



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 41, Folder 7, Oberammergau Passion Play, Undated.

M E M O R A N D U M

The following Statement on Passion Plays was issued from the office of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, on February 28, 1968. It was signed for the Executive Committee by the following members who were present at the meeting at Seton Hall University on the aforementioned date, in consultation with the Board of Consultants of the Secretariat:

Pt. Rev. Msgr. George G. Higgins
Rt. Rev. Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher
Rev. Edward H. Flannery
Sister K. Hargrove, R.S.C.J.
Rev. John B. Sheerin, C.S.P.
For: Edward J. ...

A STATEMENT ON PASSION PLAYS

Lent, more than any other liturgical season, draws the attention of Catholics to the sufferings of Christ. In this holy season the Church calls its faithful to relive these sufferings, especially in its Holy Week Liturgy. In many places it is customary to supplement the Liturgy by pious practices, among which have been passion plays. Popular in the past, these pious representations of Christ's passion are still produced in a few places. Their primary purpose is to stimulate religious fervor, but, when they are carelessly written or produced, they may become a source of anti-Semitic reactions. Need we say that such reactions are foreign and injurious to true Christian piety and to the intent of the Sacred Scriptures on which they are largely based, as well as offensive to our Jewish brothers? In the past simplistic and erroneous interpretations of the sacred writings have occasioned the accusation that the Jewish people of all time bear unique responsibility for the death of Jesus. History is witness to the injustices and hatred experienced by them because they have been considered as a people accursed because of the death of Christ. What we say here, it may be added, is equally applicable to sermons and teachings on the passion of Christ.

In its Statement on the Jews the II Vatican Council has dealt with this problem and urged that "all see to it that nothing is taught in catechetical work or in preaching the Word of God that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ." The Council, further, has reminded us that "what happened in His (Christ's) passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, or against the Jews of today." The Council Fathers make St. Paul's words their own, "Now as before God holds Jews more dear for the sake of their fathers." In consequence, the Statement continues, "the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures." "The Church," it concludes, "has always held, and holds now, that Christ underwent His passion and death freely because of the sins of men and out of infinite love. . . ."

Fidelity to these principles is expected of all members of the Church. A particular responsibility, however, rests upon composers and producers of passion plays, preachers, catechists and educators, because it is easy to portray Jews, even inadvertently, in such a way as to misrepresent or exaggerate their role in the passion

In depicting the Passion, it is possible, for example: (1) to conceal the fact that Jesus is a Jew and that His friends as well as His enemies in the drama are Jews; (2) to create the impression that most Jews of Jesus' day willed His death, failing to show that the secrecy surrounding much of Jesus' trial was motivated by the large following He had in Jerusalem. (3) to change the "crowd" of Barabbas' followers into a screaming "mob," suggestively symbolic of the mood of all Jerusalem, and indeed all Israel, to Jesus; (4) to depict Pilate, whom historiography has shown to have been a ruthless tyrant, as an innocent and kindly bystander, (5) to highlight those texts of the gospel narrative that are amenable to misinterpretation by unformed audiences such as: "His blood be upon us and upon our children" (Matt 27, 25).

It is also possible, in characterizations, type-casting and costuming of passion plays to have the Jewish enemies of Jesus appear and behave in a manner that would seem to cast an aspersion on the Jewish people. A sample of this device may be seen in certain plays which strive by means of caricature to display Jesus' enemies as supposedly unattractive Semites and His followers as handsome and appealing types.

Passion plays, and sermons and teachings on the Passion, involve more than a question of Catholic-Jewish relations. Indeed, they involve the very concept of an authentic Catholic spirituality. Christian pastors and educators are bound to preach and teach Christ crucified, but in so doing must never divert the eyes of the faithful from the love and victory of Christ to the deeds of men, be they Jews or Gentile. Rather must they try to increase in the hearts of their audience a greater love of God and of all men, remembering that in the Passion drama Romans and Jews were, in the Christian view, representatives of all of us. Nowhere is this important truth more poignantly expressed than in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, in which we read:

"As our sins consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the Cross, most certainly those who wallow in sin and iniquity crucify to themselves again the Son of God as far as in them lies and make a mockery of Him." (Hebr 6:16) This guilt seems more enormous in us than in the Jews, since according to the testimony of the same Apostle: "If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8); while we, on the contrary, professing to know Him, yet denying Him by our actions, seem in some sort to lay violent hands on Him.

Rev. Edward A. Flannery,
Executive Secretary,
Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish
Relations

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Bericht über die Probeaufführung

des

Passionsspiels von Pater Ferdinand Rosner

(1709 - 1778)

für Oberammergau bearbeitet von Dr. Alois Fink

Musik von Franz Xaver Richter

(1709 - 1789)

eingrichtet und bearbeitet von Wolfgang Fortner

unter Mitwirkung von Uwe Lohrmann

Inszenierung und Bühnenbild von Hans Schwaighofer

Musikalische Leitung Hermann Handerer

Choreinstudierung Tosso Troll

Generalbaß-Ausarbeitung Uwe Lohrmann

Spieler, Chor und Orchester, Mitwirkende aus der
Gemeinde Oberammergau, unterstützt von Instrumenta-
listen aus den Landkreisen Garmisch-Partenkirchen
und Weilheim sowie von Mitgliedern der Augsburger Philharmonie,
des Musikkorps der I. Gebirgs-Division
und des Tölzer Knabenchors

Das Vorhaben, das Oberammergauer Passionsspiel von 1750, verfasst von Pater Ferdinand Rosner, versuchsweise aufzuführen, war schon seit mindestens 10 Jahren im Gespräch. Eine solche Aufführung sollte einem doppelten Zweck dienen:

1. die einzige überhaupt vorhandene Alternative zu dem seit 1860 gespielten Deisenberger-Text überhaupt kennenzulernen, und
2. in der Praxis, d.h. unter den heute in Oberammergau gegebenen Verhältnissen, zu sehen, ob eine Aufführung dieses älteren Textes realisierbar ist.

Diese Probeaufführungen sind nun endlich zustande gekommen. Der nachfolgende Bericht soll die Bevölkerung Oberammergau's über die wichtigsten Vorgänge im Zusammenhang mit dieser Probe informieren und eine Entscheidungshilfe sein für die weitere Geschichte und das weitere Schicksal der Oberammergauer Passionsspiel-Tradition.

Der Ruf nach einer Spielreform war spätestens seit 1960 unüberhörbar geworden. Wenn dabei auch in einer weltweiten Öffentlichkeit die Einwände gegen eine fast schon grundlegende antisemitische Haltung des gesamten Spiels (eine Grundhaltung, die so gut wie allen europäischen Passionsspielen anhaftet) im Vordergrund standen, gab es doch sehr viele genauso ernst zu nehmende Bedenken, die - insbesondere nach dem 2. Vatikanischen Konzil - sowohl theologische wie historische Argumente für sich hatten. Nach den Erfahrungen des letzten halben ^{hundert} Jahrhunderts, auch nach der Situation des Glaubens in der heutigen Welt, eine dramatische Dichtung zu schreiben, die einem Laienspiel angemessen wäre und die in Besonderheit die sowohl kulturhistorisch wie lokal festgelegte Oberammergauer Tradition weiterzuführen hätte, kann als schiere Unmöglichkeit gelten. Diese Tradition zu retten, zugleich von zeitbedingten inhaltlichen wie formalen Schwächen zu reinigen, bot sich, als ein geradezu einmaliger Glücksfall, ein ebenfalls Oberammergauer Spiel an, noch weiter zurückreichend und zugleich von grösserer menschlicher Glaubwürdigkeit und ~~von~~ einer weit höheren sprachlichen Qualität, das zudem vor allem in seinem historischen und theologischen Grundgehalt dem Empfinden unserer Gegenwart sehr viel mehr entsprechen kann.

Die Scheu, ein ohne Zweifel risikoreiches Wagnis, das ein Rückgriff auf diese noch einmal gut hundert Jahre ältere Oberammergauer Fassung darstellte, zu unternehmen, ist verständlich; unverständlich musste der Versuch sein, allein schon das Kennenlernen dieser einzig vorhandenen Alternative zu verhindern.

Nun liegen die Probeaufführungen der Rosner-Passion hinter uns. Sie waren nicht nur für die unmittelbar Beteiligten, sondern in erster Linie für Oberammergau wichtig und lehrreich; sie brachten jenseits von allem theoretischen Für und Wider praktische Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse, die für die Ausarbeitung einer endgültigen Spielfassung wichtig sind.

Bevor auf den eigentlichen, detaillierten Bericht eingegangen wird, gleich hier einige allgemeine Bemerkungen.

Die viel zu kurze Vorbereitungszeit - für die Einstudierung eines völlig neuen und anspruchsvollen Textes, mit völlig neuer Musik, in einer völlig neuen Ausstattung und zu einem Teil mit neuen, noch unerfahrenen Spielern - musste noch vieles in einem vorläufigen und unbefriedigenden Stand lassen, was allerdings bei weiterem und möglichst ungestörtem Bemühen keinerlei Schwierigkeiten mehr bedeutet, die in den Probeaufführungen noch zutage getretenen Mängel zu korrigieren. Die öffentliche Kritik war, bis auf eine einzige Ausnahme, durchwegs positiv; was im einzelnen beanstandet wurde, deckt sich in allen wesentlichen Punkten mit der Meinung der Initiatoren. Im einzelnen wird der Bericht noch darauf eingehen. Vorweggenommen sei, daß die in den Probespielen gezeigte Fassung grundsätzlich das auch öffentlich erklärte Einverständnis einer Gruppe von jüdischen Experten gefunden hat, die extra zu diesen Aufführungen aus Amerika gekommen waren, an ihrer Spitze Rabbiner Mark Tanzenbaum, eine in der ganzen Welt bekannte geistige und geistliche Autorität des Judentums.

Die angesprochenen Mängel hatten sich zum grössten Teil bereits im letzten Verlauf der Proben gezeigt, doch wurde im Interesse eines ungefährdeten Spielablaufs, kurz vor den Aufführungen, darauf verzichtet, sie durch Änderungen noch zu beheben. Ohne hier schon in Details zu gehen, ist zu sagen, daß das Spiel (insbesondere die zweite Hälfte) noch um etwa 45 Minuten

zu lang ist. Insbesondere können im ersten Teil noch die öffentlichen Verhandlungen (Pilatus- und Synhedriumszenen) gestrafft werden, vor allem aber die Handlung von der Kreuzabnahme ab. Die Christusgestalt muß im ersten Teil von Anfang an stärker profiliert werden; es ist zu überlegen, ob in der zweiten Spielhälfte die Chorauftritte nicht anders gelöst werden können. Schliesslich sind Kürzungen der Musik erforderlich, genauere, d.h., zur jeweiligen Szene passende Einsätze der Musik (sie waren z.B. nicht richtig bei der Abendmahlscene, die ohnehin auch Bühnenbildnerisch umgebaut werden soll), ferner einige bessere, straffende Lösungen bei manchen Übergängen und Szenenwechseln einschliesslich der Umbaupausen. Vermutlich wird sich auch der Einsatz von solistischen Sängern (Engelerscheinungen) als überflüssig erweisen.

Zusammenfassend kann gesagt werden, daß der nun überschaubare Bogen der Gesamtinszenierung keineswegs die endgültige, erst noch zu erarbeitende Endfassung des Rosnerspiels darstellen konnte. Der Versuch ergab jedoch eine wenn auch unter aussergewöhnlichen Umständen und Schwierigkeiten zustande gekommene Grundlage für eine endgültige Fassung. Bei dem summarischen Hinweis auf die insgesamt positiven Kritiken dieses Versuches (sie werden im einzelnen in einer eigenen Dokumentation vorgelegt werden) muß auch die grundsätzliche Zustimmung von kirchlicher katholischer und evangelischer Seite erwähnt werden.

Nun zum Bericht im einzelnen.

1. Vorbereitungen 1975/1976/1977

Zur Information der Oberammergauer Bevölkerung über den Reformversuch erfolgten im Einvernehmen mit der Gemeinde

- a) Zwei Ausstellungen zu Inszenierungsvorschlägen für eine Reformprobe auf der Mittelbühne des Passions-spielhauses.

Es wurden gezeigt:

September 1975 Radierungen (Entwürfe und unbearbeitete Textauszüge zur Inszenierung des Rosnerspiels).

- b) 1976 plastische Modelle zu Bühnenbildern, den leb. Bildern und zu Spielszenen.
- c) Kostüm- und Maskenentwürfe
- d) Ein von der Gemeinde anberaumter Informationsabend über aktuelle Fragen zur Passion wurde am 30. April 1976 von ca. 800 Interessenten besucht.

Texte aus der Rosnerpassion wurden von den Spielern vorgetragen.

Diesen Informationen ging bereits im Jahre 1964/65 ein Vortrag über eine Inszenierung der Rosnerpassion mit gesprochenen Texten voraus.

(Die Bearbeitung erfolgte von Dorothea Kiesselbach, Bayerischer Rundfunk).

2. Durchführung der Probe

Die Einstudierung des Spieles mußte unter denkbar ungünstigen Bedingungen erfolgen. Auf Grund der Kommunalwahlen im Frühjahr 1978 sollte auf Wunsch des Gemeinderates die Aufführung möglichst bald erfolgen. Unter Rücksichtnahme auf die klimatischen Bedingungen wurde der gerade noch vertretbare Termin auf den Spätsommer, den 13. August 1977 gelegt.

Die Arbeit stand unter großem Zeitdruck. Die fast tägliche Probenbelastung der freiwilligen und berufstätigen Mitwirkenden konnte ebenfalls auf keinen längeren Zeitraum als auf 6 Monate ausgedehnt werden. Wenn auch die ersten Sprechproben, beginnend am 12. Januar 1977 in einem Klassenzimmer der Volksschule anlaufen und später dann in das Kleine Theater verlegt werden konnten, gab es nach den einsetzenden Stell- und Spielproben auf der Freilichtbühne bei schlechter Witterung keine Ausweichmöglichkeiten mehr.

Die kurze Zeit bis zur geplanten Aufführung ließ weder Probenausfälle noch Verschiebungen zu. Es war notwendig bei jedem Wetter den täglichen Probenrhythmus einzuhalten.

Zur Erstellung der gesamten Bühnendekoration standen keine entsprechend eingerichteten Werkstätten zur Verfügung.

Die unzulängliche Beheizung der Arbeitsplätze während der Winterzeit und die in der freien Halle durchzuführenden Installationsarbeiten für die Beleuchtungsanlage erschwerten die Arbeiten erheblich.

All dies bedeutete eine außerordentliche Belastung und ließ den Ausgang als ungewiß erscheinen.

3. Mitwirkung

Im Sommer 1977 wurden die Mitwirkenden zur Rosnerprobe erfaßt. Von 447 Meldungen stieg die Beteiligtezahl auf 708 Personen an.

Die Erfassung des Chores ergab am 29. Juni 1976 eine Personenzahl von 92 Sängern und Sängerinnen mit

32 Sopranstimmen	
27 Alt	"
27 Tenor	"
14 Baßstimmen	

Diese Mitgliederzahl blieb bis zur Aufführung der Haydnmesse am Dreikönigstag konstant. Bei der Reformprobe wirkten 71 Sänger und Sängerinnen mit. Die musikalischen Voraussetzungen für den von Tosso Troll zusammengerufenen Chor waren zu Anfang der Probenarbeit unterschiedlich. Die Arbeit konzentrierte sich in erster Linie auf gründliche Stimmbildung, auf die Schaffung eines homogenen Chorklanges, auf allgemeine Musikkunde und auf die Einstudierung der Haydnmesse. Hiezu waren 21 Gesamtproben und 106 Einzelproben erforderlich.

Die Einstudierung des Gesangs zur Reformprobe mußte in 94 Proben mit verschieden zeitlicher Dauer geschafft werden.

Von Zuschauern und Fachleuten erntete der Chor hohes Lob. Er brachte eine erstaunliche Leistung in der Präzision der Wiedergabe, die von der Schönheit des Chorklanges und von hoher Qualität getragen wurde.

4. Musik

Der Musikkorper setzte sich aus insgesamt 83 Musikern zusammen, davon 48 Einheimische und 35 auswärtige Instrumentalisten. Nicht alle Musiker konnten aus den eigenen Reihen gefunden werden, weil einerseits die Kräfte nicht zur Verfügung standen, andererseits aber auch Oberammergauer nicht zur Mitwirkung bereit gewesen sind. Vor allem aber ließ die kurze zur Verfügung stehende Zeit nicht mehr zu, nur mit Laien aus dem eigenen Ort den Anforderungen gerecht zu werden. Durch die nicht von den Initiatoren der Probeaufführung zu verantwortenden Verzögerungen lag ja auch der letzte Teil der Partitur erst Anfang Mai vor; erst dann konnten auch die einzelnen Stimmen ausgeschrieben werden.

Erstmals am 9. August, drei Tage vor der ersten mit Zuschauern besetzten Aufführung, war es möglich mit dem vollzähligen Orchester zu proben. Die fehlenden Musiker wurden aus den Nachbargemeinden, vom Musikkorps der

1. Gebirgs-Division, sowie von der Augsburger Philharmonie, vom Dirigenten angeworben.

Mit der Erstellung der Bühnendekoration wurde am 1. Juni 1976 begonnen. Die Nähstube nahm ihre Arbeit bereits am 1. März 1976 auf. Der Bayerische Rundfunk hat der Gemeinde ca. 100 Scheinwerfer und div. Geräte in einem Sachwert von ca. 350.000.- DM zur Durchführung der Probe übereignet. Etwa zum gleichen Zeitpunkt sind die Vorbereitungen zum Einbau der Beleuchtungsanlage und anderer technischen Vorrichtungen begonnen worden.

5. Probentätigkeit

Mit der Zusammenkunft am 2. Weihnachtsfeiertag 1976 wurden mit einem Vortrag über den historischen Ablauf des Passionsgeschehens und einer Rollenbesprechung die offiziellen Proben eingeleitet. Die Spieler waren bereit, ohne Namensnennung die Aufgaben in einer Gemeinschaftsarbeit zu übernehmen. Die Sprechproben begannen am 12. Januar 1977 mit einer nur 14-tägigen Unterbrechung bis zum 11. August 1977.

In 868 Probestunden angerechnet für Spieler
" Probestunden für Musiker und Schlagzeug
" Probestunden für Chor.

Der gesamte Zeitaufwand für Proben wird mit insgesamt
Stunden registriert. Die Beschäftigungszeit für den
Spielleiter ab seiner beginnenden Tätigkeit im August 1975
bis August 1977 beträgt 25 Monate. Eine tagliche Anrechnungs-
zeit von 6 Arbeitsstunden ergeben Stunden

zusätzlich	<u>858 Probestunden</u>
insgesamt	Stunden

Als Nachweis dienen

- a) Erstellung der Modelle
- b) Entwürfe, Zeichnungen
- c) Vorbereitung von 2 Ausstellungen
- d) Überwachen der Arbeiten im Passionstheater
- e) Überwachen der Werkstätten
- f) Beschaffung von Material
- g) Fahrten und Verhandlungen
- h) Mitarbeit bei der Textbearbeitung und bei der Ausarbeitung des Treatments.
- i) Spielleitung

Der gesamte Spielablauf konnte erstmals am 9. August 1977, 3 Tage vor der ersten Aufführung, überschaubar erfolgen. Auf Grund des Zeitdrucks war es nicht mehr möglich, die bereits erkannten Fehlerquellen, Kürzungen oder notwendige Veränderungen im Spielablauf herbeizuführen, ohne nicht die so nah bevorstehende Aufführung am 13. August 1977 durch eine Verwirrung der Spieler zu gefährden. Aus Rücksicht auf die Berufstätigkeit der Mitwirkenden konnten die Anfangs- und Endzeiten des Spieles nicht mehr verändert werden.

Nahtlos leiteten die Proben zur ersten Aufführung mit Zuschauern am 12. August über. Die Bildpresse, Kinder aus dem Ort und der naheren Umgebung hatten Zutritt.

Aufführung

Samstag	13. August	freier Zutritt für die Oberammergauer Bevölkerung und sonstige Besucher
Sonntag	14. August	Presseaufführung, geladene Gäste, freier Verkauf
Montag	15. August	freier Verkauf
Dienstag	16. August	Dokumentaraufnahme der Rosnerpassion durch das Bayer.Fernsehen, Regie Anka Kirchner
Mittwoch	17. August	freier Verkauf
Freitag	19. August	freier Verkauf
Samstag	20. August	freier Verkauf
Sonntag	21. August	freier Verkauf

Sämtliche Aufführungen waren sehr gut besucht oder voll besetzt, obwohl die Werbung durch die Gemeinde erst spät angelaufen ist. Trotz aller Hindernisse haben alle Beteiligten in einer großartigen Gemeinschaftsleistung, getragen von der Begeisterung und Hingabe zum Spiel, eine stark beeindruckende und sehr ernst zu nehmende Probeaufführung der Rosnerpassion gezeigt.

Ich bitte Sie deshalb bei Ihrer kritischen Anteilnahme all die angeführten Tatsachen und die zu bewältigenden Schwierigkeiten, die uns diese Aufgabe erbracht hat, bei ihrem Urteil nicht zu übersehen.

Wenn auch die anfänglich ungewohnte Reimsprache viel Mühe und Geduld bei der Einstudierung erforderte, so haben die Spieler den Reim bewältigt. Die seit vielen Jahren vernachlässigte Breitenarbeit in der Heranbildung des Spielernachwuchses sowie auch in der als notwendig erkannten Sprech- und Stimmschulung, ^{machte} war es in diesem kurzen Zeitraum nicht möglich, auf diesem Gebiet Versäumtes nachzuholen. Dazu darf nicht übersehen werden, daß mit den beginnenden Spielproben auf der großen Bühne

- a) in Einzelproben
- b) bei Proben in Gruppen
- c) bei den Szenenproben in all ihrer Vielfalt

nicht mehr viel Zeit für reine Sprechproben blieb. Daß teilweise die gesprochenen Texte in der riesigen Zuschauerrhalle nicht gut verständlich waren, liegt in erster Linie an der mangelhaften Akustik dieser Halle. Ich selbst habe in verschiedenen Rängen vom vorderen bis zum rückwärtigen Sitzplatz das Sprechen der Spieler abgehört, ich habe festgestellt, daß sowohl in den ersten wie auch in den letzten Reihen das Wort verstanden werden konnte, daß aber auch über die gleichgenannten Entfernungen, ob an den vorderen oder zurückliegenden Plätzen, die Akustik schlecht war. Es blieb auch hier keine Zeit, die besten Sprechpunkte auf der Freilichtbühne zu testen.

Inwieweit es vertretbar wäre, die heute entwickelte Ton-technik einzuschalten, müßte überprüft werden. Dies sollte ein Anliegen der Gemeinde für das Spieljahr 1980 sein.

6. Einbeziehung der Nacht

Das Nachtspiel bringt für die Inszenierung eines Passionsspiels außergewöhnliche Vorteile - Vorteile, die nicht nur den optischen Eindruck überhöhen, sondern sich auch gleichbedeutend mit dem Spielablauf decken. Es darf nicht übersehen werden, daß auch hier gleich wie am Tage die Natur einen wesentlichen Beitrag leistet. Die Verwendung des Lichtes bei Nacht muß als eine Bereicherung gesehen werden und darf nicht wegen gewisser sehr passionsspielfremder Argumente abgewertet werden. Der Übergang vom Tag zur Nacht wirkt außerdem symbolisch zum gesamten Ablauf der Passion.

Die ^{Stimmung} ~~Stimme~~ beim Einzug mit relativ noch hohem Sonnenstand neigt sich im Spielablauf bis zum Abendmahl (mit dem Sonnenuntergang). Bei Einbruch der Dämmerung mit der beginnenden Olbergsszene und der einfallenden Nacht im 2. Teil des Spieles deckt sich das Geschehen auf der Bühne mit der Ausweglosigkeit und Einsamkeit in der Todesangst Christi. Die folgenden Stationen beginnend mit der Geißelung, der Verurteilung, bis zur Hinrichtung laufen mit elementarer Wucht und glanzlos ab, sie verlangen eine Verschleierung bis zur Kreuzabnahme. Die Gefahr des Absinkens zur naturalistischen Peinlichkeit wird ausgeschlossen. Das Stilmittel des Lichtes ist dabei eine Hilfe, auf die nicht verzichtet werden kann.

7. Spieldauer

Die Gesamtdauer des Spieles darf im ersten Teil der Aufführung 2 Stunden, im zweiten Teil 2 1/2 Stunden nicht übersteigen. Die Erfahrung zeigte, daß der Spielbeginn auf 14.30 vorverlegt und der erste Teil um 16.30 beendet wird. Eine 3-stündige Pause ist angebracht.

Der Beginn des zweiten Teiles kann bereits auf 19.30 Uhr vorverlegt und spätestens um 22.00 Uhr beendet werden. Die Anfangszeiten hängen im übrigen von den Spielmonaten ab. Eine entschiedene Kürzung des Schlußteiles muß angestrebt werden.

Ihre sachliche Kritik und Ihre Ratschläge sollen uns aber auch in den noch nicht angesprochenen Organisationsfragen bei einer Nachaufführung weiterhelfen. Die Unterbringung der Besucher und der Gäste während der Spielzeit, deren Unterkunft und Bewirtung erfordern eine Überprüfung durch kompetente Stellen, die auch bereit sind, in dieser Frage für Oberammergau eine zufriedenstellende Lösung zu finden.

8. Verbesserungsvorschläge und weitere Bearbeitung des Spieles

Ohne grundsätzliches im gesamten Spielablauf anzutasten ist es erforderlich, den Einzug szenisch auszubauen, vor allen Dingen dahingehend, daß die Christuserscheinung profilierter zur Wirkung kommt. Auch für die Musik im ersten Teil sollten noch Verbesserungsmöglichkeiten überlegt werden.

Die Bühnenbilder konnten nach geringfügigen Detailveränderungen und Kürzungen belassen werden. Die Spielszenen mit den allegorischen Hauptfiguren, die eine starke Aussagekraft haben, sollen verbleiben, während die Teufelszenen vereinfacht und zum Teil gekürzt werden sollen. Ähnliches gilt für die in der Probeaufführung noch zu breit ausgespielten Judas-Szenen.

Die Umbauten müssen teilweise rascher erfolgen.

Im zweiten Teil führt eine ständige Steigerung im Spielablauf hin bis zur Kreuzigung, während der Schluß durch unnotige Längen absinkt.

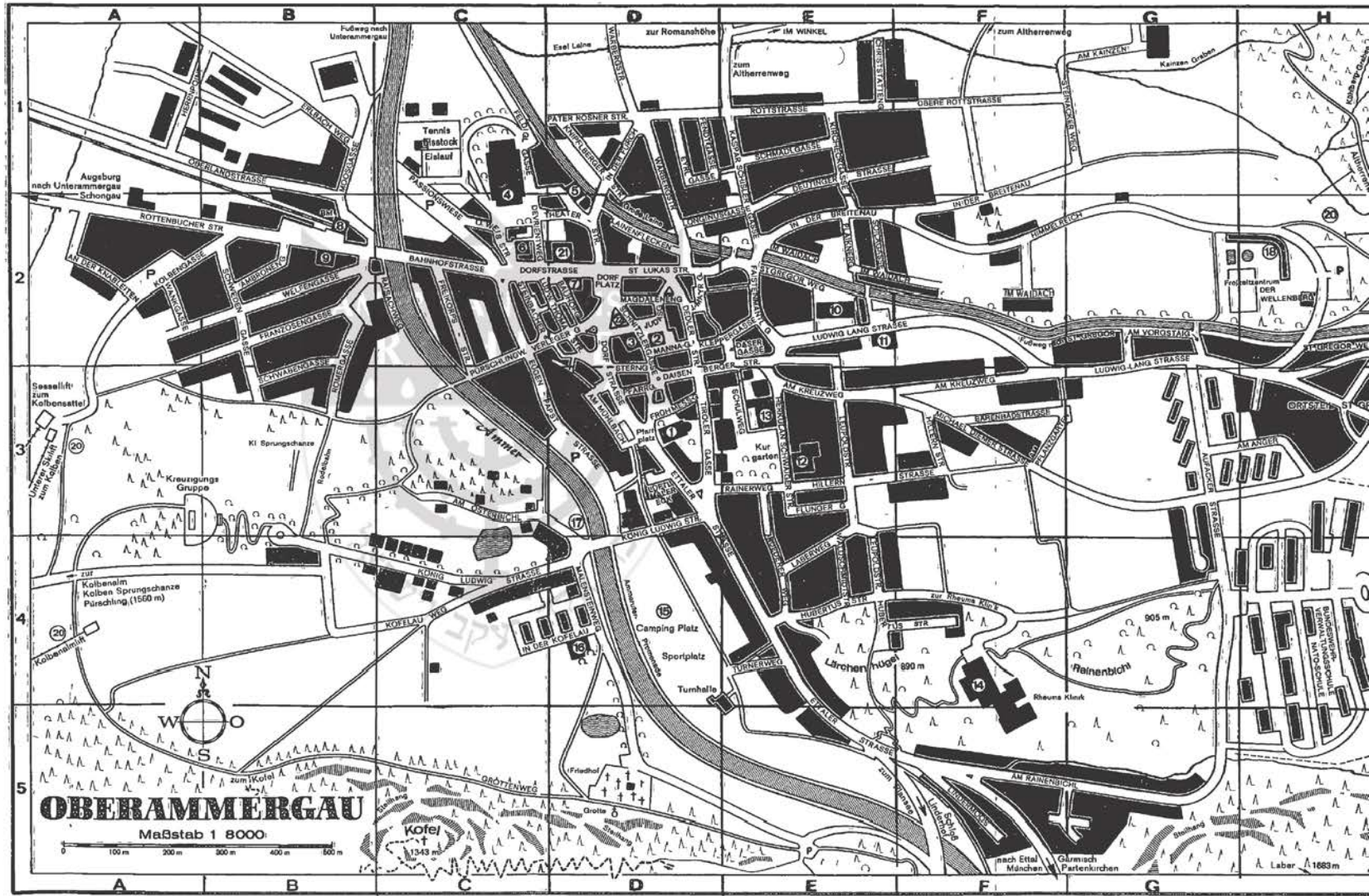
Im Detail einige Beispiele:

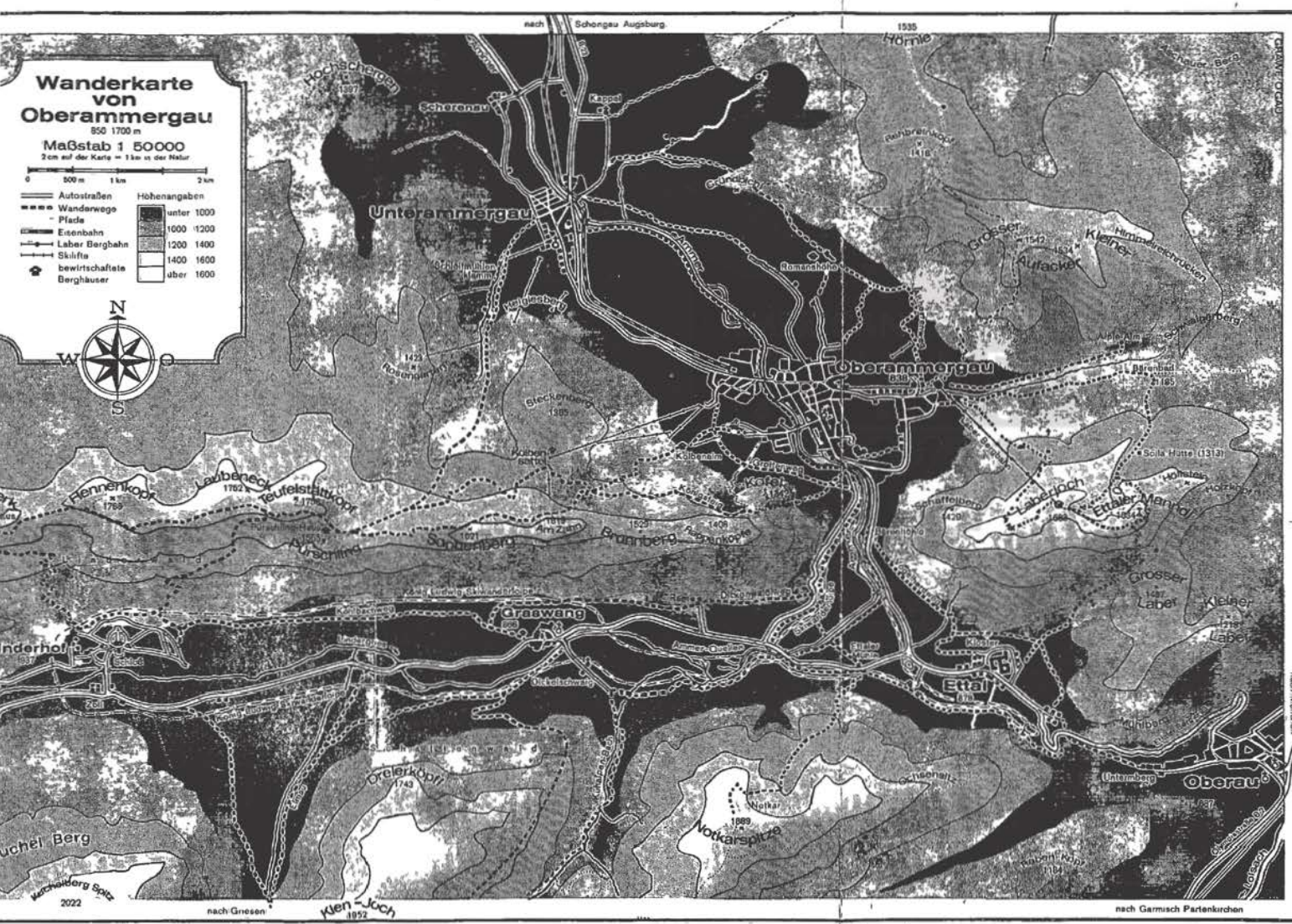
Die Engelserscheinung beim Olberg wie bei der Auferstehungsszene muß gestrafft werden, die Texte sollen gesprochen werden. Die Rats- und Verhandlungsszenen vor Pilatus, insbesondere die Meinungsäußerungen der einzelnen Ratsmitglieder sind noch zu breit angelegt und bedürfen einer Straffung. Die bisher gewohnte Empörungsszene im Daisenbergerspiel bedarf in der Rosnerfassung einer anderen Auslegung. Klar herausgearbeitet werden müssen die Gruppen der Unschlüssigen und Gleichgültigen und derjenigen, die sich in ihrer Haltung nicht von der Masse leiten lassen wollen, davon abgesetzt der Pöbel mit dem Ruf

"ans Kreuz mit ihm". Diese unterschiedlichen Volksgruppen sollten im Rosnerspiel klar sichtbar sein. Die Tänze der Laster müßten in ihrer Länge reduziert werden. Der Ablauf des Kreuzweges bis hin zur Kreuzigung ist logisch entwickelt und stellt den Höhepunkt in dieser Inszenierung dar. Die technischen Vorbereitungen zur Aufrichtung der Kreuze müssen in aller Stille vor sich gehen, so daß die Gespräche Christus-Magdalena, Begegnung mit Maria, die Worte am Kreuz und die Station der Kleiderberaubung und Annagelung (ohne die langen Gespräche der Henker und Soldaten) ins alleinige Blickfeld gerückt werden. Bei der Kreuzabnahme und zur Salbung steht die musikalische Unter-
malung ^{zur} breit im Vordergrund. Hier wird eine wesentliche Straffung notwendig, da sich das Spiel jetzt zum Schluß drängen muß, die Grablegungs-szene, die Szene der Wächter am Grabe, die Engelszene als auch der Gang der Frauen müssen gestrafft, ^{es soll} oder vielleicht direkt nach der Auferstehungsszene zum Schlußbild übergeleitet werden. Die hier in Vorschlag gebrachten Änderungen sind ohne Schwierigkeiten durchzuführen, sie sollen insgesamt der besseren dramaturgischen Proportion des gesamten Spiels dienen.

- 1 Kath Kirche
- 2 Rathaus
- 3 Kleines Theater
- 4 Passionspielhaus
- 5 Evang Kirche
- 6 Polizei; Feuerwehr
- 7 Museum
- 8 Bahnhof
- 9 Post
- 10 Schnitzschule
- 11 Krankenhaus
- 12 Kath Pfarramt
- 13 Schule
- 14 Rheuma-Klinik
- 15 Campingplatz
- 16 Jugendherberge
- 17 Mini-Golf
- 18 Alpenbad Wellenberg
- 19 Laberbergbahn
- 20 Ski-Lifte
- 21 Verkehrsamt der Gemeinde
- 22 Reisebüro

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Am Anger H 3 | König Ludwig Str BD 4 |
| Ambronngasse B 2 | Kreuzweg EF 3 |
| Am Kaizzen G 1 | Laberweg E 4 |
| Am Kreuzweg EF 3 | Lammenflocken D 2 |
| Am Mühlbach D 3 | Leupoldstr E 3/4 |
| Am Osterbichl C 3 | Lindemoos F 8 |
| Am Pflanzgarten F 3 | Longinugasse DE 2 |
| Am Ramenbichl FG 5 | Ludw Lang Str EG 2 |
| Am Vorgelag G 2 | Ludw Thoma Str D 2 |
| An der Knablielen A 2 | Luffimaloreck D 3 |
| Aufackerstr G 3/4 | Magdalenongasse D 2 |
| Bahnhofstr C 2 | Malentornweg D 4 |
| Bärenbadstr F 3 | Mannegasse D 2 |
| Bauhofergasse D 2 | Mich Diemer Str FG 3 |
| Breitenu EF 2 | Moosgasse B 1 |
| Christstättengasse E 1 | Oberlandstr AB 1 |
| Dasergasse E 2 | Osterbichl C 3 |
| Daisenbergerstr DE 3 | Ottm Weiß Str C 2 |
| Dadlerstr D 2 | Passionswiese C 2 |
| Deutingenstr E 1 | Pator Rosner-Str D 1 |
| Devrienweg C 2 | Pfarrgasse D 3 |
| Dorfplatz D 2 | Planknergasse E 2 |
| Dorfstr D 2/3 | Pörschlingweg C 3 |
| Eugen Papst Str CD 3 | Rainenbichl FG 5 |
| Erlbachweg B 1 | Rainerweg E 3 |
| Ettaler Str DE 3 5 | Raischwag C 2 |
| Eyrlgasse D 1 | Romanshöhe D 1 |
| Faßlonantlgasse E 2 | Rottstr DE 1 |
| Feldgigasse C 1 | Rottenbucher Str AB 2 |
| Fendgasse D 1 | Römergasse B 2/3 |
| Flungergasse E 3 | Ruedererweg E 4 |
| Franzengasse B 2 | Schmidlgasse E 1 |
| Freikorpsstr C 2 | Schützlergasse D 2 |
| Frühmossergasse D 3 | Schulweg E 3 |
| H Schwarzer Str E 3 | Schwabongasse B 3 |
| Herrpoin AB 1 | Schwedengasse B 2 |
| Hillarnstr EF 3 | Soilgasse E 2 |
| Himmelreich FG 2 | Steinackerweg FG 1 |
| Hubertustr EF 4 | Steinbacherstr C 2 |
| Im Waidach EF 2 | Storgasse D 3 |
| Im Winkel E 1 | St Gregor H 2/3 |
| In der Breitenau EF 2 | St Gregor Weg E 2 |
| In der Furch D 1 | St Lukasstr D 2 |
| In der Kofelau CD 4 | Theaterstr ID 2 |
| Josef Mayr Gasse D 2 | Tirroler Gasse D 3 |
| Judgasse D 1 | Turnerweg E 4 |
| Kaizzen G 1 | Vorlegergasse CD 2 |
| K Schisler G E 1/2 | Vorgstaig G 2 |
| Kircheggasse E 1 | Waidach EF 2 |
| Kleppergasse E 2 | Waldschmidstr E 4 |
| Knablielen A 2 | Wankgasse A 2 |
| Knipfelbergerstr D 1 | Warbergstr D 1/2 |
| Kofelau Weg C 4 | Weihherweg C 3 |
| Kolbengasse A 2 | Wolffengasse B 2 |





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- Von Oberammergau aus**
- Dorf, Lamerallee, Alpenbad: 3/4 Std
 - Dorf, Altherrenweg, Kainzen, Rottstraße: 1 1/2 Std
 - Dorf, Friedenshöhe, Kreuzesgruppe: 3/4 Std
 - Dorf, Kreuzesgruppe, Kolbenalm (bewirtschaftet): 1 Std
 - Dorf, Grottenweg, Malenstein, Ammerufer: 1 Std
 - Dorf, Ettalerstraße, Lärchenhügel, Alpenbad: 1 1/2 Std
 - Dorf, Rottstraße, Romanschöhe (bewirtschaftet): 1 1/2 Std
 - Dorf, Alpenbad, Lamenschlucht, Aiple-alm: 1 1/2 Std
 - Dorf, Ammerufer, Vogelherdweg, Ettal*: 2 1/2 Std
 - Dorf, Ammerufer, Ettaler Mühle, Benediktenhof*: 2 Std
 - Dorf, Linderhofer Straße, Dickelwaldweg, Ram: 2 Std
 - Dorf, Ammerquellen, Dickelachwaig, Graswang: 4 Std
 - Dorf, Unterammergau*, Schleißenmühlenklamm: 3 Std
- Von Graswang**
- Gröbl-alm (Café), Kohlbachweg, Schloß Linderhof*: 2 Std
 - Elmau, Griesen*: Elmau, Schloß Linderhof*: 7 Std
- Bergtouren von Oberammergau aus**
- Die angegebenen Stunden bedeuten nur die Aufstiegszeit
- Kofel (1342m) über Kälberplatte: 1 1/2 Std
 - Pürschling (1665m) über die Kolbenalm: 3 Std
 - Von dort auch Abstieg nach Unterammergau* oder nach Schloß Linderhof*
 - Höhenweg Kofel, Königsteig, Zahn, Pürschling, zu den Brunnenkopfhäusern (1601 m): 6 Std
 - Von dort auch Abstieg nach Linderhof*: 2 Std
 - Klammspitze (1925 m) ab Brunnenkopfhäuser weitere 2 Std
 - Aufacker (1642 m) über Alpenbad: 1 1/2 Std
 - Von dort zum Hörndle, Bad Kohigrub*: weitere 3 Std
 - Laberjoch (1683 m) (auch mit Bergbahn) und Ettaler Mannnd (Abzweig Ettal): 2 1/2 Std
 - Notkarspitze (1889 m), Aufstieg über Ettaler Mühle: 4 Std
- Skiwanderloipe „Auf König Ludwigs Spuren“**
Oberammergau - Ettal - Graswangtal - Schloß Linderhof - Oberammergau (45 km)

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Oct.....The American Jewish Committee today announced that ~~the~~ ^a leading Catholic academic institution in Bavaria, West Germany, will sponsor a symposium of Catholic and Jewish scholars in Munich next month on the relationship of the Oberammergau Passion Play to the development of anti-Semitism in Germany and in Christian culture.

The symposium, which will be held November 19, will be sponsored by the Catholic Academy of Bavaria in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee's Interreligious Affairs Department.

Announcement of the symposium was made by _____, at the annual meeting of the AJC's National Executive Council. The Council, the agency's highest policy-making body, will continue its sessions through Sunday at the Hyatt Regency Cambridge Hotel.

The AJC has long been concerned with the effect of the Oberammergau Passion Play, and others given in other parts of the world, on Christian-Jewish relationships. Last July, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, AJC's National Director of Interreligious Affairs, and William S. Trosten, AJC Director of Development, met with Dr. Franz Henrich, President of the Catholic Academy of Bavaria, on the Oberammergau Passion Play question. At that time, the AJC leaders suggested that a dialogue among Catholic and Jewish scholars on the historical and theological issues represented in the Passion Play could prove helpful, and the Academy subsequently decided to sponsor a symposium on the subject.

Rabbi Tanenbaum will present one of the major papers at the symposium. He has also been invited to speak in the village of Oberammergau following the symposium ^{on the} religious and historical factors that have contributed to anti-Semitism in Germany and elsewhere.

Outlining the significance of the symposium, Mr. _____ pointed out that "this will be the first time in the history of the Oberammergau

Passion Play, which dates back to 1634, that a German Catholic group of such prestige has taken the initiative in cooperation with a Jewish body to examine systematically the performances and texts of Passion Plays with a view to recommending revisions that would remove the sources of anti-Semitism that they may contain. More than 20 years ago, the AJC made an exhaustive line-by-line analysis of the script then used in the play's performance. It concluded that it was a highly anti-Semitic document 'that could not help but contribute to the misunderstanding of Jews and Judaism'."

Mr. added that in the past two decades, AJC has been deeply concerned with the issue, including the controversy over which version of the Play was to be produced. Over the centuries, it has been performed in at least five different versions. The Play, which is a major tourist attraction in the German town of Oberammergau, is given once every ten years. In 1970, more than 500,000 people from 113 countries witnessed performances. The next series of performances is scheduled for 1980.

The symposium in Munich will focus on five major themes:

1. The passion of Jesus in historic perspective, including an examination of the Roman occupation of ancient Judaea and the circumstances of Jesus' trial.

2. The varying interpretations of Jesus' passion in ~~the~~ different parts of Christian scripture.

3. The death of Jesus and the holy will of God, examining the foreordaining of Jesus' death from a theological viewpoint.

4. The Good Friday liturgy, looking at the meaning of the changes that have been made in the service since Vatican Council II.

5. The possibilities and limitations of artistic portrayals of the Passion of Jesus. This will include the historic background of the Passion Play; the relationship of the Passion Play to the current religious climate; and the role of the Passion Play in fostering anti-Semitism throughout history.

THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY
AND ANTISEMITISM

By

LEONARD SWIDLER

PROLEGOMENA

Passion Play Antisemitic?

At the request of the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai Brith I undertook with the help of my New Testament colleague Father Gerard Sloyan to make a careful analysis of the text to be used at the 1980 Oberammergau Passion Play to see whether it contained any serious anti-semitic or antisemitic fomenting elements. The result was a twenty page commentary, which was also translated into German and published along with appendices in a 114 page book: A Commentary on the Oberammergau Passionsspiel in regard to its image of Jews and Judaism (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1978). The conclusion we came to was that there were many serious antisemitic and antisemitic fomenting passages. They were all specified, and it was explained how and why they were both offensive to Jews and in opposition to the stance the Catholic Church had committed itself to through various Vatican II and post-Vatican II documents; it was recommended that they be changed or eliminated. In the Fall of 1978 copies of this Commentary were sent to the responsible persons at Oberammergau and Cardinal Ratzinger, Archbishop of Munich, within whose jurisdiction Oberammergau lies.

The Oberammergau Text

In the year 1633, in the midst of the decimating Thirty Years War, the plague swept through much of southern Germany. The people of Oberammergau, a small village in a valley of the Bavarian Alps some fifty

miles south of Munich, pledged at that time that they would produce a "Passion Play" every ten years, that is, a drama depicting the suffering and death of Jesus. Such Passion Plays developed from the medieval Mystery Plays of the thirteenth century and subsequently, with the original text of the Oberammergau Passion Play stemming from a fifteenth-century Passion Play of a Benedictine monastery in Augsburg, Ss. Ulrich and Afra. The text changed over the decades, but a really major shift occurred with the writing of a new text by the Benedictine monk Ferdinand Rosner of the Abbey of Ettal, just five miles from Oberammergau. (This text again gained importance in contemporary times.)

The large role played by the devil and similar elements of the Rosner text did not well suit the spirit of the Enlightenment as it swept through Germany in the early nineteenth century and so another monk of Ettal, Othmar Weis, wrote another new text for the Passion Play in 1811 and still again in 1815. This text was set to very impressive orchestral and vocal music by a native of Oberammergau, Rochus Dedler (expanded and revised in 1950 by another native, Eugen Papst). This Weis text was significantly revised in 1860 by still another Oberammergauer, and pupil of Othmar Weis at the Ettal monastery, Father Alois Daisenberger, later the parish priest of Oberammergau. It is this Weis-Daisenberger text and Dedler-Papst music that has been used for the past one hundred and seventy years and has been seen and heard by millions. It is also basically this text that is projected for use in 1980 and which was analyzed by myself and Professor Sloyan. It is not difficult to see why the Oberammergau villagers are attached to it.

Still, there was a move by a significant group of villagers a few years ago to promote the use of the Rosner text. They even put on a full-scale experimental production of it in 1977. But it failed to gain wide support. My former theology professor, Father Heinrich Fries, Professor of Fundamental Theology and Ecumenism of the Catholic Theological

Faculty of the University of Munich remarked to me this June that, after having seen it, he considered it quite unsuitable to contemporary audiences and theology, and indeed to the Gospels.

The matter of which text to use in 1980 came to a vote in 1978 and the Weis-Daisenberger text was voted in. The division of opinion lingered on, somewhat augmented by the argument offered by some that the Rosner text was less antisemitic than the Weis-Daisenberger. However, it is clear to me from speaking with people in Munich, Pater Gregor of Ettal, Mayor Zwink of Oberammergau and people in the Weinstuben of Oberammergau that the dispute over the Rosner and Weis-Daisenberger texts circled around personal, family and dramatic concerns and basically had really nothing to do with the antisemitism question. Be that as it may, the democratic decision of the villagers was strongly in favor of the latter text and it was that text Mayor Zwink and his colleagues had to work with.

Catholic and Jewish Concern

The Catholic and Jewish communities are right to be seriously concerned about the impact the Oberammergau Passion Play has had and will continue to have. There have been, and still are, many passion plays, but none have attained anything like the world-wide fame that Oberammergau has--over half a million are again expected to see it next year. But beyond those five hundred thousand people's impressions is the symbolic significance and the influence on other passion plays the Oberammergau Passion Play will have. In any case, we Catholics need to be extremely sensitive on this matter in view of the long history of the "anguish of the Jews" (as Father Edward Flannery titles his history of antisemitism) at our hands. Still more, the burden of responsibility for German Catholicism cannot even be measured.

Germany 1979

This June while in Europe I arranged to visit Ettal monastery and

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Oberammergau (I would also have visited Cardinal Ratzinger, but he was suddenly called to Poland with the Pope--he nevertheless sent a letter of recommendation in my behalf to Pater Gregor Ruemelein of Ettal and Mayor Zwink of Oberammergau). I was most cordially received by Pater Gregor at Ettal, who it turns out was a key person in the revision of the 1980 text. (The very indication on his part that he was not always completely satisfied with the revisions made, because committee work always demanded compromises, and other statements, evidenced his commitment to eliminating as thoroughly as possible all elements offensive to Jews. Mayor Zwink's later remarks to me confirmed my judgment of Pater Gregor's role in the 1980 revision.) He went through his entire file on the text, which he placed at my disposal, and discussed all matters openly and at length with me. I received a copy of the revised 1980 text and spent some hours comparing it with my marked-up 1970 copy and my Commentary. I was satisfied that the great bulk of the problems had been adequately solved.

In light of that fact my visit with Mayor Zwink was also most friendly. he had graciously arranged to open the Rathaus, Town Hall, to meet me after the Pentecost Sunday solemn Mass (in the fantastically beautiful rococo parish church with a glorious Mozart Mass with full orchestra, choir, and solos, made up entirely of villagers--this love of and expertise in pageantry and classical music of the Mozart-Beethoven era accords perfectly with their love of their Passion Play, whose text and orchestral and choral music also stem from the Mozart-Beethoven era and style).

REQUESTED TEXTUAL CHANGES MADE

It will perhaps be helpful to look briefly at some of the most important changes made in the 1980 text to get a concrete sense of the progress the Oberammergauers have made in this area, and what remains yet to be done.

People--Crowd--Pharisees

Some of the problems were largely concerned with the printed rather than spoken text. For example, a number of the extremely hostile lines toward Jesus were designated: Volk (People), with the obvious danger of implying that the Jewish people as a whole were complicit in Jesus' death. It was suggested that the dramatis personae be changed to something like "crowd," which it was (Volksmenge). The same was true of "Pharisees." These spiritual forebears of present-day Rabbinic Judaism have been unhistorically much maligned in Christian tradition; only in recent years have Christian scholars and Church documents begun to rectify this gross error. In the 1980 text the Pharisees--who previously had played solely negative roles--are totally absent.

Old Covenant Elimination Eliminated

A specifically anti-Jewish statement that clearly was contrary to the teaching of Vatican II, but which persisted in the text of the Passion Play, was simply eliminated from the 1980 text. The portion struck from the 1980 text read as follows: at the Last Supper Jesus said, "The Old Covenant which my Father made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has reached its end."

Synagogue

An even more serious series of offensive statements focussed on the word Synagogue as a symbol of Judaism--among other things, a very un-historical notion since in Jesus' time if anything the Temple, not the Synagogue, would have been the symbol of Judaism. Some of the more stark statements, and their changes, are as follows:

- 1a) "Judas...hastened to the Synagogue and sold his Master." (1970)
- 1b) "Judas...hastened to the High Council and sold his Master." (1980)
- 2a) In bitter pangs of conscience Judas said: "Accursed Synagogue!" (1960)

- 2b) "Accursed Pharisees!" (1970)
- 2c) Totally cut (1980).
- 3a) The High Priest Annas said: "I wish this enemy of the Synagogue were standing in fetters before!" (1970)
- 3b) Totally cut. (1980)
- 4a) The High Priest Caiphas said to Jesus: "So, you are the one who thinks he can bring to ruin our Synagogue...(1970)
- 4b) "So, you are the one who thinks he can bring to ruin our religion."(1980)
- 5a) Caiphas said to his cohorts: "This day will see...the honor of the Synagogue heightened." (1970)
- 5b) Totally cut. (1980)
- 6a) After the condemnation of Jesus by Pilate, Caiphas said: "Triumph! Victory is ours! The enemy of the Synagogue is annihilated! People: 'Long live the Synagogue!'" (1970)
- 6b) Caiphas: "Victory is ours! Rejoice! Our faith is rescued!" The rest is cut. (1980)

"The Jews"

One of the sensitive problems of Christian antisemitism is the kind of talk that states or implies that the Jews as a whole were guilty of the death of Jesus--as if Jesus himself and his followers were not also Jews, and oblivious of the fact that the vast majority of Jews in the world then had never even heard of Jesus. Sometimes this problem is raised by simply using the term "the Jews," thereby implying the Jews as a whole. The Passion Play had three such texts, one of which went through an interesting evolution. The 1960 text has Jesus say to Pilate: "If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would have fought so that I would not have fallen into the hands of the Jews." The 1970 text changed to : "...into the hands of the High Council." The 1980 text went even further: "...into the hands of my enemies."

A similar, but not as completely satisfactory, textual evolution occurred when the Roman court recorder is made to read (in the 1960 text): "I, Pontius Pilate, Procurator in Judea of the mighty Claudius Tiberius Caesar, at the desire of the High Priests, Sanhedrin, and the whole people of the Jews pronounce the death sentence upon Jesus." The 1970 text was changed to: "...the whole people of Jerusalem..." In 1980 the text will read: "...the people of Jerusalem...." The shift then went from the whole Jewish people, to the whole people in Jerusalem, to the people in Jerusalem. The unsatisfactory quality of the 1980 text is that it might still imply that all the people of Jerusalem had condemned Jesus-- which from the evidence of the Gospels clearly was not the case. However, earlier in the 1980 Oberammergau Passion Play a great deal of attention is given to the fact that the enemies of Jesus deliberately rounded up their supporters to form the crowd and constantly egged them on, so that it should be clear to the audience that it was only an orchestrated mob of ward healers who condemned Jesus rather than the whole "people of Jerusalem." The 1980 printed text even adds a new subheading stressing the manipulation of the crowd by Jesus' priestly enemies: "The Priests Bring the Stirred Up Crowd Over to Their Side."

The third text shifted abruptly from 1970 to 1980. In the earlier texts Pilate said: "I will have nothing to do with these proposals of the Jews." In 1980 Pilate says: "I will under no circumstances have anything to do with the charges of the High Priest."

People

A like problem often turns up with the use of the term "people" (Volk) implying the whole people, as mentioned above. Again, there was a very interesting evolution of one passage of the text. The 1960 text read: "'In this People,' says the Lord, 'I have no more pleasure,'" In 1970 the text changed to: "'In these sinners'....," and in 1980 it will

read: "'In such sacrifices'...."

The shift was more abrupt, and just as complete, in a second instance. The text up to and including the 1970 version had a hymn which read:

Have you then no mercy, oh, deceived and misguided People?

....

A furious, blinded People which ceases not its clamor,

The term People was totally eliminated in 1980 by the simple device of dropping the lines that contained it.

"His Blood Be On Us and On Our Children!"

In only one of the four Gospels, Matthews, does the phrase "his blood be on us and on our children" appear, even though all four Gospels treat of the scene of Pilate and Jesus before the manipulated Jewish mob. Hence, even though we now know that that phrase is a kind of technical, metaphorical term meaning that the group involved was giving its approval for the legal judgment just stated, there is at least one documentary source for the phrase being uttered once, by the crowd. However, until the 1980 text the Passion Play text repeated it in various ways no less than seven times!

Choir: Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

May the Lord avenge the blood of the Son on you.

People: May it come upon us and upon our children!

Choir: May it come upon you and your children.

....

Pilate: I am innocent of the blood of this just man!
Let it be your responsibility!

Priests and People: We take it upon us! His blood come upon us and upon our children!

....

Pilate: ...I have no share in this blood-guilt. Let it

be as you have cried aloud: it falls upon
you and upon your children!

Priests and People: Good! It falls upon us and upon our children!
(This last line in 1960, not in 1970)

The impact of this unhistorical, grossly misleading and highly antisemitic machinegun-like repetition must have been massive. It has been vastly modified in the 1980 text. The first three scourging lines above have been replaced by the following verse, which, though it has a certain deliberate ambivalence (the Paschal Lamb of Exodus and the New Testament), is surely a huge improvement:

O People of God! O People of God!

The Blood of the Lamb purifies you from all guilt;

It grants you for certain and forever the favor of God!

The next four statements above are reduced to the single Matthean sentence

Priests and Crowd: His blood be on us and on our children!

Vashti, Synagogue, Jews--Rejected of God

Perhaps the most nakedly antisemitic portion of the Passion Play text is a section of poetry, which has also undergone a thorough-going evolution. The essence of the poetry (sung by a massive Greek-style chorus) in its 1960 form was a strangely perverted typology depending on the Book of Esther. Queen Vashti, a Gentile, is rejected in favor of Esther, a Jew; but then the parallel is said to be that the Synagogue is rejected in favor of the Gentiles. Throughout the poetry runs the near identification of the rejected Vashti, the Synagogue, Jerusalem, and the Jewish people--all thrust aside by God in a blatant bit of antisemitism. Following is that poetry as it appeared up to 1980 (with the few variations between the 1960 and 1970 texts both given):

People of God! Your savior is near to you;

The one long promised you has come.

O hear him! Follow his lead!

Blessing and life will he bring you.

(But Jerusalem shows itself blind and deaf--1960

But the city Jerusalem shows itself blind--1970)

It pushes the proffered hand away.

Therefore the All High also turns himself from it,

And lets it sink into its own destruction.

Vashti proudly disdains the royal banquet;

Enraged over this, the king thrusts her

Out of his sight and chooses

A more noble soul for his spouse.

(Thus is the Synagogue also thrust aside;

The Kingdom of God is taken away from it,

Given to other Peoples

Who will bring the fruits of righteousness.--all cut in 1970)

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

Return to your God!

Scorn not with evil mockery

The warning call of grace;

That not, unholy one, on you

In full measure one day be poured

The anger of our God most high!

(But alas! The prophet murderer--1960

But alas! The impenitent sinner--1970)

With evil mind wanders on.

Therefore, thus says the Lord

(This People I will have no more.--1960

This city I will have no more.--1970)

See Vashti, see! The proud one is cast out!

A type of what the Lord has designed for the synagogue

"Remove yourself from my throne
You proud wife, unworthy of the crown!"
Thus spoke Ahasuerus in wrath.

"Yours, fairest Esther, yours it is
This day beside the king to reign
Here chosen for the royal throne."

"The time of grace has passed away;
I will cast out this proud (People--1960) (city--1970),
Even as I live," thus says the Lord.
A better people He will choose
Espoused to him for evermore,
Like Esther was to Ahasuerus.
Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

You sinners, hear the word of God:
Do you still wish to find grace,
Then put forth from your hearts
The leaven of sins.

The crass rejectionist theology reflected in both versions of this verse was unfortunately traditional Christian theology for many, many centuries, and thus it is sadly not understandable that it should still have been operative in 1960 (though in the shadow of the horror of the Holocaust!). But in 1970, five years after the "Declaration On the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" of Vatican II, where it was stated, "God holds the Jews most dear....He does not repent of the promises he makes or of the calls He issues," the continuance of such a theology (despite the relatively minor revisions made) is almost incomprehensible.

The 1980 text totally eliminates this rejectionist theology, though

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a perhaps slight ambivalence remains. Still, the improvement is massive. It was accomplished mainly by strenuous cutting. The earlier fifty lines of verse are now reduced to fifteen. The perverted Vashti-Esther, Jews-Gentiles image has completely disappeared (thereby eliminating not only a strange antisemitism, but also avoiding the intrinsic sexism of the story). No rejection of Judaism is mentioned. Rather, there is a plea for the People of God not to reject their savior; but this People of God is all humanity (perhaps through the diaphany of the Jewish People) who are bade to reject instead their sins:

People of God! Your savior is near to you;
The one long promised you has come.
O hear him! Follow his lead!
Blessing and life will he bring you.

O you my People! O you my People!
Return to your God!
Scorn not with evil mockery
The warning call of grace;
That not, People of God ("unholy one" in 1970!), on you
In full measure one day be poured
The anger of our God most high!
O humanity ("sinners" in 1970), hear the word of God:
Do you still wish to find grace,
Then put forth from your hearts
The leaven of sins.

UNREQUESTED TEXTUAL CHANGES MADE

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Basically all the above discussed revisions had been recommended in the Commentary published by the ADL. However, a number of additional improvements were also made which went beyond what had been recommended.

They are worthy of note, though they are of varying substance.

Jehovah

First, on the positive side: It has long been a pious practice among observant Jews not to speak out loud the proper name of God, Yahweh (or Jehovah, as earlier scholarship thought it was pronounced), but to substitute a synonym. (Thus, I was puzzled when I first visited Jewish services and in following the prayers saw the letters JHWH and nevertheless heard people recite Adonai--Lord.) According to Pater Gregor, out of sensitivity to this custom the 1970 text already had substituted "Eternal One" or "Most High" for Jehovah.

Godless Murderers

In the texts previous to 1980 there was some poetry which three times referred to the enemies of Jesus as murderers and once as Godless. That hard language was somewhat softened to the following:

The vengeance of the Godless feeds impiously on his martyrdom (1970)

The pitiless feed impiously on his martyrdom (1980)

Behold! Hanged between (murderers 1970) (robbers 1980)

He himself forgives his (murderers 1970) (enemies 1980)

And instead of hating the clique of (murderers 1970) (impious ones 1980)

Jews--Conniving Merchants

In the texts up to 1980 two scenes were devoted to the connivance of the Temple merchants in the betrayal of Jesus. Such scenes were completely fictitious, having no documentary, or even legendary, basis whatsoever. However, as Pater Gregor pointed out, so as to avoid even the possibility of the viewers' stereotyping Jews with conniving merchants as betrayers of Jesus these scenes were entirely eliminated.

Greetings To Our Jewish Brothers and Sisters .

Again on the positive side, but this time in a more obvious and substantial way, the 1980 text dramatically adds a greeting to the Jewish People. At the very beginning of the Play is a Prologue in which "all are greeted who are here united in the love of the savior to follow mourning on the path of his Passion....Pray, pray with us since the hour has come for us to keep our sacred vow to the Eternal One." Into the midst of that welcoming of the audience is now inserted the following greeting to the Jewish People:

Greetings also to you brothers and sisters of the people from whom the savior came. We here in no way wish to look for guilt in others; rather each person should recognize himself as guilty in this event. God has perceived everyone as united in disobedience.

This explicit greeting of Jews (which incidentally again shows a sensitivity in avoiding sexist language by specifically greeting both Jewish sisters and brothers) follows traditional Christian theology which perceives every human being as complicit in evil in the world, and therefore sharing in responsibility for the evil visited upon all human beings, which in a special way is focussed in Jesus of Nazareth as the meeting point of the human and divine. Thus all human beings traditionally are said to share in the sufferings and death of Jesus. Hence Jews as fellow sinners share no more and no less than all others in this guilt. Such a theology, of course, cannot form a basis for antisemitism. But beyond that, such a friendly greeting and disclaimer of scapegoating of the Jews at the very outset of the Passion Play is to be greeted.

DESIDERATA

Of the recommendations made in the Commentary, all the major ones

were followed at least adequately. Of those that were not at all or not fully accepted, all were of relatively minor stature, that is, they pertain not to the esse but the bene esse of a solution of the problem of antisemitism in the Oberammergau Passion Play. They fall into five categories.

Pontius Pilate

We know from documentary evidence (e.g., near contemporary writers, Josephus and Philo) that Pilate was an uncommonly bloodthirsty, self-seeking Roman ruler. Although the Gospels, for political reasons, moderated his image somewhat, the text of the Passion Play goes much farther and depicts Pilate as a very sympathetic, noble Roman who against all his best instincts was forced into allowing Jesus' death by evil Jews. As noted above, the 1980 text makes it quite clear that it is only a small group of hostile Jews who were complicit in the plot against Jesus' life, so that the whitewashing of Pilate would no longer play such an important role as a foil to set off the evil Jews. Still, Jesus' enemies were mainly Jews. Hence a whitewashed Pilate would still fulfill to some extent a foil function.

The 1980 text does eliminate at least two statements by Pilate which unwarrantedly paint him with virtuous hues. At one point in the earlier versions Pilate said of Jesus that perhaps he is the son of a god, and at another he said that Jesus "had so much that is noble in his face, in his bearing. His speech also testifies to such noble frankness and a nature so highly gifted that he seems to me a very learned man....What if he were really of higher descent." Both of these implausible statements are cut in the 1980 text. However, the following highly unlikely statement of Pilate remains: "I will do everything I can to save this Jesus." Thus, while the 1980 text is significantly "improved" by portraying Pilate in an historically more correct negative manner, it would be further

improved by characterizing him as the treacherous tyrant he was!

Old Covenant--Earlier Covenants

It was pointed out in the Commentary that the term "old covenant" (or "old testament") is inaccurate, misleading, and liable to foment antisemitism, for in the Hebrew Bible there were several succeeding covenants, each adding to, not replacing, the preceding ones--the same being true of Jesus' "new" covenant. Thus, there was no "old" covenant, only earlier, unreplaced, covenants. The 1970 Passion Play text used the term old covenant twice, once placing it incomprehensibly in the mouth of Jesus, who, as mentioned above, was made to say: "The old covenant which my father had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has reached its end." The 1980 text happily has struck that. However, the second use of the term old covenant has remained in the 1980 text. There is a reference to the sacrifice of the old covenant in a choral poem. Because of the context the problem is minor, though it would be better if the term old covenant were completely avoided.

Yeshua--Jesus

It was suggested in the Commentary, for the sake of greater historical accuracy and of making Jesus appear the Jew that he was, that instead of the unhistorical name Christ the historically correct one, Jesus (or better, Yeshua, as Jesus actually was addressed in Aramaic or Hebrew), be used. This was not so much a matter of eliminating antisemitism as acknowledging the Jewishness of Jesus. In fact, no one in the Passion Play ever addresses Jesus as Christ, nor does anyone address him as Jesus (except his mother on two occasions). That is understandable enough. The problem here is mainly one of the printed text where as a speaker Jesus is always named Christ, and until 1980 most printed dramatic instructions also used the name Christ. In the 1980 text most of the

latter now use Jesus, though the speaking lines are still all designated "Christ." It would be a still further advance in an accurate depiction of Jesus if this latter were also changed to Jesus, or Yeshua. Recovery of a sense of the Jewishness of Jesus would help to substitute philo-semitism for antisemitism.

Rabbi

At the time of Jesus the word "rabbi" probably was still only a form of address (meaning "my master" or "my teacher"), but not yet a title. That is, one as yet did not speak in the third person of a "my teacher," "rabbi." Hence, it is unhistorical, and quite undocumented, to have a character in a Passion Play entitled "Rabbi." But such a character does exist in the Oberammergau Play. The facts that he is very hostile toward Jesus and that rabbis are contemporary symbols of Jews and Judaism tend to foster the notion that Jews as such were hostile toward Jesus. This is especially ironic since Jesus was most often addressed by his disciples as "rabbi." Thus it would best accord with historical data and the lessening of fostering antisemitism if there were no character in Passion Plays entitled rabbi, and especially not only ones hostile toward Jesus; conversely, it would also best accord with history and properly promote philosemitism (that is, the love of Jesus' people) if Jesus would be addressed as "rabbi."

"Old Testament" Characters vs. Jesus

A number of characters in the Passion Play are given names of well-known Hebrew figures from the "Old Testament": Moses, Ephraim, Joshua, Zadok, Ezechiel, and Boaz; all are very unattractive figures, serving as foils for Jesus. Since most viewers of the Play will unconsciously identify the well-known names with Judaism, the immediate effect of this juxtaposition is to give the impression that the "Old Testament" stands

over against Jesus and that it is driven out by him, as the Hebrew characters in the play are driven out of the Temple by Jesus.

When the Second Vatican Council stated "the Church of Christ acknowledges in God's plan of salvation the beginning of her faith and election is to be found in the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets....Nor can she forget that she draws nourishment from that good olive tree unto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted (cf. Rm 11:17-24)," it became unacceptable for Catholics to continue (it, of course, never really was "acceptable") to set the "Old Testament" over against the New--Moses, Ephraim, Ezechiel, etc., over against Jesus. The 1980 Passion Play text does eliminate Moses, but the other Hebrew Bible characters remain. This of course is basically only a problem of the printed text, not one for the hearing audience, but it should nevertheless be rectified.

A Jewish Jesus

It was noted in the Commentary that "eliminating the 'trouble spots' in the present text is of course an important first step, but it is only a first step. It is to be hoped that those responsible for the Oberammergau Passion Play will be motivated to wrestle more profoundly with the problem and come up with creative means which will move beyond the negative task of eliminating elements that are or could be seen as degrading to Jews and Judaism--and hence also distorting of our Jewish-rooted Christian faith--and begin the positive task of probing and promoting the Jewish heritage pervading the foundation of Christianity.

"The American Catholic bishops, among many other Catholic Church leaders and theologians, provide us with a beginning list of some of the Jewish elements in our Christian heritage: 'Christians have not fully appreciated their Jewish roots. Early in Christian history a de-Judaizing process dulled our awareness of our Jewish beginnings. The Jewishness

of Jesus, of his mother, his disciples, of the primitive Church, was lost from view. That Jesus was called Rabbi; that he was born, lived and died under the Law; that He and Peter and Paul worshipped in the Temple-- these facts were blurred by the controversy that alienated Christians from the Synagogue.' It is these and other aspects of the Jewishness of Jesus and early Christianity that need to be pondered and drawn into the texts and very structures of Passion Plays." That important work still lies largely ahead.

CONCLUSION

Nevertheless, the important first step of eliminating the "trouble spots" has, in my judgment, been adequately taken. All of the essential problems, as well as many lesser ones, have been satisfactorily taken care of and even a few positive steps have been ventured; only a few secondary problems have not yet been completely resolved. This is no small accomplishment. Thanks is due to Peter Gregor, the responsible people at Oberammergau, the Anti-Defamation League, and the others who helped move the issue this far, and encouragement should be given to the carrying out of that second, even more difficult, step of developing a philosemitic Passion Play.

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THE STAR'S TRAVEL REPORT

'Passion Play' Popular With Tourists

Los Angeles Times

IN THIS STORYBOOK village 55 miles south of Munich on the Austrian border, the play inspired by a miracle is about to unfold.

It is the miracle that stems from a vow made nearly 350 years ago when the Black Plague threatened to wipe out Oberammergau.

Across Europe the dread disease had claimed untold thousands of lives.

In Oberammergau residents ringed their villages with fires, sealing off the tiny hamlet. Outsiders were forbidden to enter. And anyone who left couldn't return.

But a homesick villager, Kaspar Schissler, evaded the guards, carrying back with him the plague.

IN LESS THAN a month the disease took 84 lives.

Terror gripped Oberammergau. In desperation, the village fathers made a solemn vow. If Oberammergau were spared, they would enact a play each 10 years thereafter based on the life and suffering of Christ.

From that day forth the deaths ceased. Thus, the miracle and the inspiration for Oberammergau's famed "Passion Play."

With rare exceptions, it has been repeated each decade since the early 1600s.

It will open this year May 25 and will continue almost daily into September. With a cast of 1,600 — each player is an amateur — it will represent the single largest assemblage of actors and actresses on earth. In the most crowded scene, 800 players will be on stage simultaneously.

Already the "Passion Play" is nearly 90 percent sold out. Casting began months ago. Major roles were heatedly sought after, particularly those of Christ and the Virgin Mary.

FOR THE FIRST time in the play's history, two persons were selected for each lead.

Playing Christ will be 43-year-old cooper-smith Gregor Breitsamter. His understudy is a 20-year-old dental student and part-time mail carrier, Rudi Swink. (For Breitsamter's father, Melchior, it will be his ninth "Passion Play" since his

debut as a 6-year-old.)

Irmí Dengg, 41, who operates a souvenir shop in her spare time, will share the role of Mary with Martha Wiedemann, a 19-year-old seamstress.

To qualify for a part in the Passion Play one must be either a native of the little woodcarvers' village or a resident for 20 years or more.

Performances will begin at 8:30 a.m. and 6:40 p.m. with a three-hour midday intermission.

NEARLY EVERY family in Oberammergau will be represented in the 1980 production. All males are growing beards and long hair. Everyone but Pontius Pilate, who traditionally appears on stage clean-shaven.

So what gives with the local barber? Well, sir, he's considering closing up shop till next September in favor of peddling souvenirs.

Getting a ticket to the "Passion Play" at this late date would be considered Oberammergau's second miracle. Something like coming up with a box seat for a Broadway hit.

And even with a ticket, there's a hitch. Visitors must spend two nights in Oberammergau. It's a method of guaranteeing more than one full house in this colorful alpine hamlet.

AND THERE'S something else. After two nights one must pack and trot on. Besides making way for new audiences, it guarantees souvenir shopkeepers a steady flow of clientele.

It seems fitting that the town that once sealed itself off from the outside world now welcomes it with open cash registers.

And they do have souvenir shops. Yes, the good people of Oberammergau have gotten a mite mercenary. Still, who's to blame them? The opportunity to fill their coffers rolls around only once every 10 years, and with half a million visitors, this means a ton of money.

TO THEIR CREDIT, the village fathers plow profits from the play back into Oberammergau. In 1950 the village school was modernized. In 1970 they built a new swimming pool — complete with artificial waves. And when the curtain

rings down on the 1980 production, the locals intend to get busy building a Congress hall.

After that if Hilton and Sheraton should show up with a convention of Shriners, it would be difficult to tell Oberammergau from St. Moritz.

Still, it is unlikely that this will occur. For one thing, Oberammergau enforces a strict building code.

Tear down a structure and up must come another resembling it. Even repairs to existing buildings, fall under the scrutiny of the Town Council.

THE PLAY ITSELF takes place in a relatively new covered auditorium with an open-air stage, which is keen for the audience. Still, players have been known to take an occasional soaking. But rain or shine, in the tradition of the theater, the show goes on.

Even with the commercialism, Oberammergau remains steeped in Old World charm, couched in a high Alpine valley and surrounded by magnificent peaks. Hand-painted frescoes adorn its buildings and villagers stroll the streets in Old World fashion.

It's nearly impossible to escape talk of the Passion Play, even during an off-season. A couple of Oberammergau's hotels are operated by men who once played the role of Christ. And there's the director of the village Wood-Carver's School, Hans Schwaighofer, who twice appeared as Judas.

BESIDES THE "Passion Play," Oberammergau is renowned in Bavaria by its Wood Carver's School. Students from dozens of nations are coached in this Old World art. And for those too poor to participate, tools are provided by the state.

Because of its wide fame as a woodcarvers' village, Oberammergau draws vast crowds even during those years when the Passion Play isn't in production.

Up to 50 buses a day disgorge tourists bent on buying up souvenirs that range from religious figures to cuckoo clocks.

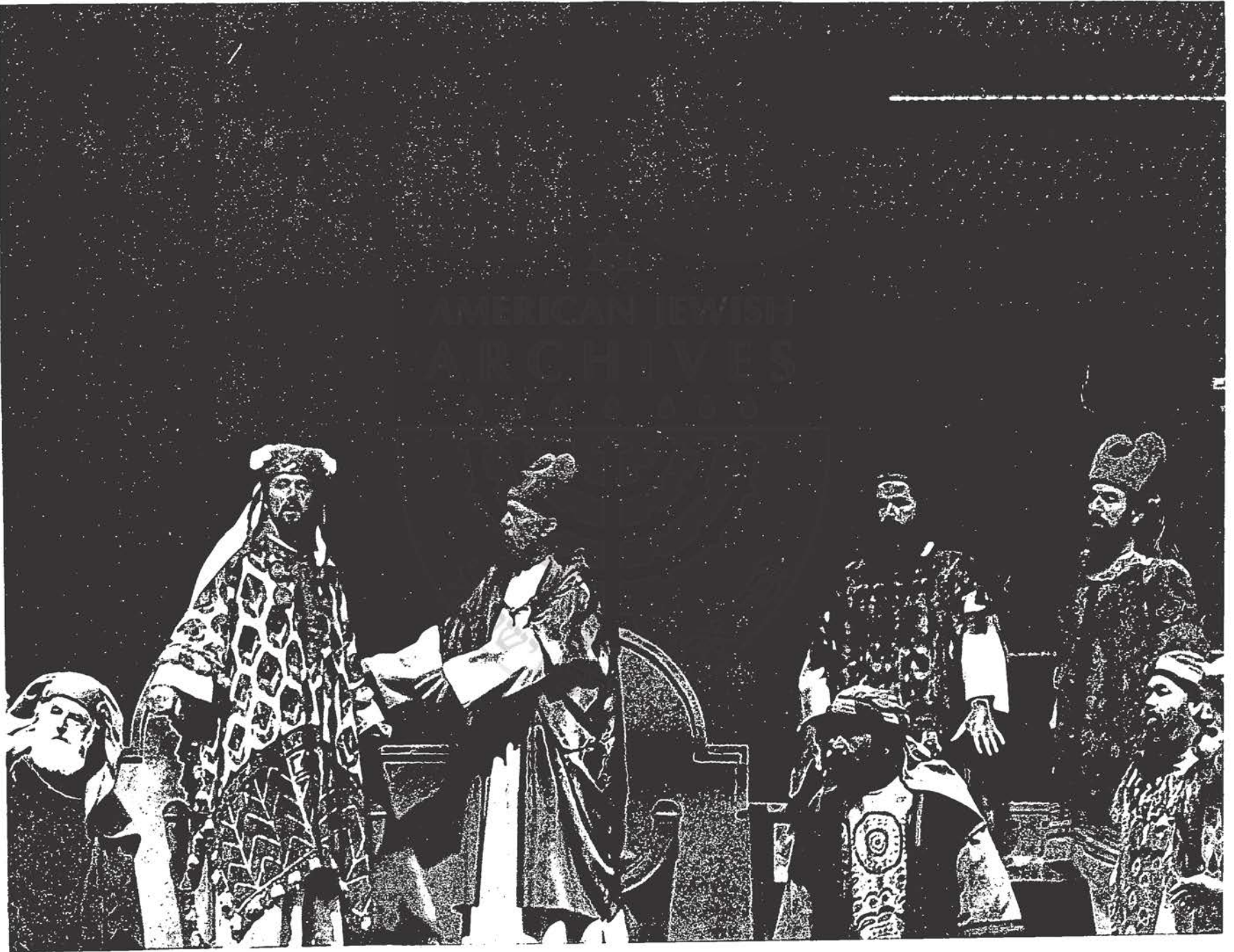
While Oberammergau is couched in religion, its vices are visible. Its three bars can legally remain open till 2 a.m. but frequently don't close till 4 or later.

IN OBERAMMERGAU you are forbidden to stand while drinking. You must sit at a table. That's the law.

So everyone, well, nearly everyone, who visits Oberammergau minds his manners. Just as the locals do. As a result, the six-man police force has the softest touch in Bavaria.

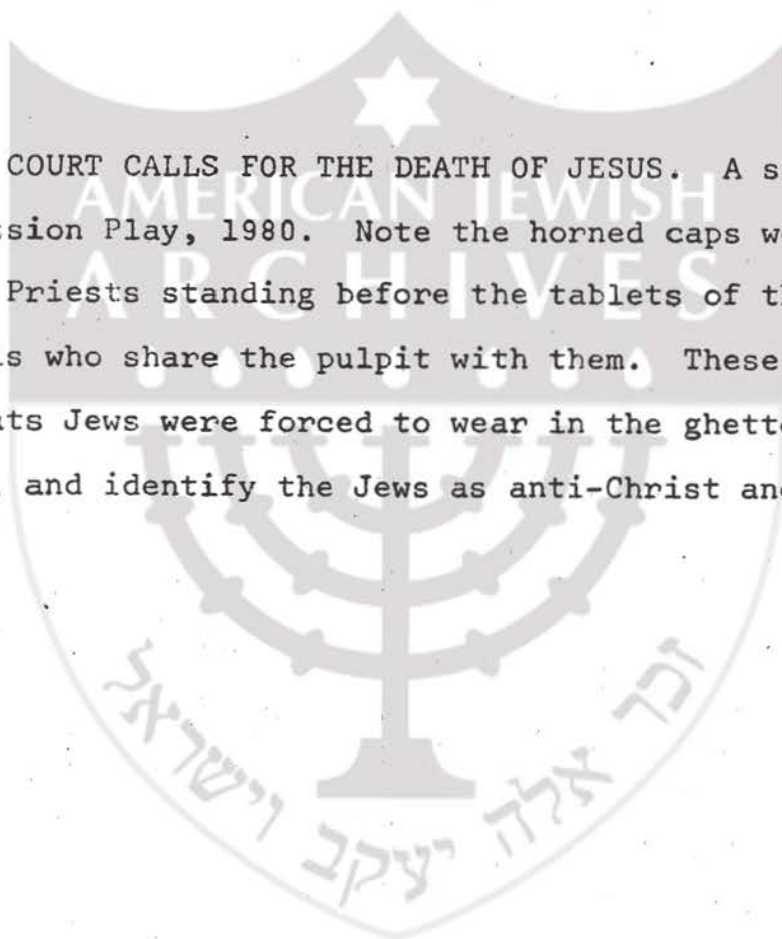
Occasionally someone will write a traffic ticket. And now and again a petty theft occurs. Otherwise, being a cop in Oberammergau is a breeze, even during the hectic days of the Passion Play.

During years when the Passion Play is performed, hotels and inns fill up in neighboring villages as well as Oberammergau, getting the spillover.



THE JEWISH HIGH COURT CALLS FOR THE DEATH OF JESUS. A scene from the Oberammergau Passion Play, 1980. Note the horned caps worn by the two Jewish High Priests standing before the tablets of the Law, and by the two Rabbis who share the pulpit with them. These are based on designs of hats Jews were forced to wear in the ghettos during the Middle Ages, and identify the Jews as anti-Christ and associated with the devil.

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A VIEWER'S GUIDE

TO THE

OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY



INTRODUCTION

Focusing on Jesus' agony and death on the cross, and the events which lead up to it, passion plays are emotionally potent dramas. To the degree that any passion play derives its dramatic tension from the contrast between absolute good and absolute evil, some persons or groups must personify the forces of evil. Too often, the Jewish people have been assigned that function, made to represent the forces of utter darkness against which the purity and innocence of Jesus stand in stark contrast. Jewish concern about the possible anti-Semitic impact of such dramas is not fanciful; it is based on a history of periodic, bloody persecution related to the passion narrative. A Christian scholar has noted:

The crucifixion drama is...regarded, not without reason, as having played a prominent part in Jewish disabilities through the centuries as well as providing a major cause of negative attitude toward Jews today. In the Middle Ages, when anti-Semitism was more socially acceptable than it is in contemporary society, recitals of the Passion of Christ were often followed by physical violence against Jews. Medieval Christians so frequently attacked Jews on Good Friday that in some countries the latter were forbidden by law to leave their houses on that day.¹

Of all the pageants that dramatize the Crucifixion story, the most famous undoubtedly is the Passion Play performed every ten years at Oberammergau by the townsfolk of that village, in Upper Bavaria, West Germany. The Oberammergau play dates back to 1634, when it was first performed in fulfillment of a vow made during a plague epidemic the year before. Over the centuries, it has been performed in at least five different versions. The present text by Fr. Joseph Alois Daisenberger, used for more than a century, is a revision of an earlier text by Fr. Othmar Weis. In modern times, the play and the picturesque mountain village in which it is performed have become a major

international tourist attraction.

One of the play's strongest admirers in modern times was Adolf Hitler, who stated at the height of the Second World War: "It is vital that the Passion Play be continued at Oberammergau; for never has the menace of Jewry been so convincingly portrayed."² Under the Nazi government, the Oberammergau Passion Play was classified as a "racially important cultural document," and on the occasion of the pageant's tercentennial, in 1934, a Nazified special performance represented Jesus and his disciples as Aryan heroes.

After World War II, when the Christian world began to reappraise its attitudes toward Jews and Judaism in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust, demands for revision of the traditionally anti-Jewish Oberammergau drama came from many quarters, both Christian and Jewish. These demands were undergirded by a Declaration adopted by the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965, which asserted, "...what happened to Christ in His Passion cannot be attributed to all Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor to the Jews of today."

Some changes in the play's text were made for the 1970 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Significantly more have been made for the 1980 production. Those who revised the text for the 1980 performance of the drama have made a serious effort to cleanse the play of anti-Jewish polemic and prejudice, and they have added an introductory exhortation cautioning each spectator to "recognize himself as guilty in what happened..."

The American Jewish Committee believes that, unfortunately, these well-meaning modifications are undermined by the drama itself, for the way in which

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Adolf Hitler, Secret Conversations, 1941-1944 (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Young, 1953), p. 457.

the story unfolds and develops has not been basically altered. The traditional anti-Jewish polemic which shaped the original text has not been examined, nor have the insights of current biblical and extra-biblical scholarship been incorporated into the dynamics of the play.

Thousands -- perhaps hundreds of thousands -- of Americans will be viewing the Oberammergau Passion Play in 1980. Because of our profound ~~concern~~ for continued Christian-Jewish understanding and cooperation in the United States and other parts of the world, the American Jewish Committee has prepared this booklet, examining certain themes and developments in the drama and providing background information not included in the Oberammergau production. We hope it will enrich ^{the} potential viewer's understanding of ^{the realities of underlying} the critical events depicted on the stage -- events which have shaped the destinies of our faith communities from that time forth.

DRAMATIC OUTLINE OF THE PASSION PLAY

Preluded by and interspersed with a number of "living tableaux" dramatizing events from Hebrew Scriptures, and by musical solos and chorus, the Oberammergau Passion Play follows Jesus from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem -- where he drives the traders out of the Temple -- through his arrest, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

The dramatic conflict of the pageant derives from the hostility of the Jewish authorities to Jesus, and their determination, from the outset of the play, to destroy him. It begins with Jesus driving the traders from the Temple courtyard, and this partly lays the ground for the ensuing hostility of the Jewish authorities. Bent on reimbursement and revenge for the losses they

have sustained, the merchants serve as intermediaries who induce Judas to betray Jesus. This is contrary to the Gospels, according to which Judas approached the priests with his offer of betrayal.

In the Oberammergau drama, it is ^{not only} the Jewish religious authorities ^{and} the merchants, ^{but} ~~and~~ ultimately, the Jewish people, who are cast in the role of villains. The merchants are motivated by greed; the religious authorities largely by jealousy and vindictiveness; the people, manipulated by their leaders, behave like a sadistic lynch mob driving Jesus to the cross with joyful satisfaction. The intense political and religious differences that polarized the Jewish community of the time are almost totally ignored. Jewish law is misrepresented as exclusively harsh and punitive. Pilate, on the other hand, is portrayed sympathetically, and the cruelty and brutality of Roman occupation is essentially overlooked. All of these factors combine to give a biased and inadequate picture of the realities against which the drama unfolds.

JEWS IN ROMAN OCCUPIED PALESTINE

The events depicted in the Oberammergau drama took place against the background of a brutal Roman occupation; an intermittent guerilla warfare fought by Jewish insurgents; widespread messianic expectation among the Jewish masses -- which included the expectation of deliverance from the cruelty of Roman rule. Fear among the Romans of a large-scale political uprising led routinely to severe repressive measures, including frequent executions on the cross.

A Roman Catholic scholar has delineated some of the conflicting factions within the Jewish community of the First Century:

History shows us that the temple priesthood and the Sadducean party which supported the priesthood were at that time closely

allied with the interests of the Roman rulers of Palestine....

Arrayed against the Sadducees and the temple priesthood were the religious movements of the day. The Pharisees, as the lay leaders of a popular movement seeking to go back to the observance of the covenant in the spirit of the prophets, bitterly opposed the Sadducees and disagreed with them on almost every significant point of doctrine, from the manner of interpretation of the Bible to the belief in the resurrection of the body after death. In spirit and belief, as we have seen, the teaching of Jesus and the early Church was remarkably similar to that of the Pharisees.

Also opposed to the temple priesthood were the Essenes, the ascetic separatist group which had established a monastic-like community on the shores of the Dead Sea and from there issued ringing denunciations of the temple as vile and corrupt.

The temple priesthood and the Sadducees supported Rome not for religious but for political and economic reasons. In this sense, they could not be called "Jewish leaders" at all. Cut off from the people and living by collaboration with Rome, the temple priesthood must have developed a quite natural "seige mentality." Eager to please their Roman superiors, they would zealously seek to bring to the attention of Pilate even the slightest hint of rebellion.

Palestine in the time of Christ was, we know, seething with revolutionary movements. Indeed, a few decades after his death these erupted into full-scale rebellion against Rome, a rebellion only quashed by the destruction of the temple itself.

...the Pharisees and the Essenes, unlike the Sadducees, had no political power. They had no temple guards to enforce their will as did the chief priest. They were as powerless before the Roman conqueror as were Jesus and his small group of followers.³

Because the Oberammergau drama ignores these internal divisions, only one issue divides Jews in the play, and that is how they react to Jesus. The drama does not indicate that the majority of the Jewish population of Palestine would not have known about Jesus, or that there would be many Jews who would have sympathized with Jesus as a fellow victim of Roman oppression, without believing he was the promised Messiah. The revised drama makes a beginning in that direction by having a few people in the crowd before Pilate call for the release of Jesus, but this fleeting impression of sympathy for Jesus is dissipated immediately thereafter when the "priests and people" accept responsibility for his blood. Similarly, both in the New Testament and in the Passion Play, there are Pharisees

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Eugene Fisher, Faith Without Prejudice: Rebuilding Christian Attitudes Toward Jews (New York: The Paulist Press, 1977). pp. 79-81.

who defend Jesus. However, they are not identified in the cast list as Pharisees, only as "friends" of Jesus.

In effect, then, Jews in the drama fall into one or two categories: the "bad" Jews, who hate Jesus-- or are manipulated into hating him-- and who cruelly hound him to his death, and the "good" Jews, who are seen by the audience to be Christian prototypes. To Christians, Jesus' messiahship and divinity are self-evident, but this should not be read back into the play. The Gospels themselves suggest that in some degree Jesus deliberately hid his ministry from the public; his messianic role was not supposed to be for public knowledge.

Indeed, the Gospel reports that even the twelve did not always comprehend Jesus' ministry. Thus, Peter challenged his prediction of his death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21-24); the disciples argued which of them was the greatest (Luke 9:46-50); James and John advocated the use of force (Luke 9:51-56). Not until the very end, at the Last Supper, did even the disciples fully understand the import of Jesus' teaching (John 16:29-30). That being so, the implication that only willful blindness and jealousy prevented universal acceptance of his messiahship is patently unfair.

MISREPRESENTATION OF JEWISH LAW

Following a prejudice of long standing, the Passion Play falsely pictures Jewish law as the opposite of Christian love. The law is represented as legalistic, punitive and harsh, and also as vindictive. The drama reflects a profound misunderstanding of Jewish law, which may be based on ignorance of how the law was interpreted and applied, rather than on deliberate malice.

The misconception that Jewish law is nothing more than a literal application of strictures in the Hebrew Bible is widespread in Christendom. In fact, the rabbis and sages who developed the law interpreted and applied it in in-

creasingly humane ways, and created conditions that made it nearly impossible to apply severe punishment. Capital punishment was rare, and a Sanhedrin that condemned even one human being was judged to be a wicked Sanhedrin.

But in the Oberammergau drama, Jewish law is invoked mainly as a source of punishment. Except for one corrective instance, where Nicodemus cites the provisions of Jewish law to demand fair treatment for Jesus, the law is repeatedly invoked to sanction enmity to Jesus.

In recent years, Christian scholars have examined the religious world of Jesus' day with fairness, tracing the various trends of first-century Judaism with their achievements, their shortcomings and their great vitality. As a result, many of Jesus' moral teachings -- such as the Beatitudes and the law of love, forgiveness and mercy -- have been shown to have roots in the Jewish Scriptures, and parallels in the rabbinical writings of Jesus' time. Unfortunately, the Passion Play still projects a view of the Jewish religion and religious institutions in Jesus' time as corrupt and punitive.

THE PORTRAYAL OF PILATE

The Passion Play makes a near hero of Pilate, portraying him not only as a compassionate man, sincerely concerned about justice, but as a weakling -- the "unwilling judge" -- who reluctantly orders Jesus' execution under pressure from the cruel Jews.

All of this is wildly unhistoric -- indeed, it turns the truth upside down. The New Testament accounts and other historical sources, such as the writings of Philo and Josephus reveal that Pilate was a particularly brutal governor known

for his ruthlessness in putting down disturbances (see reference to his massacre of Galilean pilgrims in Luke 13:1). He constantly and unnecessarily offended Jewish religious sensibilities, inspired fear in the Jewish leaders and was quite beyond the reach of any manipulation by them. In his Legatio ad Gaium Philo quotes Agrippa who wrote of Pilate's "corruption, his acts of insolence, his rapine, and his habit of insulting people, his cruelty, and his continual murders of people untried and condemned, and his never-ending, gratuitous, and most grievous inhumanity."⁴ He was eventually recalled to Rome to stand trial for cruelty and oppression.

The revisers of the text for the 1980 performance had a great opportunity to correct the depiction of Pilate as a kindly weakling. Yet this brutal Roman procurator who had total power to save whom he pleased and to condemn whom he pleased, behaves in the play like a helpless tool in the hands of the Jewish authorities. Even his order to scourge Jesus -- a routine custom of Roman law-- is attributed to Pilate's hope of softening Jewish enmity to Jesus. He does not behave in the drama like the cruel tyrant history has shown him to be.

BARABBAS

In the Passion Play, Barabbas is described simply as a "robber and murderer." Thus, when people in the crowd cry out for his release, they appear to be motivated by the basest and most vicious motives. To choose a common criminal over Jesus is humanly incomprehensible.

Yet Barabbas is described by both Mark and Luke as an insurrectionist who had committed sedition against Rome (the same crime for which Jesus was officially

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c.f. Thomas S. Kepler, "Oberammergau, the Jews and Pilate," The Christian Century, Vol. LXXVIII, no. 30, July 26, 1961, p. 899.

condemned by Pilate). The evidence indicates that Barabbas was a guerilla fighter against the Romans.⁵ As such, he would have been something of a popular hero, particularly among those convinced that freedom from Roman oppression could be achieved only through armed struggle.

If the Passion Play had depicted Barabbas as a guerilla leader against the hated Romans, at least some human motivation would emerge for those who call for his release.

"IT'S IN THE BIBLE"

Efforts to remove the anti-Jewish impetus in the Oberammergau Passion Play and similar dramas are frequently countered by arguments that a particular passage is quoted directly from the Gospels. Christians who feel they are being asked to alter or suppress the language of their sacred Scriptures may react with confusion or resentment. To the claim that a particular incident or phrasing is "there in the Bible" Christian scholars have responded with two major observations.

The first is that the New Testament itself cannot be properly understood without taking into consideration the findings and insights of both biblical and extra-biblical scholarship. Fr. John T. Pawlikowski has noted:

A great deal of vital background material is missing from the Gospel narratives as they now stand. It must be supplied through auxiliary readings and commentaries. This situation makes it almost impossible for even the very best of Passion Plays to entirely avoid a travesty of the Gospel story. We cannot obtain a fully accurate picture of the trial and death of Jesus from reading the Gospels alone. This is the clear conclusion of the vast majority of modern biblical scholars.⁶

5

c.f. Dominic Crosan, "Anti-Semitism and the Gospel," Theological Studies, XXVI:189 (June 1965).

6

John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M., Catechetics and Prejudice: How Catholic Teaching Materials View Jews, Protestants and Racial Minorities (New York: Paulist Press, 1973)

The second is that the Gospel narratives differ among themselves in describing key events; thus a true understanding of the trial and death of Jesus must be reconstructed rather than read from the Gospels. Dr. Eugene Fisher has carefully noted how Matthew's additions to earlier Gospel accounts of the Passion foster the notion of Jewish guilt:

Matthew's additions, dictated by the pressure of his times, to the passion account are often small but provocative. As we have seen, he expands a questioning of Jesus by the temple authorities into a formal trial before the Sanhedrin. This trial, many scholars agree today, could not have taken place that night in the way Matthew describes it....

Matthew's additions tend to improve the image of Pilate. Mark, in an attempt to appease the Roman sensitivity, had described Pilate as somewhat hesitant about whether to kill Jesus or not. What is hesitancy in Mark becomes conviction in Matthew. Matthew's Pilate is wholly convinced of Jesus' innocence. He washes his hands to illustrate it, a scene preserved in no other Gospel. In Matthew alone do we find the words ascribed to Pilate: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man. See to it yourselves" (Mt. 27:24). Since Roman law prohibited Jews from exercising capital punishment in such cases, it is doubtful whether this statement could be historical. Romans alone could carry out a death sentence at the time (Jn 18:31). Likewise, the ritual washing of the hands was a Jewish religious custom. It is not likely that a Roman governor would follow it...Matthew then adds to Mark's text another verse: "And all the people shouted back, 'His blood be upon us and our children'" (Mt. 27:24-25). This passage has caused serious tensions over the centuries. It is noteworthy that it is found only in Matthew and that the other Synoptics make a sharp distinction between the small mob before Pilate and "the people who sympathized with Jesus..."⁷

Clearly, the question of which passages and events from the Gospels are selected in teaching about or dramatizing the passion will greatly influence feelings toward Jews and Judaism. The Oberammergau drama is rooted in an earlier tradition of hostility and contempt toward Jews and Judaism which has since been repudiated by the Church, but which was prevalent in past centuries,

7

Fisher, op. cit. pp. 84-87.

and which shaped the attitudes of generations of Christians. This tradition presupposed Jewish guilt, rejection and displacement, and emphasized these themes through the selective use of Scripture. In the Oberammergau Passion Play, this hostile tradition has dictated not only which events in the Gospel narratives are dramatized, but even when the plot departs from Christian Scripture. For example, the so-called "blood curse"; which has been used to justify so much hatred and persecution of Jews throughout history, is found only in the Gospel of Matthew. Similarly, Pilate's washing of his hands, which deflects responsibility for the death penalty from himself onto the Jews, appears only in Matthew. Yet all of these occur in the Passion Play. However, when it comes to the scourging of Jesus, the Gospel source changes. According to Mark, Luke and Matthew, Jesus is first condemned, then scourged as part of the normal routine of Roman execution; there is no further interaction between him and the crowd. Only in the Gospel of John is Jesus first scourged and then shown again to the crowd. Yet this version, which emphasizes the pitilessness and vindictiveness of the mob, is dramatized in the Passion Play.

Demonstrably, the Oberammergau Passion Play invokes and dramatizes those Gospel sources which cast the most negative light on Jewish motives and actions. In addition, the play departs from biblical sources when it comes to the role of the traders. These disreputable merchants carry into the Passion Play a motif of greed which is completely unwarranted by Christian Scripture and which stands at the heart of one of the basest of anti-Semitic slanders.

The question is not that certain episodes in the Oberammergau drama are true to scripture, but that a text fairer and more sympathetic to Jews, reflecting the political and religious realities of the time, could be devised, equally true to scripture.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1968, the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement on passion plays, cautioning writers and producers of such pageants to avoid the following exaggerations and misinterpretations:

- "To conceal the fact that Jesus is a Jew and that His friends as well as His enemies in the drama are Jews;
- "To create the impression that most Jews of Jesus' day willed His death, failing to show that the secrecy surrounding much of Jesus' trial was motivated by the large following He had in Jerusalem;
- "To change the 'crowd' before the governor's palace into a screaming 'mob,' as representing all Jerusalem, and indeed all Israel;
- "To depict Pilate, whom historiography has shown to have been a ruthless tyrant, as an innocent and kindly bystander;
- "To highlight those texts of the gospel narrative that are amenable to misinterpretation by uninformed audiences, such as: 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' (Matt. 27:25)."8

In varying degrees, the Oberammergau drama violates most of these guidelines. It levels accusations against the Jewish people as a whole. ^{Thus,} Pilate tells Jesus; "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me." If Jesus was arrested by stealth at night-- for fear of his popularity-- and followed by a weeping and mourning crowd (Luke 23:27), how could his "own nation" have delivered him to Pilate? And in the Condemnation Scene, Pilate condemns Jesus at the desire of the High Council and "the people of Jerusalem." Here again, a few authorities are assumed to represent an en-

On a much more emotional level, the prologue to Act XI accuses the whole people:

"Have ye then no mercy,
Oh, ye deceived and misguided people?
No! Without pity they cry: Away to the cross with Him!...
But around the Savior of all, in wrath is raging
A furious, blinded people which ceaseth not its clamor
Till the unwilling judge
Cries: So take Him and crucify Him."

R Aside from the depiction of the bloody tyrant, Pilate, as "unwilling," this passage gives the impression that Jesus was handed over to Jews to be crucified. Must it be repeated that Crucifixion was Roman form of execution, and that it was carried out by Roman soldiers by order from the Roman procurator?

Later in the same Act, Pilate comments:

"Only a few days ago ye accompanied this man through the streets of Jerusalem with rejoicing. Is it possible that, to-day, these very same people call down death and destruction upon him?"

These passages highlight the underlying assumption of the drama; that the Jewish people knew about Jesus, that they rejected him-- after some had initially supported or accepted him-- and universally clamored for his death.

But in point of fact, half of the Jewish people was then living outside of Palestine, scattered throughout the far-flung Roman Empire. Of those who remained, a relatively small number would have heard of Jesus, his message, or his ministry. Among those who had heard him, he found adversaries, enemies, disciples, the sympathies of the masses.

Jesus of Nazareth lived and died a faithful Jew, affirming to the end the very same religious law that the Oberammergau Passion Play maligns as harsh

and punitive. He did not reject his people, nor did his people reject him. The producers of the Oberammergau Passion Play would have performed an act of justice and reconciliation had they taken to heart the message of the 1975 Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations of the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops:

"We urge all in the Church who work in the area of education, whether in the seminary, the school or the pulpit, not only to avoid any presentation that might tend to disparage Jews or Judaism but also to emphasize those aspects of our faith which bear witness to our common patrimony and our spiritual ties with Jews.

"Much of the alination between Christian and Jew found its origins in a certain anti-Judaic theology which over the centuries has led not only to social friction with Jews but often to their oppression. One of the most hopeful developments in our time, powerfully assisted by Nostra Aetate, has been the decline of the old anti-Judaism and the reformation of Christian theological expositions of Judaism along more constructive lines.

"The first major step in this direction was the repudiation of the charge that Jews were and are collectively guilty of the death of Christ. Nostra Aetate and the new Guidelines have definitely laid to rest this myth which has caused so much suffering to the Jewish people. There remains however the continuing task of ensuring that nothing which in any way approaches the notion of Jewish collective guilt should be found in any Catholic medium of expression or communication. Correctly viewed, the disappearance of the charge of collective guilt of Jews pertains as much to the purity of the Catholic faith as it does to the defense of Judaism.

CHRISTEN UND JUDEN: DIE LANG ENTZWEITEN BRÜDER

(Translation of: CHRISTIANS AND JEWS. A TROUBLED BROTHERHOOD)

(1) (Focus)

(2) Wandschmiererei: "Nieder mit den Juden!"

(3) "Es gab diese Welt; es gibt sie nicht mehr." Eingang zur Jad-Waschem-Gedächtnisstätte in Jerusalem.

(4) "Jüdischer Geizhals." Von einem unbekanntem Künstler des 17. Jahrhunderts.

(5) Ewiges Licht der Gedächtnisstätte am Jüdischen Theater in Amsterdam.
(Don't know this theater or memorial --check)

(6) Sinnbild der Kirche. Skulptur am Strassburger Münster, um 1250.

(6) Strassburg, im Jahre zwölfhundertfünfzig.
An der einen Seite des Münsterportals haben Christen als Sinnbild der Kirche eine Statue angebracht. Stolz und königlich steht sie da, ein Banner umwunden mit Siegespalmen in der Hand, die Krone auf dem Haupte. So blickt sie hinüber auf eine andere Figur: ein Sinnbild der Synagoge.

(7) Sinnbild der Synagoge. Skulptur am Strassburger Münster, um 1250.

(7) Besiegt und trostlos steht die Synagoge da. Ihre Lanze ist zerbrochen; die Gesetzesrolle hängt schlaff zu ihrer Seite. Sie blickt nirgends hin; die Augen sind ihr verbunden.

(8) Kreuzigung, mit Kirche und Synagoge rechts und links. Aus einer Handschrift des frühen 11. Jahrhunderts.

(8) So sah die Kirche im dreizehnten Jahrhundert sich selbst gegenüber der Judenheit.

(9) Wiedergabe der Strassburger Statuen in einem Religionslehrbuch um 1950.
(See if this is what is meant. If an American text, say so.)

(9) Und so haben auch noch junge Christen von heutzutage das Verhältnis zwischen Christen und Juden aufzufassen gelernt.

(10) Öffentliche Hinrichtung während des zweiten Weltkriegs. Zeichnung von einem KZ-Häftling.

(10) Gewiss, Barbareien wie die Hitlers können wir nicht begreifen...

(11) Karikatur auf das Haus Rothschild. Von Leandre, 1898.

(11) ...aber mit niederträchtigen Klischeevorstellungen oder bestenfalls mit Überlegenheitsgefühlen gegen die Anderen sind wir wohlvertraut.

(12) Vergoldetes Glas. Aus einer jüdischen Katakomben in Rom, 4. Jahrhundert nach Christus.
(What is represented?)

(12) Wer kann da noch von Brüderlichkeit reden?

(13) "Alba House Communications presents:"

(14) "A sound filmstrip by Suzanne M. Noffke, O.P."

(14) Ein Filmstreifen von Suzanne M. Noffke, O.P.
(For accreditation with Catholic audience, say what "O.P." means--ask Judith Bank)

(15) "Christians and Jews: A Troubled Brotherhood"

(15) Christen und Juden: Die lang entzweiten Brüder

- (16) "Moses und die zwölf Stämme Israels."
Wandmalerei in der Dura-Europos-Synagoge in Mesopotamien, 3. Jhdt. n. Chr.

(16) Schon bevor das Christentum begann, hatte sich das jüdische Volk in fast allen Kulturzentren der Mittelmeerwelt angesiedelt.

- (17) "Josephus und Vespasian." Aus einer lateinischen Handschrift des 13. Jhdts. in Fulda.

(17) Aber die Juden waren anders als die anderen Völker. Die vorgeschriebenen heidnischen Kulte machten sie nicht mit. Sie glaubten an einen einzigen Gott und hingen zäh an ihrem Glauben.

- (18) Die drei Jünglinge im Feuerofen.

(18) Und das bekam ihnen oft schlecht. Judenverfolgungen waren nichts Ungewöhnliches, und auch Judenmetzeleien kamen vor.

(Slightly edited for historical perspective.)

- (19) "Die Ahnenreihe Christi." Aus dem Codex Aureus in Lorsch in Rumänien, 810 n. Chr.
(Rumania sound's wrong--check)

(19) In diese jüdische Gemeinschaft wurde Jesus von Nazareth als Jude geboren.

- (20) "Die Reinigung des Tempels." Von El Greco, 16. Jhdt.

(20) Unter seinen Stammesgenossen erschien Jesus als ein Rabbiner vom alten Schlage; als ein Prophet, der Barmherzigkeit übte und zugleich die unnachgiebigsten Anforderungen stellte. Aber wie es mit Propheten geht, so erfuhr auch Jesus neben begeisterter Zustimmung schroffe Ablehnung.

- (21) "Kreuzabnahme." Im Dom von Volterra in Norditalien, 13. Jhdt.

(21) Bei den Römern, die sein Heimatland Palästina beherrschten, fand Jesus wie alle andern Juden nur Verachtung. Politische Gegensätze führten schliesslich zu seiner Kreuzigung.

- (22) "Agapê." Aus der Katakombe der heiligen Domitilla in Rom.

("Agapê" means both "unselfish love" and "love feast," "Liebesmahl"—see which in this case.)

(22) Eine Anzahl von Juden glaubten, mit Jesus hätte das messianische Reich begonnen. Sie betrachteten seinen Tod nur als Vorspiel zu seinem Weiterleben und trafen weiterhin in seinem Geist zusammen, bis sie in der jüdischen Gemeinschaft Palästinas eine besondere, eng verknüpfte Gruppe bildeten. Aber die neue, christliche Lehre galt ihnen und auch Aussenstehenden als rein jüdische Angelegenheit.

- (23) "Synagoge." Aus der Passah-Haggada von Barcelona, 14. Jhdt.

(23) Die Judenchristen nahmen weiter an Gottesdiensten in Tempel und Synagoge teil. Sie hielten das jüdische Gesetz und verkehrten meist mit anderen Juden.

- (24) "Paulus predigt." Aus einer karolinischen Handschrift.

(24) Aber schon in den Briefen des Paulus, den Ältesten Schriften des Neuen Testaments, finden wir Hinweise auf Spannungen zwischen Juden und anderen innerhalb der Christengemeinde.

- (25) "Agapê." Aus der Katakombe von St. Peter und St. Marcellinus in Rom.

(25) Als auch Nichtjuden anfangen, die Botschaft Jesu von Nazareth zu glauben, ergaben sich Streitfragen. Konnte ein Heide Christ werden, ohne erst Jude zu werden? Blieben Christen weiterhin an das jüdische Gesetz gebunden? Und was sollte aus Juden werden, die Jesus nicht als den Messias anerkannten?

- (26) "Gamaliel mit seinen Anhängern." Aus der Haggada von Sarajewo, 13. Jhdt.

(26) Paulus zwar blieb dabei, das Gotteserbe der Juden sei ewig; und der Pharisäer Gamaliel riet,

abzuwarten, ob sich die neue Lehre mit der Zeit als gottgegeben herausstellte oder nicht. Aber die Saat gegenseitiger Feindseligkeit war schon gesät.

(27) "Der Brand Jerusalems." Von Goeru.

(Don't know this artist.)

(27) Als schliesslich gegen Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts die Evangelien niedergeschrieben wurden, war eine erbitterte Spaltung im Entstehen. Der Jerusalemer Tempel war inzwischen zerstört worden, und Judenchristen wurden nun als Abtrünnige angesehen, die Jerusalem im Augenblick seiner Vernichtung im Stiche gelassen hätten. Voll politischer Erbitterung und religiösem Zorn sprachen Christen und Juden förmlich den Bann gegeneinander aus.

(28) "Pilatus und die Juden." Aus dem Codex Purpureus in Rossano in Italien, 6. Jhdt.

(27) Kein Wunder also, dass das Wort "Jude" in den Evangelien oft einen schlechten Klang hat. Die Evangelisten schrieben ihre Berichte inmitten gegenseitiger Achtung und Ablehnung, und zeichneten meist ein recht tendenziöses Bild von ihren jüdischen Mitmenschen. Die Römer andererseits kommen in den Evangelien unverhältnismässig sanft, manchmal geradezu wohlwollend heraus.

(29) "Römer mit siebenarmigem Leuchter und Trompeten." Vom Titusbogen in Rom.

(This must be the well-known relief of soldiers carrying loot from the Temple.)

(28) Als das zweite Jahrhundert anbrach, traten christliche Lehrer mit der Behauptung auf, die Zerstörung Jerusalems und alles andre Unglück, das damals über die Juden hereinbrach, sei nichts Geringeres als die göttliche Strafe für die Ermordung des Gottessohns.

(30) "Kreuzigung." Aus dem Bonnot-Psalterium, um 1260.

(Don't know this manuscript.)

(30) Mit andern Worten: man klagte das ganze Judentum eines Verbrechens an, für das man in Wirklichkeit kaum die wenigen Juden verantwortlich machen könnte, die bei dem Prozess und der Verurteilung Jesu von Nazareth anwesend waren. Die meisten damals lebenden Juden wussten nicht einmal, dass Jesus überhaupt existierte. Und dennoch hat dieser Vorwurf des sogenannten Gottesmordes neunzehn Jahrhunderte lang Christen als Rechtfertigung gedient, Juden "im Namen Gottes" zu verfolgen und umzubringen.

(31) "Die Juden." Frankfurt, 1568.

(31) Was Paulus so nachdrücklich erklärt hatte: dass die göttliche Berufung der Juden auf ewig sei—das war offenbar kurz nachdem er es geschrieben hatte, schon wieder vergessen.

(PAUSE)

(32) "Kirche und Synagoge": zwei Gebäude mit Mönchen und Rabbinern (?). Aus einer Handschrift von Rabanus Maurus' De Universo, 1023.

(32) Die Juden blieben von nun an dabei, Christen aus ihrer Gemeinschaft auszuschließen. Sie betrachteten die Tochterreligion als Ketzerei, oder suchten die Abgefallenen für das Judentum zurückzugewinnen.

(33) "Moses und Jesus im Streitgespräch." Niederlande, 13. Jahrhundert.

(33) Die Christen ihrerseits wurden den Juden immer mehr feind, weil mehr und mehr Nichtjuden sich zum Christentum bekehrten. Daran änderte auch nichts, dass Christen und Juden in derselben Weise von den römischen Herrschern gehasst und verfolgt wurden.

(34) "Konstantin ernennt Papst Sylvester zum geistlichen Haupt des Westens." Wandgemälde aus dem 13. Jhd.

(34) Auf die Dauer hätte gemeinsam erlittene Verfolgung vielleicht Christen und Juden dazu bringen können, sich gegenseitig als Brüder zu behandeln. Aber unter Konstantin, im frühen vierten Jahrhundert, verlagerte sich die Staatsgewalt in die Hände von Christen. (Indication of century added.)

(35) "St. Denis predigt dem Volk von Paris."
Aus einer französischen Handschrift.

(35) Von nun an identifizierte sich der christliche Glaube immer mehr mit dem christlichen Staat. Theologische Angriffe, juristische Gewalt, Kanzelpredigten, Konzilsbeschlüsse, kaiserliche Befehle— alle dienten nun als Waffen, die Juden als "verfluchtes" Volk zu brandmarken und sie niederzuhalten.

(36) "Kantor beim Synagogengottesdienst."
Aus dem Leipziger jüdischen Festtagsgebetbuch (Machsor), frühes 14. Jhd.

(36) Staats- und Kirchenrecht verboten den Juden den Umgang mit Christen. Auf Mischehen stand Todesstrafe. Jüdische Religionsübung wurde auf bestimmte Orte und Zeiten beschränkt.

(37) "Der Jurist, der Jude und die Frau machen die ganze Welt irr." Nürnberg, 1520.
(What is this—a satirical print, "Spottbild"?)

(37) Nach und nach wurden die Juden aus fast allen öffentlichen, geschäftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Lebensbezirken ausgesperrt. Das Judentum durfte nur existieren, soweit es den Christen nicht in die Quere kam oder Anstoss erregte.

(38) "Der heilige Ambrosius verwehrt Theodosius den Zutritt zum Mailänder Dom." Von A. (?) Borgognone, 15. Jahrhundert.

(38) Es kam damals häufig vor, dass Christen die Juden tödlich angriffen und dass die Juden mit Gegenangriffen antworteten. Hierbei stand das Gesetz und die öffentliche Macht fast immer auf der Seite der Christen. Da hatte zum Beispiel ein Bischof eine Christenbaule bei der Zerstörung einer Synagoge

angeführt—und kein Geringerer als der heilige Ambrosius, der Bischof von Mailand, setzte es durch, dass Kaiser Theodosius nicht dagegen einschritt.

(39) Silberner Bucheinband: Digesten des kaisers Justinian, 533.

(39) Als Anfang des sechsten Jahrhunderts das justinianische Gesetz eingeführt wurde, blieb den Juden kaum noch ein Fetzen Recht oder Achtung übrig.

(40) "Bischof Adalbert von Prag kauft Sklaven von jüdischen Händlern frei." Detail von der Bronzetur des Doms in Gnesen (Polen), um 1175.

(40) Juden durften keine christlichen Sklaven halten; umgekehrt aber war es erlaubt.

(41) "Jude wird vor einem christlichen Richter vereidigt."

(What kind of picture?)

(41) Kein Jude wurde zur Rechtspflege zugelassen; keiner durfte auch nur vor Gericht als Zeuge gegen einen Christen auftreten.

(42) "Passahfest." Aus der Passah-Haggada von Barcelona, 14. Jhdt.

(42) Jüdische Feiertage, die mit christlichen parallel liefen, durften immer erst nach den christlichen gefeiert werden. Zum Beispiel durfte das Passahfest nie vor Ostern stattfinden.

(43) Stich aus der "Judentracht." Deutschland, 15. Jhdt.

(43) Man versuchte sogar, aus jüdischem Glauben und Gebrauch alles zu entfernen, was die Christen nicht übernommen hatten: die hebräische Sprache, das talmudische Gesetz, sowie die Verschiedenheit der Auffassungen über die Auferstehung der Toten und über das jüngste Gericht. Der jüdische Glaube sollte nur als eine Art unwilliger Zeuge für den christlichen bestehen bleiben.

(44) "Gregor der Grosse entsendet Missionare."

(44) Einmal noch wurde es anders, aber nur vorübergehend und nur in hochgestellten geistlichen Kreisen. Im ausgehenden sechsten Jahrhundert erklärte Papst Gregor der Grosse, Juden hätten das Recht, als Juden zu leben, ohne von Christen daran gehindert zu werden. Er verbot, Juden mit Gewalt zu taufen, was damals öfter vorkam.

(45) "Die Juden werden zu Christus gerufen."
Köln, 1507.

(45) Aber selbst Gregor hielt es nicht für unrecht, Juden durch Bestechung zur Taufe zu bringen!

(46) Ende des ersten Teils.

(47) "Christians and Jews: A Troubled Brotherhood"—Part 2

(48) (Focus)

(49) "Segnung des Jahrmarktes von St. Denis." Aus einer lateinischen Handschrift.

(See if this is meant—"Blessing of the Fair of St. Denis" in original)

(49) Mit dem Entstehen des Feudalismus gerieten die Juden in einen neuen Teufelskreis der Ausbeutung und Unterdrückung. Von der Landwirtschaft, wie man sie im Feudalzeitalter betrieb, waren sie ausgeschlossen, weil sie keine Leibeigenen besitzen durften. Auch der Handel und die Ausübung freier Berufe wurde ihnen gesetzlich verboten.

(50) "Bauer und jüdischer Geldverleiher mit Rechengerät." Augsburg, 1531.

(50) Nur ein Weg blieb den Juden offen. Die Kirche erlaubte Christen nicht, andern Christen Geld auf Zins zu leihen. Da aber Anleihen nun einmal gebraucht wurden, erlaubte man den Juden das Leihgeschäft.

Unter der Kontrolle von Christen entwickelte sich hieraus ein neuartiges Ausbeutungssystem: Das Kapital des Juden, sein Geschäftssinn und seine Einkünfte standen dem christlichen Lehnsherrn jederzeit zur Verfügung—und wenn es dem gnädigen Herrn passte, konnte er das Geschäft einfach beschlagnehmen.

(This is true in a literal sense, but misses the point: that the Jews were forced into the hateful and hated role of usurer, i. e. exploiter.)

- (51) "Judenkarikatur." Von Thomas Rowlandson, England, 1801.

(51) Und dann verhöhnten Christen den Juden noch jahrhundertlang in Wort und Bild als habstüchtigen Geldeintreiber! (edited to motivate much later illustration.)

- (52) Stiche nach Skulpturen aus dem 11. Jhdt.

(52) Im Jahre Tausendsechshundneunzig rief die Kriegstrompete des ersten kreuzzugs die Gläubigen in ganz Europa auf. Der angebliche Zweck war religiös: christlichen Pilgern sollte der Zugang zu Jerusalem freigemacht werden. Aber Politik, Geldgeschäfte und Glaubenshetze machten aus dem hochgemuten kreuzzug ins heilige Land bald ein unwürdiges Schauspiel, und für die Juden begann eine neue Schreckenszeit.

- (53) "Juden werden zum Feuertod verurteilt."

(53) Die Juden in Frankreich und Süd- und Westdeutschland (reference to places added) wurden nun als "Ungläubige im Lande" verfemt. Kreuzritter zogen durch ihre Wohnorte und gaben ihnen die Wahl zwischen Taufe und Tod. Nur zu oft wurden diese Greuel durch die Bischöfe am Ort angestiftet. Ganze Judendörfer wurden so vernichtet. Und die geschuldeten Gelder,

die an Juden hätten zurückgezahlt werden sollen, flossen in die Kassen der Kreuzfahrer.

(54) "Bischof Johann von Speyer schützt die bedrängten Juden."

(54) Einige wenige geistliche Herren erhoben Einspruch gegen eine solche Verdrehung der christlichen Lehre. Aber der Lärm des Gemetzels übertönte ihre Stimmen.

(55) "Das Schandzeichen." Von Jobst Melleru.
(Don't know this artist.)

(55) Im Jahre 1215 befahl Papst Innozent III, alle Juden in christlichen Landen müssten fortan ein besonderes "Schandzeichen" an ihrer Kleidung tragen, damit nicht etwa ahnungslose Christen durch Berührung mit ihnen befleckt würden.

(56) "Juden trinken Christenblut."
Plakette aus Polen. (Date?)

(56) Alle möglichen alten Schauergeschichten wurden wieder ausgegraben. Da hiess es zum Beispiel, Juden rüchen von Natur schlecht oder wären missgestaltet, und versuchten, sich davon zu heilen, indem sie Christenblut tranken.

(57) "Der Mord an Simon von Trient im Jahre 1475." Holzschnitt von Wohlgemuth, Nürnberg, 16. Jhdt.

(57) Man klagte die Juden an, sie ermordeten Christenkinder und verwendeten ihr Blut für das Passahfestmahl. Dieser Wahn griff so um sich, dass jedes irgendwo tot gefundene Kind als Märtyrer ausgerufen wurde und Juden oder ganze Judengemeinden am Ort ohne richtige Untersuchung dafür hingerichtet wurden.

(58) "Passahfest." Aus der Darmstädter Haggada, 15. Jhdt.

(58) Dass tatsächlich im jüdischen Gesetz jede Verwendung von Blut strengstens verboten ist, darum

kümmerte sich bei diesen Greuelthaten kein Mensch.

- (59) "Das Wunder der geschändeten Hostie."
Von Paolo Uccello, 15. Jhdt.

(59) Man sagte den Juden sogar nach, sie entwendeten Hostien aus Kirchen—wie es hieß, "um Christus nochmals zu töten." Demnach hätten die Juden also selbst an den Eucharist als Verkörperung Christi geglaubt! Aber Verleumdungen gehen noch über ganz andere Selbstwidersprüche spielend hinweg. In den Wirren des späten Mittelalters überschlug sich der Wahnsinn, und jeder Aberglaube gebar neuen Aberglauben...

- (60) "Judenverbrennung." Holzschnitt.

(60) Jedes Unglück—sei es eine Feuersbrunst, sei es der schwarze Tod—wurde den Juden in die Schuhe geschoben. Man metzelte sie nieder, verbrannte sie bei lebendigem Leibe, trieb sie ins Wasser, sodass sie ertranken. Manche starben von eigener Hand, um nicht durch Zwangstaufe ihren Glauben zu verraten.

- (61) "Juden bringen Kaiser Heinrich VII eine Thora-Rolle als Huldigung." Rom, 1312.

(Original mistakenly has Henry VIII. And the picture is off target, but we'll have to live with it. The toleration of Jews in Rome was by order of the Pope: it had nothing to do with the Emperor. Perhaps the author was misled by the term "Holy Roman Empire.")

(61) Einer der wenigen Orte, wo Juden auch während des Mittelalters mehr oder weniger in Frieden leben konnten, war Rom. Aber auch hier blieben ihnen erzwungene Abtrennung und Erniedrigungen wie der "Judenhut" nicht erspart.

- (62) "Jüdische Deputation vor Ferdinand und Isabella." 1483.

(Something wrong with original caption, which see. Perhaps "led...by Torquemada"?)

(62) In Spanien dagegen verfolgte die Inquisition die Juden mit Folter, Zwangstaufe, Entführung von Kindern in christliche Familien und zuletzt, im Jahre 1492, mit Landesverweisung. Damit war, angeblich im Namen Jesu, so ziemlich alles verraten, was Jesus gelehrt hatte.

(63) "Plünderung des Frankfurter Ghettos," 1614.

(63) In andern Ländern baute man, als Dörfer zu Städten anwachsen, eingemauerte Ghettos, um die vorgeschriebene Absonderung der Juden auch weiter aufrechtzuerhalten. Jeden Abend schlossen christliche Torhüter das Judenviertel von aussen zu.

(64) "Schreiber." Aus der Rothschild'schen Handschrift im Bezalel-Museum in Jerusalem.

(64) Das Ghettodasein bedeutete physische, psychologische und soziale Entbehrungen und zwang die Juden, sich mehr von der Aussenwelt abzuwenden. Das hatte allerdings auch gewisse Vorteile, sodass Juden manchmal sogar freiwillig ein gewisses Mass von Abgeschlossenheit suchten. Die Jahrhunderte im Ghetto gaben den Juden ein Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit, das nie wieder ganz ausgestorben ist, und eine Leidenschaft für Studium und Gelehrsamkeit, wie sie bis heute nicht ihresgleichen hat.

(65) Judenviertel in Pressburg, um 1947 (1497?).

(65) Dennoch, Ghetto bleibt Ghetto, und wer unfreiwillig darin lebt, für den ist es bei allen Vorzügen ein Gefängnis.

(66) "Proklamation der von Kaiser Karl V. den Juden verliehenen Rechte," 1550.

(66) Der Humanismus und die Renaissance brachten den Juden endlich einige Erleichterung und gaben ihnen ihre Rechte zum Teil zurück. Aber es stand ein Preis darauf. Ohne es geradezu herauszusagen, erwartete man nun, sie würden sich über kurz oder lang zum Christentum bekehren.

(67) "Disputation zwischen Geistlichen und Rabbinern," Augsburg, 1531.

(67) Als öffentliche Unterhaltung zwang man Rabbiner zu Disputationen mit christlichen Geistlichen, die die Bosheit der jüdischen Lehren beweisen sollten. Diese Debatten endeten gewöhnlich damit, dass die heiligen Bücher der Juden, besonders der Talmud, beschlagnahmt und verbrannt wurden.

(68) Papst Leo X.

(68) Nur wenige christliche Gelehrte liessen sich darauf ein, die jüdische Lehre gegen unberechtigte Angriffe zu verteidigen. Diese wenigen—darunter Johannes Reuchlin und Papst Leo der Zehnte—bewiesen endlich, dass die Judenhetze des Klerus unberechtigt war. Aber damit war es leider nicht getan.

(Edited to remove contradiction with what follows.)

(69) "Luther bei der Predigt." Von Lucas Cranach, 16. (not 17th) Jhdt.

(69) In seiner Frühzeit suchte auch Martin Luther Einverständnis mit den Juden, weil er hoffte, sie würden sich bekehren lassen. Aber als sie dies nicht taten, wurde er zu ihrem ärgsten Feind. Zuletzt rief er dazu auf, sie aus Deutschland zu vertreiben und ihre Synagogen zu verbrennen.

(70) Deutsche Spottmünze auf die angebliche Kornspekulation und Preistreiberei der Juden, 1694.

(70) Mit Luthers Predigten begann eine gewaltige neue Welle der Judenfeindlichkeit. Wenn Preise stiegen oder das Getreide knapp wurde, beschuldigte man die Juden, wie es diese Spottmünze aus dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert zeigt.

(71) "Auszug der Juden aus Wien bei ihrer Vertreibung durch Kaiser Leopold I.," 1677.

(71) Wieder wurden Juden aus vielen Städten vertrieben oder ausgesperrt, oder nur auf beschränkte Zeit zugelassen.

(72) Jüdischer Hausierer, 18. Jhdt.

(72) Wieder wurden Gesetze eingeführt, um die Rechte der Juden vor Gericht, im Wirtschaftsleben und sogar in Ehe- und Erbschaftssachen einzuschränken.

(73) "Der napoleonische Sanhedrin," 1807

(73) Das Revolutionsjahr 1789 brachte die französische Erklärung der Menschenrechte. Napoleon beschloss, in seinem Reiche die Rechte der Juden wiederherzustellen, und berief dazu sogar eine grosse jüdische Notabelversammlung ein, den sogenannten Sanhedrin von 1807.

(74) "Napoleonische Soldaten verhaften einen jüdischen Hausierer," 1812.

(74) Napoleon wollte, die Juden sollten normale Bürgerpflichten annehmen und sich ihrer Umwelt anpassen. Die napoleonische Befreiung blieb jedoch zum grossen Teil eine trügerische Hoffnung, und praktisch war es mit den verschiedenen Einschränkungen noch nicht zu Ende.

(Edited for historical accuracy.)

(75) "Die Abfassung der amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitserklärung." Von J. L. G. Ferris.

(75) Erst in dem Masse, in dem die Völker sich allmählich von kirchlichen und feudalen Institutionen frei machten, wurde die bürgerliche Freiheit der Juden zur Wirklichkeit. In einem Lande nach dem andern sicherten neue Grundrechte allen Bürgern Gleichheit ohne Rücksicht auf das Religionsbekenntnis zu.

(76) Entwicklung der Industrie

(76) Indem sich die politische Freiheit weiter verbreitete und gleichzeitig die moderne Industrie aufzublühen begann, fanden Juden Gelegenheit, mit ihren christlichen Mitbürgern als Gleichgestellte in Wettbewerb zu treten.

(77) "Das Judentum." Aus: Pam (author?), Garra del capitalismo judio (= "Die Klaue des jüdischen Kapitalismus"), Toledo, 1943

(77) Aber auch damit waren die alten Lügen und Klischeevorstellungen nicht erledigt. Im Gegenteil: neue Gerüchte kamen auf, die Juden hätten sich verschworen, den Reichtum ganzer Länder oder der ganzen Welt an sich zu bringen. An die Stelle des alten Glaubenshasses trat wirtschaftlicher und Rassenhass.

(78) "Judentypen," Nürnberg, 1825.

(78) Mit Brotneid und wirtschaftlicher Ungewissheit kam eine neue ideologische Vorstellung auf: die Juden seien von Natur "rassisch minderwertig." Ein neuer, scheinbar wissenschaftlich fundierter Antisemitismus war im Entstehen.
(Slightly edited for historical accuracy.)

(79) Voltaire. Stich aus der Sammlung Mansell.

(79) Schon Voltaire und andere weltliche französische Aufklärer hatten die Juden für geistig minderwertig oder schwerfällig, für grausam und aberwitzig, unwissend und barbarisch, kurz, für "Feinde der Menschheit" gehalten. In der jüdischen Religion hatten diese judenfeindlichen Aufklärer nichts sehen können als Aberglauben, Dummheit und Hass.
(Slightly edited for truer historic time sequence.)

(80) Schlagzeile des Dearborn Independent vom 22. Mai 1920.
(This will need translating and explaining.)

(80) Ideologische Urteile dieser Art tauchten vom achtzehnten bis zum frühen zwanzigsten Jahrhundert immer wieder auf. Ebenso soziale und politische Ereignisse, die aus derartigen Wahnideen hervorgingen.

(81) Hitler

(81) So war eine judenfeindliche--und zugleich zutiefst unchristliche--Saat ausgesät worden, mehr als neunzehn Jahrhunderte lang; und sie keimte verhängnisvoll auf in der Gedankenwelt Hitlers und in dem Nazireich, das er zu erschaffen suchte. Wir können also das, was unter dem Nazi-Regime geschah, nicht in einem Vakuum betrachten, als ob es keine Vorläufer gehabt hätte. Ähnlichgesinnte hat es immer gegeben, auch im freien Amerika--bis in unsere Tage hinein.

(82) "Nur für Christen": Briefe aus amerikanischen Kurorten.

(This will need explaining, with an indication that it is of the past.)

(82) Ja, auch in den Vereinigten Staaten fand man Wege--allerdings höflichere--sich die Juden vom Leibe zu halten.

(83) Deutsche Juden erwarten den Tod

(83) Und Amerika bot den Juden während und nach der Hitlerzeit nur wenig Trost und Hilfe. Amerikanische Regierungsstellen taten wenig oder nichts für sie, auch nachdem sie über das Elend der Flüchtlinge und über die Massenmorde informiert waren.

(84) Gelber Stern

(84) Hitler war nicht der erste ("nor the last" omitted as pointless and, to date, untrue), der den Juden ein Schandzeichen aufzwang.

(85) Schild "Voor Joden verboden" in einem Park in Holland

(85) Er war auch nicht der erste (ditto), der Juden aus öffentlichen Stellen vertrieb oder ihnen das Betreten öffentlicher Plätze verbot.

(86) Misshandlung jüdischer Gefangener

(86) Aber Hitler griff jede Verleumdung der Juden auf, die die Menschheit sich je ausgedacht hatte, und jede Massregel, durch die man jemals Juden, einfach weil sie Juden waren, bestraft, erniedrigt, unterdrückt oder vernichtet hatte. Und diese Lügen und Grausamkeiten trieb er bis zum Aussersten, zum Wahnsinn.

(87) Leichen

(87) Sechs Millionen mussten sterben--weil sie Juden waren. Neunzehn Jahrhunderte Verfolgung wurden im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert in einem riesigen, geplanten Vernichtungsgreuel noch einmal durchgelitten.

(88) Jad-Vaschem-Gedächtnisstätte in Jerusalem.

(88) Und da fragen manche Christen, warum die Juden noch immer trauern...

(89) Montage

(May need translating or explaining)

(89) ...oder warum sie das Schicksal ihrer Brüder in der USSR und die Zukunft Israels so ernst nehmen.

(90) Montage

(May need translating or explaining)

(90) Und die Juden begreifen nicht, dass manche Christen so wenig begriffen haben,...

(91) Jüdisches Mahnmahl in Paris

(91) ...dass so wenige mit ihnen trauern...

(92) "Der ewige Jude." Von Gustave Doré, 1852.

(92) ...und dass so viele die alten Lügen und Wahnvorstellungen immer weiter mit sich herumtragen, um sie wieder an spätere Generationen weiterzugeben.

(PAUSE)

(93) Synagogue de la Paix in Strassburg.

(93) Nicht weit vom Strassburger Münster steht heute eine Synagoge, die die Friedenssynagoge heisst.

(94) Innenansicht der Synagogue de la Paix.

(94) Dort steht über dem Heiligtum auf hebräisch die Frage: "Haben wir nicht alle denselben Vater?"

(95) "Christus und (in?) Israel." Moderner Holzschnitt aus dem Londoner Observer.

(Original has "en," which would mean "in" in French, "and" in Dutch.)

(95) Aber wie die Söhne dieses einen Vaters sich als Brüder zueinander stellen sollen, das müssen sie selbst beantworten.

(96) Montage.

(May need translating or explaining)

(96) Christliche Konfessionen haben heute einen neuen Anfang gemacht. Sie haben den Antisemitismus verurteilt und haben mit Stolz die gemeinsamen Wurzeln von Christentum und Judentum anerkannt.

(97) Kirchenversammlung in Neu-Delhi.

(97) Der Weltkirchenrat hat 1948 und nochmals 1961 in Neu-Delhi den Antisemitismus in jeder Form nachdrücklich verdammt, und hat die ihm angegliederten Konfessionen aufgefordert, dasselbe zu tun.

(98) Zweites Vatikanisches Konzil.

(98) Und im Jahre 1965 hat das zweite Vatikanische Konzil mit seiner Erklärung über die Juden den Weg zu tieferem Zwiegespräch gebahnt. Feierlich bestätigte die Kirche, was Paulus am Anfang gelehrt hatte: Gott hat die Juden auf ewig berufen; seine Berufung ist unauflöslich.

(99) Montage offizieller Schriftstücke.

(May need explaining.)

OBERAMMERGAU - THE GOSPEL OF HATRED CONTINUES

by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

"It makes me feel ashamed to be called a Christian." Prof. Eva Fleischner, a major Roman Catholic theologian, spoke those words last week after she had viewed the 1984 production of the Oberammergau Passion Play. A professor of theology at Montclair State College in New Jersey, she went to Oberammergau as a member of an interreligious delegation of the American Jewish Committee.

Despite all its ~~princ~~ pious pretensions, Oberammergau has become a testament to the triumph of materialism over spiritual values. When I first previewed that Passion Play in that seven-hour production 1980, I found ~~xxxxxx~~ a tedious, monumental bore. Its sole dramatic force derives from its medieval cosmology: Jesus and his disciples are the children of light and they are schemed against and ~~his~~ he is finally crucified by the heavy-bearded, nefarious Jews and their priests, the children of darkness.

As early as the 1950s, the American Jewish Committee published a series of line-by-line analyses of the Passion Play demonstrating that it is "structurally flawed and is constitutionally anti-Semitic." After our meetings with Oberammergau officials in 1977 and 1980, they made a number of changes to remove the worst anti-Semitic passages. But the effect remains cosmetic.

Why ~~havent~~ do they resist changing to the better Father Rosner text in which Jews are far less central? The answer: money. This version guarantees the villagers millions of dollars which they live for a decade on which

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Not only in the New Testament, but in the Oberammergau drama itself, there are Pharisees who sympathize with Jesus and come to his defense. However, they are not identified in the cast list as Pharisees, only as friends of Jesus. The only individuals identified as Pharisees are uniformly hostile to Jesus. This is patently unfair.

The Portrayal of Pilate

AJC's comparative analysis of the 1960 and 1970 text observed that the Passion Play made a near hero of Pilate, portraying him not only as a compassionate man, sincerely concerned about justice, but as a weakling -- the "unwilling judge" -- who reluctantly orders Jesus' execution under pressure from the cruel Jews.

The analysis noted:

All of this is wildly unhistoric-- indeed, it turns the truth upside down. The New Testament accounts and other historical sources, such as the writings of Philo and Josephus, contain no hint that Pilate was anything but a particularly brutal governor known for his ruthlessness in putting down disturbances (see the reference to his massacre of Galilean pilgrims in Luke 13:1). He constantly and unnecessarily offended Jewish religious sensibilities, inspired fear in the Jewish leaders and was quite beyond the reach of any manipulation by them. A letter from Herod Agrippa I to the Emperor Caligula describes him as inflexible, merciless and corrupt, and accuses him of executing men without a proper trial. He was eventually recalled to Rome to stand trial for cruelty and oppression.³

The revisers of the text for the 1980 performance had a great opportunity to correct this unhistorical depiction of Pilate. Unfortunately, the portrayal remains essentially the same. Confronting the High Council's demand for Jesus' death, Pilate expostulates: "What! We dare to demand that I, the representative of the Emperor, will be a tool in your hands to carry your designs to fulfillment?" Yet, that is exactly what he is in the drama -- a tool in the hands of the Jewish authorities! In a later scene, Pilate remarks that he "will do his utmost to save [Jesus)". This would be laughable

(31) Oberammergau 1960 + 1970 - etc.

were its impact not so invidious. Pilate had total power to save whom he pleased and to condemn whom he pleased. Even Pilate's order to scourge Jesus -- a routine custom of Roman law (and acknowledged as such in the text) -- is twisted in the drama into Pilate's hope of softening Jewish enmity to Jesus: "Perhaps the dreadful sight of a man scourged will alter your uncompromising stance." (It should be acknowledged that this formulation replaces a much more offensive passage in the 1970 text, but the replacement does not alter ^{Pilate's motivation in} the essential dynamic of the drama.)



Similarly, Caiphas notes in the play that Pilate "had hundreds slaughtered without trial or verdict." But Pilate does not behave in the drama like the cruel tyrant history has shown him to be. Thus, Caiphas' accusation has no credibility.

Barabbas

To depict Barabbas as simply a "murderer" makes the call for his release by some people in the crowd humanly incomprehensible. Barabbas is described by both Mark and Luke as an insurrectionist who had committed sedition against Rome (the same crime for which Jesus was officially condemned by Pilate).

The evidence, as persuasively marshalled by Father Dominic Crossan⁴ indicates that Barabbas was a guerilla fighter against the Romans (the Greek word lēstēs, basically meaning "robber," was also used to signify "insurgent"). The Gospel of Mark suggests that a band of Barabbas' friends or followers (not necessarily a large crowd) asked Pilate to release him, rather than Jesus, whom they may not even have known, and that Pilate resisted the demand because he considered Barabbas more of a threat to the Roman occupation than Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke, written later, the crowd is represented as a mob from the general population, but this cannot be substantiated from Matthew or John; and nowhere in the Gospels is there any indication that the crowd was purposely recruited by the Jewish authorities to shout against Jesus, as suggested in the Passion Play.⁵

As previously noted, the political realities of the time are largely ignored, even in the revised text: an intermittent guerilla war; widespread Messianic expectations, which were understood by Jews to include liberation from the brutal Roman occupation; fear among the Roman rulers of a large-scale uprising, and repressive measures by the Romans, including frequent executions

⁴ *Dominic Crossan, "Anti-Semitism and the Gospel," Theological Studies, XXVI:189 (June '61)

on the cross.

If the Passion Play were to seriously incorporate these realities within the heart of the drama, some human motivation would emerge for those who call out for the release of Barabbas. As a guerilla leader, he would have been seen as a hero by persons who believed that release from Roman oppression could only be achieved by fighting.

Internalizing the Passion

In an article cited in Oberammergau 1960 and 1970, Father Ralph Gorman stated:

The true Christian identifies himself with those who schemed against Christ, clamored for his death, and crucified Him on Calvary. Looking for the guilty, the true Christian strikes his own breast and acknowledges that it was because of his sins that Christ died...No man can harbor hatred of the Jews in his heart and be a Christian.⁵

There is evidence that those responsible for the Passion Play intended to take this message to heart. In a written foreward to the 1970 text, Max Bertl cited the Vatican Council Declaration of 1965 which disclaimed collective Jewish responsibility for the Crucifixion, and added:

Jesus Christ took His Mother from among the Jewish people, had a small group of faithful followers from the Jewish people around the cross, gathered around Him men from the Jewish people, who later suffered pain and death for His sake. Others of the Jewish people met in front of Pilate's courtroom, demanding the death of Jesus with the cry "Crucify Him!" Who could and should see in these the whole Jewish people? Must we not, rather, regard them as representatives of all mankind, who by their sins brought about the Lord's death?⁶

⁵*Ralph Gorman, "Again the Jews," The Sign, May 1960, p. 6.

⁶*Father Max Bertl, Oberammergau, February 1970

In the revised text for 1980, a similar passage has been added to the prologue to Act I:

"Welcome to ye, too, brothers and sisters from the people
From which the Savior sprang.
Far from us be any attempt to seek the guilt among others;
Let each person recognize himself as guilty in what happened.
God has locked all together in their disobedience;
To all he has sent mercy and salvation from the cross."

However ^{of} honorable the intentions which motivated these sensitive additions, they are undermined by the content of the drama which follows.

For Christians to feel their own culpability in the passion of Jesus, they must be able to humanly identify with all parties in the conflict. They must feel themselves capable of ^{having ed} behaving the same way in the same circumstances. In the present version, even with the elimination of much of the sadistic and bloodthirsty language of the 1960 and 1970 scripts, it is virtually impossible for onlookers to identify with those who conspire against Jesus. Ironically, they may feel some human empathy for Pilate, even for Judas, but the priests, the traders, the Pharisees and the "people" are so villainous, so one-dimensional, that human empathy is impossible.

Significantly, this passage appears to be appropriated from the Rosner text of the Passion play which the Cheramorgan Town Council originally rejected.

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caps n

Invoking Christian Scriptures

Efforts to remove anti-Jewish elements in the Oberammergau Passion Play and similar dramas are frequently countered by arguments that a particular passage is quoted directly from the Gospels. Christians who feel they are being asked to alter or suppress the language of their Sacred Scriptures may react with confusion or resentment. To the claim that a particular incident or phrasing is "there in the Scriptures," Christian scholars have responded with two major observations.

The first is that the New Testament itself cannot be properly understood without taking into consideration the findings and insights of both biblical and extra-biblical scholarship. Father John T. Pawlikowski has noted:

A great deal of vital background material is missing from the Gospel narratives as they now stand. It must be supplied through auxiliary readings and commentaries. This situation makes it almost impossible for even the very best of Passion plays to entirely avoid a travesty of the Gospel story. We cannot obtain a fully accurate picture of the trial and death of Jesus from reading the Gospels alone. This is the clear conclusion of the vast majority of modern biblical scholars.*

The second is that the Gospel narratives differ among themselves in describing key events; thus a true understanding of the trial and death of Jesus must be reconstructed rather than read from the Gospels. Dr. Eugene Fisher has carefully noted how St. Matthew's additions to earlier Gospel accounts of the Passion foster the notion of Jewish guilt:

7 *John T. Pawlikowski, Catechetics and Prejudice: How Catholic Teaching Materials View Jews, Protestants and Racial Minorities (New York: The Paulist Press, 1973), p. 107.

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Some changes for the worse Cap

A few of the changes made in the revised script for the 1980 performance appear to make matters worse. Throughout the earlier versions, Jesus is addressed as "Rabbi" by his followers and disciples. These instances have been eliminated, and "Rabbi" replaced by "Master" or "Dear Master."

It may be that this change has been made with the best of intentions. However, in the context of the drama, it serves to alienate Jesus from his Jewish background, his Jewish associates, and his roots in the Judaism of his time. Moreover, it allows "Rabbi" to remain in the text only as a term of opprobrium; anyone identified as a rabbi in the drama is portrayed as a villain and an enemy of Jesus.

Another instance occurs in Act II, Scene I, when Jesus foretells his death. In the 1970 version, Jesus says: "The son of man shall be delivered unto the Gentiles and he shall be spat upon and mocked at. They will crucify him..." In the 1980 version, this reads: "But now the son of man will be delivered up to the high priests and scribes, who will condemn him and turn him over to the Gentiles..." The revision has more of an anti-Jewish impact than the earlier version.

Conclusions Cap

Those who revised the script for the 1980 performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play appear to have made a serious effort to cleanse it of accusations of collective Jewish guilt and rejection, and of anti-Jewish polemic and prejudice. They have deleted the explicit allegations in the 1960 and 1970 text that God has rejected the Jewish people and ended His covenant with them. They have removed many of the most blatant expressions of sadism, vengefulness and greed on the part of the traders, the priests, the Pharisees and "the people". They have added an introductory exhortation cautioning each spectator to

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"recognize himself as guilty in what happened..."

Unfortunately, these well-intentioned changes are undermined by the drama itself, for the way in which the story unfolds and develops has not been basically altered. Thus, despite the elimination of a great many ^{vehement} outcries, the priests, Pharisees, and fictitious "traders" are still lumped together as arrogant, hating enemies of Jesus who hound him to the cross and derive joyful satisfaction from his condemnation and suffering. Pilate is still portrayed as the unwilling judge, forced into condemning Jesus by the "violence" of the crowd. Jewish law is still depicted as harsh and punitive. The Jewish people still call down the blood curse upon themselves and their children. Undoubtedly, some of the vehement anti-Jewish impact of the 1960 and 1970 versions has been moderated, but much remains. Unfortunately, the insights of current biblical and extra-biblical scholarship have not been incorporated into the dynamics of the drama. A number of opportunities to point up the religious and political realities of that time, and thus provide an understandable human motivation for the behavior of some of the protagonists, have been overlooked by the revisers. For example:

1. It should be made clear that the high priest is a Roman appointee and that the Sadducean party which supported the priesthood was at the time closely allied with the interests of Roman rulers. They had a vested interest in maintaining civic peace and stability, and were fearful that any kind of popular uprising would bring the might of Rome down on them, and on the helpless people. (Palestine in the time of Jesus was seething with revolutionary movements. Indeed, a few decades after his death they erupted into a full scale rebellion against Rome. Roman fear of potential political uprising was and remains the most ignored factor in the depiction of the events of that time. It is touched on once or twice by the high priest, but should be lifted up as a major theme.)
2. It should be made clear that the Pharisees, as the leaders of a popular movement seeking to observe the Covenant in the spirit

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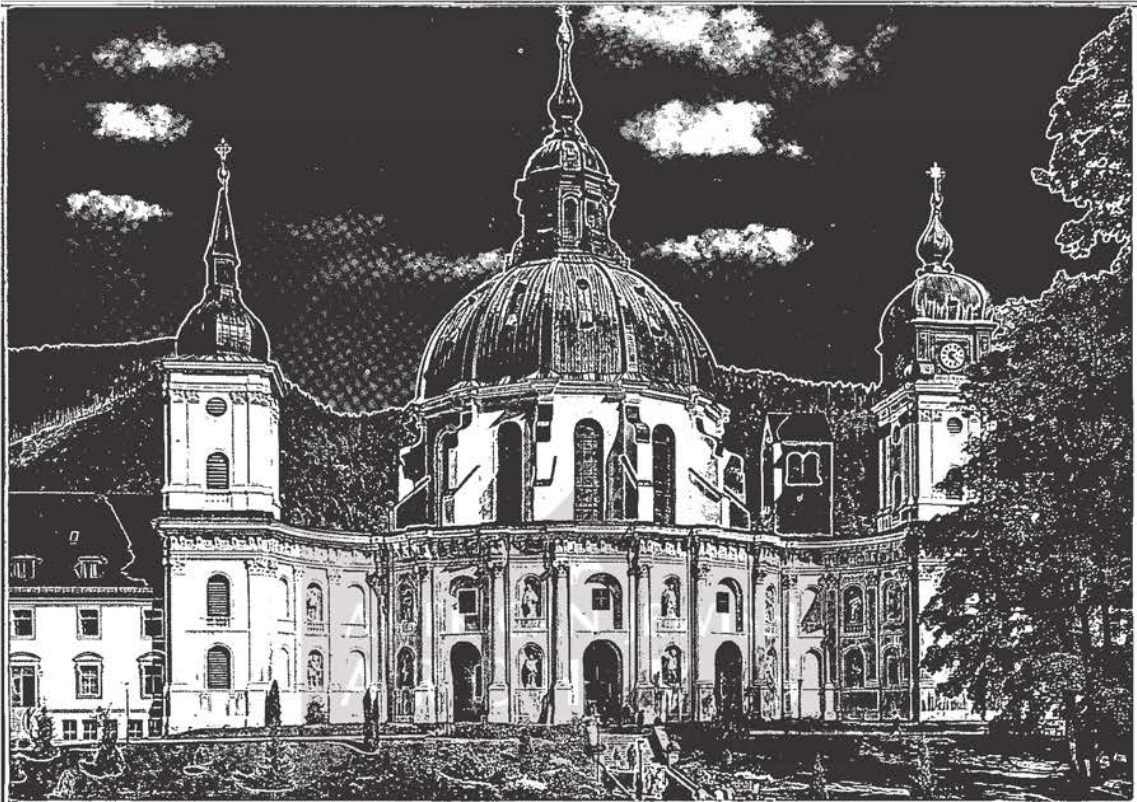
of the prophets, ~~bitterly~~ opposed the Sadducees and disagreed with them on ~~almost every~~ significant point of doctrine.

3. It should be clear that Jesus had friends and supporters among the Pharisees. Those who are listed as his friends in the cast of characters should be identified as Pharisees.
4. In all versions of the Daisenberger text, including the present revision, the Jews in the drama fall into two categories: either they hate Jesus and plot against him, or they are secret or "hidden" Christians. Nowhere is there an indication that the majority of the Jewish population of Palestine would not have known about Jesus, or that there would be many who would sympathize with him as another victim of Roman oppression, but still not accept him as the promised Messiah. The Gospels themselves suggest that in some degree Jesus deliberately ~~his~~ his ministry from the public; even his disciples did not always comprehend him. To Christians, Jesus' messiahship and divinity are self-evident, but this should not be read back into the play. It should be recognized in the drama that there are a great many people who might have rejected Jesus' messianic claim, but who would still have viewed him as a fellow human, and not sought his death.
5. While the role of the traders has been diminished, this group should be eliminated from the drama. Their actions carry into the Passion Play a motif of greed which is completely unwarranted by Christian Scripture, and which stands at the heart of one of the basest of anti-Semitic slanders.

These changes would require not only the elimination of harsh and sadistic language -- much of which has been accomplished -- but a basically different orientation to major characters in the drama and the way they interact. As it stands, the Oberammergau Passion Play retains its anti-Jewish impact despite the well-intentioned efforts of those who have revised it.

see alternate





Jakobus d. Äl.

Jakobus d. Jung

Matthäus

Thomas

Simon

Christus
und die
zwölf
Apostel

Passionsspiel 1970
Oberammergau

Johannes

Judas

Petrus

Philippos

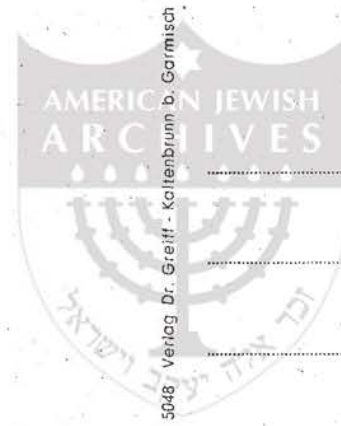
Thaddäus

Bartholomäus



Passionsspieldorf Oberammergau
Pilatushaus - Oberammergau mit Kofel
Dedferstraße - Passionsspielhaus
Bühne und Chor der Passionsspiele

Farbfoto
DR. GREIFF





Oberammergau

- 1 Laber-Kabinenbahn, Länge 2200 m, ganzjährig in Betrieb
 - 2 Freizeitzentrum „Der Wellenberg“ mit Hallenbad
 - 3 Verkehrsamt – Heimatmuseum
 - 4 Passionsspielhaus
 - 5 Tennis, Sommer-Eisstockbahnen
 - 6 Bahnhof – Post
 - 7 Campingplatz
 - 8 Jugendherberge
 - 9 Kolben-Sesselbahn, Länge 1780 m, ganzjährig in Betrieb
- P = Parkplatz
 ☞ = bewirtschaftete Berg- bzw. Ausflugsraststätten

Spazier- und Wanderwege

Gehzeiten für Hin- und Rückweg ab Dorfmitte * Rückfahrt auch mit Bus

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| Lanenallee, Wellenberg | ¼ Std |
| Altherrenweg, Kanzen, Rottstraße | 1½ Std |
| Friedenshohe, Kreuzesgruppe | ¼ Std |
| Friedenshohe, Kreuzesgruppe, Kolbenalm ☞ | 1 Std |
| Friedenshohe, Grottenweg, Ammerufer | 1 Std |
| Ettaler Straße, Larchenhügel, Wellenberg | 1½ Std |
| Rottstraße, Romanshohe ☞ | 1½ Std |
| Wellenberg, Lanenschlucht, Aiple-Alm | 1½ Std |
| Wellenberg, Altherrenweg, Romanshohe ☞ | 2 Std |
| Ammerufer, Barenhöhle, Vogelherdweg, Ettal * | 2½ Std |
| Ammerufer, Ettaler Mühle ☞, Benediktenhof ☞ * | 2 Std |
| Rottenbacher Straße, Wank-Alm ☞ | ¾ Std |
| Rottenbacher Straße, Ammerufer, Unterammergau * | 1 Std |
| Linderhofer Straße, Dickenwaldweg, Rambauern | 2 Std |
| Ammerquellen, Dickelschwaig, Graswang * | 4 Std |
| weiter über Grobi-Alm ☞ und den Kohlbachweg nach Schloß Linderhof * | weitere 2 Std |
| Kalberplatte, Kofel-Hohenweg, Kolben ☞ | 3 Std |
| Kalberplatte, Kofel-Hohenweg, Kolbensattel ☞ | 4 Std |

Berglouten

Die angegebenen Stunden bedeuten hier jeweils nur die Aufstiegszeit

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Kofel (1342 m) über Kalberplatte | 1½ Std |
| Pürschling (1585 m) ☞ über die Kolbenalm ☞ | 3 Std |
| Pürschling mit Sesselbahn über Kolbensattel ☞ | 2 Std |
| Abstieg nach Unterammergau * oder Linderhof * je | 2 Std |
| Brunnenkopfhäuser (1601 m) ☞ über Kofel-Hohenweg, Königssteig, Zahn, Pürschling ☞ | 6 Std |
| Von dort auch Abstieg nach Schloß Linderhof * | 2½ Std |
| Klammaspitze (1925 m), ab Brunnenkopfhäuser weitere | 2 Std |
| Aufacker (1542 m) über Wellenberg | 1½ Std |
| Von dort zum Hornle, Bad Kohigrub * | weitere 3 Std |
| Laberjoch (1683 m) ☞ und Ettaler Mandl (1634 m) | 2½ Std |
| Von dort auch Abstieg nach Ettal * | weitere 1½ Std |
| Nokkarapitze (1889 m) über Ettaler Mühle ☞ | 4 Std |
| Von dort auch Abstieg durch Kuhalpenklamm, weitere | 3 Std |

Besichtigungen

Museum mit Weihnachtsskrippen und Hinterglasmalerelen, Passionstheater

*Aus dem Buch, Übersetzungen so seiner Passionsspiele
von Hermann Bremer, geb. von Hülse Übersetzungen
einer Zirkelverein von Garschitz. Herausgegeben 1900*

In dem Kapitel "Drei Helden des Passionsspieler"

3. Geistlicher Rat Alois Daisenberger

ist auf den Seiten 142 / 143 dessen Pfingstpredigt
vom Pfingstsonntag 1860 abgedruckt:

Daisenberger war Spielleiter und Textbearbeiter des
Passionsspieler. Er gab in seiner Predigt, die am Vortag
der ersten Aufführung 1860 stattfand, den Zuhörern, d.h.
seinen Pfarrkindern folgende Spielanweisungen:

" Jeder, der bei dem Werke, in was immer für einer Weise mitzuwirken
hat, ist ein notwendiger Ring in der Kette.; Er beifere sich,
das ihm Aufgetragene nach seinem besten Vermögen zu erfüllen
und so zur würdigen Ausführung des Ganzen das Seine be-
zutragen:

Den Darstellern der Juden, Priester usw. gab er wortlich folgende
Anweisung:

" Ihr, die ihr Personen vorzustellen habt, die den Lebens-
würdigsten, den Heiligsten hassten und verfolgten, stellet diese
Personen nur vor in ihrer ganzen Bosheit, Gehässigkeit und
Heuchelei, so dass jeden Zuschauer Abscheu an sich schändlicher
Gesinnung ergreifen muss. Dadurch tragt ihr bei, dass die Un-
schuld, die Sanftmut, die erhabene Würde des Erlösers in desto
hellerem Lichte erscheine. Durch den Schatten in einem Ge-
malde wird das Licht erst recht hervorgehoben.

Ihr, die ihr die Junger des Herrn, die Freunde und Freundinnen
Jesu vorzustellen habt -- euer ganzes Wesen sei Liebe und Ver-
ehrung gegen den göttlichen Meister, -- horchende Aufmerksamkeit
auf jedes seiner Worte, innigste Teilnahme bei der Vorhersagung
der bevorstehenden Ereignisse, tiefster Seelenschmerz bei seinen
Leiden, bruderliche Freundlichkeit und Liebe untereinander. An
Euch, um euren Herrn und Meister her, soll man eine Versammlung
der besten Menschen, das herrlichste Musterbild für alle Christen-
gemeinden sehen.

So werde das, was wir unternehmen ein wahrhaft heiliges, gottge-
falliges, segensreiches Werk."

The Evening Sun

From a Baltimorean who's been there

✓ OBERAMMERGAU'S PASSION PLAY

By Don Spatz

IN THE YEAR 1633, a devastating plague ravaged vast sections of Europe, taking the lives of countless thousands. Miraculously, the citizens of Oberammergau, a tiny village in the Alps of Germany's southern Bavaria, were spared.

In gratitude for this Divine intervention, people of the town took a holy vow. From time onward, Oberammergau would be the site of regular dramatizations of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. The miracle play, a genre once common in the Middle Ages, would be revived, expanded and continued in perpetuity.

And so in 1634 with the first performance, a tradition began. Except for several war-caused interruptions, it has been maintained to this day.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, from Baltimore and throughout Maryland, will make the pilgrimage this year to view the historic spectacle. It is offered every ten years at the start of each decade, with several performances each week from May through to late September.

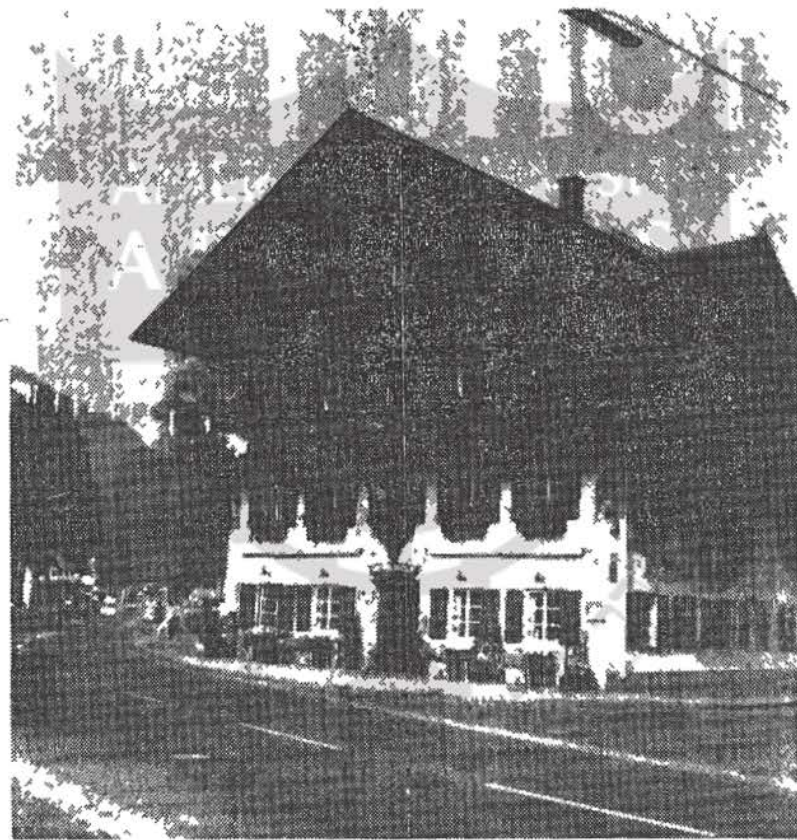
The picturesque Alpine village, which boasts a normal population of less than 5,000, will burst its seams playing host to swarms of visitors from all corners of the world. The handful of local rucoco hotels have been booked solid for months, even years, in advance, and private homes for miles in every direction will be thrown open to provide bed and board. Neither inflation nor the battered collar will prevent hordes of Americans of many religious persuasions from sharing this extraordinary spiritual experience.

Though played in the German language, no translation is necessary. Its appeal and impact are universal.

Originally, *Das Oberammergauer Passionspiel* was offered by the townspeople for their own edification, and for their neighbors in nearby communities. But as the years passed, word spread, and an ever-widening circle of the curious clamored for admission.

The play begins in the early morning. There is a break for lunch, and then the drama resumes, ending with the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the hours of late afternoon.

The people of this quaint Bavarian hamlet have been, and still are, skilled woodcutters



One of the colorful hotels on the main street of Oberammergau

Their exquisite carvings are prized by anyone who appreciates this art form. But the play has now become their chief means of livelihood. As soon as one production ends, preparation for the next, ten years hence, begins.

Every aspect of this huge undertaking is in the hands of amateurs, the citizens themselves. Everyone is involved, whether it be in the designing or making of the hundreds of costumes and wigs, the lighting, building scenery, handling props, or playing in the large orchestra or perhaps singing in the chorus.

Principal interest, of course, centers on

those who will portray the scores of onstage speaking roles. It is said that actors learn their lines years in advance, bending and shaping their daily lives to achieve a true dimension for the characters they assume. Complete rehearsals begin months before the first performance.

The man chosen to portray Christ is invariably one of the town's outstanding leaders, selected as much for his personal qualities as for his acting ability. Youngsters who may play but parts in one production, dream and work toward bigger and more important as-

signments in future years.

As one who attended the Passion Play in 1970, and who has visited Oberammergau in intervening years (and will go again this summer), I can offer a bit of advice to the first-timer. Seeing the play is an overpowering, almost mystical experience with tremendous emotional impact, but there could be problems in two areas.

For one, the audience of about 5,000 daily sits long hours on rigid, unyielding wooden benches. If you are not well upholstered, the seats certainly aren't. Take a cushion.

And though we attended the play on a day in July when Baltimore sizzled in 90-plus heat, we nearly froze in Oberammergau. The town is nestled in the high Alps, and there the thermometer remained in the low 40s. What's more, a frigid rain fell throughout the day.

How the performers managed, drenched to the skin on their open stage, remains forever a mystery to me. The audience sits in a covered theater, but the side facing the stage is open.

If you go, pack extra clothing.

The town itself is utterly charming. It derives its name from the minuscule Ammer river, fed by Alpine glaciers, which meanders casually through its center. Riots of floral color greet the eye everywhere, from the tidy little gardens to the inevitable window boxes brimming with brilliantly-hued geraniums.

Restaurants and hotel dining rooms bulge with diet-destroying goodies, prepared by people who seem bent on sending you home pounds heavier.

Spotlessly clean despite the incessant flow of tourists who stay only for the play and then move on, Oberammergau is a showcase for traditional German cleanliness and *Gemuetlichkeit*. It is a picture postcard brought to life.

If you are among the legions from Baltimore and nearby who will travel to West Germany this year to visit Oberammergau, you have a glorious treat in store. If you are not among the fortunate ones this year, I suggest that you begin now to lay plans for 1990.

The Passion Play of Oberammergau can be a stabilizing influence in a chaotic world. It should be seen by everyone, at least once.

Mr. Spatz is a radio commentator and occasional versifier on the *Other Voices* page.

OBERAMMERGAU

A COMMENTARY FOR VIEWERS

OF THE PASSION PLAY

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

With a foreward by (name to come)

*Eugene Fisher man who is
awaiting word from him*

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

European)
Paris Office)
41 Avenue Paul Doumer
Paris 75016

*of office
("Paris Office")
to indicate that*

*European way, put
zip code before city
Check with Abe Kaulhow*

FOREWARD

Focusing on Jesus' agony and death on the cross, and on the events that lead up to it, Passion plays are emotionally potent dramas. They are meant to imbue ~~while their intention may be to arouse in Christians feelings of contrition and repentance,~~ ^{with} a sense of ~~being part of~~ ^{being part of} sinful humanity, ^{too} often they ~~have had~~ ^{instill} a very different result, ~~instilling feelings of Christian self-righteousness,~~ ^{coupled with} ~~in Christians,~~ and of contempt and hostility ^{toward} for Jews and Judaism -- the people and the religion of Jesus.



Jews have long been concerned about the possible anti-semitic impact of Passion plays, ^{or simplistic renderings of the Crucifixion drama} for good reason. The Protestant scholar, Bernhard E. Olson, notes that "in the Middle Ages...recitals of the Passion of Christ were often followed by physical violence against Jews."

^{NOA} The Crucifixion drama, Olson states, played a prominent part in the disabilities of Jews through the centuries and is still a major cause of hostility against them.¹

Between May and Oct of 1980, tens of thousands

^{tens,} perhaps hundreds, of thousands, of Americans will view the Oberammergau Passion Play in 1980, ~~on this occasion, out of~~ ^{continued} a profound concern for Christian-Jewish understanding and cooperation; the American Jewish Committee ^{has prepared} presents the commentary that follows. It examines certain themes and their treatment in the drama, and provides relevant background information that is not

-- some in search of a religious experience, others motivated by interest in traditional folk art. Out of

self-evident from what happens on the stage. We hope it will enrich the viewer's understanding of the events depicted--events which, after two millennia, still continue to ^{affect} ~~shape~~ the destinies of our faith communities.

serve as antidote to ^(signature) possible infections of anti-Jewish attitudes of



THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY, 1634 - 1980

Of all the pageants that dramatize the Crucifixion story, the most famous undoubtedly is the Passion play performed every ten years by the townsfolk of Oberammergau in upper Bavaria, West Germany. The Oberammergau play was first performed in 1634, in fulfillment of a vow made during a plague epidemic the year before. Over the centuries, it has been performed in at least five different versions, the present one, by Father Joseph Alois Daisenberger--a revision of an earlier text by Father Othmar Weis--has been used for more than a century. In modern times, the play and the picturesque mountain village in which it is performed have become major international-tourist attractions.

The Jewish Presence in the Drama

The Oberammergau pageant follows Jesus from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem--where he drives the traders out of the Temple--through his arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. These scenes are interspersed with musical numbers, both solos and choruses, and with "living tableaux" representing certain episodes in the Hebrew Scriptures that are traditionally taken as prefigurations of New Testament events.

The Jewish religious authorities, the Temple traders and, ultimately, the Jewish people, are the villains of the drama. Judaism is

~~They are shown to be moved by the most base and vile of motives, and behave in a bloodthirsty and sadistic manner. Jewish law is~~

~~misrepresented as essentially harsh and punitive, Pilate, on the other hand, is portrayed as a near-hero, and the brutality of~~

~~Roman occupation is largely overlooked. The intense political and religious differences that divided the Jewish community of~~

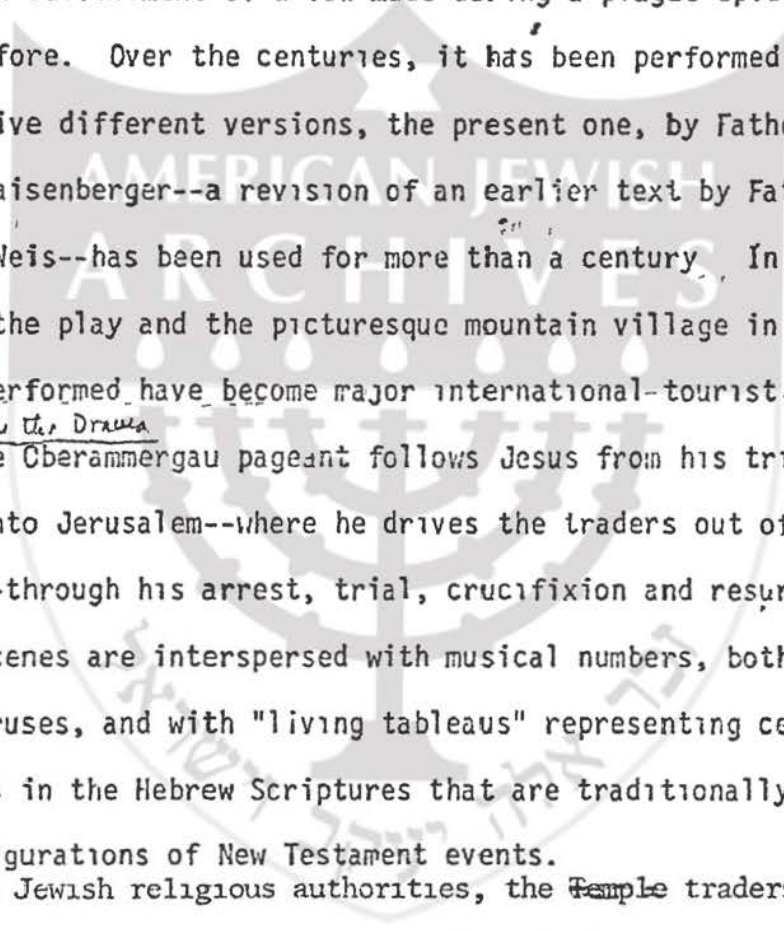
~~the time are ignored. All of these factors combine to give the drama~~

a powerful anti-Jewish impact.

affairs

It will be discussed in the pages that follow

We should not anticipate the specifics yet to be documented.



until recent decades
As performed in times past, the drama was even more vigorously
anti-Jewish. significantly, it was -4- much admired by

~~This anti-Jewish impact endeared the play to Adolf Hitler,~~
~~who decided,~~
among others, ~~At the height of the Second World War,~~ Hitler

declared: "It is vital that the Passion Play be continued at
Oberammergau; for never has the menace of Jewry been so con-
vincingly portrayed."² Under the Nazi government, the pageant
was classified as a "racially important cultural document," and
on the occasion of its ^{any} ~~tercentennial~~ in 1934, a Nazified special
performance represented Jesus and his disciples as Aryan heroes.

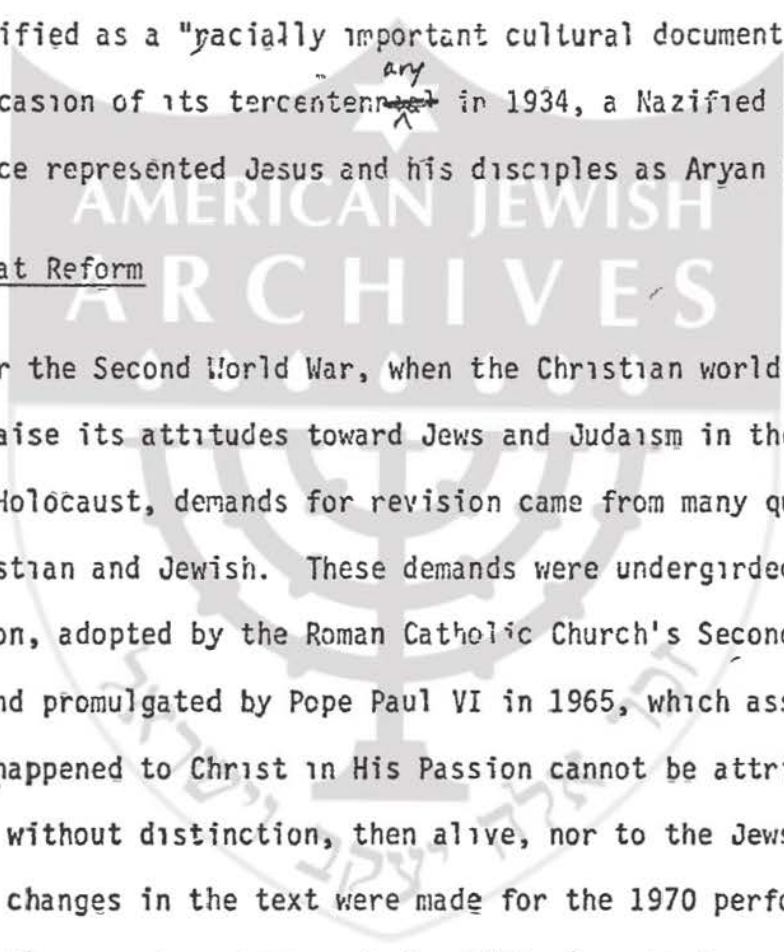
Attempts at Reform

After the Second World War, when the Christian world began
to reappraise its attitudes toward Jews and Judaism in the light of
the Nazi Holocaust, demands for revision came from many quarters,
both Christian and Jewish. These demands were undergirded by a
Declaration, adopted by the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican
Council and promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965, which asserted:
"...What happened to Christ in His Passion cannot be attributed to
all Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor to the Jews of today."

Some changes in the text were made for the 1970 performance.
Significantly more have been made for 1980, in a serious effort to
cleanse the play of anti-Jewish polemic and prejudice. [^] An intro-
~~ductory~~ ^{in the foreword} passage now exhorts each spectator to "recognize himself as
guilty in what happened..." in the Passion of Jesus.

Unfortunately, these modifications, well-meaning and welcome

'Tercentenary' or
'tricentennial' -
Don't ask me why!



though they are, do not reach the heart of the matter. For the most part, the text has only been cut, not rethought; objectionable passages have become much fewer, ^{and} briefer, and ~~less emphatic~~, but the objectionable themes are still there, and the way in which the story unfolds and develops has not been basically altered. The traditional anti-Jewish polemic which shaped the earlier text has not been ~~scald~~ ^{questioned} ~~with~~, nor have the insights of modern biblical and extra-biblical scholarship been incorporated into the dynamics of the play.



THE IMAGE OF JEWS AND JUDAISM

Jewish groups and the Jewish people are consistently re-
 presented as motivated by evil in the Oberammergau Passion Play.
 The traders, whom Jesus ^{drove} ~~drove~~ from the Temple, are ^{incited} ~~driven~~ by
 frustrated greed and thirst for revenge to instigate his per-
 secution; the religious establishment is prompted by envy and
 power madness; ^{to condemn him} the people, manipulated by their leaders, behave
 like a sadistic lynch mob, driving Jesus to the cross with ^{impatience} ~~shouts~~
~~cruelty~~ ^{of glee}.

^{accordance with}
 In a ~~revival~~ of long-standing religious prejudice, the play
 implies that the Jewish people as a whole knew about Jesus and
 collectively demanded his death. The Jewish law is ^{repeatedly} ~~consistently~~
 pictured as cruel and vindictive, in a false juxtaposition to
 Christian love.

Allegations of Bloodthirstiness

Though far less prominent than in earlier versions, expressions
 of vindictive cruelty are still numerous throughout the play. As
 Jesus carries his cross to Golgotha, sadistic enjoyment erupts in
 a kind of shouted dialogue between the priests and the people: "Do
 not let him rest. On, drive him with blows!" "Do not be too careful
 with him!" "Up to Golgotha! To the cross with him!" <sup>"Is his arrogance not
 yet gone from him, even when he hangs helpless upon the cross?"</sup> "This
 day will be a festival to us." ^{some say of}

Charges of Collective Responsibility

^{the Jewish people}
 The underlying assumption of the drama is that ~~all Jews of~~
~~Jesus' time knew about him, that they rejected him~~ - after some had

I think we need a
 brief paragraph dis-
 cussing that this
 sadistic detail
 is not in the
 N.T., or is less promi-
 nent there. Every-
 where else, our
 accounts of his
 who are followed
 by corrective
 usage.

initially supported or accepted him--and that they unanimously clamored for his death.

Thus, Pilate tells Jesus "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me," and later condemns him at what he describes as the desire of the High Council and "the people of Jerusalem." In both passages, the religious authorities are assumed to represent ~~an entire people~~ ^{All Jews.} On a much ~~more~~ ^{higher} emotional level, the prologue to Act XI accuses ~~the people~~ ^{Jews} as a whole:

Have ye then no mercy,
Oh, ye deceived and misguided people?
No! Without pity they cry: Away to the cross with Him!...
But around the Savior of all, in wrath is raging
A furious, blinded people which ceaseth not its clamor
Till the unwilling judge
Cries: So take Him and crucify Him.

¶ This idea that Jesus was rejected by the Jewish people as a whole is mistaken for the simple reason that

And we do know that the majority of the Jewish population of Palestine had not heard of ^{him; and} Jesus. Moreover, half of the Jewish people was then living outside Palestine, scattered through the far-flung Roman Empire. Most of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries did not ~~could not have~~ know about him, his message or his ministry. Even within Palestine,

How do we know this?

¶ Among those who did know of him, on the other hand, Jesus retained considerable loyalty, right through the crisis. Significantly,

~~80~~

~~As for the allegation that Jesus was delivered up "by his own nation," his popularity was such that the authorities did not~~

dare arrest him in the daytime for fear of the popular reaction

(*John 11:7; Matthew 23:15*) *acknowledged*

~~(CITE GOSPEL)~~ -- a circumstance noted in the play itself. ~~Also~~ *And* when Jesus was led

away after being condemned by Pilate, a large crowd, ~~the Gospel reports that he was followed by a weeping and mourning,~~ *followed him*

~~crowd~~ (Luke 23:27).

¶ The erroneous notion that the Jews unanimously turned against Jesus, is also fostered *reflected* in a comment by Pilate in Act XI:

~~Later in the same act, Pilate comments:~~

Only a few days ago ye accompanied this man through the streets of Jerusalem with rejoicing. Is it possible that, to-day, these very same people call down death and destruction upon him?

¶ *Actually, since not all Jews in Jerusalem became hostile to Jesus, we cannot be sure*
~~In point of fact, we do not know~~ *(that the crowd that called down destruction on Jesus consisted of the same people who had previously cheered him.)*



"Willful Blindness"

Again in keeping with long-^{established} ~~standing~~ religious prejudice, the play suggests that the refusal of Jews to accept Jesus was prompted by willful perversity--that they knew, or could have known, of his divine mission, yet purposely refused to accept his message.

That Jesus ^{was} ~~is~~ divine and that he ^{was} ~~is~~ the Messiah is, of course, obvious to Christians; but it was not ^{self-evident} ~~equally plain~~ to his Jewish contemporaries, ^{nor even his followers,} ~~^~~ On the contrary, the Gospels suggest that in some degree Jesus deliberately hid his ministry from the public. His messianic role was supposed to be known only to the twelve disciples, not to the general public. Indeed, even the twelve did not always comprehend Jesus' ministry: Peter challenged his prediction of his death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21-24); the disciples argued which of them was the greatest (Luke 9:46-50); James and John advocated the use of force (Luke 9:51-56). Not until the very end, at the Last Supper, did even the disciples fully understand the import of Jesus' teaching (John 16:29-30).



That being so, the implication that only willful blindness and jealousy prevented universal acceptance of Jesus' messiahship is patently ~~unfair~~ unwarranted

False Image of a Polarized Community

Only one issue divides Jews in the play: how they react to Jesus. The community, for the most part, is drawn in blacks and whites: there are the "bad" Jews, who hate Jesus (or are manipulated into hating him), and who hound him to his death; and there are the "good" Jews--in effect prototypical Christians--who follow him.

If the play shows "good Jews" who follow Jesus, how can we claim (pp. 6-7A) that Jews are shown as universally hostile to him?

Among those who ~~had~~ heard him, Jesus actually found, not only enemies and disciples, but also Jews who sympathized with him as a fellow victim of Roman oppression, ^(were drawn to his teaching) though ^{without} they did not believe ^{ing} he was the promised Messiah. The play briefly recognizes that fact by having a few people in the crowd call on Pilate to release Jesus, but this fleeting impression of sympathy is immediately dissipated when the "priests and people" accept responsibility for his blood.

Also soft-pedaled is the fact that ^{certain} ~~a number of~~ Pharisees ^{befriended and} defended Jesus: ~~(ADD NAMES AND SCRIPTURAL CITATIONS)~~. ^{Two} They appear in the Passion play, ^{they} but are identified only as "friends" of Jesus, not as Pharisees.

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea

Misrepresentation of Jewish Law

Following a misconception of long standing, The Passion Play

pictures Jewish law as the opposite of Christian love as ~~legal~~ formalistic,
~~istic, punitive,~~ harsh and vindictive. The law figures mainly as
a sanction for enmity against Jesus; only once during the trial is
it invoked to demand fair treatment for him. The drama betrays no
understanding of how Jewish law actually was interpreted and applied.

Christians have traditionally been taught that Jewish law had
become an ossified relic by Jesus' time--that it consisted solely
of the often very stern norms of the Hebrew Bible, literally and
unchangingly applied. Actually, Jewish law, like other ~~legal~~ law
codes, has continually evolved over the millennia. Long before
Jesus' time, Jewish sages had begun to interpret it in increasingly

humane ways, intentionally making severe punishment difficult to
apply. *The whole tendency of the Talmudic rabbis was toward ~~the~~
abolition of the death penalty;* ~~By the time of Jesus (TRUE?) capital punishment was rarer
in the Jewish system of justice than in any others;~~ a Sanhedrin
in seven years--
(Jewish high court) that condemned even one person to death ~~in~~
some rabbis said one in seventy years -- "murderous
~~A YEAR, I THINK VERIFY QUOTATION)~~ was deemed a "wicked Sanhedrin."

In recent years, Christian scholars have examined the lively
religious world of Jesus' day without handed-down prejudices,
tracing the varied trends of first-century Judaism with their
achievements and shortcomings. The results confirm that the anti-
thesis of Jewish law and Christian love is false. We now know that
many of Jesus' moral teachings--such as the Beatitudes and the ~~law~~ injunctions
of love, forgiveness and mercy--have roots in the Jewish Scriptures
and are paralleled in the rabbinical writings of his time. Un-

fortunately, the Passion Play remains untouched by these insights.



THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The trial and death of Jesus can be fully understood only if viewed against the historical background: the brutal Roman occupation of Palestine. Jewish insurgents were fighting an intermittent guerilla war against the occupiers. A large part of the Jewish masses was imbued with messianic expectation, including the hope of deliverance from Roman rule. The Romans, faced with the ever-present possibility of a large-scale political uprising, resorted to severe repressive measures, including frequent executions on the cross.

The play should have conveyed something of the helplessness of the people under these conditions, the climate of desperation mixed with fervent hope, the political hazards amid which the Jewish authorities had to maneuver. But it does no such thing, instead, it seeks to heighten dramatic tension by making the Romans look better and the Jews far worse than the historical record warrants.

Politics and Religion

Except for differences of opinion over Jesus, the Passion play almost totally ignores the varied political and religious trends that divided the Jewish community of the time. It thereby obscures the question to what extent the spokesmen for the priesthood who conducted the proceedings against Jesus may be considered leaders

did in fact) rebellion against Rome & uprising ^{and was crushed only} a few decades after Jesus' death, a full-scale

of the Jewish people.

A Roman Catholic scholar, Eugene Fisher, comments:

The Gospels as a whole present us with sufficient evidence, when viewed objectively, to reconstruct a true picture of Jesus' death. That picture does not include "the Jews" or even "the Jewish leaders." It is an event in which the Roman governor is the primary actor, along with certain key figures of the Temple party which he controlled. ✓

Delineating the chief factions within the Jewish community of the first century A.D., ~~he~~ ^{Dr. Fisher,} notes that the Temple priesthood, and the Sadducean party which supported it, were closely allied with the interests of the Romans, not for religious but for political and economic reasons. Cut off from the people and living by collaboration with Rome, they could not be called "Jewish leaders" at all. Vigorously opposed to them were the Pharisees, lay leaders of a popular movement that sought to revive the spirit of the prophets. In spirit and belief, the teaching of Jesus and the early Church was similar to that of the Pharisees. Also opposed to the priesthood were the Essenes, an ascetic separatist group which denounced the Temple as vile and corrupt. But

"...the Pharisees and the Essenes, unlike the Sadducees, had no political power. They had no temple guards to enforce their will as did the chief priest. They were as powerless before the Roman conqueror as were Jesus and his small group of followers." ✓

The Portrayal of Pilate

Contrary to everything we know about him, the Passion Play shows Pontius Pilate as a kind of noble-minded weakling--a com-

passionate man, sincerely concerned about justice, but not determined enough to withstand the pressure of the vengeful Jews for Jesus' execution.

This portrayal literally turns the truth upside down. The New Testament and the historical writings of Philo and Josephus all agree that Pilate was a particularly brutal governor, known for his ruthlessness in putting down disturbances. The Gospel (Luke 13:1) mentions a massacre of Galilean pilgrims ordered by him; Philo refers to his "corruption, his acts of insolence, his rapine,

and his habit of insulting people, his cruelty, and his continual murders of people untried and condemned, and his never-ending, gratuitous, and most grievous inhumanity." ⁵ He was eventually

recalled to Rome to stand trial for cruelty and oppression. ^{As holding}

~~the Roman governor, with absolute power to save or condemn~~

whomever he saw fit, he was in no way susceptible to pressure by the Jewish authorities. On the contrary, he kept them in fear, and constantly and gratuitously offended Jewish religious sensibilities.

The Passion Play's wildly unhistorical depiction of Pilate could have been ^{but was not,} corrected in the current revision, ~~but the opportunity was not taken.~~ Although one passage refers to Pilate's

having "hundreds slaughtered without trial or verdict," he ~~does~~ ^{is not portrayed as} ~~not act like~~ the cruel tyrant he was, but rather like a helpless puppet in the hands of the Jews. Even his order to scourge the defendant--a routine practice in Roman trials--is excused as an attempt to soften Jewish enmity against Jesus, and one passage,

previously cited ("...Till the unwilling judge/cries. So take Him and crucify Him") actually implies that Pilate handed Jesus to the Jews to be crucified by them. Crucifixion was, of course, a Roman form of execution, carried out in this case, as in all others, by Roman soldiers under orders from the Roman governor.

The Crowd that Cried for Barabbas

In the Passion Play, Barabbas is described simply as a "robber and murderer." Thus, when some of the members of the crowd cry out for his release, they appear to be choosing a common criminal over Jesus--a vicious, morally incomprehensible choice.

In actual fact Barabbas, according to both Mark and Luke, was convicted of sedition, the same crime for which Jesus was ~~officially~~ ~~was~~ condemned by Pilate. The evidence indicates that he was a guerrilla fighter against the Romans. ^{As} ⁶ As such, he would have been something of a popular hero, particularly among those convinced that freedom from Roman oppression could be achieved only through armed struggle.

If the Passion Play had depicted Barabbas ^{correctly} as a fighter against the occupying power, those who called for his release would at least have had a humanly understandable motive.

"IT'S IN THE BIBLE"

Efforts to remove anti-Jewish elements from Passion plays are frequently countered by the assertion that a particular passage is quoted from the Gospels. Christians may resent being asked (as they perceive it) to alter or suppress parts of their sacred Scriptures. How cogent are these arguments?

Interpretation and Selection

To the assertion that a particular incident or phrasing "is there in the Bible," Christian scholars have responded with two major observations.

First, the New Testament cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the findings and insights of both biblical and extra-biblical scholarship. Father John T. Pawlikowski has noted:

A great deal of vital background material is missing from the Gospel narratives as they now stand. It must be supplied through auxiliary readings and commentaries. This situation makes it almost impossible for even the very best of Passion Plays to entirely avoid a travesty of the Gospel story. We cannot obtain a fully accurate picture of the trial and death of Jesus from reading the Gospels alone. This is the clear conclusion of the vast majority of modern biblical scholars. ↴

Second, the Gospel narratives differ among themselves in describing key events; and one of the ways in which they differ significantly is in the roles ascribed to Jews and others in the trial

and death of Jesus. As Dr. Fisher has noted, Matthew adds to the earlier account by Mark certain small but provocative elements that foster the notion of Jewish guilt. For example, "he expands a questioning of Jesus by the temple authorities into a formal trial before the Sanhedrin. This trial, many scholars agree today, could not have taken place that night in the way Matthew describes it...." Again, where Mark, hoping to appease Roman sensitivity, ^{has} ~~had~~ Pilate ^{merely} somewhat hesitant about whether to ^{have} ~~kill~~ Jesus, ^{killed} Matthew shows him wholly convinced of Jesus' innocence. Hence the hand-washing scene, a detail of dubious authenticity, since this ritual was a Jewish, not a Roman custom. The "blood curse" ("His blood be upon us and our children") also is an addition in Matthew. ^{7 8} ✓

Because of differences like these, a true understanding of the trial and death of Jesus cannot (simply be) borrowed from the Gospels, but must be extracted and constructed from the different accounts, ~~and~~ ^{and} which passages and events are selected in dramatizing the Passion is bound to make a great deal of difference as far as feelings toward Jews and Judaism are concerned.

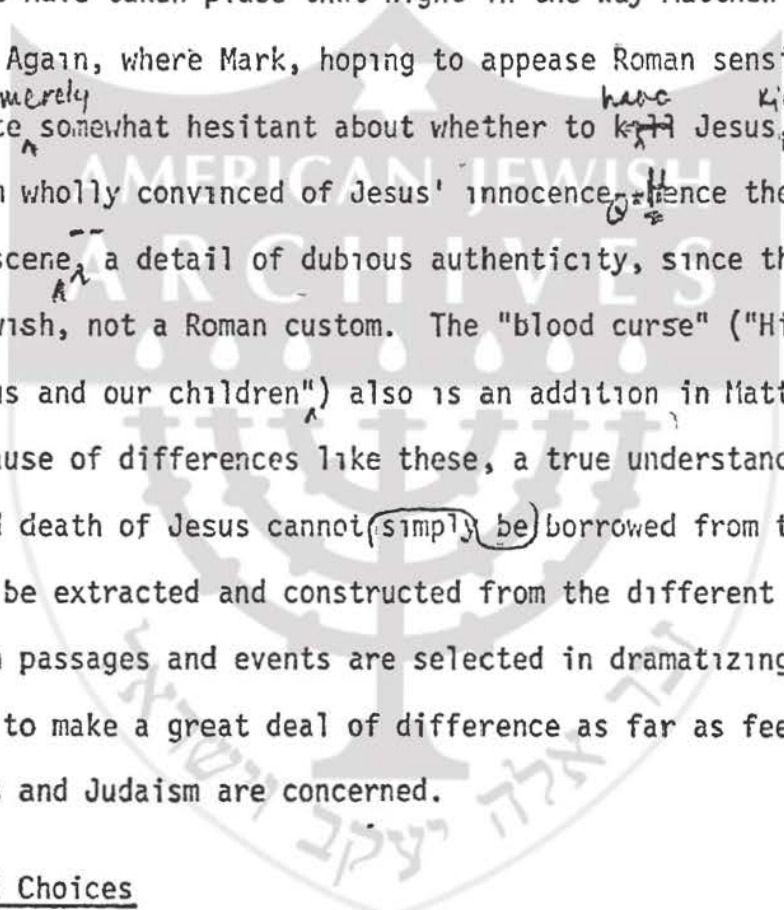
One-Sided Choices

The Oberammergau ~~play~~ demonstrably invokes and ~~dramatizes~~ ^{emphasizes} those Gospel episodes which cast the most ^{unfavorable} ~~negative~~ light on Jewish motives and actions, no matter how narrow their historical basis. For example: the "blood curse," the cause of so much hatred and

Citation?

Citation?

Citation?

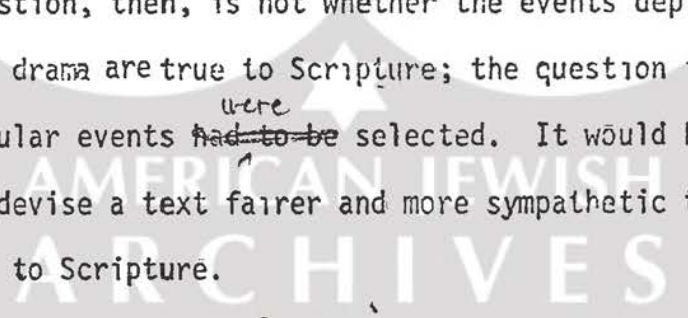


persecution of Jews throughout history (found only in Matthew); ^{the} ~~Pilate's~~ ^{(by which Pilate displaces} hand washing, ^{which} ~~lays~~ the responsibility for Jesus' ^{condemnation} ~~death~~ ^{to} the Jews (also, in Matthew), the incident where Jesus, after his scourging, is once more shown to a pitiless, vindictive mob (only in John).

from ~~from himself~~

Citation?

The question, then, is not whether the events depicted in the Oberammergau drama are true to Scripture; the question is ~~whether~~ ^{why} these particular events ~~had to be~~ ^{were} selected. It would have been possible to devise a text fairer and more sympathetic to Jews, yet equally true to Scripture.



It's NOT in the Bible

In view of the argument that Passion plays must adhere to the Gospel accounts, it deserves to be pointed out that one important strand in the Oberammergau drama has no Biblical foundation at all: the affair of the ~~disreputable Temple~~ ^{Temple} traders ~~in the Temple~~.

In the Gospel, the traders are summarily driven from the Temple courtyard by Jesus, and are not mentioned thereafter. In the Passion play, however, they become the initiators of the plan to destroy Jesus. Bent on revenge, and on reimbursement for the losses caused by their ejection, they inveigle Judas into offering to betray Jesus and serve as intermediaries between him and the Jewish establishment. All this is freely invented; in the Gospel, Judas approaches the priests directly and on his own initiative with his offer of betrayal.

Citation?

How could they have been re-imbursed?

In earlier versions of the play, the traders were extremely vociferous and prominent, in the current revision their repetitive rhetoric is considerably reduced. But, as elsewhere in the new version, cutting proves to be no substitute for rethinking. The basic flaw remains; the traders still figure as initiators of Jesus' betrayal and as an incarnation of "Jewish greed."



chapter head

INTERNALIZING THE PASSION

Both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars have emphasized that the ~~internal~~ message of the Passion for Christians is to make them aware of their own culpability, ^{NOT to lay the guilt to others, father,} Ralph Gorman writes:

The true Christian identifies himself with those who schemed against Christ, clamored for his death, and crucified Him on Calvary. Looking for the guilty, the true Christian strikes his own breast and acknowledges that it was because of his sins that Christ died...No man can harbor hatred of the Jews in his heart and be a Christian. ✓

In similar fashion, Dr. ~~Bernard~~ Olson observes:

The I-with-Christ identification uses the Cross to demonstrate the culpability of others. The I-against-Christ identification points up our own guilt and our involvement in the deeper and more insidious acts of inhumanity which men everywhere are disposed to commit. ✓ 10

Sub-head

Internalizing the Passion

intentioned

Two well-motivated efforts to universalize and internalize ^{the} responsibility for Jesus' death appear ^{near the beginning of the current} in the Oberammergau text. One, ^(word earlier, is a passage in the) a written foreword; ^{it} cites the Vatican Council Declaration of 1965, ^{as} and states that the Jews who demanded the death of Jesus should be regarded ^{as} representatives of all mankind, who by their sins brought about the Lord's death. The second, ^{a new} added to the ^{of} spoken prologue to Act I, disclaims "any attempt to seek guilt among others; let each person recognize himself as guilty in what happened."

Is this verbatim from Vol II, 2) the " " seem to suggest?

However ^{praiseworthy,} ~~sensitive~~ these additions, ^{they} are ^{nullified} ~~undermined~~ by the drama which follows. ~~For Christians~~ ^{Christians} to feel their own culpability in the passion of Jesus, ^{they} must be able to identify ^{themselves} with all parties in the

conflict. They must feel ~~themselves~~ ^{that they could have} capable of having behaved ~~the~~ just like

~~same way~~ as Jesus' adversaries in the same circumstances; ^{10"} However, ~~it~~

it is virtually impossible for onlookers to ^{imagine themselves in their roles, and} identify with those opposed

to Jesus. ~~Ironically,~~ ^{and indeed} they may feel some ~~human~~ empathy for Pilate,

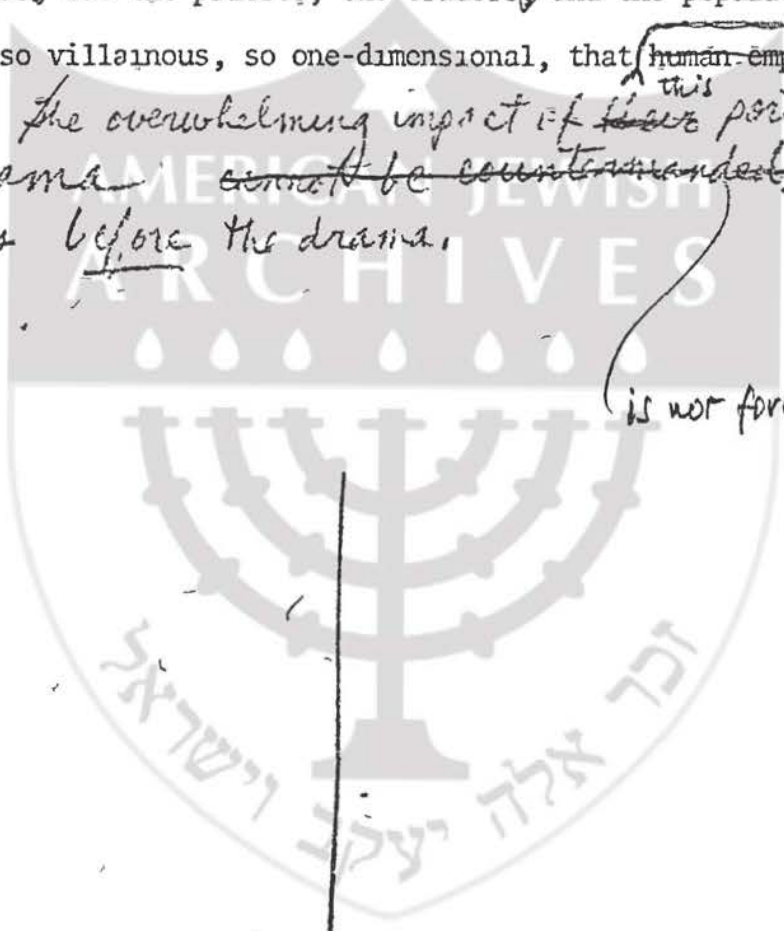
even for Judas. But the priests, the traders, and the populace are

depicted as so villainous, so one-dimensional, that ~~human empathy is~~

~~impossible.~~ ^{this} The overwhelming impact of ~~this~~ ^{portrayal in} the drama

~~cannot be countermanded by cautioning~~ spectators before the drama.

is not forestalled by exhortations



subhead

To Overcome Old Falschoods

~~A MISSED OPPORTUNITY~~

The Oberammergau drama is rooted in a tradition of hostility and contempt toward Jews and Judaism which prevailed for many centuries and shaped the attitudes of generations of Christians. According to this tradition, Jews were collectively guilty of the death of Jesus; they had been rejected by God for refusing to accept Jesus, and their religion had become invalid with the advent of Christianity. In modern times, this anti-Jewish ideology has been repudiated by Christian churches, but it still lives on in Passion plays such as that at Oberammergau.

In 1968, the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement on Passion plays, cautioning writers and producers of such pageants to avoid the following exaggerations and misinterpretations.

To conceal the fact that Jesus is a Jew and that His friends as well as His enemies in the drama are Jews;

To create the impression that most Jews of Jesus' day willed His death, failing to show that the secrecy surrounding much of Jesus' trial was motivated by the large following He had in Jerusalem;

To change the "crowd" before the governor's palace into a screaming "mob," as representing all Jerusalem, and indeed all Israel;

To depict Pilate, whom historiography has shown to have been a ruthless tyrant, as an innocent and kindly bystander;

To highlight those texts of the gospel narrative that are amenable to misinterpretation by uninformed audiences, such as: "His blood be upon us and upon our children" (Matthew 27:25).

Handwritten scribble on the left margin.

Handwritten checkmark at the bottom of the list.

Handwritten notes on the right margin: "and replaced by... it still lives on in... finds a resonance..."

In 1975, the ~~USA Conference~~ United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops (SAME AS UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, PAGE 209) stated the new agenda of the Church vis-a-vis the Jews and Judaism in general terms. Referring to Nostra Aetate, the Papal bull (?) on [TOPIC?], issued in conjunction (?) with the Second Vatican Council (1965), and to the Guidelines (IDENTIFY), the Bishops declared:

We urge all in the Church who work in the area of education, whether in the seminary, the school or the pulpit, not only to avoid any presentation that might tend to disparage Jews or Judaism but also to emphasize those aspects of our faith which bear witness to our common patrimony and our spiritual ties with Jews.

Much of the alienation between Christian and Jew found its origins in a certain anti-Judaic theology which over the centuries has led not only to social friction with Jews but often to their oppression. One of the most hopeful developments in our time, powerfully assisted by Nostra Aetate, has been the decline of the old anti-Judaism and the reformation of Christian theological expositions of Judaism along more constructive lines.

The first major step in this direction was the repudiation of the charge that Jews were and are collectively guilty of the death of Christ. Nostra Aetate and the new Guidelines have definitely laid to rest this myth which has caused so much suffering to the Jewish people. There remains however the continuing task of ensuring that nothing which in any way approaches the notion of Jewish collective guilt should be found in any Catholic medium of expression or communication. Correctly viewed, the disappearance of the charge of collective guilt of Jews pertains as much to the purity of the Catholic faith as it does to the defense of Judaism. ✓¹²

~~(INSTEAD OF THIS SECOND QUOTE FROM THE AMERICAN BISHOPS, COULDN'T WE CITE VATICAN II?)~~



In varying degrees, the Oberammergau drama as performed in 1980 still violates the principles laid down in these two statements. It would have been an ~~extraordinary~~ act of justice and reconciliation if the producers had taken them ^{more} ~~so~~ fully to heart. Christians as well as Jews are poorer for the failure to use ^{this} ~~the~~ opportunity.



FOOTNOTES

1. Bernhard E. Olson, Faith and Prejudice (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 195.
2. Adolf Hitler, Secret Conversations, 1941-1944 (New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1953), p. 457.
3. Eugene Fisher, Faith Without Prejudice Rebuilding Christian Attitudes Toward Jews (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 79-81.
4. Ibid., p. _____
5. Legatio ad Gaium (FULL CITATION?); Cf. Thomas S. Kepler, "Oberammergau, the Jews and Pilate," The Christian Century, July 26, 1961, p. 899.
6. The Greek word lēstēs, "robber," was also used to signify "insurgent." Cf. Dominic Crossan, "Anti-Semitism and the Gospel," Theological Studies, XXVI 189 (June 1965).
7. John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M., Catechetics and Prejudice: How Catholic Teaching Materials View Jews, Protestants and Racial Minorities (New York: Paulist Press, 1973).
8. Fisher, op. cit., pp. 84-87.
11. Executive Committee, Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, A Statement on Passion Plays, press release dated February 28, 1968, p. 2, The New York Times, March 5, 1968, p. 44.
12. United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops, _____
9. Ralph Corway, _____
10. Olson, op. cit., p. _____

which pages for these quotations?

Cite ch., par if possible

Cite release only if it contains something the Times does not.

citation?

Citation

Citation



Memo to: Judith Banki cc: Sonya Kaufman
From: George Salomon
Subject: Oberammergau: A Commentary...
Date: March 4, 1980

Here, post haste, are my final suggestions on the Oberammergau piece, for you to use or discard as you see fit. You don't owe me an accounting, but if you need further help, feel free to call me: 516-487-4064.

In my notations, balloons indicate comments (as against actual copy); red indicates queries calling for decisions, checking or rewriting by you.

Most of my contributions are small potatoes. The only large potatoes are the following:

- (1) The section "Charges of Collective Responsibility" (pp. 6ff.) seemed muddled and choppy on reinspection; I've reworked it.
- (2) The query on p. 9 raises a substantive point which worries me and which I'm not expert enough to deal with.
- (3) I've combined the last two chapters, "Internalizing the Passion" and "A Missed Opportunity," so as to have an entity in scale with the other chapters, long enough to contain subheads. The two pieces go together nicely, I think.
- (4) The closing paragraphs (pp. 21-21A) have been transposed and reworked so we end with words of our own rather than with quoted matter. The bull (?) and guidelines referred to in the second Bishops' statement should be identified; see queries.

Some technical hardware remains to be attended to:

- (1) You must decide whether the piece is to be copyrighted. If so, the copyright notice must go either on, or on the back of, the title page--preferably the latter.
- (2) If you want, and space permits, a table of contents, it should consist of only the foreword and the five chapter titles--not the subheads.
- (3) Ask Sonya to decide whether the piece should have an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) and a price, and where they should go.
- (4) Also decide, or ask Sonya to decide, whether a piece of this sort is supposed to get an AJC document number instead of, or alongside, the ISBN.

George