

**Jews and Judaism in the Political Theology
of Radical Catholic Traditionalists**

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ABSTRACT

The controversies over Holocaust-denying Bishop Richard Williamson, and earlier over Mel Gibson's film, The Passion of the Christ, have given prominence to radical Catholic traditionalists and their growing influence. The recent pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI saw a great investment of political capital seeking reconciliation with the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), yet this effort failed, in great part due to the antisemitism that permeates the Society. Williamson and the Holocaust deniers are often represented as isolated individual representatives of the radical traditionalists, especially after Williamson's expulsion from the SSPX. In reality it can be argued that the radical traditionalist movement is based upon classical supercessionist theology and that there has often been an effort to cloak this theology from public view. I will trace its roots from Europe to the United States, focusing on Father Charles Coughlin, the "radio priest" whose audience stretched into the millions before World War II; and the Irish priest, Denis Fahey, the theologian most quoted by Coughlin, whose influence continues to be strong in those circles today. I will also survey connections with far right extremists and neo-Nazis and demonstrate the shared Holocaust denial and classical theological antisemitism that link these groups and threatens to negate the gains made since Vatican II that have nurtured the Jewish-Catholic relationship over the past 45 years. Finally, we will assess some of the possible implications of this trend for the future of Jewish-Catholic relations, particularly after the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the election of Pope Francis.

In the time that has passed since the dramatic resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the election of Pope Francis there have been many attempts to assess Benedict's legacy. According to one view, as expressed by some of the former Pope's supporters, "Benedict's papacy would be the final triumph of old-school Catholicism."¹

As part of those efforts to reinforce traditional Catholicism, Benedict reached out to many in the more conservative wings of the Catholic Church. Included in his outreach was the attempt to heal the rift between the Church and the radical traditionalist Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX). Indeed, so significant were his efforts in this regard that one commentator referred to the discussions as "Benedict's Unfinished Business," and also suggested that

¹ David Gibson, *Analysis: The Surprising Afterlife of Pope Benedict XVI*, <http://www.religionnews.com/2014/02/25/analysis-surprising-afterlife-pope-benedict-xvi/>.

Benedict was motivated by fear that the rift “threatens the Vatican with what it fears the most: a small but permanent schism.”² Ultimately, the radical beliefs of the schismatic SSPX could not be reconciled. A major sticking point has been the group’s refusal to recognize the 1965 reforms of the Second Vatican Council, including the institutional shift in relations between the Church and the Jewish community, embodied in the document “*Nostra Aetate*.” These Vatican II reforms were so dramatic that Catholic historian Michael Phayer claimed they signified “the Catholic Church’s reversal of its 2,000 year tradition of anti-Semitism.”³

Yet some within the Church refused to accept this seismic shift in theology. The SSPX, and others like them, so bitterly resented these changes that in some cases they even split with the Vatican. Benedict XVI made it a priority to try to heal the rift with the largest of these groups; indeed, it was said of him “that he invested a large share of his personal charisma and political capital seeking reconciliation with the SSPX.”⁴ The announcement in the fall of 2012 that the Vatican had broken off talks with the SSPX signified the complete failure of this effort; the October statement by Archbishop Gerhard Müller, head of the Congregation for the Defense of the Faith that “We cannot give away the Catholic faith... [T]here will be no compromises here; I think there will be no new discussions” seemed unambiguous in signaling the end of negotiations.⁵ Yet later indicators from the Vatican have been inconsistent. In January 2013, Archbishop Augustine Di Noia, one of the Vatican negotiators, wrote to the SSPX leadership again, urging “reconciliation and healing” between the

² Alessandro Speciale, “SSPX, Benedict XVI’s Unfinished Business,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/06/sspx-benedict-xvis-unfinished-business_n2816304.html/, accessed 7 Mar. 2013.

³ Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2001), 203. A useful short summary of the history of “*Nostra Aetate*” and its impact can be found in Elana G. Procaro-Foley, “Heir or Orphan: Theological Evolution and Devolution Before and After *Nostra Aetate*,” in *Vatican II: Forty Years Later*, edited by William Madges (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 308–39.

⁴ Speciale, “SSPX, Benedicts XVI’s Unfinished Business.”

⁵ Tom Heneghan, “Vatican plans no more talks with SSPX Catholic rebels: CDF head Muller,” <http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2012/10/05/vatican-plans-no-more-talks-with-sspx-catholic-rebels-cdf-head-muller/>, accessed 7 Mar. 2012.

groups.⁶ And, according to the SSPX leadership, these signals emanated even from the office of Pope Benedict XVI himself. In a news report, Bishop Bernard Fellay, the SSPX head, claimed that “retired Colombian Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos, then-president of the Pontifical Commission ‘Ecclesia Dei,’ the office responsible for relations with traditionalist Catholics, had told him in March 2009 that the society would be formally recognized....” Even if the doctrinal congregation ruled against the society, he claimed the secretary told him the pope would “overrule it in favor of the society.”⁷

Although the Catholic Church is still officially committed to the teachings of “*Nostra Aetate*,” opponents of that document and of “modernity” in general have continued their fight and appeared to have gained at least a hearing in the Vatican under Benedict XVI. For these radical Catholic traditionalists “International Judaism” and its desire “to radically defeat Christianity” was the major reason for their radical rejection of “*Nostra Aetate*,” Vatican II, modern democracy and religious tolerance.⁸ This is what motivated their continued affirmation of what the French historian Jules Isaac labeled many decades ago as “the teaching of contempt.”⁹

Following the sociologist Michael Cuneo, I will define these groups as those who have rejected the reforms of Vatican II, and “entered into schism from the institutional church.” Here I will focus primarily on the attitudes of such extreme traditionalists toward Jews, Judaism, and the related area of religious freedom.¹⁰ It is important to note that there are a number of traditionalist groups who have not rejected all aspects of Vatican II and who are maintaining some relationship with the established Church. These groups are often seen by

⁶ “In letter to SSPX, Vatican archbishop appeals for unity,” <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/in-letter-to-sspx-vatican-archbishop-appeals-for-unity/>, accessed 1 Mar. 2013. The letter was characterized by the Vatican’s spokesman as a “personal appeal” and not an “official document.”

⁷ Carol Glatz, “SSPX head says Vatican sent mixed messages during reconciliation talks,” <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1300051.htm>.

⁸ Bishop Gerald Sigaud to Cardinal Tardini, 22 Aug. 1959, posted under the title “What Vatican II Should Have Done,” <http://aventors.blogspot.com/2010/04/what-vatican-ii-should-have-done.html>, accessed 6 Sept. 2014.

⁹ Jules Isaac, *The Teachings of Contempt* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

¹⁰ Michael Cuneo, *Smoke of Satan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 6.

the radical Catholics as having sold out to, or been betrayed by Rome.¹¹ This loose constellation of groups and sympathizers makes an accurate assessment of the exact numbers of radical Catholics very difficult. In 1998, estimates were for approximately one million followers, loosely divided into those who were official adherents of a number of different groups, and other sympathizers not officially affiliated but still retaining membership in the Church.¹² However, a Catholic source in 2004, relying on “official Vatican figures,” claimed nearly one million adherents for the SSPX itself.¹³ According to the SSPX, they now maintain chapters in 37 different countries.¹⁴ By contrast, the Houses of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP) a traditionalist group that has accepted many of the Vatican II reforms and is in good standing with the Church, lists chapters in 15 countries.¹⁵ And more recently one traditionalist author described the current picture as “slow growth in Europe” but more spectacular progress in North America.¹⁶ While there are a variety of reasons for this growth, those within the movement describe it as spurred by the belief that a true Catholic is one who must “preserve the Holy Faith *in a manner consistent with how it has always been understood*, and who strives to preserve *all* of the liturgical rites and customs of the Church as they were before the Vatican II revolu-

¹¹ For example, some of these groups are listed at a radical traditionalist website under the warning “What has happened to other ‘traditionalist’ organizations who made an agreement with Rome?” <http://www.truetrad.com/index.php/other-organizations-who-made-a-deal-with-rome>. The site itself is called TrueTrad.com, subtitled, “No compromise with Modernist Rome,” accessed 6 Sept. 2014.

¹² “All we want is the Latin Mass,” Catholic World News (1 May 2005) claims that number of followers for the decade 1988–1998, <http://www.catholicculture.org/news/features/index.cfm?recnum=37861>.

¹³ “Roman Catholic Traditionalism?,” http://web.archive.org/web/20091026233659/http://geocities.com/catholic_traditionalist/.

¹⁴ <http://www.fsspx.org/en/la-fraternite-en-chiffres/?pid=48>. Statistics as of 1 July 2014.

¹⁵ <http://www.fssp.org/en/coordonnees.htm>

¹⁶ Luc Perrin, “Papers of the Conference on Summorum Pontificum II: “Catholic Traditionalism from a French Perspective,” <http://sthughofcluny.org/2011/11/papers-of-the-conference-on-summorum-pontificum-ii-prof-luc-perrin.html/>. He also estimated the number of French followers as 50,000.



Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre,
founder of the Society of St. Pius X,
at a 1984 ordination mass.

tion.”¹⁷ Thus the radical traditionalists often focus liturgically on the appeal of the Tridentine Latin Mass and dogmatically on the rejection of the innovations of modernism (described by Pope Pius X as the “synthesis of all heresies”).¹⁸

The Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), named after the Pope whose 1907 encyclical against Modernism, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* serves as the rallying point against any innovation,¹⁹ has become the locus of the extreme Catholic traditionalist world. It was created in 1970 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who first came to attention when he refused to sign onto the Vatican II statement on religious liberty and the Church in the modern World.²⁰ In 1970 he founded a traditionalist seminary in Écône, Switzerland as well. The SSPX came to the United States in 1973, with chapels being established in California, Texas, and New York. Lefebvre continued to publicly criticize the reforms of Vatican II, including the liturgical changes, and came into more overt conflict with Rome. He was ordered to close down his Swiss seminary in 1974 by Pope Paul VI, but refused. As a result, in 1976 his priestly functions were suspended. This did not stop Lefebvre, who in 1983 threatened to consecrate a successor.

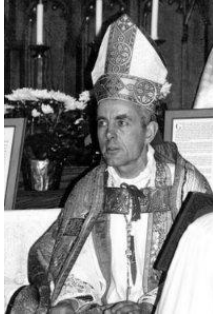
Trying a different approach, Pope John Paul II in 1984 permitted (under some conditions) the Tridentine Latin Mass as a gesture of conciliation to the traditionalists. Lefebvre and the traditionalists were not reconciled however,

¹⁷ <http://www.fisheaters.com/traditionalcatholicism.html>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The official English text of the encyclical can be found at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_19070908_pascendi-dominici-gregis_en.html.

²⁰ Cuneo, *Smoke of Satan*, 91.



Bishop Richard Williamson,
formerly affiliated with SSPX.
*Source: Photo taken 3 June 1991 by
jcapaldi (Creative Commons)*

and three years later Lefebvre again threatened to consecrate a successor. This time the Vatican responded by entering into negotiations with the group, and indeed, on May 5, 1988 Lefebvre signed an agreement that required him to acknowledge his loyalty to the Vatican, and to accept the new Mass (Novus Ordo) of 1969 as legitimate. In return, the SSPX was to be recognized and allowed to continue to use the Tridentine Mass. The very next day Lefebvre repudiated the agreement, and on June 30, 1988 he consecrated four bishops in defiance of Rome's authority. This time the Vatican responded forcefully, excommunicating Lefebvre and his priests and declaring the SSPX to be in a state of schism.²¹ Lefebvre died in 1991, but by then the SSPX had become well-established and able to withstand the loss of its founder. Swiss Bishop Bernard Fellay was elected Superior General in 1994, and reelected in 2006.

THE CONTROVERSIAL BISHOP WILLIAMSON

A firestorm erupted when Bishop Richard Williamson (one of the four bishops consecrated by Lefebvre in 1988) questioned the reality of the Holocaust. In January 2009, Pope Benedict XVI had lifted the group's excommunication. However, on the same day, in an interview aired on Swedish TV, Williamson said "I believe that the historical evidence is strongly against, is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler." The bishop added: "I think that 200,000 to 300,000

²¹ Ibid., 91–92.

Jews perished in Nazi concentration camps, but none of them in gas chambers.”²²

The reaction from outraged Jews and many others was immediate, and grew upon exposure of Williamson’s history of antisemitic comments that included a belief in the accuracy of the notorious fabrication, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.²³ The resulting storm of criticism caused the Vatican to insist upon Williamson’s renunciation of Holocaust denial, which he refused to do. He did say, however, in a letter in February 2009, that “observing these consequences I can truthfully say that I regret having made such remarks.” He never recanted his views, however.²⁴ The negative import of Williamson’s comments, coming amidst the ongoing reconciliation discussions with the Vatican, was not lost on the SSPX leadership. Fellay weighed in on the matter by issuing a statement that said:

It’s clear that a Catholic bishop cannot speak with ecclesiastical authority except on questions that regard faith and morals. Our Fraternity does not claim any authority on other matters. Its mission is the propagation and restoration of authentic Catholic doctrine, expressed in the dogmas of the faith. It’s for this reason that we are known, accepted and respected in the entire world. The affirmations of Bishop Williamson do not reflect in any sense the position of our Fraternity. For this reason I have prohibited him, pending any new orders, from taking any public positions on political or historical questions.²⁵

²² <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/01/26/pope.holocaust.denial/index.html?iref=24hours>.

²³ <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2012/10/24/sspx-expels-bishop-williamson>. See also Steven L. Jacobs and Mark Weitzman, *Dismantling the Big Lie: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2003) for examples of the current use of the *Protocols*, as well as a detailed refutation of the text.

²⁴ http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/27/the-text-of-a-bishops-semi-apology/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0, accessed 17 Aug. 2014.

²⁵ <http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/blog/?p=2721>, accessed 26 Jan. 2009.

Williamson's antisemitism was neither new nor hidden. In a letter posted on the SSPX seminary website, dated February 1, 1991, Williamson reflected on the (first) Gulf War. First he pontificated that the war was instigated by Russia in an attempt to "kill with one stone...obstacles to the advance of International Socialism," that would then allow "Russia to march through the now unguarded gateway to Europe." But hidden behind the Russian advance, according to Williamson, was another, even more sinister cause. "However, behind the Gulf War, and even behind Russia, may one not, thirdly, fear the looming figure of the Anti-Christ?" The war was a creation of "the many friends of Israel in the USA...whooping for the United States to break the Arab strong man." Finally Williamson puts these comments into a clear theological perspective:

Until they [the Jews] recover their true messianic vocation [by accepting the Church] they may be expected to continue fanatically agitating, in accordance with their false messianic vocation of Jewish world domination.... So we may fear their continuing to play their major part in the agitation of the East and the corruption of the West.²⁶

In another letter to his supporters, written on the letterhead of the SSPX's St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Winona, Minnesota just a few months later, Williamson quoted the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*:

it is indispensable to stir up the people's relations with their governments in all countries so as to utterly to exhaust humanity with dissension, hatred, struggle, envy...so that the goyim see no

²⁶ Originally at <http://www.sspxseminary.org/publications/letter/1991/February/February.shtml>. Now it is posted at <http://williamsonletters.blogspot.com/2009/02/gulf-war-and-state-of-catholic-church.html>, a site which states: "This collection of pastoral epistles by Bishop Richard Williamson was removed from the SSPX website after their contents (along with other comments by the bishop) became an embarrassment to the organisation of which he has for many years been a leading light."

other course open to them than to take refuge in our complete sovereignty in money and all else.²⁷

Later in the same letter Williamson also cited Protocol 14 (“in countries known as progressive and enlightened, we have created a senseless, filthy, abominable literature”) referring to the “alternative life-style” which, in Williamson’s view is “so horrible as to cry to heaven for vengeance.” Williamson’s belief in the *Protocols* has remained consistent. A decade later, in a letter of May 1, 2000, Williamson wrote “God puts in men’s hands the ‘*Protocols of the Sages of Sion*’...if men want to know the truth, but few do.”²⁸

Williamson’s letters demonstrate not only his brazen antisemitism but also his racism and sexism. In another letter he explains the 2005 unrest in France:

So when white men give up on saving Jews, looking after other races and leading their womenfolk, it is altogether normal for them to be punished respectively by the domination of Jewish finance, by the refusal to follow of the non-white races and by rampant feminism.²⁹

In November 1991, Williamson even combined two of those themes, noting criticism of an earlier letter in which he condemned women for wearing pants and jocularly compared it to criticism of his Holocaust denial:

Few of you will be surprised to learn that the September letter appealing to the women not to wear trousers caused a strong reaction, comparable only to the reaction of the Seminary letter which referred to scientific evidence that certain famous “holocaust gas-chambers” in Poland cannot have served as gas-chambers at all.³⁰

²⁷ Richard Williamson, letter of 3 Nov. 1991, copy in my possession. It can also be found in various sites online, such as <http://jloughnan.tripod.com/sparwill.htm>.

²⁸ Richard Williamson, 1 May 2000, quoted in Thomas Fox, “Lefebvre movement: long, troubled history with Judaism,” <http://ncronline.org/news/lefebvre-movement-long-troubled-history-judaism>.

²⁹ Robert Williamson, “Denial of Christ Creates Chaos,” <http://www.dailycatholic.org/issue/05Nov/nov14lit.htm>.

³⁰ See note 13 above.

When Fellay issued his statement in 2009 distancing his organization from the controversy, Williamson's antisemitism was well-known, having been publicly disseminated within the SSPX for at least eighteen years. Thus it is clear that Fellay was being disingenuous at best when he claimed that "the affirmations of Bishop Williamson do not reflect in any sense the position of our Fraternity." In fact, the SSPX and the radical Catholic traditionalist movement in general are shot through with antisemitism which is indeed one of the foundational doctrines of the movement.

TRADITIONALIST ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-JUDAISM

Lefebvre's own record on Jews and Judaism was also highly questionable. In an August 31, 1985 letter to Pope John Paul II he spoke approvingly of both the World War II-era Vichy Regime in France and the far-right National Front, identifying the contemporary enemies of the faith as "Jews, Communists and Freemasons." Lefebvre criticized all the reforms carried out within the church for more than twenty years to please heretics, schismatics, false religions, and declared enemies of the church, including the Jews.³¹ After Pope John Paul II's dramatic visit to the Rome synagogue, Lefebvre wrote: "And, most recently, the Pope has been into the synagogue of the Jews in Rome. How can the Pope pray with the *enemies* of Jesus Christ and they continue to fight against Jesus Christ everywhere in the world."³²

According to Thomas C. Fox, Lefebvre also gave an interview to the journal of the National Front in France, suggesting that Catholic opposition to a residence for Carmelite nuns at the site of the Auschwitz death camp was instigated by Jews.³³

Lefebvre's followers often share this outlook. One of the four bishops he ordained in 1988, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais (the authorized SSPX biographer of Lefebvre), said in 1997:

³¹ Thomas C. Fox, "Lefebvre Movement: Long, Troubled History with Judaism," 26 Jan. 2009, NCR Online, <http://ncronline.org/node/3180>.

³² Typescript, "The Archbishop Speaks," 30 March and 18 April 1986, Box 192, 8, 7, American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives (ACUA), Catholic University, Washington, D. C.

³³ Ibid.

The church for its part has at all times forbidden and condemned the killing of Jews, even when “their grave defects rendered them odious to the nations among which they were established....” All this makes us think that the Jews are the most active artisans for the coming of Antichrist.³⁴

Nor has their record been confined simply to making statements. In 1989, Paul Touvier, a fugitive charged as a Nazi collaborator who had ordered the execution of seven Jews in 1944, was arrested in a priory of the Fraternity of St. Pius X in Nice, France. The fraternity stated at the time that Touvier had been granted asylum as “an act of charity to a homeless man.” When Touvier died in 1996, a parish church operated by the fraternity offered a requiem Mass in his honor.³⁵

Prior to the Williamson controversy, the SSPX website had featured two postings that reflected and summed up the SSPX’s position on Jews and Judaism, documents subsequently expunged from the website. In one essay, the Vatican II teaching that “the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from Holy Scripture” is described as “outrageous.”³⁶ The other essay claimed that “Judaism is inimical to all nations in general, and in a special manner to Christian nations” and that “the unrepentant Jewish people are disposed by God to be a theological enemy, the status of this opposition must be universal, inevitable, and terrible.” There are claims that “the Talmud, which governs Jews, orders enmity with Christians” and that the “Jewish people persecute Christendom” “conspire against the Christian State,” commit “usury” and even “are known to kill Christians” (!). Thus the essay defends the notion that Jews should not be “given equality of

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See *New York Times*, 18 July 1996, <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/Holocaust/touvier-obit.html> on Touvier’s connection with the SSPX.

³⁶ “Can it truly be said that the Jewish race is guilty of the sin of deicide, and that it is consequently cursed by God, as depicted in Gibson’s movie on the Passion?” Featured in the Q and A section, Mar. 2004. The March and June issues are missing from the Angelus’ website’s library, but the article is now available on the traditionalist Catholic forum, CathInfo.com, <http://www.cathinfo.com/catholic.php/Are-the-Jews-guilty-of-Deicide>, accessed 7 Sept. 2014.

rights” but rather that Jewry should be forced into ghettos (“isolated into its own neighborhoods”).³⁷

Similarly a 1959 letter from Lefebvre’s close ally, Bishop Gerald Sigaud claimed that “Money, the media, and international politics are for a large part in the hands of Jews...Those who have revealed the atomic secrets of the USA were...all Jews. The founders of communism were Jew [sic]” This letter was also posted on the SSPX website.³⁸

As of early February, 2009 the Canadian SSPX website still hosted an archive of Williamson’s antisemitic letters, one of which complains that “Jews have come closer and closer to fulfilling their...drive toward world domination...” Other SSPX officials sounded similar notes. After the Williamson controversy broke out, Fr. Floriano Abrahamowicz, a pastor and spokesperson for the SSPX in Northern Italy, defended Williamson and said he, too, was unsure if gas chambers were used for anything but disinfection or whether six million Jews were really murdered. He called the Jews a “people of deicide.” Abrahamowicz was later expelled from the Society. More recently, in Oct. 2013, Abrahamowicz officiated at the funeral of convicted Nazi war criminal, Erich Priebke.³⁹

DENIS FAHEY, CHARLES COUGHLIN, AND TRADITIONALIST THEOLOGY

Such positions are not original, nor are they a theological innovation for extreme Catholic traditionalists; indeed they bear a striking similarity to the writings of a somewhat forgotten Irish priest, Denis Fahey, whose work is one

³⁷ Frs. Michael Crowley and Kenneth Novak, “The Mystery of the Jewish People in History,” *The Angelus* (Apr. 1997), http://www.sspix.org/against_the_sound_bites/mystery_of_the_jews.htm, accessed 29 Jan. 2009. Archived versions of the original SSPX postings of both this and the preceding article can be found at <http://www.salvationisfromthejews.com/m1.html>, a site run by a Jewish convert to Catholicism who has spoken out against what he described as the “most virulently anti-Semitic teachings” of the SSPX.

³⁸ A copy of this letter is in my possession. It can be found at http://globalfire.tv/nj/09en/religion/sspx_on_jewry.htm.

³⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/15/erich-priebke-funeral_n_4101902.html.

of the most frequently cited by SSPX members and similar believers. Mary Christine Athans, in her important study, *The Coughlin-Fabey Connection: Father Charles E. Coughlin, Father Denis Fabey, C.S.Sp., and Religious Anti-Semitism in the United States, 1938–1954* thoroughly explored Fahey's life and thought and how his theology of antisemitism made its way from Ireland to the United States.⁴⁰

Fahey was born July 2, 1883 in Kilmore, County Tipperary, Ireland. In 1900 he was a novice of the Holy Ghost Congregation in France, adversely affected by the results of the Dreyfus Affair and the French government's anticlerical Associations laws of 1905 that required religious congregations to be recognized by the government. At that time, France was an incubator of ecclesiastical antisemitism. As David Kertzer wrote, "In the cauldron of Catholic resentment toward the republican state in the 1880s, the Jews, visible in national politics, in the civil service and in the economy, served as a lightning rod for all that was wrong with modern French society."⁴¹ This was a struggle that began with the French Revolution, which the Catholic reactionary, Leon de Poncins, described as "the greatest event of history for over 1800 years."⁴² For all sorts of ultra-conservatives of this ilk, as well as for fascists and Nazis, the French Revolution marked the moment when the world was turned upside down. Historian Richard Wolin stresses the significance of this point:

As Goebbels pithily observed a few months after Hitler's rise to power: "The year 1789 is hereby erased from history...." They elected to combat the values of the French Revolution.... Thereby they ushered in an alternative vision of modernity, one that was to supersede the standpoint of the philosophes and the political champions of 1789.⁴³

⁴⁰ Mary Christine Athans, *The Coughlin-Fabey Connection: Father Denis Fabey, C.S.Sp., and Religious Anti-Semitism in the United States, 1938–1954* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991).

⁴¹ David Kertzer, *The Popes against the Jews* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 170.

⁴² Vicomte Leon de Poncins, *Freemasonry and Judaism* (New York: A and B, 1994), 29. Originally published in 1929, this book is now released by a publishing house with an apparently African-American orientation.

⁴³ Richard Wolin, *Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 3, cited in David



Denis Fahey, C.S.Sp. (1883–1954), an Irish priest whose writings influenced Father Charles Coughlin and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

In 1908, Fahey had gone to Rome, where he received doctorates in philosophy and theology, and lived at the *Seminaire Française*.⁴⁴ Ordained in 1911, he returned to Dublin in 1912. Except for the period 1916–1920, when he was in Switzerland for health reasons, he remained in Dublin, teaching at the Holy Ghost Seminary until his death on January 24, 1954. Fahey was a prominent voice in Ireland, maintaining a high profile as a public intellectual, as evidenced by the fact that upon his death, Irish Prime Minister Éamon de Valera attended his evening funeral Mass.⁴⁵ While there is a question as to the direct impact that Fahey had on Irish society during his lifetime, there can be no doubt that in some circles he found receptive ears. Mervyn O'Donnell, in his research on Jewish immigration to Ireland in 1933–1939, has pointed out that during this period “Many Irish civil servants betrayed negative preconceived notions about the Jews.”⁴⁶ While de Valera was generally seen as being relatively moderate toward Jews at that time, and thus his attendance at the

Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of Western Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 491, n. 1. Dennis also cites Fritz Stern’s similar observation that “they (the Nazis) appropriated something from every intellectual tradition of modern Germany, except one. They consistently warred against the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution....” Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1974), 277.

⁴⁴ Mary Christine Athans, “A New Perspective on Father Charles E. Coughlin,” *Church History* 56, no. 2 (1987): 226.

⁴⁵ Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey*, 59.

⁴⁶ Mervyn O'Donnell, “The ‘Jewish Question,’ Irish Refugee Policy and Charles Bewley, 1933–1939,” in *Racial Discrimination and Ethnicity in European History*, edited by Guðmundur Hálfðanarson (Pisa: University of Pisa, 2003), 148.

funeral Mass might have been a matter of protocol, it certainly reflected on Fahey's high stature at the time of his death.

While in Rome, Fahey was heavily influenced by Father Henri l'Floch, the Superior of the *Seminaire Française* (Pontifical French Seminary). l'Floch stood firmly in the French antisemitic tradition at the end of the nineteenth century linked to anti-republicanism, a strong feature of Catholic politics at the time.⁴⁷ l'Floch's impact during the heyday of French and Italian Catholic anti-modernism has been described as follows:

l'Floch had substantial influence on Fahey.... He was later removed from his position as Rector because of his relationship to the controversial and anti-Semitic *Action Française* movement which was finally condemned by Pius XI in 1926.⁴⁸

l'Floch was also a revered mentor of Lefebvre. Athans, who interviewed a number of Fahey's students and younger colleagues in Ireland wrote that "Some (priests) believe that l'Floch's influence can also be traced to Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre...founder of the dissident traditionalist movement...known as the Fraternity of SPX."⁴⁹ Lefebvre himself acknowledged his debt to l'Floch. In the English version of his memoirs, he describes l'Floch as one "To whom I owe much of my formation as a seminarian and as a priest," and recalls that he chose to speak "of Père l'Floch at my consecration."⁵⁰ This influence is still attested to in traditionalist circles. A current traditionalist writer claims of Lefebvre that "His seminary training at the French College in Rome

⁴⁷ Vicki Caron, "The Path to Vichy: Antisemitism in France in the 1930s" (J. B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Annual Lecture, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C., 20 Apr. 2005), 3; <http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/publications/occasional/2005-07-02/paper.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey*, 22–23; Julie Kalman, *Rethinking Antisemitism in Nineteenth Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) gives an extensive overview of the French Catholic antisemitism that nurtured such thinking.

⁴⁹ Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey*, 62–63, n. 25; cf. Yves Congar, *Challenge to the Church: The Case of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre* (Huntington, Ind., Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1976), 16, 88–90; see also <http://www.catholicity.com/commentary/rutler/07849.html>.

⁵⁰ Michael Davies, *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre*, part 1 (Dickinson, Tex.: Angeles Press, 1979).

under the celebrated Père le Floch [*sic*] had vaccinated him forever against Liberalism in all its shapes.”⁵¹ Another resident of the French Seminary was the future Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, John Charles McQuaid, who studied under Fahey and later wrote the preface to Fahey’s first book in 1931.⁵² McQuaid’s biographer, John Cooney, has asserted that L’Floch’s “combination of theological rigidity and political conservatism rubbed off on the seminarians, among them...Marcel Lefebvre.”⁵³ Having been nurtured in the same intellectual milieu, it is no surprise that Fahey and Lefebvre shared much of the same *Weltanschauung*.

Among other sources, Fahey also drew on the *Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secretes*.⁵⁴ This journal was founded in 1912 by Father Ernest Jouin, described by Kertzer as “the main champion of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and the best known exponent of Catholic antisemitism in the 1920s” in France.⁵⁵ Other scholars have noted that even in the highly charged atmosphere of French antisemitism Jouin stood out for combining both religious and racist elements. He was a striking example of a priest who held that Jews cannot be converted because of their racial origin.⁵⁶

⁵¹ John Daly, Pro-Sedevacantism Quotes from Abp. Lebefvre, <http://www.fathercekada.com/2012/09/04/pro-sedevacantism-quotes-from-abp-lebefvre/>, posted 4 Sept. 2012. The article appears to have been posted originally on the radical traditionalist site The Four Marks, <http://www.thefourmarks.com/>. Daly is identified there as an “author, translator...president of Catholic publishing house Tradibooks,” an online bookseller whose catalogue includes one of Fahey’s books.

⁵² John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin: O’Brien Press, 1999), 72. Cooney (p. 162) notes that by 1942 McQuade was distancing himself from such overt antisemitism, writing in a letter “I have been obliged to watch carefully his remarks upon the Jews. Fahey will frequently err in good judgement, and this error will take the shape of...where Jews are concerned, remarks capable of rousing the ignorant or malevolent.”

⁵³ Ibid, 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 129.

⁵⁵ Kertzer, *Popes against the Jews*, 267.

⁵⁶ Alan T. Davies, *Infected Christianity: A Study of Modern Racism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), 142, cited in John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews 1933–1965*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 303, n.4.

Jouin and his work were not isolated on the fringes of Catholic life. Pope Benedict XV, who headed the Church from 1914 to 1922, gave Jouin the title of “Prelate of His Holiness,” which Jouin used to add papal authority to his works, and he received further blessings from Vatican Secretary of State Gasparri in 1919 and later from Pope Pius XI as well. Jouin even claimed credit for originating the term “Judeo-masonic” in 1920, and additionally he claimed to have been told by Pius XI to “Continue your *Reviem*...for you are combating our mortal enemy.”⁵⁷ Jouin also influenced the prominent Italian fascist Roberto Farinacci, who in 1939 repeated some of these familiar themes in urging harsher anti-Jewish measures in Italy, claiming that the French Revolution had created a great wrong by proclaiming the rights of men that grew into the rights of Jews. Farinacci suggested following the paths laid out by the Jesuits in the pages of *La Civiltà Cattolica* (described as “the most influential Catholic publication anywhere in the world”) whose publisher, Enrico Rosa wrote approvingly in 1928 of a “healthy evaluation of the danger emanating from the Jews” (in contrast to “an un-christian type of antisemitism”). Rosa also fulminated against the Jews as revolutionaries, blaming them not only for the French revolution of 1789, but for the July Revolution (1830), the German Revolution (1848), and finally, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.⁵⁸ The importance of these writings for contemporary Catholic antisemites is immense. As an example, one traditionalist website posted in 2009 an entire three-part article from the October 23, 1890 edition of *La Civiltà Cattolica* (in English) entitled *On the Jewish Question in Europe*. The focus of the article was on “the invasion of the Israelites into every sector of public and social life,” leading to the “necessity of stopping and combating the spread of this plague and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 267–69.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 283–84. Farinacci was described as “one of the country’s most vocal Jew baiters,” in Susan Zuccotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 49. For Rosa’s antisemitism and the Jews as revolutionaries, see Hubert Wolf, *Pope and Devil* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012), 116–17. The description of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, in Kertzer, *Popes against the Jews*, 134.

stressing its most pernicious consequences.”⁵⁹ Thus the antisemitism of the late nineteenth century is brought forward electronically into the new millenium.

Fahey was a prolific writer, publishing a series of books and pamphlets, many with repetitive titles and similar themes. The titles included *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World* (1935), *The Rulers of Russia* (3rd American ed., 1940), *Grand Orient Freemasonry Unmasked as the Secret Power Behind Communism*. (1950, a republication of George F. Dillon’s work, with a foreword by Fahey), *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (1953).

For Fahey, the world was a simple, but very dangerous place. In his manichaeian perspective he believed that God was only accessible through the Catholic Church which in turn was “supra-national and supernatural”; however, God was locked in a cosmic struggle with Satan—a very real antagonist for Fahey. Although Judaism was the Church’s prime opponent, Satan’s agents in this world included

Bolshevism, as the most recent development in the age-long struggle waged by the Jewish nation against the Supernational Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Mystical Body, the Catholic Church.

Fahey followed that depiction with a comparison of Catholicism and Judaism, to the detriment of the latter. According to his theology, through the rejection of Jesus as Christ, Judaism was seeking to “recast (the world) in the mould of Jewish national life.” Fahey concluded by asserting that this rejection “cannot but mean the complete undoing of the Catholic organization of society,” which in his view, embodied the appropriate order of things.⁶⁰

Communism, for Fahey, was in this Catholic perspective simply a tool used by the Jews. “The real forces behind Bolshevism in Russia are Jewish forces, and...Bolshevism is really an instrument in the hands of the Jews for the

⁵⁹ Ignis Ardens, http://z10.invisionfree.com/Ignis_Ardens/index.php?showtopic=3768. The article appears on a number of other traditionalist sites, such as <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/jq1.htm>, and <http://www.romancatholicism.org/pdf/civilta-jews.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Fahey, *Rulers of Russia* (Detroit, Mich.: Social Justice Publishing, 1940), 44–45.

establishment of their future Messianic kingdom.”⁶¹ Fahey’s contrast between Judaism and Catholicism reflected different concerns, some of which transcended theological issues, exhibiting clear social and political implications. For example, in his tract *The Rulers of Russia*, Fahey spells out the differences between Jews and Catholics regarding what he terms “citizenship”:

Here it will be well...to contrast the Jewish idea of citizenship with the Catholic idea.... As members of their own “messianic” nation, they must strive for the domination of their nation over others, as thus [only] they hold, justice and peace can be achieved on earth. The Jew would fail in his duty to the Messiah to come if he did not subordinate the interests of other nations to his own.... But the Catholic Church, being supra-national and supernatural, does not aim at the obliteration of national characteristics and qualities by the imposition of a national form, but at their harmonious development by the elimination of the defects due to original sin.⁶²

This reading of theological history viewed Judaism as a religion committed to ruling over the other nations, and its adherents as not possessing the qualities of eligibility for equal citizenship. Catholicism by its nature (and despite historical evidence to the contrary) was, however, seen as less restrictive and the proper dominant authority in society.

Fahey evidently believed that the world had reached its peak in the thirteenth century, when the Church was its essential ruler—at least in Europe, which appeared to be all that mattered to him. However, that state of affairs did not last long. For Fahey, there was no concept of religious liberty—a tool of the devil used to take state and society away from the true worship of God—to be found solely in the Catholic Church. An echo of this belief can be found in

⁶¹ Ibid., 22. See Caron, *Path to Vichy*, 7–8 for illustrations of similar themes in 1930s France, including in Catholic circles. She points out the “ambivalence” that existed in those circles about Jews, in contrast to the “extreme antisemitism of the Dreyfus era,” 10.

⁶² Fahey, *Rulers*, 72.

Williamson's thought. In comments on Pope Benedict XVI's December 2005 address to the Curia, Williamson wrote that:

What is wrong with freeing States from any obligation to Christ the King is that *implicitly you are denying that Jesus Christ is God...* Religious liberty means in effect, a declaration of independence from God, which is directly opposed to the first Commandment... However, where Catholics are in a sufficient majority, the State may physically prevent the *public* practice of false religion while tolerating their practice in private.⁶³

This was a fundamental tenet for Lefebvre as well. In the biography by de Mallerai he is quoted as saying that the acceptance of the doctrine of religious liberty is “a scandal to Catholic souls (that) cannot be measured. The Church is shaken to its very foundation.”⁶⁴

In January 2008, SSPX theologian Matthias Gaudron repeated this theme in “Catechism of the Crisis of the Church,” addressed to the church membership. After posing the question “Is there, then, no right to the free exercise of religion?” he states:

The true religion possesses the absolute right to develop and to be practiced freely, for no one can be impeded from serving God in the way He Himself has prescribed. It is an exigency of the natural law. The false religions, to the contrary, have no real right to be practiced precisely because they are false and erroneous. Error can never have any right; only the truth has rights.⁶⁵

⁶³ <http://www.fisheaters.com/forums/index.php?topic=893264.0>, accessed 7 Sept. 2014.

⁶⁴ Quoted in “Rome-SSPX, Background to the Doctrinal Discussions,” <http://www.cfnews.org/page10/page18/page18.html>, which is a traditionalist website).

⁶⁵ Matthias Gaudron, “Catechism of the Crisis in the Church,” *Angelus Press*, 31, no. 1 (16 Jan. 2008): par. 37, http://www.angelusonline.org/index.php?section=articles&subsection=show_article&article_id=2671.

The same *Catechism* succinctly summed up the SSPX's stance on tolerance: it is simply "the patient endurance of an evil."⁶⁶

For Fahey and similar thinkers political freedom, religious freedom, can only be found in the Church; and so the right order is one in which the Church reigns supreme, and delegates those freedoms she desires for her benefit only. Outside of the Church there are no rights and no freedom; and all those in opposition or in a state of non-belief are agents of Satan.

Contemporary traditionalists who share such views clearly think that Pope Benedict XVI betrayed the Church. According to one of the more prolific traditionalist writers, John Vennari,

It is certainly difficult to reconcile Cardinal Ratzinger's words to the teaching of Pope Pius VII, who in his Apostolic Letter *Post tam diuturnas* denounced indifferentism and the new concept of religious liberty: "By the fact that the indiscriminate freedom of all forms of worship is proclaimed, truth is confused with error, and the Holy and Immaculate Spouse of Christ is placed on the same level as heretical sects and even as Jewish faithlessness."

Vennari credits Fahey for this insight.⁶⁷

Fahey traced it all back to the original fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden, followed by later historical events, such as the Reformation and the French Revolution, with equally disastrous results. As he wrote, the

Protestant Reformation...broke the unity of European subjection to the supranational, supernatural Church of Christ.... It did not however install a naturalistic international organization.... That was reserved for the French Revolution...[which began] the domination

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ John Vennari, "Judaism and the Church: Before and After Vatican II," <http://ssp.org/en/news-events/news/judaism-church-after-vatican-ii-1342>. Vennari is editor of *Catholic Family News*, one of the most prominent radical traditionalist monthlies. Vennari gives his source as Pope Pius VII, *Post tam diuturnas* (1814), quoted in Denis Fahey, *The Kingship of Christ and Organized Naturalism* (1943; republished by the Christian Book Club of America [Palmdale, Calif.: 1987]), 10. The quote also appears in Fahey, *Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation*, 12.

of the world by Masonic Naturalism.... Behind Masonry, however [was] the other naturalistic force of the once chosen people.... The Jews everywhere made use of Freemasonry to secure the rights of becoming citizens of the once Christian states.⁶⁸

Even the horrors of the Holocaust did not mitigate such deep-rooted antisemitism. But Fahey did find it necessary after the Holocaust to attempt to draw a distinction between unacceptable antisemitism, which was defined as “hatred of the Jewish nation” and “opposition to the Jewish and Masonic naturalism,” which he endorsed as a vital aspect of Catholicism.⁶⁹ For Fahey naturalism was a source of evil precisely because it inevitably led to rejection of belief in God or any other form of supernaturalism. The revulsion felt by the world to the horrors of the Holocaust created the necessity for Fahey to try and distinguish his brand of antisemitism from that of the Third Reich. In the forward to his 1953 book, *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (the body of the book was written before the war, but published afterwards) he wrote of

the confusion created in minds owing to the use of the term “anti-semitism.” The Hitlerite naturalistic or anti-supernatural regime in Germany gave to the world the odious spectacle of a display of Anti-Semitism, that is hatred of the Jewish Nation. Yet all the propaganda about that display of Anti-Semitism should not have made Catholics forget the existence of age-long Jewish Naturalism and Anti-supernaturalism. Forgetfulness of the disorder of Jewish naturalistic opposition to Christ the King is keeping Catholics blind to the danger that is arising from the clever extension of the term

⁶⁸ Fahey, *Rulers*, 50–51, section titled ““Democracy” versus “Fascism.””

⁶⁹ Fahey, “What Really is Anti-Semitism,” originally posted on the SSPX website at http://www.salvationisfromthejews.com/sspx_what_really_is_anti_semitism.html, and now at <http://www.salvationisfromthejews.com/w1.html>. The description that he quoted approvingly was taken from a review published in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (Mar. 1947) of his book *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation*.

“Anti-Semitism” with all its war connotation to the mind of the unthinking.⁷⁰

In maintaining this position, Fahey was staying true to the teachings of the church in which he grew up. In France, even after Kristallnacht, a leading Catholic journalist could write that “The Church accepts the fact that Christians need to adopt measures of defense against the Jews’ invasion into civil or political life.”⁷¹ Hubert Wolf has recently written the following assessment in regard to the 1928 Vatican decree dissolving the group *Amici Israel*: “In the opinion of these cardinals, this meant that only racial antisemitism was condemned, whereas theological antisemitism on the part of the Church would be considered legitimate and even necessary.”⁷² As some scholars have already noticed, this was a distinction without a difference; in Birgit Gregor’s words, it “trivializes the fact that the ‘racist antisemitism’ grew out of the ‘religious anti-Judaism.’”⁷³

⁷⁰ Fahey, *Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation*, 5–6.

⁷¹ Caron, *Path to Vichy*, 12.

⁷² Hubert Wolf, *Pope and Devil*, 111. Wolf also links the opposition to the *Amici Israel*, spearheaded by the influential Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Merry del Val, to the Vatican’s “antimodernism,” as reflected in del Val’s use of “code words (that) had been just two decades earlier used by Pius X in his condemnation of modernism.” (p. 107) Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother*, 170, quotes del Val’s 1928 statement that “Hebraism with all its sects inspired by the Talmud continues perfidiously to oppose Christianity,” a statement mirrored in Fahey’s works.

⁷³ Birgit Gregor, “Zum protestantischen Antisemitismus Evangelische Kirchen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus,” in *Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses: Antisemitische Forschung, Eliten und Karrieren in Nationalsozialismus*, edited by Fritz Bauer Institute (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999), 174–77, cited in Wayne Meeks, “A Nazi New Testament Professor Reads the Bible: The Strange Case of Gerhard Kittel,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James Kugel* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 539, n. 68. Meeks also refers there to Paul Lawrence Rose’s insight that “racist thinking was predicated on the notion of ‘a national character’ that is central to the evolution of modern antisemitism” (and thus there was no major demarcation between religious and racial antisemitism), Paul Lawrence Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 15. Uriel Tal had earlier made a similar point, asserting that “‘racial’ antisemitism was totally dependent on religiously inspired antisemitism for its appeal.” See Uriel Tal, “Religious and Anti-Religious Roots of

In the body of his book Fahey went so far as to justify Nazi actions against the Jews on theological grounds, and to imply that the Catholic Church was even more of a victim. In Fahey's words,

One can readily conclude that the National-Socialist reaction against the corroding influence of Jewish Naturalism on German national life leads, not only to measures of repression against the Jews but to a dire persecution of the Catholic Church. The deified German race has attacked the rival natural deity, the Jewish race, directly, and has proceeded systematically to get rid of it as corrupting the very fount of deity, German blood.⁷⁴

In other words, the Nazis were only reacting to the Jewish threat, and their major fault was not in the reaction, but rather the form it took. In the same work Fahey spelled this out in even greater detail: "We have seen that the Nazi movement in Germany is one of a number of national reactions against the naturalistic Internationalism of the Jewish Nation and of Freemasonry."⁷⁵ Thus in Fahey's vision of the Third Reich, the innate Jewish "naturalism" was something recognized by many as a danger which would lead inevitably to defensive reactions, but it was the Church that was the ultimate opponent and the ultimate victim of the Nazis.⁷⁶ In a very real sense, if the results of the French Revolution — modernity and liberalism — were both successfully erased then there would be a need or opportunity for a *Weltanschauung* that could dominate the world. Recognizing this, Pius X, del Val, and Fahey all hoped that the Church would fill that vacuum, while the Nazis obviously saw themselves as the new vanguard. There was even agreement in the Church, or at least among

Modern Antisemitism," in *Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Third Reich*, edited by idem (London: Routledge, 2004; the essay was first published in 1971), 177.

⁷⁴ Fahey, *Kingship of Christ*, 44–45. According to Wolf's account of the *Amici Israel* incident, Pope Pius XI had by this time recognized the dangers of racial antisemitism and wanted to refer to it by using "the term anti-semitism, which del Val apparently wished to delete." Wolf, *Pope and Devil*, 113.

⁷⁵ Fahey, *Rulers of Russia*, 57.

⁷⁶ For a convincing argument demonstrating the overwhelming obsession of the Nazis with antisemitism as a driving force for World War II and the Holocaust, see Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

some of its high-ranking elements, that the results of 1789 had to be rolled back; and if the Nazis held a similar view, then there might be opportunity for a *modus vivendi*, or even common ground between the two.⁷⁷

One who attempted to build such a bridge was Bishop Alois Hudal who “staunchly defended the German state’s discrimination against Jews because of the dangers they posed for the ‘German *Volk* spirit.’”⁷⁸ For such reactionaries, the division was over which ideology would be able to successfully fill the vacated space and dominate the Western world.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Wolf, *Pope and Devil*, 236–37, gives an illuminating picture of the position of del Val and Pacelli on these issues: “In a letter dated December 9, 1926, Merry del Val...praised Pacelli’s September letter to the German bishops as *zélante*, which from his perspective was an expression of the highest possible praise. This is surprising, at first glance because the word *zélante* has rather negative connotations and is usually translated as zealot. But in the Curia, the term *zélante* is associated with something considerably greater.... The *zélanti*...were religious hardliners who opposed all political compromise.... Not only had the *zélanti* taken up the cause against the Protestant heresy; they had at least since the French Revolution been in complete opposition to anything that even remotely smacked of *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité*.... One of the most important avowed twentieth-century *zélanti* happened to be Merry del Val, who as Pius X’s cardinal secretary of state had been made responsible for rooting out modernists in the Catholic Church. Democracy, the emancipation of the Jews, and ecumenism were deeply abhorrent to him. By ‘honoring’ Pacelli as a *zélante*, Merry del Val was acknowledging him as a member of his party of fighters, unflinching in their advocacy of Catholic truth.”

⁷⁸ Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother*, 26. Connelly also described Hudal as a “Catholic bridge builder to Nazism.” The Austrian-born Hudal was appointed bishop of Aela in 1933. He fell out of favor with the Vatican following publication of his book on the foundations of National Socialism in 1937 since his thinking contradicted Vatican policy towards Germany at that time. Following World War II, he was a major figure in the notorious “rat line,” — the escape route for Nazis on the run from Europe to South American or Arab countries. See Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler’s Henchmen Fled Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Another such figure, Robert Grosche, is discussed by Donald J. Dietrich, “Catholic Theology and the Challenge of Nazism” in *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence and The Holocaust*, edited by Kevin P. Spicer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 81–87.

⁷⁹ Wolf, *Pope and Devil*, 205, notes Papal Nuncio Orsenigo’s memo to the Vatican on his 1933 meeting with Hitler, where he reports that Hitler “assured us that he viewed the Jews as vermin, and recalling the position of the Catholic Church up to the end of the fifteenth century, regretted that liberalism had not seen this danger.” Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008) is a thorough study of the German Protestant

Fahey, like most conspiratorial antisemites, relied uncritically on highly questionable sources for his information, for example citing Arnold Leese (*The Fascist*, May 1939) who had claimed that “Jews are the chief owners of urban real estate in Poland.”⁸⁰ Leese was one of the best-known radical antisemitic figures in England in that period. Among his writings was a work asserting that the blood libel was real. He served a number of prison sentences connected to his activities, which included aiding Waffen-SS POWs in escaping from England. Fahey also drew upon the classic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Athans has compared Fahey’s attitude to the *Protocols* to that of Henry Ford, Charles Coughlin, and Nesta Webster (antisemitic figures much admired by Fahey) who “all admitted that (while) they could not prove the veracity of the *Protocols*...(but) what was described in the *Protocols* was what was going on in the world.” Increasingly Fahey relied on the *Protocols* in his own work as well.⁸¹

And, again like many other conspiratorial antisemites Fahey was prone to seeing conspiracies of Jews everywhere. In one of his books he even claimed that Jews were attempting to eliminate any religious meaning from the celebration of Christmas. The proof for this insidious plot was

Christmas cards that have nothing to remind the recipient of what the rejoicing is for.... In this process of eliminating the supernatural Messiah from the celebration of the anniversary of his birth...the largest firm of Christmas card manufacturers, have certainly played a great part..... All three directors appear in the communal Directory of the Jewish Year Book (and other Jewish communal activities).⁸²

Thus the Jews, through the ownership of a greeting card company by three Jews, were alleged to be plotting to strip Christmas of its sacred meaning!

In other works Fahey published lists of Jews in the Russian Communist leadership, as well as a list of “Members of the Jewish Nations in the United

collusion with Nazism with a pertinent discussion (133–36) of the Catholic role in this effort to create a “nazified Christianity.”

⁸⁰ Fahey, *Rulers of Russia*, 70, n. 1.

⁸¹ Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey*, 103.

⁸² Fahey, *Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation*, 51.

Nations Organization.... As of last year (1951) this tiny but powerful group of Zionist nationalists hold the following key posts.” This list comprised eighty-six names, spread over five pages.⁸³ A forerunner of many conspiracy theorists today, Fahey wrote that “The real purpose of the UN is to pave the way for a ‘World Government’ to which all nations (but one?) surrender their sovereignty and independence.”⁸⁴

For Fahey, this global threat from Jews meant that the Church had to fight back by all available means. This included depriving Jews of their civil rights, denying them the latitude and freedom they were using to undermine society and rejecting their national aspirations in Zion. He believed that

A step to be taken to undo the naturalism of the French Revolution and, at the same time, prevent onslaughts on the Jews, is to withdraw citizenship of other States from all of them, and limit them to citizenship of some other State, their own. That State must not be Palestine, for the Jewish claim to Palestine is implicitly a denial that they have disobeyed God and missed their vocation by the rejection of the True Supernatural Messiah.⁸⁵

Finally, after the Holocaust he was worried that Catholic sympathy for Jews because of their terrible suffering would create a lessening of Catholic anti-Jewish vigilance. And, despite the growing awareness of the Nazi Holocaust, those crimes did not begin to compare to the ancient Jewish crime of deicide, whose result should have ordained the structure of society ever since. “Some Catholics seem to forget that the Jews...in their terrible opposition to God... were intent on the most awful crime ever committed, the crime of deicide.”⁸⁶

⁸³ Ibid., 169–73.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 174.

⁸⁵ Fahey, *Rulers*, 75.

⁸⁶ Fahey, *Kingship of Christ*, 53.

**FROM EUROPE TO AMERICA:
DENIS FAHEY AND CHARLES COUGHLIN**

Fahey's theology was clearly formed in and reflective of the prewar reactionary Church. However, as the Catholic Church began to change after World War II his teachings might well have faded into obscurity, had he not found a powerful ally in the United States in the person of Father Charles Coughlin who brought Fahey to the attention of a receptive audience across the Atlantic. As Coughlin's aura dimmed, Fahey's teachings also seemed to wane; but in reality they had been well-planted and were lying dormant, germinating and waiting for the right circumstances in which to flower.

Mary Christine Athans in the *Coughlin-Fahey Connection* and other writings has shown that "the 'theologian' whom Coughlin quoted most frequently was...Father Denis Fahey."⁸⁷ Coughlin did not just quote Fahey or base his thought on the Irish priest's writings. He took an even more active role, especially by reprinting and distributing Fahey's tract, *The Rulers of Russia*, through his Social Justice Publishing Company in 1940, when Coughlin was still at the height of his powers. Coughlin even boasted in a 1940 letter to Fahey that he had circulated 350,000 copies of the pamphlet thus ensuring Fahey's introduction to a mass American audience.⁸⁸

Coughlin was undoubtedly the most prominent Catholic antisemite in the United States at that time.⁸⁹ "Not only did he reach millions with his weekly radio broadcasts, but he also disseminated his extremist messages through his widely read magazine *Social Justice*, which claimed 200,000 subscribers."⁹⁰ The result was that he popularized an antisemitism that had a significant impact on

⁸⁷ Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey*, 224.

⁸⁸ Coughlin to Fahey, 20 March 1940, Fahey Papers, cited in Enda Delaney, "Political Catholicism in Post-War Ireland: The Revd. Denis Fahey and *Maria Duce*, 1945–54," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 52, no. 3 (July 2001): 495.

⁸⁹ Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 188–89, 305, cited in Joseph W. Bendersky, "Dissension in the Face of the Holocaust: The 1941 American Debate over Antisemitism," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 96.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

U.S. popular discourse and even spurred antisemitic acts — often led by his followers, which threatened public safety.⁹¹

By bringing Fahey’s writings to an American audience, Coughlin enabled Fahey to become a bridge between the Vatican-inspired and the French Catholic antisemitism of the early twentieth century and extreme right groups in America.⁹²



Father Charles Coughlin (1891–1979), an enormously popular radio preacher from 1926 until 1942, with an audience of some 30,000,000. His journal, *Social Justice*, had a wide readership for ten years before its suppression in 1942.

According to Esther Feldblum, in Coughlin’s world-view, “Christianity and America represented Christ, [while] Communists and bankers represented the Antichrist. And conveniently, the two evils were linked together in the Jewish race.” She added that although

a number of the hierarchy were displeased with Coughlin’s ravings, he, nevertheless, found a receptive and supportive audience in the diocesan press. One of his key supporters in the eastern press was the [Brooklyn] *Tablet*. In a typical defense of Coughlin’s antisemitism, the editor (Patrick Scanlon) remarked “Fr. Coughlin has fearlessly and courageously discussed the Jewish problem that others would pass by in cowardly silence.... [No Catholic can

⁹¹ See, among many, David Bennett, *The Party of Fear* (New York: Vintage, 1995) 263–66.

⁹² Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey Connection*, 211. Delaney also points out that Fahey’s works were translated into French by Adrien Arcand, the leader of the Canadian fascist Blue Shirts organization and cites direct communication between Arcand and Fahey. Delaney, *Political Catholicism*, 496 and n. 56.

honestly criticize] Fr. Coughlin's very temperate reference to the part that a Jewish *Weltanschauung* contributed to the untoward world conditions.⁹³

What Scanlon called a “temperate reference” was translated by some of Coughlin's followers into the formation of a militant group called the Christian Front. Its members were implicated in a series of disruptive and violent anti-semitic acts in the late 1930s and early 1940s that disturbed the peace and threatened the security of Jews throughout cities such as Boston and New York which had a large Irish Catholic presence. In both cities the wave of anti-semitism was often ignored by sympathetic Catholic policemen, and eventually had to be countered through official action by Massachusetts Governor Leverett Saltonstall and New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.⁹⁴

Even before the wave of antisemitism became overt, public discourse had become sufficiently heated and the issue politically sensitive enough that it even reached the White House. In a 1941 memorandum to Myron Taylor, his personal representative to the Vatican, President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote,

I forgot to mention that when you get the chance, you might express the thought that there is a great deal of anti-Jewish feeling in the dioceses of Brooklyn, Baltimore and Detroit and this feeling is

⁹³ Brooklyn *Tablet*, 4 Feb. 1939, cited in Esther Feldblum, *The American Catholic Press and the Jewish State 1917–1959* (New York: Ktav, 1997), 46. Coughlin did have some sympathizers amongst the hierarchy. Suzanne Brown-Fleming, in her significant study of Cardinal Aloisius Muench, whom she described as “the most powerful American Catholic figure and influential Vatican representative in Occupied Germany and subsequent West Germany” between 1946–1959, refers to Muench's positive reaction to Coughlin. According to Brown-Fleming, Muench, who was also the bishop of Fargo, North Dakota through that period, had no issues with Coughlin's antisemitism in 1935 (“Coughlin's scapegoating of Jews...did not strike Muench as problematic; indeed, Muench believed it had positive effects”). Suzanne Brown-Fleming, *The Holocaust and Catholic Conscience: Cardinal Aloisius Muench and the Guilt Question in Germany* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 33.

⁹⁴ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 120–23, 132–33; Philip Jenkins, *Hoods and Shirts: The Extreme Right in Pennsylvania 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) examines the Christian Front and similar groups in one state.

said to be encouraged by the church. The point to make is that if anti-Jewish feeling is stirred up, it automatically stirs up anti-Catholic feeling and that makes a general mess.⁹⁵

Taylor did raise the issue but found the Vatican essentially non-responsive; it was the Vatican's resident American expert, Father Joseph Patrick Hurley, himself a virulent antisemite, who advised the Vatican to ignore Coughlin's antisemitism.⁹⁶

While the Coughlin-Fahey correspondence continued in the same vein even after Coughlin's official silencing in 1942, Fahey's public profile also diminished.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Fahey's influence had become entrenched in certain circles, and his association with Coughlin almost certainly allowed his influence to spread even wider, especially among Coughlin's associates and allies like Gerald Winrod and Gerald L. K. Smith, Protestant antisemites who were foundational figures in American Christian right-wing extremism. Smith

⁹⁵ FDR Papers, President's Secretary's File, 1941, Box 51, FDR Archive, Hyde Park, N.Y.

⁹⁶ Charles R. Gallagher, *Vatican Secret Diplomacy: Joseph P. Hurley and Pope Pius XII* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 68–70; idem, "A Peculiar Brand of Patriotism: The Holy See, FDR, and the Case of Reverend Charles E. Coughlin," in *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church in America, 1933–1945*, edited by David B. Woolner and Richard G. Kurial (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 272–75. Gallagher also points out that Hurley "became the only bishop of the entire Second Vatican Council to officially and publicly protest the signing of *Nostra Aetate*."

⁹⁷ For example, see Coughlin's letter to Fahey "while anti-Semitism is to be abhorred in so far as it is related to hatred for the Jews as individuals and racials, nevertheless, anti-Judaism, which means opposition to the Judaic concept of life, is not to be so condemned...." Rev. Charles Coughlin to Denis Fahey, 5 Mar. 1941, quoted in Mary Christine Athans, "A New Perspective on Father Charles Coughlin," *Church History* 56, no. 2 (June 1987): 224–35, quote appears on p. 233. Richard Williamson commented on the silencing of Coughlin in a 1987 letter: "Dear Friends and Benefactors.... A great American priest, Fr. Charles E. Coughlin, as the famous 'Radio priest' of the late 30's and early 40's of this century, swung into action and took the Catholic battle right out into the public arena until the Church's own enemies had him silenced — through the Church's own hierarchy!" Richard Williamson, letter from St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Ridgefield, Conn., 10 Aug. 1987, Box 192, 8, 11, American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, (ACUA), Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

exchanged letters with Fahey in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In a letter to an Irish follower, Fahey wrote that

the programme of Gerald L K Smith as taken from his paper *The Cross and the Flag*...declares unflinchingly and unequivocally for the Rights of Christ the King. Are his detractors and smearers for Christ the King or against Him? The Judaeo-Communists tried to brand every man who stood for American nationalism and against Communism during the war as pro-Nazis.⁹⁸

Another such figure, Francis Parker Yockey, published an article in Coughlin's *Social Justice* magazine in 1938, in which he lamented that an "alien" control of the media "resulted in the spiritual enslavement of American youth."⁹⁹ Yockey would leave a powerful impression on the godfather of American Holocaust denial, Willis Carto, who visited him in prison shortly before his suicide.¹⁰⁰ They were both great admirers of Father Coughlin. The historian George Michael who noted Coughlin's influence on Carto, who has been perhaps the most important and influential figure in the American radical right over the past half-century. Carto recalled the priest as a seminal figure from his childhood to whose broadcasts he would listen with his whole family.¹⁰¹ He described him as a "spellbinding orator."¹⁰² Carto remembered "Coughlin as a genuine populist" and cited "opposition from Jewish organizations...as evidence of Coughlin's bona fides as a true American hero."¹⁰³

Not surprisingly, Bishop Richard Williamson has found himself taken up by various strands of the far right, and especially the Holocaust deniers. Among

⁹⁸ Denis Fahey to unknown member of the *Maria Duce* group (3 May 1949, quoted in Athans, *Coughlin-Fahey Connection*, 213. The *Maria Duce* group was a small, Fahey-inspired Irish ultra-traditionalist Catholic group. See Enda Delaney, "Political Catholicism in Post-War Ireland: The Revd. Denis Fahey and Maria Duce 1945–54," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 3 (July 2001).

⁹⁹ George Michael, *Willis Carto and the American Far Right* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2008), 76.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 10

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 154.

those who have adopted the bishop are the notorious neo-Nazi and professional Holocaust denier, Mark Weber, director of the Institute for Historical Review (who in a March 2009 article entitled “Bishop Williamson and ‘Holocaust Denial’: Why the Uproar?”), concludes: “The Williamson affair underscores a well entrenched Jewish-Zionist bias in the cultural life of modern Western society, and reminds us, once again, of the power behind that bias.”¹⁰⁴

Robert Faurisson, the French academic Holocaust denier, who has squabbled with Weber over the future of Holocaust denial, also sprang to Williamson’s defense. According to a posting on his blog,

The height of his enemies [*sic*] misfortune, and for the traditionalist Catholic he is...if he ever did fall to his knees before the new Inquisition he would immediately remind everyone of Galileo, the man whom science and history ended up acknowledging to be right despite his abjuration. Even if he wound up losing, Richard Williamson would thus have won.¹⁰⁵

Links between the Holocaust deniers and Catholic extremists are not limited to Williamson. In 1993 the *Journal of Historical Review*, the house organ of the Institute of Historical Review, the central organization of Holocaust deniers in the United States, published in its September–October issue “The Holocaust Issue: Three Christian Views.” Two entries were by traditionalist Catholics (including the late Joseph Sobran, who had been fired by William Buckley from the *National Review* because of his antisemitism) and the other by Bishop Louis Vezelis, described as the “editor of *The Seraph*, a traditionalist Catholic monthly.” According to Vezelis “the preponderance of objective and factual evidence shows the promoters of the Holocaust story to be libelous frauds.”¹⁰⁶ Sobran was defended by the IHR as far back as 1987, and later spoke at the

¹⁰⁴ http://ihr.org/williamson_march09.html.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.robertfaurisson.blogspot.com/2009/04/mark-weber-must-resign-from-institute.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Louis Vezelis, “Examine All the Evidence,” *Journal of Historical Review* 13, no. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1993): 34–35; on Sobran’s antisemitism, see William F. Buckley, *In Search of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Continuum, 1992). His conclusion there was that Sobran had indeed “written anti-semitic articles” (118–19).

IHR's 2002 conference.¹⁰⁷ Thus, despite the denunciations of Williamson's Holocaust denial and even some pro forma condemnations of antisemitism from the SSPX, based on their own writings, there can be no question that the antisemitic teachings espoused by Fahey and repeated by Williamson still permeate the heart of the theology of the SSPX and of similar Catholic traditionalists.

Even though the SSPX has tried to be more circumspect about such aspects of their theology following the negative fallout from the Williamson affair, they have not succeeded in completely expunging their record. For example, still available on the Asia SSPX website is an article from March–April 2000 by Bishop Salvador L. Lazo entitled “My Return to the Traditional Latin Mass: Autobiography of a Traditional Catholic Bishop.” In it Lazo lists some of the books that inspired him on his spiritual journey, including Fahey's *Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation*, as well as others about the dangers of Freemasonry. Lazo was very open about their impact on his thought, writing that

Reading these books gave me a better idea of the crisis and confusion in the Church today. It became clear to me who are the real enemies of the Catholic Church. Father Denis Fahey pinpointed them when he wrote: “The enemies of the Catholic Church are three. One invisible, Satan, and two visible: a) Talmudic Judaism, and b) Freemasonry....” That Judaism is the visible chief enemy of the Catholic Church, is evident from the Church history, from words and deeds of individuals, and groups and the teachings of the Talmud of which the Kabalah constitute the basis of Judaism.”¹⁰⁸

Williamson has long held up Fahey as an authority on which to rely. On the website of the SSPX's U.S. seminary in Winona, Minnesota, one can find a

¹⁰⁷ Mark Weber, “Joseph Sobran and Historical Revisionism,” http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v07/v07p373_Weber.html; and Joseph Sobran, “For Fear of the Jews,” <http://www.ihr.org/conference/14thconf/sobranconf.html>.

¹⁰⁸ http://archives.sspix.org/bishop_salvador_lazo/my_return_to_the_traditional_mass_part_1.htm.

letter by Williamson from 1983 in which he advised his readers to keep to sound Catholic doctrine and to proven authors, “for instance, the excellent Fr. Denis Fahey.”¹⁰⁹

FAHEY’S INFLUENCE TODAY

Finally, it must be recognized that Fahey’s baleful influence is still alive today not only in the SSPX, but in similarly-minded groups. E. Michael Jones, who has been a significant figure in the radical Catholic movement over the past few decades, is one who relies on Fahey’s distinctive definition of antisemitism. Jones, who holds a doctorate in English and American Literature from Temple University in Philadelphia, was described by Cuneo in his 1999 book as a “flamethrowing author...who employs a take-no-prisoners, slash-and-burn approach.”¹¹⁰ Over time Jones’ target has increasingly been Jews and Judaism; and in his journal, *Culture Wars*, he follows Fahey in drawing the distinction between “racial hatred” of Jews which he claims to abhor, and hatred of the Jewish religion which is attempting, in his view, to overthrow Catholicism’s natural position. In an article entitled “The Conversion of the Revolutionary Jew,” Jones quotes Fahey’s definition and then sums up his own opinion that

Opposition to Jewish ambition “to impose its rule on other nations” is not anti-Semitism, even if the Jews want to portray it that way. The Christian must oppose anti-Semitism, defined as hatred of the Jewish race, but he must also oppose the Jewish agenda of opposition to Logos. As many Catholics have done in the past, the Catholic must oppose the agenda of the revolutionary Jew, even now—nay, especially now— when Jews have adopted the tropes of conservatism to disguise their true aims.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Originally found at <http://www.sspxseminary.org/publications/rectors-letters-separator/rectors-letter/64.html> and now available at <http://www.leofec.com/bishop-williamson/64.html>, accessed 7 Sept. 2014.

¹¹⁰ Cuneo, *Smoke of Satan*, 40.

¹¹¹ Jones, “The Conversion of the Revolutionary Jew,” <http://www.culturewars.com/2006/Conversion.htm>.

In 2006, Jones posted an interview linked to his 1,200-page book, *The Jewish Revolutionary Spirit and Its Impact on World History*, in which he stated that:

Insofar as they rejected Christ, the Jews rejected Logos, and in rejecting Logos, they rejected the order of the universe, including its moral or political order....” “Judaism is not the religion of the Old Testament. Catholicism is the religion of the Old Testament.... The Talmud is a systematic distortion of the Torah...whose purpose is to keep the Jewish people away from Logos and in bondage to Jewish leaders.¹¹²

Jones’ antisemitism has led him into some strange company — including that of the radical Palestinian-American activist Hesham Tillawi, on whose cable television program Jones appeared in 2008. Tillawi’s show has become a convenient forum for numerous antisemites, including such notorious figures as David Duke, Ted Pike, Texe Marrs, Mark Weber, and fellow Holocaust deniers Bradley Smith, Frederick Toben, and Willis Carto.¹¹³

Another noteworthy figure in this gallery is Robert Sungenis, who has been one of the most active internet proponents of radical Catholic antisemitism. Sungenis, whose writings appear on Jones’ website, is a polemicist whose early writings were *contra* Protestantism, but like Jones he has moved to targeting Jews. Jones was a featured speaker at Sungenis’s First Annual Catholic Conference on Geocentrism, held in South Bend, Indiana, the home of Notre Dame University, one of the most prominent Catholic universities in the United States.¹¹⁴ Reacting to accusations of antisemitism, Sungenis posted a page on his website entitled “Ask Your Question about the Jews, Judaism, Zionism, etc.,” where he presents his own revealing answers to obviously set up

¹¹² <http://www.culturewars.com/2008/JRSInterview.htm>.

¹¹³ See Mark Weitzman, *Magical Logic: Globalization, Conspiracy Theory and the Shoah* (Posen Papers in Contemporary Antisemitism, no. 10, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2008), 18, where I point out how Tillawi’s antisemitism and anti-Zionism is an example of bridging the gap between extremists on the far left, the extreme right, and radical Islam.

¹¹⁴ Ironically, given Sungenis’s title, the French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson defended Williamson by comparing him to Galileo (see note 91 above)!

questions. For example, Sungenis asserts he is no Holocaust denier, yet he states that “I do not deny that Jews were killed by the Nazis. The Nazis killed many people. What I question is whether 6 million Jews were killed by the Nazis.”

Sungenis believes that Jewish–Catholic dialogue is part of a broader Jewish plot. He asserts that the reason for it “is philosemitism, a cultural malaise fostered by the semitically-dominated political and religious groups in America.” Indeed, he even defined philosemitism as a form of “Jewish racism” and a “serious sin” enforced because “the Jews control much of the politics, wealth, academia, media, sciences, arts, and culture today.” Their main weapon of control is “to brand someone who criticizes them as an ‘antisemite,’ publicize it at will in the media which they dominate, and the damage will be practically irreparable.”

Sungenis even blamed Jews for forcing Nazi Germany into World War II:

[W]e should read accounts from people who see the events of World War I and II from a different angle. One of these issues concerns Germany’s relationship with the Jews. According to various accounts, the Germans treated the Jews very nicely when the Jews were excised out of Russia and migrated to Germany. As the story goes, however, the Jews turned on the Germans because they got a better deal from someone else. This made the Germans very bitter against the Jews.

He repeats the traditional supercessionist theology, but also makes sure to use it against Zionism.

Conversely, any view of the Jews that sees them today as an exclusive and divinely blessed people whom God favors over other races and nations, or as a people who, based on selected historical events, still possess the deed, as it were, to the land of Palestine, is one the purest forms of racism. The Jews no longer are the Chosen

People; the Church is. The Jews no longer own Palestine; the world does.¹¹⁵

In another posting Sungenis acknowledged his debt to Fahey, writing that “Fr. Fahey has a lot of good things to say. He was a faithful priest who would not compromise with the latest fads in politics or culture.”¹¹⁶ Sungenis also has a positive view of Williamson. In an introduction to a 2004 interview with Williamson posted on his website, Sungenis stated that

Although we do not subscribe nor endorse the present schismatic state of the SSPX, nevertheless, Bishop Williamson’s comments about the state of the Church and what he calls the “New Religion” are quite correct. Every Catholic, whether you are liberal, conservative or traditional, needs to read what he says.

Sungenis did part with the traditionalist bishop over what he described as “Williamson’s insistence that Vatican II taught that man had the moral right to choose his own religion.¹¹⁷ The interview appeared originally in *The Remnant*, one of the earliest and most important traditionalist publications in the United States. Interestingly, in a column posted on the online *Remnant* on January 26, 2009 devoted to the Williamson affair, one of their major writers and another follower of Fahey, Christopher Ferrara, pronounces himself “mortified” by Williamson’s reliance on the discredited “Leuchter Report” (whose author, Fred Leuchter, asserted there had been no gas chambers in Auschwitz). Ferrara concluded: “In this defining moment we are being asked to define ourselves by declaring what we stand for, and what we will *not* stand for. To answer that

¹¹⁵ Robert Sungenis, “Ask Your Question about the Jews, Judaism, Zionism, etc.,” http://www.catholicintl.com/qa/Ask_Your_Question_about_the_Jews.pdf.

¹¹⁶ Idem, “Q&A’s,” (April 2005), http://www.catholicintl.com/qa/qa_2005_04april.htm.

¹¹⁷ “An Exclusive Interview with Bishop Richard Williamson,” <http://www.catholicintl.com/epologetics/articles/pastoral/williamson-interview.htm>. The version with Sungenis’ comments is now unavailable online, the original interview can be found at http://www.sspxasia.com/Documents/Society_of_Saint_Pius_X/Interview_with_Bishop_Richard_Williamson_2005.htm.

question by rejecting what the Bishop has said is not to show weakness before the Church's foes."¹¹⁸

Like Fahey and Williamson, Sungenis also seems to have no problem relying on hardcore antisemitic sources. An entire blog by William Cork critiques Sungenis's writings on Jews and Judaism, showing how often he plagiarized Nazi authors like Robert Ley, modern antisemites like Jack Mohr, or Holocaust deniers like Mark Weber. Sungenis significantly praised the Holocaust-denying *Journal of Historical Review* as a "highly prestigious and credible magazine...."¹¹⁹ Another blog on that website posted by David Palm accused Sungenis of plagiarizing from Fahey directly.¹²⁰

Fittingly enough, the SSPX and other antisemitic traditionalists found themselves defended by what is probably the most pseudo-academic far right website in the United States, the *Occidental Observer*, an offshoot of the *Occidental Quarterly*. This journal is edited by the California State University professor, Kevin MacDonald, who testified on behalf of David Irving during Irving's failed lawsuit in 2000 against historian Deborah Lipstadt. MacDonald has written extensively on Jews and Judaism from an "evolutionary perspective," most notably in a trio of books.¹²¹ George Michael, a leading

¹¹⁸ Christopher Ferrara, "Triumph and Tribulation: Pope Under Fire for Lifting Excommunication of SSPX Bishops," http://www.remnantnewspaper.com/Archives/2009-0131-ferrara-triumph_and_tribulation.htm. For Ferrara's reliance on Fahey, see http://www.ratzingerfanclub.com/covenant_and_mission.html, which cites a 30 Sept. 2000 *Remnant* article by Vennari. On the Leuchter Report, see Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York: Random House, 2010), 637.

¹¹⁹ See William Cork, "Sungenis and the Jews on the Page, Antisemitism and the Catholic Right," originally at <http://wquercus.com/sungenis/#sources> and now archived at <http://archive.today/ja8fS>. Cork presents a side-by-side comparison of Sungenis's writings and the original uncredited sources.

¹²⁰ David Palm, "Sources, Schoeman, and Sungenis," <http://sungenisandthejews.blogspot.com/2007/02/sungenis-and-jews-sources-schoeman-and.html>. Palm identifies himself as a traditionalist Catholic.

¹²¹ Kevin MacDonald, *A People That Shall Dwell Alone: Judaism As a Group Evolutionary Strategy, With Diaspora Peoples* (Westport: Praeger 1994), *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport: Praeger 1998) and *Separation and Its Discontents Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism* (Westport: Praeger, 1998). MacDonald, now retired

scholar of right-wing extremism in the United States, has described MacDonald's work as having "been well received by those in the racist right, as it amounts to a theoretically sophisticated justification for anti-Semitism," with the result that MacDonald "has attained a near reverential status and is generally considered beyond reproach" by extremists.¹²² In his article, "The Church and anti-Semitism—again," first published in February 2009, MacDonald defended the SSPX and other extreme Catholic traditionalists by describing how

The Catholic Church has played the role of ethnic and cultural defense in the past. It is certainly not surprising that Jewish organizations are alarmed by any suggestion that it might be returning to its historic self-conception.

And he concludes by hoping that "the traditionalists don't give in to what will be a furious onslaught to prevent any glimmer of the resurgence of traditional Catholicism."¹²³

from his teaching position, is devoting his time to the extremist movement. He was a professor of psychology at the California State University, Long Beach. Both the University Senate and his own department have formally disassociated themselves from his positions.

¹²² George Michael, "Professor Kevin MacDonald's Critique of Judaism: Legitimate Scholarship or the Intellectualization of Anti-Semitism?," *Journal of Church and State* (2006): 779–806, available online at <http://www.kevinmacdonald.net/JC&S48-2006.pdf>.

¹²³ Kevin MacDonald, "The Church and anti-Semitism—again," *Occidental Observer*, <http://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/articles/MacDonald-SSPX.html>. MacDonald refers approvingly to claims by James C. Russell which asserted that, in MacDonald's paraphrasing, "the Church was influenced by German culture." Russell's writings became a matter of public controversy in 2010 when he won the Republican and Conservative parties nomination to run against a long-term Democratic Congressional incumbent in a suburban New York district. However, when an article he had published in the *Occidental Quarterly* in 2001 was exposed, the Republicans tried to drop him as their candidate. See Leah Rae, "Westchester GOP drops candidate over inflammatory essay," *Journal News*, 22 Sept. 2010, and related stories available at <http://www.lohud.com/article/20100922/NEWS01/9220350/Westchester%20GOP%20drops%20candidate%20over%20inflammatory%20essay>.

Finally, one quote about Jews from Fahey, used by today's extremist Catholics, sums up not only the traditional reliance on Fahey's theology, but their positive embrace of antisemitism as well. Fahey's original statement is found in the writings of John Sharpe, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and rabid traditionalist Catholic who has his own distribution house. In a 2003 article in the SSPX magazine, *The Angelus*, he gave a negative assessment of the 2001 Vatican document, "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible," which he concluded with a quote from Fahey's *Mystical Body of Christ and the Reorganization of Society* (pp. 277–78) that "may we all have the courage to respond with the words of Fr. Fahey: 'In that sense, every sane thinker must be an anti-Semite.'"124

Later Sharpe sued a local paper for libel when it publicized his antisemitic beliefs. In the decision against him the judge wrote:

No reasonable person can read Sharpe's individual writings and conclude that he espouses anything other than a deep, abiding and pervasive suspicion of and hostility toward Jews, whether considered as a collective people, religion, nation or ethnic group.¹²⁵

RADICAL TRADITIONALISTS, JUDAISM, AND THE CHURCH TODAY

The SSPX has been quite open about its goals. Speaking in 2009 about the efforts by Rome to bring the group back into the Church, Bishop Tissier de Mallerais was blunt, declaring that "we do not change our positions, but we have the intention of converting Rome, that is to lead Rome towards our positions."¹²⁶

Historian Guy Stroumsa has noted that Christianity began as a universalist faith, marked by openness to others, and then turned into an institution that tried to stamp out other religions and coerce all humanity into embracing the new majority religion. Rejection, as with the Jews, resulted in an "ecumenical

¹²⁴ (Sharpe, *Judaism and the Vatican*, <http://webarchive.org/web/20031012011638/>; http://www.sspcx.ca/Angelus/2003_June/Judaism.html).

¹²⁵ <http://www.icourt.info/Opinions/judge/Thomas/Sharpe-v-Landmark-Opinion.pdf>.

¹²⁶ <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2009/02/tissier-de-mallerais-speaks.html>

inclusivism” which entirely delegitimized the other’s existence.¹²⁷ Contemporary Catholic extremists certainly view themselves as the legitimate inheritors of this Christian tradition of supercessionist theology. By embracing myths like that of a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy, they have tried unsuccessfully to politicize this medieval theology. Even when condemning racist or Nazi antisemitism, they are insistent on the validity of the Catholic tradition of hostility to Jews and Judaism.

The distinction between “good” and “bad” antisemitism did not vanish from Catholic teaching even after the Holocaust.¹²⁸ It took the document “Nostra Aetate” to create what the Catholic scholar, Gregory Baum (who contributed to this historic change) described as “the most radical transformation of the Church’s *ordinary magisterium* to emerge from Vatican II” by confronting the heritage of antisemitism within the “teachings of contempt” and its horrific results.¹²⁹ The impact of “Nostra Aetate” on Catholic antisemitism and the acceptance of religious liberty have caused what John Pawlikowski called “the

¹²⁷ Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, “Early Christianity As Radical Religion: Context and Implications,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994): 173–93.

¹²⁸ Elena Mazzini, “The Presence of Antisemitism in the Catholic World: The Case of the *Enciclopedia Catholica* (1948-1954),” *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, no. 1 (Apr. 2010) points out that the entry on antisemitism in the authoritative 12-volume *Enciclopedia*, after condemning the crimes of Nazism, concludes by describing how “Only on these bases...is anti-Semitism legitimate in the field of ideas, and aimed at the watchful protection of the religious-moral and social heritage of Christianity.” The author of the entry, the Catholic priest-scholar Antonino Romeo also referred to his 1951 article in which he claimed “[t]hat many Israelites today...see His Kingdom in modern ‘progress,’ or they identify it with the triumph of the principles of the French Revolution.” My thanks to Dr. Natalia Indrimi for this reference.

¹²⁹ Gregory Baum, “The Social Context of American Catholic Theology,” *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 41 (1986): 87, cited in John T. Pawlikowski. “Vatican II’s “Nostra Aetate”: Its Impact on the Church’s Theological Self-Understanding, *New Theology Review* 25, no. 2 (Mar. 2013). My thanks to Father Pawlikowski for this reference. Journalist Adam Gopnik illustrated this point when he noted in regard to the English Catholic writer G. K. Chesterton: “The insistence that Chesterton’s antisemitism needs to be understood ‘in the context of his time’ defines the problem, because his time — from the end of the Great War to the mid-thirties — was the time that led to the extermination of the European Jews.” Adam Gopnik, “The Back of the World,” *New Yorker* 7/14 (July 2008).

fundamental reorientation on the Christian-Jewish question.”¹³⁰ Under Pope Benedict XVI, even during a conservative retrenchment of the Church on doctrinal and liturgical issues, and despite his heartfelt desire to heal the schism with the SSPX, the Vatican ultimately stood against those who would turn back the clock. All indicators so far are that Pope Francis will continue on that path, as he recently stressed the importance of Vatican II and strongly rejected the demands of the traditionalists who want to see the Council’s reforms revoked. In a homily in Rome (April 2013), shortly after his elevation to the papacy, Pope Francis appeared to target the radical traditionalists by firmly asserting:

The Council was a beautiful work of the Holy Spirit.... But after 50 years, have we done everything that the Holy Spirit said to us in the Council? In the continuity of the growth of the Church which was the Council? No, we celebrate this anniversary, we make a monument, but that does not bother us. We do not want to change. What is more: there are voices that want to go back. This is called being stubborn, this is called wanting to tame the Holy Spirit, this is called becoming fools and slow of heart.¹³¹

Pope Francis’s words were echoed forcefully by Archbishop Gerhard Müller, the top doctrinal official in Rome, who reinforced the Vatican’s stance that all priests must accept the authority of Vatican II, including “*Nostra Aetate*.”

¹³⁰ Pawlikowski, “Vatican II’s ‘*Nostra Aetate*.’”

¹³¹ <http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=17610>. The SSPX has criticized Pope Francis, both for his “informal” style, which they consider “humiliating” and an affront to the dignity of the Church (South America SSPX head, Rev. Christian Bouchacourt in Tom Heneghan, “Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) Criticizes Pope Francis,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/18/society-of-st-pius-x-sspx_n_3112125.html); and for substance (Fellay claimed that Francis’s views threatened “to allow souls to perish because they no longer learn sound doctrine,” Tom Heneghan, “Catholic Rebel Group Criticises Pope Francis’s Focus on Service to Poor,” <http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2013/04/19/catholic-rebel-group-criticises-pope-franciss-focus-on-service-to-poor/>).

Müller summed up the issue by observing that “whoever does not recognise this [Vatican II] is not a Catholic.”¹³²

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¹³² Heneghan, “Society Of St. Pius X (SSPX) Criticizes Pope Francis.” Abp. Müller’s position is Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

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