*divinely ordained*” kingdom; as “**Vicar of Christ**” on earth, he was *the* prophetic exemplar of “ethical” behavior. The Deputy, **Rolf Hochhuth**’s controversial play about **Pope Pius XII** and the Holocaust, first performed on Broadway in 1963, takes its title from that designation. Hochhuth, a Protestant playwright, makes the provocative charge that by his “silence” and inaction during the Holocaust, Pius failed in his role as “Vicar of Christ,” by, among other things, acting more like a “politician” than a prophet.

2. Papal Authority

Popes exercised “absolute” authority in religious matters based on the twin pillars of **Scripture** and **tradition**. Scripture *and* tradition *trumped* reason and science. Protestant reformers, on the other hand, taught that the Bible is the only inerrant authority for the Christian faith, and that Scripture contains all the knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness (“*sola scriptura*.”) The Church condemned religious *diversity* and *nonconformity*, including, Protestantism. A *fundamentalist/literalist* approach to biblical interpretation prevailed within Roman Catholicism until mid-1940, see *infra*. The Church, primarily through the **Holy Inquisition**, sought to preserve orthodoxy among the faithful by rooting out

and suppressing **heresy**.* Jews were among the more than ten thousand heretics burned at stake. As monarchs of the Papal States for eleven centuries, popes, like kings and emperors, exercised absolute authority (by “divine right”) in temporal matters as well. In the 16th century, however, the **Protestant Reformation** ruptured the unity of Western Christendom, dealing a serious blow to papal authority. By the 18th century, social, economic, religious and cultural forces unleashed by the **Enlightenment** (aka **Age of Reason**) continued the assault. With the outbreak of the **French Revolution** in 1789, what had been a difficult situation for the papacy reached crisis proportion.

*On February 16, 1600, the Inquisition executed **Giordano Bruno**, Italian philosopher and scientist, for the crime of heresy. He was burned alive at the stake. Bruno, like **Galileo**, championed the **Copernican** heliocentric system of astronomy which placed the sun, not the earth, at the center of the solar system. He refused to recant his belief throughout eight years of imprisonment by the Venetian and Roman Inquisitions. In 1992, after 12 years of deliberations, the Church finally admitted that **Galileo** had been right in supporting the theories of Copernicus. The Inquisition had forced an aged Galileo to recant his ideas under threat of torture in 1633. No such admission of error, however, has been made in Bruno’s case, whose writings remain on the Vatican’s list of forbidden texts. (cf. Creationism vs. Darwinism)

B. “Disaster” Strikes the Papacy

1. The French Revolution (1789-1799)

The **French Revolution** was a period of political and social upheaval during which the Kingdom of France, ruled by an absolute monarchy by “divine right,” was overthrown. **King Louis XVI** and **Queen Marie Antoinette** of Austria were both executed. French society was radically transformed as feudal, aristocratic, and religious privileges crumbled under assault from liberal political groups and the masses in the street. Medieval ideas about hierarchy, authority and tradition yielded to new Enlightenment principles of citizenship and the inalienable rights of man. The government of France was transformed into a “republic,” a radically new form of government based on “equal rights” for all citizens, including freedom of religion and **separation** of church and state.* The Church, as the biggest landowner in the kingdom (approximately 10 %), was seriously affected. Its extensive real property holdings were confiscated and the tax which subsidized church functions was abolished. For the first time in European history, Jews were granted equal rights of citizenship.

*The Church condemned religious liberty and separation of church and state until those doctrines were officially reversed by **Vatican Council II** in 1965.

The Catholic monarchy's close ties to the Church were severed in the wake of widespread *anticlericalism*.* The Church's power and wealth was highly resented, particularly among the many suffering hardship. Enlightenment thinkers like **Voltaire** helped fuel this resentment. During the "Reign of Terror," high clerics, many of whom were also aristocrats and landowners, were among those who met their fate under the Guillotine's blade. Some priests and nuns were also executed. "Radical" ideas based on *reason*, as reflected in the slogan "liberty, fraternity, equality," tore at the fabric of church authority. Similar to Martin Luther's reaction to the Peasant Revolt of 1524 in Germany, church leaders were appalled at the social disorder and mob rule which resulted during the French Revolution.

*Historian John McManners points out, "*In eighteenth-century France throne and altar were commonly spoken of as in close alliance; their simultaneous collapse ... would one day provide the final proof of their interdependence.*"

Granting equal rights citizenship to Jews violated church doctrine which mandated their "marginalization" within society as punishment for the arch-crime **deicide** and for their continued obstinacy in refusing to convert to Christianity. Since Jews benefited from the revolutionary changes sweeping Europe, they were *blamed* for causing them, which continued a long tradition of *scapegoating* them for catastrophic events like the black plague of the 1340's.*

* This example of "scapegoating" foreshadows what will happen in Nazi Germany when Jews are blamed for Bolshevism, Germany's loss in WWI, the humiliating terms of the **Versailles Treaty** and for the chaotic social and economic conditions during the Weimar Republic.

In 1806 a French Jesuit Priest, **Abbe Barruel**, wrote a treatise blaming the *Masonic Order* for the French Revolution. He later issued a correction letter alleging that the Jews, not the Masons were the guilty party. Belief in an international Jewish conspiracy to control the world, which continues to the present day, can be traced back to this and other sources.

2. Napoleon Bonaparte Occupies Italy (1796-1814),

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 –1821) a military and political leader who became Emperor of the French Empire as **Napoleon I**, shaped European politics in the early 19th century. He engaged in a series of conflicts—the Napoleonic Wars—involving every major European power. After a streak of victories, France secured a dominant position in continental Europe. His occupation of Italy (1796-1814) *temporarily* ended eleven centuries of temporal rule of the Papal States in central Italy. Two successive popes, **Pius VI** and **Pius VII**, were driven into exile. The Inquisition was abolished, some religious orders were suppressed. The gates of Rome's ghetto, established by decree of **Pope Paul IV** in 1555, were torn

down. As had happened for Jews in France, Jews in Italy were granted rights of citizenship. Napoleon's regime, however, collapsed in 1814 at the Battle of Waterloo and when French occupation of Rome ended, papal authority was restored to the *status quo ante*. **Pope Pius VII** thereupon *excommunicated* Napoleon I.*

* N.b. No Roman Catholic Nazi or Nazi collaborator, including Adolph Hitler, was excommunicated. At the end of WWII, however, Pope Pius XII excommunicated all Catholic supporters of Communism.

C. Pope Pius VII (1800-1823)

1. Pius VII Abandons Napoleonic Reforms (1814)

Upon returning to Rome from exile in 1814, **Pius VII** abandoned Napoleon's reforms. *Against* the advice of his secretary of state and of **Prince Metternich**, prime minister of the Austrian Empire ruled by **Emperor Francis II** of the Catholic Hapsburg dynasty, (the Austrian Empire had restored Pius VII to power pursuant to a *concordat*), Pius VII ordered Jews back into the ghetto. Jews were once again to be kept separate, so as not to *defile* Catholics. Anti-Jewish restrictions were reinstated.* For example, they were barred from certain professions, their freedom of travel was restricted, they were required to wear distinctive clothing; forbidden to own real estate; forbidden to teach in or attend universities and forbidden to employ Christian servants. Efforts to convert Jews were reinstated. The Inquisition, abolished during the French occupation, was revived.

* Church imposed restrictions on Jews living in the Papal States are precursors of Hitler's Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and Mussolini's Manifesto of Italian Racism of 1938.

2. Vilification of Jews Continues

In 1820 and 1831, popular revolts against the papacy's temporal authority erupted within the Papal States. Its *reactionary* worldview once again challenged, the papacy's "siege mentality," which started in response to the Protestant Reformation, continued. Jews were increasingly viewed as *the* personification of the evils of *modernity*, i.e. the liberal forces unleashed by the Enlightenment and the revolutions it spawned.

3. Forced Baptism/House of Catechumens.

Pursuant to church doctrine, Christ's "Second Coming" (the "*parousia*") could not take place until *all* Jews converted to Christianity. A related doctrine mandated that a Jewish child who had been baptized – with or *without* parental knowledge and consent – could not be returned to non-converted parents.* Jews

entering the **House of the Catechumens**, a residence for converts in Rome and elsewhere, were required to have their children baptized. Between 1814 and 1818, police, under orders of Pius VII, entered Rome's ghetto on twenty-two different occasions, always at night, to seize Jews and take them to the House of the Catechumens. In that brief period, seventeen married women, three fiancées and twenty-seven children were removed by force. Mothers had a simple choice - accept baptism and keep their children or leave without them. (Kertzer, The Pope Against the Jews, p.54-55)

*see the **Edgardo Mortara** forced baptism case during the pontificate of Pope Pius IX *infra*

D. Pope Leo XII (1823-1829)

1. Ravenna in Revolt

In 1825, in response to growing rebellion against papal rule in Ravenna, **Leo XII** dispatched **Cardinal Agostino Rivarola** to root out subversives. Rivarola succeeded, overseeing trials in which 500 people were found guilty and several executed. Meanwhile, in Rome, Pope Leo XII refused to commute the death sentences of two leaders of a revolutionary cell who were beheaded.

2. Jewish Myths Perpetuated

In 1825, a publication written by the procurator general of the Dominican order, **Fr. Ferdinand Jabalot**, was published and widely distributed. It restated traditional libels against Jews, i.e. that they were guilty of deicide, were crazed with the lust for lucre and desired to bring about the ruin of Christians. So intense was their hatred of Christianity, Fr. Jabalot claimed, that no evil was too great for them: "*They wash their hands in Christian blood, set fire to churches, trample the consecrated Host.....kidnap children and drain them of their blood, violate virgins.*" (Kertzer, *ibid*, p 64.) Jews are ever busy "*cheating, and hoodwinking Christians,*" which was no surprise, since the Talmud called on Jews to cheat Christians at every opportunity. Christians unfortunate enough to fall into their clutches, are likely to emerge "*not only without their shirt, but without their skin.*" (*Ibid.*, p 65.)

Pope Leo XII subsequently appointed Fr. Jabalot head of the Dominican order worldwide.

E. Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846)

1. Ritual Degradation

Within days of **Gregory XVI's** election as pope in 1831, the people of Bologna – second largest of the Papal States – rebelled. As Pius VII had done in

1814, Gregory XVI called on the Catholic Hapsburg monarch of the Austrian Empire, now **Emperor Joseph II**, to quell the rebellion. Once his authority was restored, Gregory XVI denounced those who espoused revolutionary ideas like democracy, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state. Ritual degradation of Jews during Lenten carnivals and forced attendance at liturgies to hear *conversionary* sermons continued.

2. Papal Condemnation

In 1832 Gregory XVI declared: *“that we must secure and guarantee to each one liberty of conscience*, this is one of the most contagious of errors...To this is attached liberty of the press, the most dangerous liberty, an execrable liberty, which can never inspire sufficient horror.”* (James Carroll, Constantine's Sword, the Church and the Jews, p. 441)

*cf. Vatican Council II's teaching on the subject of conscience:

“Deep within our conscience we find a law which we have not laid upon ourselves, but which we must obey. Its voice, ever calling us to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in our heart at the right moment...For we have in our hearts a law inscribed by God...Our conscience is our most secret core and our sanctuary. There we are alone with God whose voice echoes in our depths.” “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” (*“Gaudium et Spes”*), December 1965

**“It is through our conscience that we see and recognize the demands of the divine law. We are bound to follow our conscience faithfully in all our activity so that we may come to God, who is our last end.”* “Declaration on Religious Liberty,” (*“Dignitatis Humanae”*), December 1965.

3. Ritual Murder (Blood Libel)

In April 1840, newspapers throughout Europe reported a story from Damascus, Syria about the disappearance of an elderly Italian Capuchin monk, **Fr. Tommaso**. Fellow monks spread a rumor that Fr. Tommaso had last been seen heading for the city's Jewish quarter (ghetto.) Twelve Jewish leaders were arrested. Four died from mistreatment; most of the rest, all of whom were tortured, confessed their involvement in the monk's ritual murder. **Jasper Chasseaud**, an American diplomat in Beirut, wrote: *“A most barbarous secret for a long time suspected in the Jewish nation...at last came to light in the city of Damascus, that of serving themselves of Christian blood in their unleavened bread...a secret which these 1840 years must have made many unfortunate victims.”*

4. Prince Metternich Rebuffed Again

In 1843, Prince Metternich, Austrian statesman and papacy protector, wrote Gregory XVI urging him to show tolerance toward Jews. Gregory refused, replying; “*the prohibitions on the Jews “a Nation of deicides and blasphemers of Christ,” forbidding them from employing Christian servants or wet nurses, from owning real estate...from living outside the ghetto are prohibitions founded in the sacred Canons. These, in order to guarantee Christian religion and morality, command the separation of Christians and Jews.*” (Kertzer, *ibid.*, p. 82)

II. Pope Pius IX Declares War on “Modernism” (1846 - 1878)

“It is from them (the Jews) that the synagogue of Satan, which gathers its troops against the Church of Christ, takes its strength.”
Pope Pius IX

Scope: **Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti** became pontiff in 1846, taking the name **Pius IX**. His pontificate (1846-78) was filled with military, political, and cultural turmoil, as Italian nationalists under the leadership of **Giuseppe Garibaldi** and **Camillo Benso**, Count of Cavour, sought to unify Italy, a collection of principalities and city-states, into a “modern” nation state. Pius IX opposed the unification movement (known as the “**Risorgimento**,” the Italian word for “Resurgence”) because, among other things, its success would sound the death knell for the Papal States. Rather than adapt to revolutionary changes sweeping Italy and Europe, Pius IX, like his predecessors before him, chose to resist them. He declared “war” on **modernism**, -- a war waged by the Church until 1965 when **Vatican Council II** finally declared a truce. In 1870, the unified Republic of Italy was born. The final curtain fell on eleven centuries of *theocratic* rule over much of Italian territory.

In an attempt to bolster the papacy’s authority undermined by loss of the Papal States, Pius IX convened **Vatican Council I** (1869-70), which, under his firm direction, promulgated, among other things, the Church’s most *triumphal* doctrine – **papal infallibility**. Ironically, the papacy’s loss of political power over the Papal States led to an increase of its *spiritual* authority over Catholics throughout the world. At a time of increasing *democratization*, one of the liberal trends of “modernity,” the Church became more *autocratic*. Vatican influence over the lives of the faithful grew, as church authority became more centralized in Rome. The authority of individual bishops within their dioceses and the role of bishop conferences were diminished.

Pius IX’s 32 year pontificate, longest in papal history, marked the beginning of the modern papacy. It intensified the Church’s “siege mentality,”

further concentrated church authority within the Vatican, and continued anti-Judaism as a core church doctrine. One critic describes his reign as “*the most reactionary pontificate of modern time.*”

A. Vatican “Siege Mentality” Intensifies

1. Pius IX Condemns Democracy

Pius IX, (**Pio Nono**), (1846-78) elected as the candidate of the liberal and moderate wings of the College of Cardinals, succeeded arch-conservative **Gregory XVI**. Initially somewhat sympathetic to democratic and modernizing reforms within Italy and the Church, he became increasingly reactionary after being deposed temporarily as ruler of the Papal States during the Revolution of 1848. Faced with a republican mob in Rome, Pius IX denounced the “*outrageous treason of democracy*” and threatened supporters of the republic with excommunication.

2. Jews Regain and Lose Freedom a Second Time

In November, 1848, Pius IX’s secretary of state was assassinated. Fearing chaos and popular revolt, he became the third pope in fifty years to flee Rome into exile. The following month **Giuseppe Garibaldi**’s army entered Rome. A unified Italian Republic was declared. As had happened when Napoleon’s army occupied Rome earlier in the 19th century, Jews were freed from the ghetto and granted equal citizenship rights. Jewish emancipation, however, once again proved to be short-lived because papal authority over the Papal States was restored in 1850, this time by *French* troops, pursuant to a concordat between the Vatican and Emperor Napoleon III of France.

3. The Communist Manifesto (1848)

In 1848, the **Communist Manifesto** was published and became the papacy’s worst nightmare.* Manifesto advocated a classless and stateless society; abolition of private property; free love; and abolition of inheritance. Worst of all, it advocated *abolition* of religion, describing it as “*the illusory happiness of the people*” and “*the opiate of the people,*” -- an obvious frontal assault on the Church. That **Karl Marx**, one of its authors, (the other was **Friedrich Engels**) was born a Jew, predictably, fueled animosity against Jews. (N.b. railing against **Judeo-Bolshevism** in speeches was one of Hitler’s favorite rhetorical devices – a proven method to inflame listeners.)

*The Church’s nightmare became reality some 70 years later with the Russian Revolution (1917-1918) which resulted in the overthrow of Czarist autocracy and elimination of the churches (Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox) from Russian society. Czar Nicholas, who ruled by “divine right,” and his family were executed. Religion was replaced by

“materialistic atheism.” In October 1917, the Bolsheviks issued a decree abolishing private ownership of all landed estates, confiscating and transferring all church property to the “people.” Church services were forbidden. At the time, the Roman Catholic Church of Russia had on deposit with the Ecclesiastical College of the Czarist regime a total of 11 million rubles, which was seized by the Soviet government.*

* His critics contend that **Pius XII** was more concerned with the threat of Bolshevism than Nazism, viewing the latter as a “bulwark” against the former and as “the lesser of two evils.”

4. Restrictions on Jews Reinstated

When Pius IX returned to Rome from exile in 1850, he was a changed man. Whatever moderate views he had at the beginning of his pontificate were discarded. Convinced that temporal control over the Papal States was essential to church survival, he proclaimed that forces of the “modern” world were arrayed against him. Jews, Christianity’s age old “*thorn in the side,*” most of whom supported the nationalist movement, had to be put back in their place. The Inquisition was re-established. The young Italian Republic’s conferral of civil equality for Jews was revoked. Jews were forced back into the ghetto. Restrictions on them were reinstated, including, revoking their property rights, banning them from public hospitals, preventing them from giving evidence against Christians in papal courts and excluding them from schools of secondary and higher education. Additionally, Pius IX pressured rulers of nation states where Jews had already been given rights of citizenship to revoke them. (E.g. Prussia granted citizenship rights to Jews in 1812, Denmark and Belgium in 1814)

5. Pope Denounces Civil Rights

Contending that the Church was a “**perfect society,**”* Pius IX denounced separation of church and state, democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and other *liberal* ideas sweeping Europe in the mid-19th century. A united and *secular* Italy; an end to temporal power over the Papal States, were, in his view, violations of God’s *divinely ordained* plan and, therefore, “blasphemy.”

*“*The Spanish State recognises in the (Roman) Catholic Church the character of the perfect society...*” So begins Article 2 of fascist **Generalissimo Franco**’s concordat with the Vatican, echoing Pope Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors* (Article 19) which proclaimed the Church to be a “perfect society.” This doctrine can be traced back to St. Augustine’s book The City of God, written in the 4th century. The concordat, moreover, asserts that civil law cannot prevail over church teaching.

*Cf. Vatican Council II's teaching on the issue of the Church as a "perfect society:" *"The Church....will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, when the time for the renewal of all things will have come (Acts 3:21.)"* Vatican Council II's "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," (*"Lumen Gentium,"* November, 1964)

B. The Edgardo Mortara Kidnapping Case. . **A forced baptism becomes a *cause celebre*.**

1. In 1858, a sick five year old Jewish boy, **Edgardo Mortara**, who lived in the papal state of Bologna, was baptized *without* his parents' knowledge or consent by a Catholic servant girl who feared he would die and go to hell. As church/canon law forbade a baptized Christian to be raised by Jews, even his own parents, Pius IX ordered the Holy Inquisition to forcibly remove the child from his parents. Claiming "divine inspiration," Pius IX steadfastly refused to return the boy to his parents, insisting that raising him as Catholic was "God's will." Pius later *adopted* the child who as an adult, estranged from his parents, was ordained as a priest.

Despite an international outcry and strong diplomatic pressure from **Emperor Napoleon III** of France (whose troops were defending Rome against the Italian nationalist army) and **Emperor Franz Joseph** of Austria, Pius IX refused to change his position. No less than 20 negative editorials were published in the "New York Times" alone. His refusal to relent undermined public support for the continuation of the Papal States -- one of the last vestiges of the *medieval* papacy.*

*N.b. In 1946, the Vatican refused to permit the return to surviving relatives of "hidden" Jewish children of French nationality baptized during the Holocaust. In a recently revealed letter from **Pope Pius XII** dated November 20, 1946, he decrees that *only* those children be returned to their parents who had not been baptized. Pius' defenders counter that the letter is either a forgery or a misinterpretation.

2. John Cornwell writes: *"The notion of Jewish obstinacy was a crucial element in the case of Edgardo Mortara. When the parents of the kidnapped Edgardo pleaded in person with the Pope for the return of their son, Pio Nono told them that they could have their son back at once if only they converted to Catholicism -- which, of course, they would do instantly if they opened their hearts to Christian revelation. But they would not, and did not. The Mortaras, in the view of Pio Nono, had brought all their suffering upon their own heads as a result of their obduracy."** (Cornwell, Hitler's Pope, p. 27)

*Another example of "blaming the victim" for the victim's misfortune.

3. In 1867, Pius IX spearheaded an effort to have **Peter Arbues**, a 15th century inquisitor famed for the forcible conversion of Jews, canonized to sainthood. In the canonization document, Pius IX stated: *“Divine wisdom has arranged that in these sad days, when Jews help the enemies of the Church with their books and money, this decree of sanctity has been brought to fulfillment.”*

C. The Syllabus of Errors (1864)

1. In 1864, Pius IX set the Church on a course firmly opposed to the modern world with his encyclical **“Syllabus of Errors,”*** a list of 80 *errors* he, as pope, condemned, including religious freedom, separation of church and state, ending church control of public schools; bible societies, liberalism, rationalism, socialism, *communism* and the notion that the papacy ought to reconcile itself with progress and modern civilization. The Church, he maintained, was besieged by “demonic” forces, a conspiracy of secret sects, i.e. Freemasons and Jews,** concluding...*“it is from them (the Jews) that the synagogue of Satan, which gathers its troops against the Church of Christ, takes its strength.”*

* Thomas Bokenkotter writes: *“The public commotion that resulted from the Syllabus (of Errors) was without parallel in the history of the Church until our own day.... (as) it struck against the board mainstream of public opinion. Even the average Catholic was shocked to hear the Pope condemning progress and modern civilization.”* (Bokenkotter, A Concise History of the Catholic Church, p.282)

**Jews have been characterized as “demons” since, at least, the era of the Church Fathers in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE.

D. Ritual Murder Myth Persists

1. In 1867, Pius IX gave “respectability” to the ritual murder myth by decreeing that the cult surrounding an allegedly martyred child, **Lorenzino of Marastica**, be accorded official status. According to church accounts, on Good Friday 1485, when the child went out to play, Jews seized him, tore off his clothes and crucified him on a nearby tree, draining his blood to make Passover matzos.

2. In 1869, **Henri Gougenot des Mousseaux** published a book, The Jew: Judaism and the Judaization of Christian Peoples, arguing that Jews required the blood of Christian children for their Passover bread. Pius IX praised the book and its author, awarding him the Cross of Commander of the Papal Order.

E. Vatican Council I (1869-70)

1. The **Council of Trent** (1545-1563) was the Church’s primary response to the Protestant Reformation. The Council, among other things, condemned Protestant reformers as heretics and defined various doctrines. It failed, however,

to correct some obvious abuses that had developed within the Church for fear of acknowledging the *correctness* of any of the reformers' claims. The next church council, **Vatican Council I**, was convened, *three hundred years* later in 1869, as the papacy was on the brink of losing control over the Papal States.

2. Vatican Council I affirmed Pius' encyclical, the *Syllabus of Errors*; declared the dogma of **papal infallibility**; and reinforced the doctrines of **supercessionism, triumphalism** and **ultramontainism**, all attempts to shore up and centralize church authority within the Vatican in Rome. Dogma is defined as "the established belief or doctrine held by a religion or ideology that is authoritative and not to be disputed, doubted, or diverged from." In Roman Catholicism, for example, "Jesus is the Lord" is dogma.

a. "papal infallibility" * is the dogma that by action of the Holy Spirit, the pope is preserved from error when he solemnly promulgates dogmatic teachings on faith or *morals*.** By 1869 most Catholics already believed that a pope had the power to define dogma without the concurrence of a church council. But no pontiff had ever said so *explicitly*, and some bishops, including **Bernard McQuaid**, bishop of Rochester, New York, opined that making "papal infallibility" a dogma would be a calamity for the Church. When the Archbishop of Bologna pointed out that church tradition in Europe argued against infallibility, Pius reputedly retorted, "*Tradizione!*" "*La Tradizione son Io!*" i.e. "Tradition! I am tradition!") and reassigned the Archbishop to a monastery.

*Throughout Europe, secure rulers and prime ministers expressed anger at Vatican Council I's proclamation of papal infallibility as dogma, fearing that if the pope were thought to be *infallible*, his authority would conflict with state authority, thereby undermining allegiance to the state among Roman Catholic citizens. **Bismarck**, Chancellor of newly unified Germany, for example, responded with *Kulturkampf*, see *infra*.

Lord Acton (1834-1902), English nobleman, Catholic liberal and critic of papal infallibility, in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887 wrote his famous "*Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" According to historian Thomas Bokenkotter, the increase of spiritual authority that accrued to the papacy from the dogma of papal infallibility more than compensated for its loss of temporal power over the Papal States.

**Widespread "failure of conscience," is one of the major causes of the Holocaust. Conscience is defined as an "aptitude, faculty, intuition, or judgment of the intellect that distinguishes right from wrong." Similar to other religions, Roman Catholicism links conscience to a *morality* inherent in all humans which emanates from God.

b. “triumphalism” is the claim that a particular doctrine, culture, or social system is superior to and should *triumph* over all others. The term is related to the doctrine of supercessionism.

c. “ultramontanism,” (“beyond the mountains” i.e. looking to Rome for guidance), is a movement which sought to marginalize *liberal* tendencies within the Church and *centralize* authority within the Vatican.” Historian **Jacques Kornberg** claims that ultramontanism: “*mobilized antisemitism for its campaign against liberalism.*” (Carroll, *ibid.*, p. 445)

3. In August 1870, while Vatican Council I was still in session, French troops occupying Rome withdrew to fight in the Franco-Prussian war. The next month, Italian troops under Garibaldi recaptured Rome and declared it to be the capital of the unified Republic of Italy, ending the papacy’s 1000 year reign of temporal rule over central Italy.* Vatican Council I was suspended *sine die*, without completing its agenda.

*According to one historian the *Middle Ages* finally came to an end , in September 1870 as “...*Europe’s last theocratic government was ended and with it a model of government based on a mixture of church law and civil law, of discrimination against those practicing minority religions, of church monopoly over education and social services, and the use of police powers to enforce religious observance.*”

F. Collapse of the Papal States (1870)

1. With the collapse of the Papal States in 1870, the papacy’s siege mentality intensified. Judaism was considered to be *the* primary threat to Christianity, second only to atheistic communism. That Jews were among the wealthiest and most influential backers of the revolutionary trends battering the Church made Jews especially dangerous -- an attitude which stoked the fires of nascent anti-Semitism, see *infra*.

2. Addressing members of a Catholic women’s group in August 1870 Pius IX proclaimed: before the time of Jesus, the Jews “*had been children in the House of God.*” But, all this changed, for “*owing to their obstinacy and their failure to believe, they became dogs.*” Speaking just months after Italian republican forces freed Jews from Rome’s ghetto, he bemoaned the result: “*We have today in Rome unfortunately too many of these dogs, and we hear them barking in all the streets, and going around molesting people everywhere.*” (Kertzer, *ibid.* p.130)

3. When Rome fell to Italian nationalists, Pius IX, proclaimed himself a “prisoner of the Vatican,” refused to recognize the new Italian state and forbade Catholics, upon penalty of excommunication, to vote or otherwise participate in Italian civic life. Charging that “*the ideals of Italian patriots were the work of the*

devil,” he excommunicated King Victor Emmanuel II, Garibaldi, Cavour, and anyone who supported the Italian nationalist movement.

4. Not until *after World War I*, in 1919, some 50 years later, did **Pope Benedict XV** (1914-1922) lift Pius IX’s ban on Catholics voting in national elections or serving in Italy’s parliament. Animosity between the papacy and Italy’s government lasted until 1929, when **Benito Mussolini** and the Vatican signed a concordat, the **Lateran Treaty**,* in which the Vatican recognized the legitimacy of the fascist Italian state. In return the Church was granted rights of sovereignty over the territory of Vatican City.** Roman Catholicism became Italy’s *official* and *sole* religion.

*The Lateran Treaty with Mussolini in 1929 became the model for the **Reich Concordat** with Hitler in 1933, which, as noted previously, historian James Carroll terms “*a foundation stone of the Shoah.*”

**Vatican City is a landlocked “sovereign” city state of 110 acres located inside the city of Rome... within walking distance of Rome’s historic Jewish ghetto.

G. Kulturkampf (1871-1878)

1. **Kulturkampf** ("Culture Struggle") refers to a period in German history (1871-1878) when anti-Catholic legislation was enacted under the leadership of **Otto von Bismarck**, chancellor of newly unified Germany.*. Despite losing temporal power over the Papal States, the papacy still retained considerable influence over the secular affairs of European countries, especially those with large Catholic populations. Catholics made up about one third of Germany’s population, residing, for the most part, in Bavaria (in the south).

Following Vatican Council I’s declaration of *papal infallibility* as dogma, Bismarck increasingly viewed German Catholics as the “enemy within,” a potentially *divisive* force in the newly formed “Second” Reich. Allegiance to the pope, he reasoned, diminished a Roman Catholic’s allegiance to the state. (The same fear was raised by certain Protestants when John F. Kennedy was a candidate for President of the United States in 1960.) By imposing controls on church activities, Bismarck sought to neutralize Vatican influence, thereby bolstering state power. In particular, Bismarck feared the influence the **Catholic Center Party**, a political party formed in 1870, which 63 years later would be disbanded as a condition of the **Reich Concordat**. Vatican Secretary of State **Eugenio Pacelli**, the future **Pope Pius XII**, negotiated and signed the Reich Concordat with Nazi Germany in 1933. In this document, among other things, the Church agreed not to interfere in German state affairs and Hitler agreed not to interfere in church affairs. **

*For Jews, one result of the unification of Germany in 1871 was full citizenship in the Second Reich... which was stripped away by the Nazi regime in the **Nuremburg Laws** of 1935.

**Some historians charge that the Vatican's agreement not to interfere in German state affairs and the Vatican's subsequent policy of "neutrality" during WWII were *constraints* on Roman Catholic opposition to Nazi race policies.

2. Kulturkampf started with a series of laws intended to curb "abuse" of the pulpit for "political" ends. Subsequent laws mandated state control of religious education; conferred power to dismiss pastors; authority to confiscate church property; and withdrew state subsidies from priests who refused to cooperate with the regime. In 1872, priests and nuns were banned from teaching posts and all Jesuit priests were ordered out of Germany.

In May of 1873 the Reichstag (the legislature) enacted two laws, one granting state authority to oversee training and assignments of priests, and, the other, placing bishops under state control. When most clergy *resisted*, hundreds of clerics, including bishops, were jailed or exiled. Lay Catholics supported their clergy and in many towns spontaneous rallies erupted when angry demonstrators gathered while police arrested priests.

3. In 1875, Pius IX issued an encyclical declaring the May 1873 laws were null and void, stating: "...since they (the offending laws) are completely contrary to the God-given institution of the Church," he urged, German Catholics to "passively resist"* them. Furthermore, he decreed that any priest who cooperated in the implementation of the laws would be *excommunicated*. As Pius IX ratcheted up the Church's opposition to Kulturkampf, becoming in the process more and more of a political headache, Bismarck gradually moderated his anti-church policies. After Pius IX's death on February 7, 1878, Bismarck reconciled with Pius' successor, **Leo XIII**, lifting most of the onerous sanctions.**

* "Passive resistance" is a type of "civil disobedience."

Historian James Carroll writes that: "*Pius IX was able to get Bismarck to back down in his attempt to limit church authority in Germany, demonstrating the kind of resistance the Roman Catholic Church could mount, both locally and from the Vatican, when confronted with a ruthless, calculated and systematic attempt to destroy it. The Church response to Bismarck, in that sense, sets a **standard** against which its later behavior, in response to Hitler, must be measured.*"(Ibid. p.487) Emphasis mine.

H. Beatification of Pius IX (2000)

1. In September, 2000, **Pope John Paul II**, despite considerable opposition,* beatified Pius IX, the last step before canonization to sainthood. The announcement shocked many admirers of Pope John Paul's historic fence-mending with Jews, including his prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem (see *supra*). “*It hit like a thunderbolt from heaven,*” said **Elena Mortara**, professor of American literature at the University of Rome and great-great-granddaughter of Edgardo Mortara's sister. “*Pius IX's repression of Jews' civil rights,*” she added, “*is in itself serious enough to stop this beatification.*”

*see online: ww.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,53415,00.html.

2. One of Pius IX's critics describes him as “*an anti-Semite, a child snatcher, an opponent of Italian unification and father of the dogma of papal infallibility.*” In remarks during the beatification Mass, John Paul II attempted to put Pius' pontificate in historical context stating: “*By beatifying one of its children, the church does not celebrate particular historical choices but points him out for imitation and veneration for his virtues:*” adding that Pius, who reigned longer than any pope since St Peter, had been “*much loved, hated and slandered.*”

III. Birth of Modern Anti-Semitism (1870-1914)

“*For centuries the Catholic Church...harbored 'anti-Semitism' at its core, as an integral part of its doctrine, its theology, and its liturgy. It did so with the divine justification of the Christian Bible that Jews were Christ-killers, minions of the devil.*” **Daniel Jonah Goldhagen**

Scope: Historians trace the beginning of modern anti-Semitism from the collapse of the Papal States. In the third quarter of 19th century, traditional *blood* accusations leveled against Jews merged with new pseudo-scientific theories of **Charles Darwin** (Darwinism); **Herbert Spencer** (Social Darwinism) and **Frederic Nietzsche** (the “will to power”), which resulted in **anti-Judaism** based on *religion*, the Church's traditional bias against Jews, spawning **anti-Semitism*** based on *race*. Until that time, Christians had viewed Jews as *religious* inferiors, stricken with an infirmity that *conversion* to the true faith could remedy. With the rise of Nazism in the 1930's and its “*eliminationalist*” racial policy, however, Jews, even those who converted to Christianity, were viewed as **subhuman** (*untermenschen*), condemned to annihilation by their DNA.

*The word “anti-Semitism” was first penned in 1879 by German journalist Wilhelm Marr, himself an *anti-Semite*.

The uniqueness of the Holocaust is rooted in the form, function and determination of the Nazi ideology that brought it about. Adopting an extreme version of anti-Semitism, the Nazis depicted Jews not only as an *inferior* race (of *demons*), but also as the root of all evil, including the evil **Bolshevism**, whose threat could only be removed by “elimination” from European society. Under this view, Jews were carriers of absolute *evil* in their “genes” and “blood.” In 1923, early on in his political career Hitler proclaimed that “*the Jew is a race, but not human.*” Holding Jews responsible for the Weimar Republic’s social, political and economic problems, Hitler, upon his ascendancy to power as Chancellor of Germany in 1933, began to systematically strip away Jewish citizenship *and* human rights – rights gained just 50 years earlier with the unification of Germany. He then embarked on the path, first revealed in his 1925 autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, (‘My Struggle’) leading to the annihilation of six million Jews.

Admittedly, Nazi racist ideology differed greatly from previously encountered anti-Semitic tradition, but, most historians agree, it could not have been so diabolically effective in 20th century Europe without building on the foundation of already existing hatred against Jews – a hatred that shaped the European psyche and *conscience* for 1900 years.

A. Fanning the Flames of Anti-Semitism.

1. The Catholic Press

a. The Edgardo Mortara forced baptism case in 1858 demonstrated the power of the popular press to shape public opinion *against* the Church. To counter this influence, Pius IX encouraged the Catholic press to redouble its efforts to *promote* church positions. One influential Catholic periodical, founded in 1850, was the biweekly, “*La Civiltà Cattolica*,” regarded as the unofficial voice of the papacy. Every article was cleared before publication by the Vatican secretary of state. In December 1880, it kicked off an anti-Jewish campaign with a series of 36 articles.

b. The articles, perpetuating medieval myths and libels against Jews, offered an explanation for recent outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in Germany. In one, the author wrote that because Jews were obligated by their religion to hate non-Jews, Christians despised them. Societies, therefore, had to protect themselves, and so, he concluded, “*governments would be well advised to introduce exceptional laws for a ‘race’ that is so exceptionally and profoundly perverse.*” These special laws, the articles argued, would benefit Jews as well, for it was only by restoring such restrictions that popular violence against them could be prevented. Emphasis mine.

c. Another article attempted to prove that **ritual murder** was an integral element of Judaic ritual which occurred at Purim rather than

Passover. *"It is in vain that Jews seek to slough off the weight of argument against them: the mystery has become known to all."*

d. All 36 articles were written by a Jesuit priest, **Fr. Giuseppe di Santo Stefano**, one of the journal's founders. Certain themes were repeated continuously. For example, Jews had always benefited from the *kindness* of the Church, especially that of popes. Jews had lived happily in ghettos and Christians, therefore, had been able to live peaceably protected from them. That Jews were forbidden to own real property or to practice certain occupations in the Papal States actually benefitted them because such restrictions not only prevented Jews from becoming wealthy, but *"also prevented them from being too despised."* ...As history had shown...*"if this foreign Jewish 'race' is left too free, it immediately becomes the persecutor, oppressor, tyrant, thief, and devastator of the countries where it lives."* **Special laws**,* were required to keep Jews in their appropriate place and to protect Christian society from the hostility Jews harbored *"against all human society not belonging to their 'race.'"* *Far from persecuting Jews, such legislation served to prevent Jews from persecuting Christians.* (Kertzer, *ibid.* p.136) Emphasis mine.

*C.f. Hitler's **Nuremburg Laws** of 1935 and Mussolini's **Manifesto of Italian Racism** of 1938.

e. Another founding editor, **Fr. Giuseppe Oreglia S.J.** wrote in an article: ...*"The Jews – eternal insolent children, obstinate, dirty, thieves, liars, ignoramuses, pests and the scourge of those near and far...managed to lay their hands on...all public wealth...and virtually alone they took control not only of all the money...but of the law itself in those countries where they have been allowed to hold public offices...(yet they complain) at the first shout by anyone who dares raise his voice against this barbarian invasion by an enemy 'race,' hostile to Christianity and to society in general."* Emphasis mine.

f. By the beginning of the 20th century, there were approximately 500 Catholic periodicals in Italy, including 30 daily newspapers. What marked the most important and influential of these periodicals was a fierce loyalty to the pope and a pioneering role in developing a new more strident form of anti-Semitism. (Kertzer, *ibid.* p.134).

g. "**L'Osservatore Romano**," the Vatican daily newspaper, was even closer to the pope than "La Civiltà Cattolica." In 1892, with anti-Semitic movements gaining force in Europe, "L'Osservatore" devoted a series of articles to the "Jewish question." One article argued that the reason recent pogroms in Russia (as depicted in the Broadway musical "Fiddler on the Roof") had stirred up so much sympathy showed that they could only have been *engineered by the Jews themselves**. *"We would*

not stray far from the truth if we said that the rather heavy-handed blow that the Muscovite Empire has aimed at the children of Judah has played into the hands of Judaism, for it has engendered compassion for the Jews, against whom the Christian and civil world has, for good reason, begun to rebel.” The article went on to argue, on similar grounds, that French, Russian, and Austrian anti-Semitic movements were the work of “*cosmopolitan Judaism.*” Emphasis mine.

*“Blaming the victim” continues to the present day, e.g., the **Arun Gandhi** controversy in 2007 at the University of Rochester’s M.K.Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence.

h. By the 20th century, most Catholic journalists were using the term “anti-Semitism” with approbation. “*In its original form, anti-Semitism is nothing but the absolutely necessary and natural reaction to the Jews’ arrogance,*” the Vienna correspondent for “*La Civiltà Cattolica,*” wrote in 1922, adding, “*Catholic anti-Semitism -- while never going beyond the limits of moral law -- adopts all necessary means to emancipate the Christian people from the abuse they suffer from their sworn enemy.*”

i. **Pope Benedict XV** (1914-1922) is credited with suppressing the “last” vestiges of anti-Semitism in Italy’s “papally linked press.” He condemned anti-Semitism in a widely circulated 1916 statement, issued at the request of the American Jewish Committee, which pleaded for the pope to protest yet another anti-Semitic *pogrom* in Poland.

2. Pulpit and Liturgy

a. Anti-Jewish animus expressed in the Catholic press was also routinely sounded from church pulpits in Catholic homilies (sermons), particularly during the Easter season. Anti-Jewish preaching has its root in sermons of the Church Fathers in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

b. Passion plays, like the famous **Oberammergau** passion play in Germany often vilified Jews in their portrayal of the passion and crucifixion of Jesus. (cf. Mel Gibson’s movie – “**The Passion of the Christ.**”*)

*Historian James Carroll characterizes Gibson’s movie as an “*obscene portrayal of Christ’s passion... (which)... incites contempt for Jews,*” adding, it is “*an anti-Jewish twisting of the Gospel story,*” ...” a product of Gibson’s “*ultra-conservative brand of Catholicism.*”

c. Until Vatican II ended the practice in 1965,* the Good Friday gospel reading from Matthew 27:25 in the Latin Rite Mass, in which the congregation participates, speaking aloud various responses, included language put in the mouths of the Jewish crowd at Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate, saying: *His blood be upon us and upon our children.***

*It should be noted, however, that in 2007, **Pope Benedict XVI** removed Vatican II's restriction on celebrating the Latin Rite Mass with its offensive language to Jews.

** In various Christian communities, it was not uncommon for riots against Jews to break out following Good Friday liturgies.

d. **Prayer for Conversion of the Jews.**

Praying for the conversion of the Jews was recited in Catholic liturgies until 1955. It read:

*Let us pray also for the **perfidious*** Jews: that Almighty God may remove the veil from their hearts (2 Corinthians 3:13-16) so that they too may acknowledge Jesus Christ our Lord. Almighty and eternal God, who dost not exclude from thy mercy even Jewish **perfidiousness**: hear our prayers, which we offer for the blindness of that people; that acknowledging the light of thy Truth, which is Christ, they may be delivered from their darkness. Through the same Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*the Greek word in the original biblical text is more properly translated "*faithless*."

B. Theoretical Underpinnings of Anti-Semitism

1. Jews Defined by Race

During the last third of the 19th century, there emerged in Europe a *racist* perception of Jews which resulted, in part, from technological progress and scientific advancements in the fields of biology, psychology, anthropology, genetics, and evolution. This perception developed within a broader racist worldview, based on notions of *inequality* of races and the alleged *superiority* of the *white race* over other races.

2. The German *Voelkisch* (Volk) Movement

The 19th century German xenophobic *voelkisch* movement ("people's movement"), an expression of romantic German nationalism,

made up of philosophers, scholars, and artists (e.g. opera composer **Richard Wagner**) viewed Jews as *non-German*, an obstacle to the fulfillment of their nation's "rightful" destiny. Nazi ideology envisioned a new German society based on racial purity, nationalism, patriotism, and destiny. This new German society would elevate Germany to world class status and reverse the national humiliation suffered by Germans in their nation's WWI defeat and the *humiliating* terms of the **Versailles Treaty**.*

*Jews were scapegoated for these and other "national" indignities.

Members of this new German society were to be of the **Aryan** "master race," genetically healthy, socially useful and politically reliable. Because Jews represented everything diametrically opposed to this new society, their *elimination* was necessary.

3. Social Darwinism

"Social Darwinism," **Herbert Spencer**'s adaptation of **Charles Darwin**'s theory of evolution, postulated that humans were not one race, but several different *races* biologically driven to struggle against one another for *living space* to ensure "survival of the fittest." Only those races with superior qualities could win this eternal struggle characterized by force and warfare. Under this worldview, Jews were a lower and *racially* defective form of life, albeit immensely powerful and dangerous.

4. Nietzscheism.

A great influence on Hitler's worldview was German philosopher **Frederic Nietzsche** whose ideas included: the "death of God;" the master-slave mentality; herd instinct; and the ascendancy of a "master race," a "superman" ("*ubermensch*"), and the existence of "subhuman" life forms ("*untermenschen*.")

5. "Mein Kampf" (1925) sets forth Hitler's *Virulent Racist Views eight years before he assumes power*

Hitler's **Mein Kampf** ("My Struggle") first published in 1925, called for *elimination* of Jews from Germany to prevent the defilement of Aryan blood and corruption of European culture. Referring to Jews as *vermin, parasites, maggots, polluters and destroyers of Aryan humanity*, his virulent anti-Semitism was apparent for all to see.

The form of anti-Semitism Hitler embraced* denied the humanity of Jews, not just to the point of viewing them as inhuman or subhuman, but "*anti-human*". To the anti-Semitic mind of a Nazi, Jews were

responsible for all that was evil in the world. They killed Christ in “Satan’s service,” obstinately refused to convert to Christianity, and, contrary to church doctrine, their conversion to Christianity would not earn them a place in the **Greater Third Reich**, viewed as encompassing all of Europe, including the USSR. Every Jew was innately a criminal. **Joseph Goebbels**, Nazi Propaganda Minister, in 1944 asserted, “*The annihilation of Jewry is no loss to humanity, but just as useful as capital punishment or protective custody against other criminals.*”

* Swedish historian **Sven Lindquist** writes, “*We want genocide to have begun and ended with Nazism. But it didn't. Hitler was less the beneficiary than the product of religious and racial assumptions that had their origins, perhaps, in the Jew-hating sermons of (Church Fathers) St. John Chrysostom or St. Ambrose, and certainly in the blood purity obsession of (Grand Inquisitor) Torquemada.*”

In pursuit of their goal of a racially pure Greater Third Reich, the Nazis abandoned the fundamental commandment of traditional morality, “***Thou shall not kill.***” Hitler stressed this point when he said:

“*The Ten Commandments have lost their validity... Providence has ordained that I should be the greatest liberator of humanity. I am freeing man from the restraint of an intelligence that has taken charge; from the dirty and degrading self-mortification of a chimera called **conscience** and **morality**, and from the demands of a freedom and personal independence which only a few can bear...*” Emphasis mine.

6. Anti-Judaism Cultivates the Soil of Anti-Semitism

Most historians agree that Christian anti-Judaism, which dehumanized and demonized Jews, pre-conditioned 20th century European receptivity to Nazi anti-Semitism.* Here’s what two historians write on the subject:

* “*Auschwitz, when seen in the links of causality, reveals that the hatred of Jews has been...a central action of Christian history, reaching to the core of Christian character...Because the hatred of Jews had been made holy, it became lethal...However modern Nazism was, it planted its roots in the soil of age-old Church attitudes and a nearly unbroken chain of Church-sponsored acts of Jew-hatred. However pagan Nazism was, it drew its sustenance from groundwater poisoned by the Church’s most solemnly held ideology—its theology.*” James Carroll, *ibid.* p.22

"The Nazis found the teachings of the Church to be such fertile soil that they naturally and routinely drew on Christian anti-Semitic motifs to facilitate, politically and culturally, the spreading and reinforcing of their own anti-Semitism. **Julius Streicher (founder and publisher of "Der Stürmer," the Nazi newspaper) in a 1936 Christmas address to two thousand children in Nuremburg effortlessly mobilized the Christian knowledge that the children already possessed: 'Do you know who the Devil is? he asked...' 'The Jew, the Jew,' resounded from a thousand children's voices." Daniel Goldhagen, A Moral Awakening, p. 139*

7. An Italian Fascist's View

In 1939, **Roberto Farinacci**, a member of Mussolini's Fascist Grand Council, while speaking on "The Church and the Jews" said: "*We fascist Catholics consider the Jewish problem from a strictly political point of view... But it comforts our souls to know that if, as Catholics, we became anti-Semites, we owe it to the teachings that the Church has promulgated over the past twenty centuries.*"

C. Ritual Murder /Blood Libel in the 20th Century.

1. Although the first known instance of blood libel is found in the writings of **Apion**, an early 1st century Greco-Egyptian who claimed that Jews sacrificed Greek victims in the Temple, no further incidents are recorded until the 12th century, when blood libel accusations began to proliferate in Christian Europe.*

*anti-Semitism, what sociologists view as a "social pathology," has been termed the "*world's longest hatred.*"

2. Blood libel accusations, as noted previously, are based on assertions that the blood of Christian children is coveted for use in Jewish religious rituals. Historically these claims have been made to account for the otherwise *unexplained* disappearance and deaths of children.

3. In some cases, the alleged child victim of human sacrifice eventually became "venerated" by the Church," i.e. the martyr cult that arose regarding **Lorenzino of Marastica** who died in 1485 (see *supra*). A few have been even canonized as saints. Many Jews have been killed as a result of false blood libels, a trend that continued into the 20th century, as depicted in the notorious (Menachem Mendel) **Beilis Trial** in Russia (see author **Bernard Malamud**'s The Fixer). Although discredited, these libels persist today, particularly in Muslim countries.

4. **Local connection.** In 1928 when a four year old girl went missing during Yom Kippur in the upstate New York community of Messina, a town resident suggested it could be a blood libel kidnapping. Even though the little girl turned up unharmed after wandering into the woods, there was speculation that she was only released because the plot was discovered. Accordingly, the mayor organized a boycott* of Massena's Jewish owned businesses.

*The Nazis organized a boycott of Jews businesses in 1933, the year Hitler became chancellor of Germany. Similar boycotts occurred later in Poland and elsewhere. The one in Poland was endorsed by that country's Roman Catholic prelate.

D. Conspiracy Theory

1. The **Protocols of the Elders of Zion**, first published in 1903 in Russia, alleges a Jewish conspiracy to achieve world domination and/or destroy civilization. Best known example of a literary *forgery* and *hoax*,* it was re-published in 1905 by a Russian Orthodox priest, **Sergius Nilus**, in a book about the coming of the Antichrist. It was promoted as the record of "secret rabbinical conferences" whose aim was to subjugate and exterminate Christians. *Protocols* takes the form of a speech outlining how to accomplish world domination, including taking control of media and finance.

* *Protocols* is still in circulation. It appears from time to time, especially in Islamic media.

2. The text was popularized by opponents of the **Russian Revolutionary Movement**, gaining worldwide circulation after the October 1917 Revolution. The rise of Nazism was fueled by the *Protocols* as Nazi propaganda *characterized* the turbulent post World War I period in Europe as a "*war between the Jews and humanity*," with Aryan Germany the only nation willing and able to stand up against Jews for humanity.

E. The Dreyfus Affair

1. The anti-Semitic campaign against **Alfred Dreyfus**, a French military officer convicted of treason in 1894 on forged documents, was largely driven by Catholics who denounced Dreyfus for his "*perfidious Jewishness*." The Order of Assumptionist Fathers made this a special mission of its daily newspaper, "La Croix." **Owen Chadwick**, author of *History of the Popes: 1830-1914* says of this campaign that it "*was the most powerful and extreme journalism ever conducted by an otherworldly religious order during the history of Christendom*."

2. “*L’Osservatore Romano*,” the Vatican daily newspaper, defended anti-Semitic mobs that protested the reversal Dreyfus’ rigged conviction by saying: “*The Jewish race, the deicide people, wanderer throughout the world, brings with it everywhere the pestiferous breath of treason.*”

F. Pius X (1903-1914)

1. Pius X Continues Pius IX’s “War” on Modernism

Pius X (1903-14) vigorously prosecuted the papacy’s campaign against “modernism,” declaring that “*modernism constituted not a heresy, but the compendium and poison of all heresies.*” He condemned “rebels” who reject Catholic doctrine and urge the Church itself adapt to modern times. Like his predecessors, he refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Italian republic.

In April, 1907, Pius X issued “*Pascendi*,” his encyclical against modernism. Building on the work of his predecessors, it reinforced much of the dogmatic and authoritarian tone of church teaching. It reiterated the supreme authority of the papacy, demanded obedience of the faithful*, and made clear that intellectual questions within the Church were not matters for scholarly peer-group discussion but *moral* matters to be resolved under papal authority. This continued church policy which discouraged “independent” thinking by Catholic clergy, theologians and laity.* Emphasis mine.

*The laity’s role, as noted previously, was said, derisively, to be to: “pay, pray, and obey.”

2. The Anti-Modernist Oath (1910)

In 1910, Pius X issued a directive mandating that priests swear an oath denouncing modernism. Known as the **Anti-Modernist Oath**, it required unequivocal acceptance of all papal teachings and acquiescence in the meaning and sense of all teachings as decreed by the Pope, which historian John Cornwell terms “*a form of thought control unrivalled even under fascist and communist regimes.*” Priests were required to take the Anti-Modernist Oath until it was abolished by Vatican Council II in 1967.

3. Catholic Scholarship Discouraged

Pius X's aggressive stance against modernism adversely affected biblical and theological study within the Church. Although only forty or so priests refused to take the Oath, Catholic scholarship with *modernistic* or *liberal* tendencies was discouraged. Theologians who sought to pursue

lines of inquiry “*tainted*” with “secularism, modernism, or relativism” were threatened with excommunication. Ironically, some of these theologians viewed with suspicion by the Vatican before 1960 became the *periti*, i.e. theological experts, of Vatican Council II. The Church’s *fundamentalist/literalist* view of scripture continued unchanged; “modern” biblical scholarship, *new* approaches to biblical interpretation,* were discouraged until 1943 when Pope Pius XII issued his encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which finally reversed the policy.

*One “new” approach to biblical interpretation, known as “contextual/historical criticism” advocates for reading the words of Scripture in *historical context*. Biblical scholars using this approach conclude that passages used to vilify Jews over the centuries are “read out of their Jewish context.” In biblical criticism, *Sitz im Leben* is a German phrase roughly translating to “setting in life.” In other words, there can be no meaning of a text without understanding the context in which it was written.

4. Pius X Supports Jewish Conspiracy Theory

Pius X favored a high official in his secretariat of state, **Monsignor Umberto Benigni**, who became one of the two principal distributors of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” in Italy. In 1913, Pius X refused to intervene in the (Menachem Mendel) Beilis trial, see *supra*, the 20th century’s most infamous trial of a Jew accused of ritual murder. After a Catholic priest testified that such murders were historical fact, a number of influential English Jews asked the Duke of Norfolk, a Catholic, to request that the pope refute the libel. Pius X’s secretary of state, speaking for the pope, refused to do so. Historian David Kertzer charges: “*by not taking this step, the pope allowed the Catholic press, including that part of it viewed inside and outside the church as communicating the pope’s true sentiment, to continue to tar the Jews with the ritual murder charge.*”

5. Reform of Canon Law (1917)

Prior to 1917, the Church’s Code of Canon Law varied from region to region, lacking overall uniformity. On March 19, 1904, Pius X named a commission to draft a universal set of laws for the twentieth century. Two of his successors worked in the commission, **G.della Chiesa** who became **Pope Benedict XV** and **Eugenio Pacelli**, who became **Pope Pius XII**. The new Code of Canon Law was promulgated after **Pius X’s** death by Benedict XV in 1917.*

* Canon 218 of the new Code defined the pope’s authority as “*the supreme and most complete jurisdiction throughout the*

Church, both in matters of faith and morals and in those that affect discipline and Church government throughout the world.”

6. Pius X Canonized a Saint

Pius X was canonized a saint by Pius XII in 1954, becoming the only pope elevated to sainthood in modern history. Popes Pius IX and Pius XII, as previously noted, have been proposed for sainthood, as has John XXIII.

G. Two Conclusions on the Shoah

1. *“The Shoah was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity...”*

Holy See’s Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, **“We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah”** (1998)

2. *“Christian anti-Judaism did lay the ground work for racial, genocidal anti-Semitism by stigmatizing not only Judaism but Jews themselves for opprobrium and contempt. So the Nazi theories tragically found fertile soil in which to plant the horror of an unprecedented attempt at genocide.”*

U.S. Catholic Conference, **“Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See’s ‘We Remember.’”** (2001)

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