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# SEEKING RECONCILIATION AND UNDERSTANDING

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ANNUAL  
BULLETIN



2007-2009

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## — A TIME OF CREATIVE TRANSITION —

On June 1, 2008 James Bernauer, SJ was named Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning. This followed a year-long search after the departure of previous Executive Director, Philip A. Cunningham, for the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Bernauer, a professor of Philosophy at Boston College, was part of the early planning meetings that led to the formation of the Center and has been part of many of its activities over the past years.

Bernauer brings a welcome multi-disciplinary focus to the work of the Center. His published works include studies on French philosopher Michel Foucault, the thought of Hannah Arendt, and various topics in Holocaust studies. (See pp. 5,6)

His current research is devoted to: a study of the spiritual and moral formation of German Catholics prior to the rise of National Socialism; and the investigation of the historical encounters between Jews and Jesuits.



PHOTO BY LEE PELLEGRINI



With Associate Directors, Ruth Langer and Audrey Doetzel, NDS, Bernauer's efforts during his first year as Director have focused on developing an academic agenda for the Center and expanding its contributions to the Boston College community. The fruits of this work will become increasingly apparent as we move forward with graduate student and faculty interdisciplinary study groups, courses or credit, and visiting scholars—all creating a community of study and conversation on campus.

The Center is grateful to Philip A. Cunningham whose efforts, since the Center's foundation, helped shape it into one of the leading voices in Christian-Jewish relations locally, nationally, and internationally. Under his leadership, the Center published books and an e-journal, *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (see p. 7), produced on-line courses and a video series, taught courses, sponsored conferences, lectures and study groups, and developed a website that became a primary destination for the field. ([www.bc.edu/cjlearning](http://www.bc.edu/cjlearning)) Scholars and religious leaders—American, European and Israeli—lectured at Boston College, bringing the discipline of Christian-Jewish Relations to Boston's academic world.

## **THE MISSION OF THE CENTER**

The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning applies the scholarly resources of a Catholic university to the task of encouraging mutual learning between Christians and Jews at every level. The objective is the multifaceted development and implementation of new relationships between Christians and Jews that are based not merely on toleration but on full respect and mutual enrichment. This defining purpose flows from the Mission of Boston College. [www.bc.edu/cwis/mission/mission.html](http://www.bc.edu/cwis/mission/mission.html)



This building of new, positive relationships between Jews and Christians—which responds to the vision expressed in Roman Catholic documents ever since the Second Vatican Council—requires sustained collaborative research across the academic disciplines.



Under the Center's auspices scholars and thinkers representing diverse Jewish and Christian perspectives engage in intense and ongoing study of all aspects of our related yet distinct traditions of faith and culture.

We are convinced that Jews and Christians enrich and deepen their respective identities by joint educational endeavors. The Center is thus dedicated to conducting educational research and to offering programs, both in the university and the wider community, in which Christians and Jews explore their traditions together.

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*Research into problems bearing on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations will be encouraged among specialists, particularly in the fields of exegesis, theology, history and sociology. Higher institutions of Catholic research, in association if possible with other similar Christian institutions and experts, are invited to contribute to the solution of such problems. Wherever possible, chairs of Jewish studies will be created, and collaboration with Jewish scholars encouraged. (III, Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, §4, December 1, 1974.)*



## INAUGURATING THE CORCORAN VISITING CHAIR



In September 2008 the Center welcomed its first Corcoran Visiting Chair, Professor Raymond Cohen, the Chaim Weizmann Chair of International Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After studying at Trinity College, Oxford, and Lancaster University he joined the faculty of the Hebrew University in 1975. His research has focused on diplomacy, cross-cultural communication, and conflict resolution. These interests converge in his fascination with Christian-Jewish relations.

Cohen, who will remain at the Center for a second year, focused his first year of research on relations between the State of Israel and the Holy See in the aftermath of the 1993 Fundamental Agreement. In an effort to look more deeply at the political and theological implications of the various problems that have emerged, he planned and hosted, with Center Associate Director Audrey Doetzel, the June 2009 working conference, *The Holy See and Israel: The Diplomacy of Engagement*. (See p. 13)

Cohen's most recent books, *Isaiah's Vision of Peace: The Bible and International Relations* (Palgrave, 2007, with Raymond Westbrook) and *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Christians Came Together to Rescue their Holiest Shrine* (Oxford, 2008), have informed several of his contributions to the Center's activities during his first year of residency. During the fall 2008 semester two sessions of Center's Jewish-Christian Dialogue for faculty and graduate students were based on readings from his books. (See p. 7)

In his paper, *Isaiah: Prophet and Statesman*, found on pages 21 to 24 of this bulletin, Cohen develops the thesis that "[Isaiah's] vision of a disarmed world breaks the mold of conventional wisdom about war and peace." In this commentary on Is. 2:2-4 he holds that this passage is "both an oracle and an intensely political address." Observing that "[i]t is also of a piece with Isaiah's life and times," Cohen concludes that "only a fully rounded man of the world who was both prophet and statesman was capable of this radically original insight."

Raymond's interest in and familiarity with Christianity as a representative and institutional presence in Jerusalem is evident in his paper, *Christianity in Jerusalem Today*, which he presented at the conference 'Christianity and the East: Fostering Understanding' at Brigham Young University, May 14-16, 2009. In his conclusion he observes that today "Christianity in Jerusalem reflects the low morale of the great historical Churches in the West." He adds: "Peace in the Middle East would be a blessing for Jerusalem's Christians as for all the city's residents. But it will not be a panacea for this deeper loss of heart."





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## *CENTER COURSES — 2007-2009*

### **Fall 2007 – Ruth Langer**

*TH371 Turning Points in Jewish History*

Acknowledging that Jewish history stretches from creation to today, this course focuses on the major turning points which shape today's Jewish world. It considers major intellectual and theological trends, figures, and events from the development of rabbinic Judaism to the twentieth century. Through this, students come to have a basic understanding of the outlines of Jewish religious, cultural and intellectual history, of the nature of the Jewish experience as a minority culture in the Christian and Muslim worlds, and of the shapes of contemporary Judaism.

### **Fall 2007; Fall 2008 – Audrey Doetzel, NDS**

*TH48202, HS26301 Hitler, the Churches and the Holocaust*

This course examines antisemitism, nationalism and totalitarianism in relation to Hitler and the Nazi era. It explores the roots and development of Christian anti-Judaism and the role it played in helping to prepare the seedbed for the Holocaust in Europe. In the context of an overview of the years of National Socialism and the Holocaust, it analyzes the weak and inadequate responses of the churches during the Nazi era, the theological and institutional resistance that emerged in response to totalitarianism and the Holocaust, and proceeds to present the currently-developing post-Holocaust paradigm shift in Christian theology.

### **2007-8, 2008-9 – Ruth Langer**

*TH161 -162 Religious Quest: Judaism and Catholicism*

This course explores Judaism and Christianity through their points of apparent contact as well as their differences. The fall semester focuses on Exodus and Matthew and their functions as the “master stories” of their communities, shaping self understandings and ritual lives. The spring semester delves into the creation narratives of Genesis, studying the two communities’ interpretations of the biblical text and how it and its interpretations shape people’s lives. It considers such topics as birth and death, marriage and reproductive ethics, ecology, economic justice, and the Sabbath.

### **2007-2008 – Audrey Doetzel, NDS**

*TH161-162 Religious Quest: Judaism and Christianity*

In this comparative study of Judaism and Christianity students engage in an academic study of and a personal dialogical encounter with these two faith traditions. “Pluralism/absolutism/relativism” and “religion and violence” form a backdrop in the exploration of Biblical Judaism, the centuries between “the parting of the ways” and the Holocaust, and Christianity and Judaism today. It includes a comparative exploration of: the Jewish *Tanakh* and the Christian Bible(s), and Jewish and Christian life-cycle rituals. The *Sh'ma Yisrael* serves as a window into Jewish and Christian themes related to this declaration used by Jesus to proclaim “the first and greatest Commandment” to his followers. Liturgical themes are explored as the Jewish High Holy Days, the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle, the Jewish Passover, the Christian Paschal Season, and the feasts of Shavuot and Pentecost occur.



**Spring 2008 – Ruth Langer with Paul Kolbert**
*TH485 From Diatribe to Dialogue: Studies in the Jewish-Christian Encounter*

Christians and Jews, living together, have never ignored one another. Only in our times have these encounters begun to include regular positive affirmations of the other. To provide the student with a background for the contemporary situation, this course explores various theological facets of this encounter, from the diatribes of earliest Christianity through the medieval disputations, concluding with the contemporary dialogue.

**Spring 2008 – Ruth Langer**
*TH487 Passover in Midrash and Talmud*

Fundamental to any understanding of Judaism is an ability to enter into its formative literature, Midrash and Talmud, the primary texts of Jewish learning. Focusing on texts (in translation) relevant to the celebration of Passover, including the *haggadah* of the Passover *Seder*, this course introduces students to rabbinic approaches to Scripture and their means of making it relevant in their (and our) world. This understanding will be heightened by comparisons to early Christian modes of discourse on the same themes.

**Fall 2008 – James Bernauer, SJ**
*PL828 German-Jewish Thinkers*

The brilliance and tragedy of German(+Austrian)-Jewish Culture is decisive for interpreting twentieth century experience. This graduate seminar examines writings of some of its major thinkers including Arendt, Buber, Rosenzweig, Freud and major representatives of the Frankfurt School. Students are encouraged to develop their own interest in a particular figure (not limited to the ones named here) or aspect of the culture.

**Fall 2008 – Ruth Langer**
*TH436 Heschel's Heavenly Torah*

In his *The Heavenly Torah as Refracted Through the Generations*, Abraham Joshua Heschel develops his theology of revelation. In the course of this, he presents sophisticated discussion of the main pillars of Jewish theology: a discussion of God in relationship to Israel, and of the nature of God's revelation, the Torah. While very much a post-Shoah theology, Heschel's presentation is deeply embedded in and authentic to the traditions of Judaism. This course, then, also explores the rabbinic mind and the methods of rabbinic Judaism.

**Spring 2009 – James Bernauer, SJ**
*PL456 The Holocaust: A Moral History*

This course explores the issues of good and evil and how human beings succeed or fail to meet the challenge such issues pose. The Holocaust, the tragic series of events which ruptured modern western morality, are examined from a variety of perspectives (literary, cinematic, philosophical, theological, and political). It includes a study of the testimony of both its victims and its perpetrators. A special emphasis on a consideration of the intellectual and moral factors which motivated resistance or excused indifference is performed by a cooperative investigation into the ethical life-histories of people from this period. What part of themselves did they think of as primarily concerned with moral conduct?



What form of obligation did they think of as specifically ethical? To what training did they commit themselves in order to develop as ethical beings? Why did they desire to be moral or why did they find it untroubling to be immoral/amoral? The course concludes with an interpretation of the Holocaust for contemporary morality and of its theological significance for Christians and Jews.

**Spring 2009 – Ruth Langer**

*TH449 Jewish Liturgy: Its History and Theology*

Jewish liturgy, as we know it, emerged over the course of the first millennium CE. Embedded in this system of prayer is one of the most concise and normative statements of Jewish theology. After an examination of the precursors of rabbinic prayer and of the development of the synagogue as an institution, this course examines the structures and ideas of the prayers themselves. This creates a context for a deeper discussion of some key Jewish theological concepts as well as a comparison of Jewish and Christian liturgical traditions.

**Spring 2009 – Ruth Langer with Bruce Morrill, SJ**

*TH619 Suffering: Comparative Perspectives*

In the wake of the Holocaust, how can Christians and Jews comprehend evil and suffering? This course explores this theological question theoretically, comparatively, and dialogically, considering both social questions and individual suffering. The last few weeks explore Jewish and Roman Catholic rituals for death.

**Fall 2009 – James Bernauer, SJ**

*PL623 Spiritual Existence: The Weimar Experiments*

Weimar Germany (1918-33) is customarily approached as a politically and economically disastrous period. Unfortunately, this approach has eclipsed that period's protean experimentation with practices of spirituality among Christians, Jews and the non- or post-religious. This seminar examines the efforts of some of Weimar's major thinkers and artists to fashion a renewed spiritual existence for their epoch.

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***JAMES BERNAUER, SJ — ENDOWED KRAFT PROFESSOR***

In September 2009 Boston College named Center Director James Bernauer, SJ the Kraft Professor. This endowed professorship is in recognition of Fr. Bernauer's intellectual leadership, scholarly excellence, and his many contributions beyond the campus. In naming Bernauer the Kraft Professor, Provost and Dean of Faculties Cutberto Garza indicated that the Boston College administration regards endowed professorships as critical to the University's academic mission. They promote excellence in teaching by helping to retain the finest among the faculty of Boston College.



## *JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE ON CAMPUS 2008-09*

The Center and the Boston College Jesuit Institute annually co-sponsor Jewish-Christian dialogue sessions for faculty and graduate students. During the Fall 2008 semester two meetings were led by the Center's Corcoran Visiting Professor, Raymond Cohen, who guided the group's discussion of two of his published works. *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Rival Christians Came Together to Rescue their Holiest Shrine* raised issues of holy sites, ecumenism and conflict resolution. *Isaiah's Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations* provided a diplomatic perspective on Isaiah that was totally novel for most participants. In Spring 2009 James Bernauer, SJ, led a dialogue discussion which was given over to Andrew Heinze's *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*. The conversation considered some of the conflicts between Catholics and Jews on popular American psychology and Freudian psychoanalysis.



The final meeting of the semester was a discussion of Jewish attitudes toward the benefits to be found in religious pluralism. Invited guest, Rabbi Eugene Korn, led an animated discussion on a presentation of his article "Gentiles, The World to Come, and Judaism: The Odyssey of a Rabbinic Text."

## *STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS — THE JOURNAL*

*Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* is the peer-reviewed journal of the Council of Centers on Christian-Jewish Relations. This electronic journal is published by the Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning where Associate Directors Ruth Langer and Audrey Doetzel, NDS serve on the journal's editorial board as co-editor and managing editor. Begun in 2005, the journal is a forum for scholars in the interdisciplinary academic field of Christian-Jewish Relations. It also serves as a resource for clergy, educators, and others who seek to promote mutual understanding between Christians and Jews. It is an open-access publication freely available to everyone over the internet at <http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr>.

Feature Topics for Volume 3 (2008) were 'The Land and State of Israel' and 'Paul and Christian-Jewish Relations.' Volume 4 (2009) continues the special theme of 'Paul' along with the Feature Topic 'Educating in an Age of Dialogue.'

### *2010 - CALL FOR PAPERS - VOLUME V*

#### **BOUNDARIES AND BORDER CROSSINGS**

"Good fences make good neighbors" states the American proverb. But is this necessarily the case in Christian-Jewish relations? The construction of boundaries and concern about those who cross or question those boundaries have been features of the Christian-Jewish encounter from its beginning. However, today's multi-cultural society, with its emphases on individual identity and spirituality and its questioning of organized religion, challenge our received approaches to boundary construction in many ways.

The editors invite submissions for Volume 5 that address this issue from any pertinent disciplinary perspective, including psychology, sociology, and anthropology, as well as history, theology, philosophy, and education. How do we understand such topics as: the "partings of the ways," the traditions of and possibilities for how we teach and preach about each other, attitudes to mission and conversion, multiple religious belonging, or identity defined as simultaneously Jewish and Christian? What is the contribution of "fences" to "neighborliness"? Do we need fences, and if so, how high or impermeable should they be?





## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS GROUP



In 1969 a Study Group on Christian-Jewish Relations was called into being by the National Council of Churches. This group of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox scholars undertook an indepth study of topics relevant to Christian-Jewish relations, both historically and currently.

Over the years, as members became emeriti and new scholars came on board, the group was sponsored and hosted by various organizations including: the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, the Sisters of Zion, the American Jewish Committee, and the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies in Baltimore.

Since 2002 the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning has sponsored and hosted the group's biannual meetings. In spring of 2007, CSG member Katarina von Kellenbach led the group in two scholarly discussions of her book proposal on *The Mark of Cain: Forgiveness and Repentance in the Lives of Perpetrators of the Holocaust*. Ruth Langer presented and discussed with the group the paper "The Earliest Texts of the *Birkat Haminim*." At the Fall 2007 meeting scholars Esther Menn, Richard J. Mouw (guest), and Mark Heim presented papers on: "Windows for Understanding Jewish, Christian, Muslim Relations," "The Identity of Israel': A Challenge for Evangelical-Jewish Relations," and "God's Wisdom and Two Mistakes: The Struggle of Historical Christianity."

In the fall of 2008 the group welcomed scholar Amy-Jill Levine who led them through a study of her syllabus on Judaism and Christianity, and presented her paper "The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)." The Fall 2009 three-day meeting saw the scholars "taking the pulse"—on Catholic-Jewish relations and on Protestant-Jewish relations. In several follow-up sessions, issues emerging from "taking the pulse" were discussed in greater depth. As they concluded this fall meeting, the scholars agreed on two major projects which will be their focus over the next two years.

In the introduction to their September 2002 statement, *A Sacred Obligation*, the CSG scholars articulated their joint conviction: *We believe that revising Christian teaching about Judaism and the Jewish people is a central and indispensable obligation of theology in our time. It is essential that Christianity both understand and represent Judaism accurately, not only as a matter of justice for the Jewish people, but also for the integrity of Christian faith, which we cannot proclaim without reference to Judaism. Moreover, since there is a unique bond between Christianity and Judaism, revitalizing our appreciation of Jewish religious life will deepen our Christian faith. We base these convictions on ongoing scholarly research and the official statements of many Christian denominations over the past fifty years.*





## THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS (ICCJ)



James Bernauer, SJ and Ruth Langer represented the Center at the 2009 annual conference of the International Conference of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) held in Berlin in early July. It was the occasion of the presentation of a new statement, *A Time for Recommitment: Building the New Relationship between Christians and Jews*. In a festive ceremony representatives of the national dialogue bodies constituting the ICCJ signed the

three-part statement which addresses, in turn, Christians, Jews, and all people including Muslims. Plenary papers included presentations by Bishop Dr. Mussinghoff of Aachen, Germany and Ruth Langer. Langer addressed the implications of dialogue for Jewish liturgy. Her paper is now published in the CCJR journal *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (<http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol4/iss1/19>). A third plenary panel session discussed the more universal search for justice. The conference also marked the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Deutsche Koordinierungsrat, a primary organization working for Christian-Jewish understanding in Germany itself. This milestone was addressed by the German chancellor, Angela Merkel. It was particularly meaningful for the ICCJ to meet in Berlin, given the history of the city, as a pre-Nazi center of Jewish culture, as the political heart of the destruction of European Jewry, as a city in the process of healing after the fall of communism and the reunification of Germany, and as a city, like Germany itself, dealing thoughtfully and publicly with the commemoration of this heritage.

## CHRIST AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE PROJECT

Since its beginning three years ago, the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning has participated in and supported the *Christ and the Jewish People* Project. The critical nature of this project has been underlined by recent events, both in the United States and in Germany. Catholic bishops have issued statements explicitly critical of conclusions drawn based on the question underlying this project: namely, if God's covenant with Israel is eternally valid, then there is no benefit for Jews in becoming Christians and Christians need not seek their baptism. The bishops' criticism arises from the conflict between this and another long-standing tenet of Catholic teaching: that Christ is the universal savior. The Christ and the Jewish People project seeks to develop a sophisticated theological discussion about this conundrum, one that will generate a constructive inner-Catholic dialogue and enable further development of the theoretical underpinnings of the new relationship between Christians and Jews. The project is now moving toward publishing a book of essays addressing aspects of this theological conundrum central to the development of a healthy Christian theology of Jews and Judaism.



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***A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE REFLECTS ON THE CENTER***

by Rev. Fr. Demetrios E. Tonnias



Christian scholars are finding that the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College offers unique resources for their work in the fields of church history and comparative theology. The intimate relationship between Judaism and Christianity has been well documented, and the examination of this relationship has been and continues to be a subject of interest in theological studies. The Center's association with the Theology Department of Boston College, however, offers unique advantages to students such as myself who are pursuing advanced studies in the field of Jewish-Christian relations.

I am a Greek Orthodox priest serving as pastor of the Taxiarchae Church in Watertown, Massachusetts. I am now in the dissertation phase of the Ph.D. program at Boston College under the direction of my advisor, Professor Ruth Langer. The focus of my research is the nature of the relationship between Christians and Jews in the eastern Mediterranean. The Center has provided me with an ideal environment in which to meet the multidisciplinary de-

mands associated with this type of research—whether they be historical, comparative, or linguistic in nature.

Indeed, in the course of this research, the Center has enabled me to begin exploring a relationship between Greek Orthodox Christians and Jews that, unfortunately, has been too often neglected. The courses offered through the Center have given me the opportunity to examine how Orthodox Christians and Jews have interacted, not only in the early church period (an area of concern for every Orthodox Christian scholar) but also throughout the more than 2,000-year history of this relationship. The Jesuit character of Boston College also allows me to contextualize the relationship between Christians and Jews in the East vis-à-vis that found in the West, helping to illustrate the ways in which the Christian-Jewish relationship in the East is at once similar and yet still profoundly different from that found in the West.

In a broader context, however, my studies at the Center for Christian-Jewish learning have opened a new window in my ministry in the Greek Orthodox Church. Indeed, my parishioners have experienced the fruits of the courses offered at the Center. Whether in a homily or catechetical lecture, the subject matter of my studies has frequently crept into my parish life. My studies have also afforded me the opportunity to represent the Greek Orthodox Metrop-



olis of Boston not only in the local Jewish-Christian dialogue, but also on an international level. This past summer, His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston asked me to represent the Metropolis at a joint Jewish-Christian interfaith seminar in Israel, in no small measure because of my studies at the Center. Due at least in part to my participation, the schedule of the seminar was expanded to include a trip to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and an audience with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III.



*Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Theophilos III  
in the Old City of Jerusalem – May 15, 2009*

Perhaps it is in events such as these that the true benefit of the Center is manifested—when flesh and blood is put on the bones of the theological studies offered at Boston College. Put another way, every raw science has its own intrinsic value but it is only when a raw science becomes an applied science that the fruits of that science are realized. The real value of the Center is that it equips theologians with the toolset necessary to tackle the pastoral and spiritual problems found in religious communities. In a way, the Center is itself a microcosm of this

world, in that Jewish and Christian scholars work together in examining the complex nature of the Christian-Jewish experience. It is no small wonder, therefore, that some classes have co-lecturers—one Jewish and one Christian—in order to facilitate the associated discussion. For myself, someone who personifies the Center is my advisor, Professor Ruth Langer. As her student, teaching assistant, and now doctoral advisee, I have seen just how in-depth is her knowledge, not only of her native Judaism, but also of Christianity. She possesses the ability to teach about both faiths objectively—a skill which, in theological studies, is a unique asset. This is an attribute that does not come easily, but it is necessary to acquire it if one hopes to get to the heart of issues impacting the Jewish-Christian relationship. Through faculty like Professor Langer, my studies have become not simply an *encounter* of faiths but rather an *interaction*.

To say that the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning has been an essential component of my doctoral studies would be an understatement. The very subject of my doctoral dissertation is proof enough of this. It examines how the Eastern Christian father, John Chrysostom, viewed the Patriarch Abraham, and how his exegetical opinion of Abraham relates to other Christian and Jewish perspectives on the patriarch. Without the multi-disciplinary resources offered by the Center and by Boston College at large, it is difficult for me to imagine just how such research could be undertaken.





MARCH 15 – 16, 2009

**PAUL OF TARSUS:  
THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES IN HIS JEWISH CONTEXT**



AUDREY DOETZEL, NDS,  
INTRODUCES THE CONFERENCE

To mark the Church's jubilee year dedicated to St. Paul (June 28, 2008–June 29, 2009), Pauline scholars gathered for two days at Boston College to explore the significance of contemporary scholarly perspectives in Pauline studies for Christian-Jewish relations. The conference opened with a presentation by Alan Segal (Barnard College) on the theme of conversion in Paul's writings and in his Jewish context. Ruth Langer – asking the question: What would Paul do? – addressed current theological challenges regarding a Christian mission to or with Jews.



A panel on Jewish identity featured PHEME PERKINS (Boston College) and SHAYE J.D. COHEN (Harvard), while a panel by DANIEL HARRINGTON, SJ (Boston College) and BERNADETTE BROOTEN (Brandeis) explored Paul's use of the Old Testament, and Paul and Jewish Law. THOMAS STEGMAN, SJ (Boston College) and ADAM GREGERMAN (ICJS, Baltimore) addressed challenges posed by the controversial text 2 Cor. 3, and by the conflict in Galatia as it related to Gentile salvation in Judaism and in Jewish Christianity.



PHEME PERKINS RESPONDS TO ALAN SEGAL

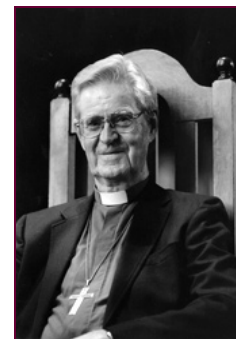


TOM STEGMAN, SJ QUESTIONS DAN HARRINGTON, SJ

The conference honored the memory and contributions of the late Pauline scholar, Bishop Krister Stendahl. Tributes by his colleague, Helmut Koester (Harvard Divinity), and by his students and colleagues Daniel Harrington, SJ, PHEME PERKINS, and Bernadette Brooten recalled the profound influence this eminent scholar had on many through his hospitality, his leadership in the church, and his advocacy of tolerance.

The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning is grateful for and deeply indebted to the pioneering efforts of this distinguished scholar and inspiring church leader.

May he rest in peace and may his memory be for a blessing.



1921 – 2008





## *THE HOLY SEE AND ISRAEL: THE DIPLOMACY OF ENGAGEMENT*

JUNE 17 – 18, 2009



Organized by Raymond Cohen, the Center's inaugural Corcoran Visiting Professor, this two-day event directed the energies of Catholic and Jewish leaders and scholars to questions of the relationship between the Vatican and the State of Israel—a relationship that concerns the central political intersection of these two religiously grounded cultures. The objective was to help move this relationship beyond minimal reconciliation to a new stage of active engagement.

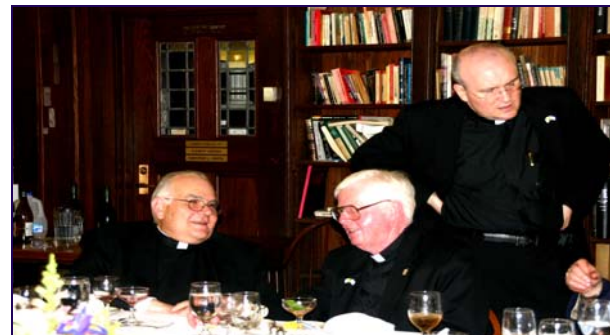


RAYMOND COHEN INTRODUCES  
THE CONFERENCE

On June 17 Mordechai Lewy, the Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See, addressed an appreciative public audience with his presentation: *From Denial to Acceptance: Holy See–Israel Relations*. Beginning his historical reflections with the state of non-relationship, he traced the stages to the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1993–94. He outlined some of the parameters of the diplomatic relations, concluding with reflections on the papal visits to Israel in 1964, 2000 and 2009. (See the text of the Lewy lecture at: <http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1195&context=scjr>). A festive dinner for invited guests followed the public presentation.



J. BERNAUER, SJ, M. LEWY, R. STERN, AND E. FISHER  
ENJOY COHEN'S WORDS OF WELCOME



D. JAEGER, D. CHRISTIANSEN, SJ AND J. MASSA ENGAGED  
IN FRIENDLY DINNER CONVERSATIONS



Raymond Cohen opened the Conference on June 18. The work of this closed conference was given focus by the following speakers and their presentations:

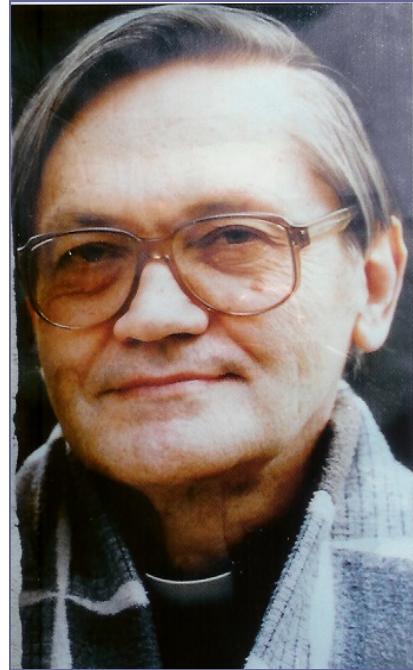
- \* Rabbi David Rosen: *The Interreligious Dialogue between the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Catholic Church*
- \* Ambassador Lewy: *The Diplomatic Relationship: Conflict and Cooperation*
- \* Fr. David Jaeger: *Christians and Jews in Israel*

Concluding remarks were offered by John T. Pawlikowski.



***CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF FR. STANISLAW MUSIAL, S.J.***

On March 4-6, 2009 the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning co-sponsored the major conference *Celebrating the Life and Ministry of Fr. Stanislaw Musial, S.J.* The conference, which marked the fifth anniversary of Fr. Musial's death, was held at three sites in Krakow, Poland: the Jewish Community Center, the Jagiellonian University and the Center for Culture and Dialogue in the Jesuit College, the Ignatianum. Fr. Musial (1938-2004), a pioneer of Jewish-Christian reconciliation in Poland, was intensely committed to combating antisemitism. Among his many involvements, he was a leader in the efforts to resolve the conflict over the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz. He was one of the strongest and most forthright voices in the Polish Catholic Church for tolerance and mutual understanding, and was intensely devoted to combating anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Other conference co-sponsors were the Bernardin Center (Catholic Theological Union), the Cardinal Suenens Center (John Carroll University), the Tanenbaum Center, and the American Jewish Committee.



*FATHER STANISLAW MUSIAL, SJ*  
*1938 – 2004*



*JAMES BERNAUER, SJ AND*  
*RABBI DAVID ROSEN*

The Center's Director, Fr. James Bernauer, S.J., presented a lecture *"From European Anti-Jesuitism to German Anti-Jewishness: A Tale of Two Texts."* He put forward the hypothesis that the 17<sup>th</sup> century anti-Jesuit polemic *Monita Secreta* provided the template for the 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-Jewish text *Protocols of the Sages of Zion* and traced some intersections of both polemics in Nazi propaganda. Other prominent presenters included Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwicz (Archbishop of Krakow) and Rabbi David Rosen (International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee) who gave major addresses on the future of the Catholic-Jewish Dialogue.



**THE HOLOCAUST: HISTORICAL MEMORY AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSE**

by Audrey Doetzel, NDS

On Wednesday, June 10, 2009 when shots rang out at the entrance to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, I was in a Museum seminar room. I was one of twenty Holocaust scholars invited to participate in a two-week seminar on teaching the Holocaust. As we crouched under tables in our darkened and locked classroom, heard the wailing cries of school children who had witnessed the shooting, and eventually were evacuated from the building, I learned very concretely why the Holocaust must continue to be taught today.



We now know that an 88-year-old white supremacist shot and fatally wounded Officer Stephen Johns, who had kindly opened the door to welcome James von Brunn to the museum. Officer Johns had often welcomed us in a similar manner when we arrived at the museum in the morning. He had become a friend—and now he was the victim of a radical supremacist whose ranting in a final e-mail message had been: “It’s time to kill all the Jews!” Our seminar debriefings following this shared tragic experience held a new sense of immediacy and urgency. We knew that when we returned to our classrooms for the fall semester we would bring a conviction and a passion borne of an experience unable to be contained in the pages of a textbook.

Less than two months earlier, on April 23, at the Holocaust Day of Remembrance Ceremony at the United States Capitol—as if by premonition—President Barak Obama had said, “[W]hile we are here today to bear witness to the human capacity to destroy, we are also here to pay tribute to the human impulse to save.” His message went on to call the country and the world to remember that: “It is the grimmest of ironies that one of the most savage, barbaric acts of evil in history began in one of the most modernized societies of its time, where so many markers of human progress became tools of modern depravity: science that can heal used to kill; education that can enlighten used to rationalize away basic moral impulses; the bureaucracy that sustains modern life used as the machinery of mass death...”

President Obama’s words aptly summarize what motivates the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning in its efforts in Holocaust education. They effectively complement the call to us by the Holy See’s *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (March 1998) and by the many exhortations by Pope John Paul II and now by Pope Benedict XVI. To help implement the mandate of *We Remember*, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, in February 2001, called Catholic educational institutions at all levels “to grapple with the Shoah as part of its central curriculum” (*Catholic Teaching on the Shoah*). Their goals for Shoah education in a Catholic context include: 1. To provide Catholics with an accurate knowledge of and respect for Judaism, the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish People, and the spiritual bond of kinship between Jews and Christians; 2. To encourage a positive appreciation of Jews







Photo - A. Doetzel

Auschwitz I Museum

'GLOD' - 'STARVATION' — MIECZYSLAW STOBIEFSKI

and Judaism in God's plan of salvation; 3. To promote a spirit of repentance and conversion; 4. To arm Catholics for the ongoing fight against traditional Christian anti-Judaism and modern racial antisemitism, by studying the causes and conditions for genocide in order to prevent such atrocities from happening in the future. They emphasize the importance of 'Construction of Memory,' calling educators to "be conscious of the moral imperative to construct a memory of the Shoah that will positively influence the moral formation of students."

A review of the Center's mission (p. 2) and the courses offered by Center staff (pp. 4-6) helps illustrate how the Center works to meet these goals. Conferences and public lectures also contribute to these efforts. Among these are the November 2008 lecture in Commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kristallnacht by Paolo Gambarini, SJ, "Remembering Auschwitz and the Beginning of Jewish-Christian Dialogue", and the April 2009 Holocaust Remembrance Day lecture by Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, "The Rescue of Jews by Non-Jews During the Holocaust."

The work of the Center is enriched by a close association with the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. In September 2006 we benefitted from the

expertise of museum staff member, Victoria Barnett, when the Museum and the Center co-sponsored at Boston College the two-day conference "Dietrich Bonhoeffer for Our Times: Jewish and Christian Perspectives." Jim Bernauer, SJ and I were both invited to participate in Museum seminars for university faculty—Jim in the May 2006 seminar, "Complicity and Confession: Post-Holocaust Christian Interpretations of Guilt and Forgiveness," and I in the Silberman Seminar (mentioned above), "Teaching the Holocaust: Its Causes, Its Course, and Its Consequences."

We are aware that an effective examination of this atrocity—which integrated religious, cultural and national identities—can motivate a profound re-examination of religious views. Given the impulse to conserve and exonerate our tradition, how do we present with integrity the admission of serious historical failures—failures which now have the capacity to catalyze affirmative messages and intellectual change? Our 21<sup>st</sup> century hope in Holocaust education is to help "make Christian faith credible by retrieving the 'authentic' core of faith that does not crack under the weight of post-Holocaust interrogations." (cf., Sarah K. Pinnock, "Atrocity and Ambiguity" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Sept. 2007)





## *THE JESUIT ORDER AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE*

by James Bernauer, SJ

The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning has established a special scholarly project, the exploration of the historical relationship between the Jesuit Order and the Jewish People. The current plan calls for an international conference to take place at Boston College in 2012.

The project emerges from a series of colloquia sponsored by the Society of Jesus's Roman leadership for Jesuits who are in dialogue with Jews. The sessions have included lay men and women as well as Jewish scholars. The first colloquium convened in 1998 in Krakow, Poland, near Auschwitz. Its theme *Jesuits and Jews: Toward Greater Fraternity and Commitment* dealt with some of the historical moments in Jesuit anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. The second meeting took place in 2000 in Jerusalem. Its subject was *The Significance of the State of Israel for Contemporary Judaism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue*. The next congress, in 2005 at a Jesuit conference center in Zug, Switzerland, focused on *The Importance of Modern Jewish Thought for Jewish-Christian Dialogue*. Two years later the colloquium was at Fordham University in New York City where its concern was *The Jews in Diaspora*. There interactions between Christian and Jewish communities in secular cultures provided a

focus for conversation. These colloquia built upon the commitment of many Jesuits after World War II to the promotion of mutual understanding between the groups, a commitment that flowered at Vatican Council II and in the inspired leadership of the Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea in shepherding "Nostra Aetate" to proclamation by the Council's Bishops.



ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL AND  
CARDINAL AUGUSTIN BEA

Although the relationship between Jews and Jesuits had importance in western culture's development, there has been no major systematic effort to explore their dealings with one another. We know that Ignatius of Loyola's desire for intimacy with his Savior even included his yearning for an actual sharing in the Jewish lineage ("*secundum carnem*") of Jesus and Mary. Ignatius's devotion to the personal



figure of Jesus saved him, and initially the Society, from a most common prejudice, namely, the view that Jewish converts to Christianity and their descendants, the so called "New Christians" of Spain, were more Jewish than Christian for they were of impure blood. Such "tainted" ancestry justified their exclusion from Church posts and religious orders.



Ignatius, showing great courage in resisting ecclesiastical and political pressures, refused to exclude Jewish converts or their descendants from the Society. Thus, some of the most distinguished early Jesuits were of Jewish heritage. Unfortunately, the Society was to abandon its founder's courageous policy on membership and in 1593, under pressure from its own members as well as ecclesiastical and secular authorities, the Jesuits banned the admission of all with "Hebrew or Saracen stock." The decree was adopted on Dec. 23, 1593, "perhaps the most shameful day in Jesuit history" according to the Jesuit historian J.P. Donnelly, S.J.

Among the more regrettable elements in the rancorous historical relationship

between Jesuits and Jews was the loss of that special sense of solidarity in suffering which should have emerged from the history they shared. They were both the most frequent victims for those who sought a total, diabolical explanation for how history operated. They formed, as Lacouture has said, a "tragic couple," both demonized in infamous documents: the *Monita Secreta* for the Jesuits, the *Protocols of Zion* for the Jews. Their diabolical character was charted on the axes of space and time. Spatially, they operated outside of any specific territory and aspired for domination over the world; they lurked behind thrones at the same time that they were quite willing to overthrow those very kings and nations. Jews and Jesuits were preeminently people of the city and, thus, were accused of being allied to wealth, loose morality, and a cunning, deracinated intelligence which was contemptuous of the traditions of the rural past. Temporally, they were at home in periods of decadence and collapse and, thus, they were perceived as devotees of modernity: the same spectacles which detected the Jesuits as fathering the French revolution saw the Jews as the creators of the Russian one.

In partnership with the Jesuit Institute, the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning will host a visiting scholar, Dr. Robert Maryks, an historian at the City University of New York for the Spring semester of 2010. While residing at Boston College, he will continue with his project of a biographical dictionary of Jesuits with Jewish ancestry.



## *THE ROLE OF RECIPROCITY IN OUR LITURGICAL EXPRESSIONS*

by Ruth Langer

An issue that has emerged over my years of involvement in Christian-Jewish dialogue has been the question of reciprocity: Christian churches have examined their teachings and worked to rid themselves of their anti-Judaism, both in thought and in practice. What have Jews done in return? Those who ask this question acknowledge that the problems in Christian thought and practice had more serious consequences than the comparable ones in the Jewish world, but this was a matter of the realities of politics and power, not of theology. Jews simply were not able to oppress and persecute Christians. That does not mean that their teachings would not have led them to do so had they been able.

One powerful locus of transmission of these teachings about the religious other is in our liturgical traditions. On the one hand, liturgies are performed, meaning that we often “do” them without paying attention to individual words or their meanings. They can communicate larger messages through less cognitive modes: through smell and taste, through music and movement, through senses of meditation or urgency. But reforms of the liturgy, beginning with the Protestant Reformation, continuing with the rise of liberal forms of Judaism, and then with the Catholic liturgical renewal of the mid-twentieth century and especially in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, injected a new element: vernacular prayer. Conversion of prayers received in “archaic” languages of learning into texts that would be understood presented real challenges.

Any translator makes deliberate choices about what words will best express the intent of the original. In the case of these liturgies, though, the vernacular text often sounded bizarre or even offensive once translated. Literal translation was insufficient, but interpretative translation meant clarifying the theology meant by the text.

Protestant vernacular liturgies predated concern about Christian-Jewish relations, but permission for Catholics to develop and use vernacular liturgies was, like *Nostra Aetate*, a product of the Second Vatican Council. Catholics thus had their first exposure to vernacular prayers through a text that had been largely, if inconsistently, revised to remove its most egregious anti-Jewish statements.<sup>1</sup> Protestant churches who so wish remained free to make further changes in their liturgies. The result is a presumption across the western Christian world that liturgy embeds within it some degree of flexibility. Where humans had erred in the composition of their prayers, they had obligations to correct those errors, at least if the proper authority was making the correction.<sup>2</sup>

What about Jewish liturgical issues? Christians in the High Middle Ages became aware that the Jews in their midst

<sup>1</sup> However, the primary, universal liturgy of the Catholic Church remains in Latin, and all vernacular prayers are authorized translations of it.

<sup>2</sup> And as we have seen in the Catholic world in the past two years with the permission for broader use of the pre-conciliar Tridentine rite, the Pope himself can determine how to make these changes.



were following rabbinic, not biblical teachings, and that these included liturgical texts that were sometimes as negative about Christians as those of Christians were about Jews. Beginning in 1238, but becoming a regular issue only a century and more later, Christians drew attention to these prayers in their denunciations of Jews to the secular and religious authorities. As a result, Jews started to self-censor some of these prayers, not reproducing them in new prayers books or changing their language. In the 1550's, in the Counter Reformation, with its move to purge subversive elements from its realm, the Catholic Church imposed formal censorship on Jewish texts, including liturgical ones, and the offensive elements of these prayers largely disappeared in Christian lands.

In some cases, these were prayers that were optional, poetic elaborations on the core liturgy. But in others, the teachings of the medieval Rhineland mystics had impressed on Jews that the wording of these texts was sacred and unchangeable, derived from divine authority and not humanly composed. Failure to recite the prayers correctly could impair their effectiveness in the divine realm. Thus, we need to raise the unanswerable question of the degree to which early modern Jews actually omitted these prayers.

Reform Jews did not share this concern about changing the prayer texts. When they introduced abbreviated vernacular liturgies in the nineteenth century, the official texts certainly did not contain outright insults to Christians. But they

did grapple with questions of how Jews should express their relationship to their neighbors. Was a sense of superiority, of chosenness, appropriate? To what extent should Jews see themselves as different and in what ways? Many of these questions arose because of the difficulty of presenting ancient poetic language and its concepts in the vernacular in ways that would avoid embarrassment to both Jews and to their Christian visitors. These concerns remain at the center of the construction of new liberal liturgies—and should be highlighted in discussions of reciprocity in Christian-Jewish relations.

The questions of how to address issues in traditional liturgies is more complex. Here, the Hebrew texts are the ones that are both used, frequently comprehended, and considered sacrosanct. However, at least for Jews of Ashkenazi origin, today's question is whether to celebrate the release from Christian oppression by restoring censored texts. There is a growing movement to do this in the case of the *aleyну* prayer, where the censors relied on a well-known but dubious interpretation of the line they erased, where the resultant text makes no sense, and where Jews from other parts of the world never altered the text. Here, the challenge is to avoid reviving that dubious interpretation. However, other texts largely remain in their post-censorship versions or, in the case of liturgical poetry, have vanished entirely from active use. Thus, here too, there is a discussion to be had, but "reciprocity" is not its correct motivation.





## *ISAIAH: PROPHET AND STATESMAN*

by Raymond Cohen

*In days to come  
 the mountain of the Lord's house  
 shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
 and shall be raised above the hills;  
 all the nations shall stream to it.  
 Many peoples shall come and say,  
 "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
 to the house of the God of Jacob;  
 that he may teach us his ways  
 and that we may walk in his paths."  
 For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
 and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
 He shall judge between the nations,  
 and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
 they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
 and their spears into pruning hooks;  
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
 neither shall they learn war any more (Is. 2:2-4).<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

We usually associate the Book of Isaiah with the great prophetic themes of wrongdoing and justice, consolation and deliverance. His vision of a disarmed world breaks the mold of conventional wisdom about war and peace. Yet Isaiah the son of Amoz was not only a prophet, he was also a statesman thoroughly at home in the international politics of the ancient Near East. How can one reconcile the hard-nosed pragmatism of the statesman with the soaring vision of the prophet?

Not much hard biographical information has come down to us about the historical figure who gave his name to the "Book of Isaiah," sixty-six chapters gathered together from different periods, written by different hands, and edited and re-edited over many centuries. All we know is that he lived in Jerusalem, capital of the tiny kingdom of Judah in the second half of the eighth century BC, was married to a prophetess, and had two sons. Rabbinic tradition adds that Isaiah's father Amoz was the brother

of King Amaziah, the grandfather of King Ahaz.

Jerusalem, with the Temple and royal palace, had been recently refortified by King Uzziah, Isaiah's cousin if the rabbis are right. A poor, thinly populated, hilltop kingdom, Judah had long conducted a cautious foreign policy in the shadow of its stronger northern neighbor, Israel. With the conquests of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC) in Syria and Palestine, Assyria became the dominant regional power, exacting tribute from local vassals. These included Judah and Israel, which lay along the route, whether for trade or invasion, from Mesopotamia to the Nile valley.

Although Assyria ran a great empire through a highly sophisticated system of law and governance—indeed, its art and architecture astonish us to this day—it was at the same time very vulnerable. It was imperially over-extended and its long frontiers thinly settled and inadequately



guarded. To defend itself against external enemies such as Egypt and Babylonia, and to keep subject peoples in check, Assyria sent out expeditionary forces as needed rather than maintaining standing armies of occupation.

This was the context for the constant foreign policy dilemma that faced Judah during Isaiah's lifetime. It was a classic conundrum of the kind that confronted small states in the Cold War. Should Judah reconcile itself to vassal status, paying onerous tribute to Assyria, or should it make a bid for independence and join an anti-Assyrian coalition? Either way Judah's fate rested on accurate assessments, in conditions of uncertainty, of the capabilities and intentions of Assyria on the one hand, and Assyria's rivals on the other. In times of crisis prophecies were indispensable for decision-making.

Careful reading of Isaiah 1-39, known as First Isaiah, the chapters that scholars associate with the historical figure, reveals a chronicle of diplomatic machinations conducted against a backdrop of power politics. In the ancient Near Eastern tradition, reflected in Isaiah 39, kings at peace communicate via envoys bearing letters and gifts. While ostensibly making sick visits—or attending family events—on behalf of their royal masters, ambassadors negotiate alliances and dynastic marriages. Treaties, solemnly sworn before God, are sacrosanct. Their infringement disrupts the celestial and international order on which peace and commerce rest: “the envoys of peace [or, Salem, i.e. Jerusalem] weep bitterly. The highways are deserted, travelers have quit the road. The treaty is broken” (Is. 33:7).

Isaiah memorably rails against Judean missions to Egypt, satirically depicting a

mission plodding through the desert, weighed down with diplomatic gifts: “they carry their riches on the backs of donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels” (Is. 30:6). Elsewhere he describes Judah “sending ambassadors by the Nile, in vessels of papyrus on the waters” (Is. 18: 2).

Isaiah's unmatched writing leaves no doubt about his superlative education, perhaps in the scribal academy where officials were trained for government service. His language is of majestic richness and resonance, and his canvas encompasses a vast geographical area from the Greek islands, via Anatolia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Levant, to Mesopotamia and Persia. This was the known world, bound together by trade and diplomacy since the third millennium BC, which informs his ecumenical, prophetic vision. “On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. On that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth” (Is. 19: 23-24).

A longtime member of the royal court, Isaiah was well-informed about the international realities of his time. He would have been present at audiences for visiting delegations and privy to the intelligence required for ruling and defending the realm. Some information would have come from visiting traders, some from spies. Isaiah's counsel was grounded in hard facts as well as faith in the Lord. He denounces an Egyptian alliance in poetic language, but it is the unreliability of Egypt as a partner and the poor judgment of its officials that concern him. “The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the wise couns-



elors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel" (Is. 19:11). "Egypt's help is worthless and empty" (Is. 30:7).

Isaiah's outlook as a statesman is reflected in three key episodes from his long career:

1. In 734 the kings of Damascus and Israel put heavy pressure on King Ahaz to join a revolt against Assyria. When he refused, they besieged Jerusalem. Isaiah met with his disheartened king and sought to encourage him: "Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint" (Is. 7:4). Julius Wellhausen took this as a call for quietist nonresistance. Oxford Hebraist Hugh Williamson, however, has pointed out that this is more likely to echo the call to arms on the eve of battle found in Deuteronomy: "Do not lose heart, or be afraid, or panic, or be in dread of them" (Deut. 20:3). (In Hebrew the parallel is even more obvious.) Isaiah, in other words, was not a pacifist and supported armed resistance in a situation of dire necessity.

2. He was, however, unswervingly opposed to entangling alliances and military adventures. Presumably he witnessed the grim cost of war following the fall of Israel in 721, when there were massive deportations and an influx of refugees into Jerusalem. In 712-711 Ashdod, with Egyptian backing, rebelled against Sargon's Assyria. To warn the young King Hezekiah against an Egyptian alignment Isaiah launched a campaign of dissuasion, appearing in public like a victim of war in a dramatic enactment of defeat. "Just as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as captives and the Ethiopians as exiles" (Is. 20:3). Here we learn of Isaiah's awareness of public opinion and his flair for the dramatic gesture.

3. Following the death of Sargon in battle in 705 Hezekiah, ignoring Isaiah's warnings, joined a new anti-Assyrian coalition. Isaiah was horrified that Hezekiah, eager to impress the visiting delegation of King Merodach-baladan of Babylonia—the leader of resistance to Assyria in the East—naïvely showed off the contents of his treasury, armory, and storehouses. Perennially mistrustful of great power intentions Isaiah saw this as an irresponsible breach of state security.

Hezekiah's adventure proved disastrous. Assyria under Sennacherib invaded Judah, captured its fortified cities, and in 701 besieged Jerusalem. Ignoring the request of Hezekiah's top officials to negotiate in the diplomatic language of Aramaic, the Assyrian envoy Rabshakeh directly addressed the populace on the city wall in Judea in order to break their will. He confronted them with an invidious alternative: If they resisted they were doomed "to eat their own dung and drink their own urine" (Is. 36:12). But if they surrendered they would be taken away "to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards" (Is. 36:17). God would not save them from the King of Assyria.

When Hezekiah's officials, distraught, came to Isaiah, he told them to tell their master not to be afraid. Later he prophesied to a penitent Hezekiah that Jerusalem would not fall and that the Lord would strike down the Assyrian army. And indeed the siege was miraculously raised. 2 Kings provides an alternative explanation for Jerusalem's survival: Hezekiah sent a delegation to Sennacherib and agreed to resume vassal status, emptying the Temple and his treasury to pay the tribute. "I have done wrong; withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear" (2 Kings 18:14).



I believe that a good case can be made for locating Isaiah's vision of peace at the 701 siege of Jerusalem. Rabshakeh's speech was a model of war propaganda, mixing threats and promises in persuasive combination. It had to be decisively rebutted were Jerusalem to hold out and Judah to survive as a nation. In place of surrender and deportation, therefore, Isaiah evokes the uplifting prospect of universal peace and a godly commonwealth. "In days to come" refers to the downfall of Assyria's empire (it cannot refer to the end of history since there would still be disputes).

Isaiah's inspirational oracle incorporates a series of revolutionary ideas. War was the centerpiece of international reality in the ancient world. Prowess in war validated a king's fitness to rule. God favored or punished his people in battle. Military victory held the forces of disorder at bay and ensured national survival. Yet here was Isaiah overturning the ontology. War would not only be abolished but become inconceivable, "neither shall they learn war

any more." No one would again think of beating plowshares into swords. God would arbitrate peacefully "between the nations" and not on the battlefield. At the same time the central figures in the old system—kings—are nowhere mentioned. It would be the nations and the peoples, not the kings, who would stream up to Zion. And they would do this of their own free will, saying "Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord." This would truly be a peace of peoples.

Some scholars date the irenic vision to a later period. I agree with biblical scholar Raymond Westbrook that the despotic Assyrian empire provides a more apt setting for an alternative vision of an international system of free nations than the relatively enlightened Persian era. Moreover this reading restores the political context to what is both an oracle and an intensely political address. It is also of a piece with Isaiah's life and times. Surely, only a fully rounded man of the world who was both prophet and statesman was capable of this radically original insight.

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