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## **Anti-Semitism and Modern Europe**

Until the Second World War, historians neglected the history of the Jewish people and European anti-Semitism. It was as if Jews had not been part of European history; as if Jews had not lived in Europe for the past two thousand years, contributing to the development of the entire continent; as if Jews had not suffered centuries of persecution by their neighbors and governments whose duties should have included the protection of all of their citizens. Jewish history has been recorded by Jews, and to this day, we rarely find Jews and their contributions mentioned in European history textbooks. Since the Holocaust, however, there have been numerous studies done about European attitudes towards the Jews and other minorities, which have suffered from rejection because they are considered to be “outsiders,” or “different.” Joel Carmichael sees the “hatred of outsiders [as] commonplace,” but, he states that “anti-Semitism is unique. Unique because of its source, its intensity, its duration – indeed, its very nature – it is a major component of European, as well as of Jewish, history over the past 2000 years, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has had a decisive effect on the world.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, Jews cannot be considered “outsiders” when Jewish communities have been a vital part of European countries for so long, and the Holocaust has forced Europeans to evaluate the intolerance they have imposed upon the Jews throughout the ages. Intolerance is now treated as a problem and the history of anti-Semitism in Western Europe raises several questions: Is there continuity between the hatred of the Middle Ages, that of the Holocaust, and feelings expressed presently? Does anti-Semitism originate from interaction between individuals or from beliefs? What do the various outbursts of anti-Semitism have in common? And how could a relatively tolerant Europe, where so many pro-Jewish historical facts are recorded, explode periodically into episodes of extreme violence?

The word, “Antisemitismus”<sup>2</sup> was used for the first time in 1879 by a German, Wilhelm Marr, at a time when religious hatred was no longer acceptable and was being replaced by racial science. The change in terminology didn’t alter the fact that Jews were the recipients of

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Carmichael, author and editor, *The Satanizing of the Jews*. 1992.

<sup>2</sup> “The term anti-Semitism ... came as a euphemistic substitute for *Judenhass*, Jew-hatred. The term is a misnomer, of course, since it has nothing to do with Semites.” Prager, Dennis and Joseph Telushkin, authors, *Why the Jews? The Reason for the World’s Greatest Hatred*. 1983.

discrimination and attacks – the Jewish faith was attacked; Jewish traditions were misrepresented; even physically, Jews became victims of vilified stereotypes. According to the Webster dictionary, anti-Semitism is “1. Prejudice against Jews; dislike or fear of Jews; disliking or fearing Jews and Jewish things; 2. Discriminating or persecution of Jews.” Elie Wiesel sees it in an expression of gratuitous hatred. On October 31st, 2002, at a conference on Global Anti-Semitism, he identified the anti-Semite as someone who,

hates people who have not been born yet, which means that anti-Semitism is not linked to something a person has done or will do. It is a sickness. There is mental sickness and there is moral sickness, and the anti-Semite is morally sick. He is sick because he lives in a delusion.<sup>1</sup>

The opposite definition of anti-Semitism is philo-Semitism, and that is the expression of love and respect for Judaism and the Jewish people. However, according to Elie Wiesel, “the opposite of love is not hate but indifference; the opposite of life is not death but insensitivity,<sup>2</sup> and hatred spreads in communities that are indifferent. According to him, “neutrality and silence favor the killer; never the victim.”<sup>1</sup> And, as it stands, a number of nations have been accused of harboring anti-Semitic policies, whereas throughout history, few have been recognized for their philo-Semitism. Still, we must remember that along the centuries, anti-Semitic violence was sporadic, and although Jews usually had to be cautious in their interaction with their neighbors and were subjected to constant humiliation, most of the time, the Jewish communities of Western Europe knew relative peace.

Numerous scholars have attempted to understand the European mind as far as anti-Semitism is concerned. Anti-Semitism has been identified as having evolved from the expression of anti-religious sentiment to the rejection of cultural and social attitudes; it was seen as an argument based on scientific reasoning only to be stamped lastly as, so-called, political hatred. In fact, during the early Middle Ages, as Western Europe became Christianized and nations were founded, several events shaped anti-Jewish behavior allowing it to develop and flourish.

Most historians state that anti-Semitism began during the Middle Ages, but in fact, anti-Jewish decrees were pronounced in antiquity because “mental sickness,” as identified by Elie Wiesel, has always existed. The historian Robert Wistrich refers to anti-Semitism as “the longest

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<sup>1</sup> Elie Wiesel, “A Call to Conscience.” (ADL Conference on Global Anti-Semitism.) October 31, 2002.  
[http://www.adl.org/Anti\\_semitism/conference/as\\_conf.asp](http://www.adl.org/Anti_semitism/conference/as_conf.asp)

<sup>2</sup> Elie Wiesel, *Somewhere a Master*. 1981.

hatred.” This would mean that he sees continuity between collective systems of thoughts across time, but how were these thoughts affected by social, cultural, economic or political variables? For political reasons, from the ancient Egyptians to the Romans, restrictive laws were imposed on the Jewish people. Furthermore, the Egyptians rewrote the story of the Exodus – to give it an Egyptian perspective – identifying the Jews as sickly people (or lepers) expelled from Egypt – who in fact were so weak that they needed a day of rest, hence the birth of *Shabbat*.<sup>2</sup> This identified Jews as a lesser people. This account was accepted by Philo and gave the foundation of the early Church doctrine a **theological anti-Semitic** bias.

In addition, much later, to absolve themselves, the Romans transferred the blame of having killed Jesus to the Jews, who were labeled “a pernicious sect,” collectively guilty of deicide for all eternity. In her book *Abraham’s Knife*, Judith Civan discusses the centuries-old libel and she finds the source of the charge in the *Akeda* event, as she compares Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his only son to the dramatization of God’s own sacrifice, according to Christian beliefs. She contends that the Gospels, based on the invention that Jews said upon Jesus’ death, “his blood be upon us and our children,”<sup>3</sup> transformed Jews into an accursed people. The theology of the Church is based on the crucifixion - as its main symbol, the cross, attests. However, instead of acknowledging a Christian-based universal guilt, since Christians believe that “Jesus died for their sins”, Christians leveled accusations against Jews in the hope that a monumental feeling of guilt and despair would bring Judaism to an end.

During the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), convened by Pope John XXIII, the Church attempted to clear the deicide charge but without much success as centuries of accusations are hard to erase. But the fact remains that Jews refused to be converted to Christianity and were considered a threat to the religious unity and to the influence of the bishops. When Justinian completed the codification of Roman law in 534, he expanded limitations on Jews. Eventually, this served as the basis of other European codes, and as its control spread, the Church made appeals to impose economic restrictions on the Jews as contained in some fifty provisions of the Theodosian Code and in resolutions reached by various Church synods<sup>4</sup> and Germanic codes of law.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Saturday, the day of rest.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Civan, “*Abraham’s Knife: The Mythology of the Deicide in Antisemitism*.” Xlibris, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> A synod is a council or assembly of Churches or Church officials.

The code of Emperor Theodosius II, which was enacted in the year 428, clearly reflects this attitude. This law excluded Jews from all public offices and for the first time, forbade mixed marriages or the construction of new synagogues.<sup>1</sup>

For the most part, European rulers were unwilling to follow the dictums of an oppressive Church, and the emerging Jewish merchants established an international trading network that linked the emerging Ashkenazi world. This gave Jews a collective image or representation, a stereotype of the “other” who, according to Emmanuel Lévinas, is the one not “counted with me,”<sup>2</sup> and he added, “il n’y a que l’homme qui puisse m’être absolument étranger.”<sup>3</sup>

Resulting from anti-Semitic sentiment and discourse, the “otherness” of the Jew became rooted in racist regimes that saw Jews as people meant to burn in hell for all eternity. Consequently, Christians could not understand why these ill-fated people still had the audacity to claim to be the “chosen people.” The psychiatrist Theodore Rubin explained how much a Jewish presence was antagonizing to those who harbored such feelings,

The Jew ever in the mind of the anti-Semite is a continuous reminder of several very important abrasive forces. Together, these forces may be thought as the existential force – the unmovable, the unchangeable, the unmitigating, the uncaring – the progenitors of and reminders of God, who to the anti-Semite forgot and shortchanged him and perhaps people generally in so many ways. To the victim of the disease, the Jew goes on to mysteriously transcend mortality and human limits. “He is always there.”<sup>4</sup>

Jews had to wait for the Enlightenment (the Age of Reason, 1650-1850) to experience modifications in social behavior. The Enlightenment was characterized by philosophical changes which led the world toward a break from religion and a move toward the individual, secularism, humanism, individualism, rationalism, and nationalism. The philosopher of the Enlightenment confronted by human rights and issues of freedom, promoted that religious belief was moved by ignorance and fear. However, although the philosophers addressed issues of human rights, they didn’t necessarily see equality between people. For example, Voltaire who sided with the struggle of the Protestant wrote about the Jews, “ Vous ne trouverez en eux qu'un peuple ignorant et barbare, qui joint depuis longtemps la plus solide avarice à la plus détestable superstition et à

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang S. Seiferth. *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages: Two Symbols in Art and Literature*. “ N.Y.: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1970, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l’extériorité*. Paris: Brodard et Taupin, 1961, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Lévinas.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Isaac Rubin, M.D. *Anti-Semitism A Disease of the Mind*. N.Y.: Continuum, 1990, p. 77.

la plus invincible haine pour les peuples qui les tolèrent et qui les enrichissent."<sup>1</sup> In the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, he added a more objective argument and stated that “ Il est certain que la nation juive est la plus singulière qui jamais ait été dans le monde. Quoiqu'elle soit la plus méprisable aux yeux de la politique, elle est, à bien des égards, considérable aux yeux de la philosophie.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Jean Jacques Rousseau, who wrote *The Social Contract*, acknowledged that all human beings are equal.

As far as the Americans were concerned, Revolutionary-humanistic ideas (such as "the inalienable rights of man") were advanced by John Locke as stated in the opening sentences of the Declaration of Independence where it is written, "We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." However, in his book *Judaism and Enlightenment*, Adam Sutcliff studies in depth the controversies he finds in Jewish philosophy and argues that Judaism presented serious difficulties for Enlightenment thinkers, and that their reactions, both negative and positive, to Jewish topics were central to the comprehension of the ambiguities of the Enlightenment itself. The enlightenment resulted in the emancipation of the Jews and toward the end of the eighteenth century life began to improve - Jews were officially readmitted in the center part of France and in England. In Germany, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing led the German Enlightenment and became a champion of tolerance, particularly towards Jews. Towards the nineteenth century, it is estimated that there were about two and a half million Jews in the world with almost ninety percent living in Europe, and that the Jewish population of France consisted of about 80,000 people.

With the “*Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen*” (the Declaration of Man and of the Citizen) posted on August 26<sup>th</sup> 1789, the French revolution extended democratic rights to all previously oppressed groups. Everyone was guaranteed freedom of religion and free exercise of worship, as long as it did not interfere with public order. Because of its emphasis on secularization and a break with the Church, the French Revolution permanently changed the influence of the Catholic Church in France. However, with secularization, **religious anti-Semitism** was replaced by **ethnic anti-Semitism**. When he gained power, Napoleon Bonaparte had a number of measures passed in support of the French Jewish communities, and one of his

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<sup>1</sup> Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), “*Essai sur les mœurs et l’Esprit des Nations*,”

<sup>2</sup> Voltaire, “*Dictionnaire Philosophique : les juifs*. “

main contributions was the “Code Civil”. He was an atypical progressive thinker, and he declared that Roman Catholicism, the Lutheran Church, Calvinism and Judaism were all official religions of France. At the time, about 400 Jews lived in Paris, and within a century, it grew to over 40,000. Napoleon had a representative group elected and Jewish communities organized into “consistories”(consistoires) with Paris as the main seat. As he invaded neighboring countries, Napoleon abolished ghettos (that were reinstated after his defeat). After he was sent in exile in 1816, Napoleon wrote:

My primary desire was to liberate the Jews and make them full citizens. I wanted to confer upon them all the legal rights of equality, liberty and fraternity as was enjoyed by the Catholics and Protestants. It is my wish that the Jews be treated like brothers as if we were all part of Judaism. As an added benefit, I thought that this would bring to France many riches because the Jews are numerous and they would come in large numbers to our country where they would enjoy more privileges than in any other nation. Without the events of 1814, most of the Jews of Europe would have come to France where equality, fraternity and liberty awaited them and where they can serve the country like everyone else.

These words written by Napoleon are self-explanatory. He wished equality for all, and he felt that the Jews were capable of unequalled greatness. However the response of other powers was not usually positive, and the "Holy Synod" of Moscow launched a vicious attack against the congregation of the Sanhedrin in Paris and the formation of the consistories and issued, in December 1806, a manifesto against the Jewish assembly. This proclamation stated: "In order to bring about a debasement of the Church, he (Napoleon) has convened to Paris the Jewish Synagogue, restored the dignity of the Rabbis and founded a new Sanhedrin." Tsar Alexander I even called Napoleon the “Anti Christ and the enemy of God.” However, this did not affect Napoleon who also wished for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. During the siege of Acre in 1799, Napoleon had drawn a declaration to that purpose referring to the Jews as “the rightful heirs of Palestine.” However, the battle was lost to the British and as a result, the plan was not carried out.

With the rise of secularization, science and industry, the face of Europe was transformed during the eighteenth and nineteenth century and the course of human history was changed. The French Revolution as well as the Industrial Revolution inaugurated the modern era. Scientists tried to popularize the findings of modern science to dispel superstitions and they used a combination of reason and rhetoric to discredit the Church’s claim to rule in spiritual matters. At the same time, there were Counter–Enlightenment theorists in France, such as Joseph de Maistre,

Louis Bonald, and François René Chateaubriand who defended tradition and Christianity. Religious beliefs were challenged by scientific research such as the dispute between creation and evolution. In the case of evolution, human beings were viewed as part of the animal kingdom leading ethnologist to the classification of races, and **secular or scientific racism** – within that context, Jews are recognized as people of a racially distinct origin. The notion identifying Jews as a race was voiced in an article written by Father Oreglia in 1880, where he states that Jews are “in fact a race, a people and a nation!... For the Jews are not only Jews because of their religion... they are Jews also and especially because of their race.”<sup>1</sup> Then, in turn, secularism and industrialization resulted in a phenomenon within the Catholic Church. During the nineteenth century, in order to counterbalance this new development, the Catholic Church encouraged the identification of miracles, consequently visions as well as communication with holy entities became endemic during that century and the early part of the next century. The rejection by the Catholic church and Pope Pius VII to adapt to the new era was to mark its relationship with the Jews until the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. After Napoleon’s defeat, “On Pope Pius VII’s return from exile in 1814, he faced the task of rebuilding a Church whose institutions were in ruins. It was just at such a time that new directions could be considered... instead, he made a series of decisions that would prove fateful for the future of the Church, and would weigh heavily on the subsequent history of Europe’s Jews.”<sup>2</sup> At that point, an additional mean developed that proved extremely efficient as an anti-Semitic tool, and this was the press. Newspapers, journals and reviews multiplied during the Nineteenth Century. The Catholic Church alone produced several hundred periodicals used, not only to provide the Churches’ voice on current issues but also, for anti-Jewish propaganda.

In the realm of sciences, at the time, in addition to the introduction of new theories, European nations were undergoing profound sociological changes. Until the Industrial Revolution, most of the world's population was rural. However, between the mid-nineteenth century and the end of the century, half of the population of Europe lived in cities, and by the end of the century, the same was true of other European countries. As the world became a market for European goods, capitals such as London, Paris, and Berlin became centers for banking and the marketing functions of the new industrialism.

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<sup>1</sup> Oreglia, *Civiltà cattolica*, 1880, IV, pp. 108-109.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> David I Kertzer. *The Popes against the Jews*. N.Y.: Vintage Books, 2001. p. 26.

Another important development of the nineteenth century was that French colonialism led to the emancipation of the Jews of North Africa. In 1870, because of local oppressions, France passed a law (*Le décret Crémieux*) giving French citizenship to the Jews of Algeria. Later, the other Jewish communities of North Africa acquired French citizenship.

The Jewish Enlightenment began in Galicia (Germany, Poland and Central Europe) and later spread to Eastern Europe (Lithuania and other provinces of the Pale of Jewish Settlement). It lasted from about 1770 to 1880, and Moses Mendelssohn (1726-1789) is considered to be the founder of the Haskalah movement as he promoted cultural assimilation. The result of the Haskalah was the disintegration of the ghettos from within and integration at the cost of Jewish semi-autonomy.

In 1843, several major events took place. First, Karl Marx published his anti-Semitic essay *Zur Judenfrage* (The Jewish Question) where he condemned all religions (“the opium of the masses”). On that same year, in France the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe completed its emancipatory program in regard to the Jews as it had been defined in 1791 by the Constituent Assembly. From that date forward, rabbis were paid a state salary just as the Catholic parish priests and Protestant pastors.

In Western Europe, emancipation and the effort to integrate did not bring feelings of prejudice to an end. Jews became regarded as competitors. As a result, only limited numbers of Jews were allowed to study in various German schools and universities. The desire for exclusion stemmed from feelings of competition and envy as reflected in Wagner’s treatise on *Judaism in Music* - a treatise that made him Hitler’s cultural symbol. Theodore Rubin, sees envy as a disease where,

The victim always feels abused and entitled and believes that symbolic possessors unjustifiably have more through luck, manipulation, belonging to the “right” group, or through downright malevolence on their part... Envious people feel that they deserve everything they do not have and what they have is never enough to compensate for just desserts or what they should have.<sup>1</sup>

In France, the nineteenth century ended with the Dreyfus Affair, which took place after a series of scandals — the Boulanger affair, the Wilson case, the bribery of government officials and of journalists associated with the financing of the Suez Canal. The Dreyfus Affair divided

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<sup>1</sup> Rubin, p. 39.



France at a time when the Third Republic was in danger of collapse. The anti-Dreyfusars sided with the military that accused Dreyfus of espionage. The leaders of the Catholic Church joined them as well as some writers such as Ernest Renan who argued that the Semitic race was an inferior race, Edouard Drummond who wrote about Jewish conspiracies in his book *La France Juive*, and Charles Maurras who founded an anti-Semitic newspaper *L'Action Française*. The intellectuals, the moderate republicans, the Radicals and the Socialists sided with Emile Zola in the defense of the Jewish officer.

In 1905, because of the role played by the Catholic leadership during the Dreyfus Affair, the Radicals and the Socialists succeeded in passing legislation separating Churches and state, and education was secularized. Due to the Dreyfus Affair, the first international anti-Semitic congress that took place in Dresden in 1882, and events taking place in Russia, Jews were faced with the fact that in spite of their will to assimilate, there was no cure for anti-Semitism. They realized the importance of having an autonomous Jewish nation and the Zionist<sup>1</sup> movement was launched with the backing of the Rothschilds of France.

In Eastern Europe, preceding and during the time of the Dreyfus Affair, thousands of Russian and Polish Jews were fleeing pogroms taking place in Russia and the Pales, in area where borders were rather fluid. These pogroms were the outcome of two main events. Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, and finally, a document, "The Protocol of the Elders of Zion," began to circulate throughout Russia in 1895. The document was advancing new conspiracy theories - that Jews were planning to control the world. These accusations were the result of social distortions playing on irrational fears with the specific purpose to trigger anti-Semitic outbreaks by those who had their own ideas of expansionism and they were used for the advancement of their own institutions. In the United States, the book was disseminated under the auspices of Henry Ford who also promoted the distribution of the book "*The International Jew*." These books and Madison Grant's book "*The Passing of the Great Race*" (1916)<sup>2</sup> accentuated the social separation of the Jews and their rejection in the United States. In Europe, progress and

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<sup>1</sup> Zionism is defined as a movement allowing for Jews to return to their historical homeland. With the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, former Mid-Eastern Ottoman territories were placed under the administration of Great Britain and France under the Mandates System adopted by the League of Nations pursuant to the League's Covenant (Article 22). The Palestinian Mandate lasted from 1922 to 1947. The UN partitioned Palestine into two independent States, one Jewish and one Arab.

<sup>2</sup> The anthropologist, Madison Grant, openly deplored the flooding of the United States by "wretched multitudes" that endangered the American way of life.

civilization did not equate with acceptance and respect. There, Judaism was viewed as an “ethnic religion,” and the religion of an inferior race - rhetoric that eventually led to the gas chambers.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in Germany, Jews living outside of the ghettos were seen as the source of practically every economic and social problem. For example, if Jews became politically active in Liberal and Socialist parties, conservative forces accused all of them of being corrupt. On the other hand, others saw Jewish expression in capitalism as a “capitalistic character” symbolized by the Rothschilds. Jews were also ascribed the German defeat in the First World War. “Adolph Hitler and other German blamed [the] defeat ... on the machinations of international Jewry and the alleged disloyalty of German Jews.”<sup>1</sup> As fascism grew, this type of scapegoating allowed the passing of segregation laws as well as sexual relation laws bringing about the formation of racist regimes. Hitler saw a Jewish man as someone who “lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people.”<sup>2</sup> For this reason, “the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 prohibited intermarriage or sexual relations between Jews and gentiles.”<sup>3</sup> In a parallel vein, between the two world wars, in the United States, “racist propaganda ... represented black males as ravening beasts lusting after white women.”<sup>4</sup> In post-war South Africa, laws were also passed “banning all marriage and sexual relations between different ‘population groups’ and requiring separate residential areas for people of mixed race.”<sup>5</sup> Racial laws were incorporated in the official doctrine of German National Socialism by Adolf Hitler and became a fundamental part of the Nazi political ideology. In fact, aside from nationalism, racism became the substance of National Socialism and to determine the nature of a Jew, the Third Reich used religion as the measurement of race. Between the Enlightenment and the rise of Fascism, anti-Semitism had been mostly a war of words but the Nazis transformed Judeophobia into an ideology. As stated cynically by Bernanos, “Hitler had dishonored anti-Semitism;”<sup>6</sup> the progresses achieved by humanity were receding and the darkness of one the most sophisticated; one the most educated European country was exposed on “Crystal Night.”

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<sup>1</sup> George M. Fredrickson, “*Racism: A Short History*.” Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Fredrickson, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> Fredrickson, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Fredrickson, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Alain Finkielkraut, “*Au nom de l’autre: Réflexions sur l’antisémitisme qui vient*.” Paris: Gallimard, 2003, p. 9

Restrictive laws were also approved in Italy and by the Vichy government and resulted eventually in deep soul searching. The Holocaust did force the world to face its anti-Semitism, but it did not put an end to it. Anti-Semitism is a latent European illness, and the Holocaust has proven that the most sophisticated and literate societies can become the most arrogant and deadly. Is it true then, as Elie Wiesel asked, that, “some men exist only to kill and others to die?”<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to elucidate anti-Semitism, Jean-Paul Sartre explained in 1946 in his “*Réflexions sur la Question Juive*” (*Anti-Semite and Jew*), that, “... the Jew is in the situation of the Jew because he lives in the midst of a society that takes him for a Jew. He has passionate enemies, and defenders lacking in passion.”<sup>2</sup> And Sartre added, “The Jew has a marked inclination to believe that the worst difficulties may be resolved by reason; he does not see the irrational, the magical, the concrete and particular nuance; he does not believe in singularities of sentiment.”<sup>1</sup>

The situation of the Jews in Europe has changed dramatically since Sartre wrote his book. After the French colonies and the Moroccan protectorate of North Africa received their independence, feeling threatened, hundreds of thousands of Jews left North Africa to settle in Israel and in France. In addition, over six million Arabs left their countries of origin to come to France where they live in ghettoized neighborhoods in large cities. As all European countries withdrew from their previous colonies, millions of Arabs have settled in France’s neighboring countries making them the target of hostilities. The Arab communities, in turn, have become the source for a new strain of Jew-hatred for several reasons- i.e., Arab immigrants considered Jews to be second class citizens in their own countries. Arab immigrants do not understand the Jewish European experience and the Holocaust. And, to the Arab immigrant, Jews and Zionists are one and the same. Also, since the Suez Affair (1956), most Jews living in Mid-Eastern Arab countries have left their homes and belongings to settle in Israel and sometimes to move to Europe. The result has been the expansion of a Jewish presence in Israel and in Europe resulting in an increase of anti-Jewish sentiment that seems to correspond to the ratio between Jewish and Arab communities, and these feelings are on the rise in communities that have not experienced the Holocaust. Therefore, because of the passing of time and a lack of connection with the

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<sup>1</sup> Elie Wiesel, “*Tous les fleuves vont à la mer. Mémoires. I.*” Editions du Seuil, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “*Anti-Semite and Jew.*” (translated by George J. Becker.) N.Y.: Schocken, 1965, p. 72

Holocaust, in the wake of political anti-Semitism, the Shoah is receding in people's memories, and even denied by some. Alain Finkelkraut pointed out that, "during the fifty years following the Holocaust, Occidental Jews were protected by the shield of Nazism."<sup>2</sup> Now, this protection has faded. Anti-Semitism has resurfaced, in part because of a resurgence of far-right activism and neo-Nazism, and also because of the new makeup of Europe. In addition, the left has adopted an "anti-Israel, anti-Jewish" attitude leaving Jews under attack in the countries where they live including Israel. This brings about what the Honorable Irwin Cotler calls "Genocidal anti-Semitism," as he refers to "the public call for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people"<sup>1</sup> made by various Arab leaders through the media. A call resulting from three major causes in the Arab world: the first one is based on religious reasons, the second on nationalistic reasons, and the third is the Palestinian grievance who wanted to inherit from the Turks the Mandated Territories partitioned between Jews and Arabs.

**Political anti-Semitism** can be divided into three categories. One is the denial to self-determination. This fact was already identified as anti-Semitism by Martin Luther King, Jr. who declared that anti-Zionism "is the denial to the Jews of the same right, the right to self-determination that we accord to African nations and all other peoples of the globe. In short, it is anti-Semitism..." the second expression of political anti-Semitism is expressed through religion and the discrimination of Jews as a people. The third is taking place through the "demonizing" of the State of Israel when the country is blamed for all of the ills rocking the Western World by countries that have colonized the Middle-East, Africa and Asia.

**Anti-Zionism** has been used to promote anti-Semitism since the recreation of the State of Israel but this does not mean that all anti-Zionist are anti-Semitic. The State of Israel was founded by a majority vote of the United Nations General Assembly on May 14, 1948. The Declaration "...asserts the natural right of the Jewish people to be like all other peoples, exercising self-determination in its sovereign state." Jews accepted the resolution whereas Arabs rejected it, and although the West Bank was under Jordanian control and Gaza under Egyptian control, from 1948 until the Seven Day War of 1967, a Palestinian homeland was never created. However, in spite of its earlier vote, the United Nations General Assembly soon changed course.

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<sup>1</sup> Sartre, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Finkelkraut, p. 9

Once Joseph Stalin realized that Israel would not become a communist nation, he became an anti-Zionist and a staunch supporter of Arab nations. During the 1960s the Soviet Union and its satellite states spread anti-Zionist propaganda especially after the 1967 Six-Day War. The Soviet media ran a large number of editorials and articles equating Zionism to racism. These ideas were publicized throughout the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Arab nations and Third World countries and most sources do not differentiate between the terms “Zionist” and “Jew”. As a result, pressured by the Soviet Union and Arab Nations, in November 10, 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 3379 by a vote of 72 to 35 (with 32 abstentions). The resolution stated that, “*Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.*“ It added that the UN ...*severely condemned Zionism as a threat to world peace and security*” and that it called “*upon all countries to oppose this racist and imperialist ideology.* The Soviet campaign resulted in a massive immigration of Jews to Israel and to other nations. But has the Russian position on Zionism changed since Perestroika?<sup>2</sup> State Duma Deputy Oleg Mashenko has since promoted anti-Semitic stereotypes and conspiracy theories when he declared in 2003 that “Jews are just as much hostages to Zionism as the Germans are to fascism.. Zionism is a dozen, a hundred, a thousand times worse than fascism...” Zionism is “a centuries-old trend that aims at world domination.”<sup>3</sup> Now, perpetuating the claims of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a number of people such as the Neo-Nazis and various Arab groups also advance that Zionists aim at world dominance. They also blend the terminologies “Zionist” and “Jew,” and the Arab countries promoting such claims include countries which have normalized relations with Israel or are in the process of normalization. The Egyptians air series based on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (a series titled *Knight without a Horse*), and Palestinian and other Arab nations promote Holocaust-denying materials.

For over twenty years, Israel struggled to have the infamous UN resolution revoked. Finally, on December 16, 1991 the UN General Assembly repealed Resolution 3379, with a vote of 111 to 25 (with 13 abstentions). Nonetheless, the struggle is still ongoing and on August 31,

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<sup>1</sup> Irwin Cotler, “*Human Rights and the New Anti-Jewishness.*” February 16, 2004. (The Honorable Irwin Cotler, a Canadian MP when he wrote this article, is now Canada’s Minister of Justice.)

<sup>2</sup> The economic reforms introduced in June 1987 by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Its literal meaning is “restructuring”, which refers to restructuring of the Soviet economy.

<sup>3</sup> Krasnovar regional-administration official newspaper. Kuban Segodnya, February 8, 2003.

2001, at the UN anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa, Israel was declared a racist apartheid state. Irwin Cotler explained such attacks as irrational anti-Semitism. He stated,

What we are witnessing today... is a new, virulent, globalizing and even lethal anti-Jewishness reminiscent of the atmospherics of the 1930s, and without parallel or precedent since the end of the Second World War... Anchored in the “Zionism is Racism” resolution, but going beyond it, the new anti-Jewishness... can best be defined as the discrimination against, denial of, and assault upon, national particularity and peoplehood anywhere, whenever that national particularity and peoplehood happens to be Jewish.<sup>1</sup>

By likening Zionism to racism, people who are not respecting human rights in their own countries are projecting their own illness unto Jews to trivialize the significance of the persecution of Jews throughout the ages and through the Holocaust. And since South Africa is no longer considered to be an “apartheid country”, Israel seems to have been designated to become its successor as the world shows great indifference toward the genocide taking place in a number of African countries.

However, the opposition to some of Israel’s policies has divided not only the non-Jewish world, but Jewish communities as well, and arguments against Israel seem to be blurred in the dispute. In fact, there are two trends: one is a democratic analysis of a government’s policies and the other likens Zionism to racism. In her book, “*Precarious Life*,” where she starts with Larry Summers statement that “anti-Israeli views” are “anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent,”<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler argues that the opposition to Zionism as racism is not anti-Semitic and that those who criticize Israel’s policies are not necessarily anti-Semites. Judith Butler herself has strongly denounced Israel’s policies toward the Palestinians.

In the Middle East, Arab nations, which are now basically *Judenrein*, have inherited the final stages of Ottoman de-colonization as well as nationalism and Judeophobia. Hatred of the Jews is not new in the Middle East where Arab Muslims joined forces with the Germans during the 1930s and massacred Jews in British occupied Palestine. With the desire to rally support for their causes against the west, the Arab media has used the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to target not only Israel but also Jews as a whole. The media is reviving a collective theme through attacks against both Jews and the Jewish State, which they see as an “intruder” among Muslim nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Cotler.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler, essay: “The Charge of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel, and the Risks of Public Critique,” published in “*Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*.” Verso Books, 2004.

Using arguments linked to a European past and Middle-Eastern nationalism, the Arab world has spread accusations against Jews of ritual murders and conspiracies to dominate the world - accusations taken straight out of Medieval Judeophobic literature, the *Elders of Zion* and Nazi propaganda. As a result, although it is not politically correct to demonize the Jews, it has become acceptable to demonize Israel. The danger is that educated people are allowed to present myths as facts. And, when influent people substitute propaganda for truth, they feed on the naïveté of the people they wish to manipulate. It seems therefore that although Judeophobia has been expressed under various titles, outbursts of anti-Semitism have in common is an illogical hatred of persons simply because they are Jews.

As briefly mentioned earlier, oppression of Jews has also been spurred by Jews themselves. **Self-hatred** among Jews results when individuals accept assessments made about them by a dominant group. According to Dr. Rubin,

Jews who hate Jews have invariably been severely emotionally damaged as children... Some Jewish Jew haters believe all they hear from non-Jewish anti-Semites and feel they must separate themselves from their pestilent birthright at any cost. Some are sociopathic, and enormous opportunism makes them dangerous to their confreres especially in times of mass anti-Semitic activity.<sup>1</sup>

The result of self-Hatred has been catastrophic throughout the history of anti-Semitism and has led to reactions destructive to a great number of innocent people. And during extreme situations, such as when the Inquisition was at its apex, during the Holocaust, or now that Judeophobia is on the rise again, a number of people feel anxious and depressed, feelings that can result in self-destructive reactions. Shreya Khatau explains that “In such situations of extreme degradation then, the oppressed group frequently reacts in an ‘intropunitive’ fashion; that is, it turns its frustrations inwardly against the self or the ‘in’ group at large.”<sup>2</sup> Self-hatred is not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon; other groups that have been oppressed because of ethnic reasons or religious beliefs certainly share this phenomenon.

If history were to teach us anything it would be to consider precedents. In the case of Judeophobia, it is evident that patterns have been created that are difficult to erase, and Jews, are seen as anything but ordinary people. The declaration of human rights could not prevent the

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<sup>1</sup> Rubin, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Shreya Khatau, *Racism and its effects*.

Holocaust or genocides. As stated by Michael Ignatieff, “The danger of genocide lies in its promise to create a world without enemies. ... a world without discord, enmity, suspicion, free of the enemy without or the enemy within.”<sup>1</sup> This means that delusional heterophobes will continue to attack those who are different. As it stands, the World Wide Web is filled with their ranting and they constantly make new converts among the disturbed and the insecure. It would seem that Ginzburg and Moore are right when they see historical continuity in anti-Semitism, but outbreaks of anti-Semitism – whether of religious, ethnic, competitive or political origins - are triggered by situations resulting from immediate context. In Western society, the stereotypical image of the Jews has become a cultural legacy that had led to misleading assumptions and often, in breakdown in communication. In modern times, the Churches have tried to erase calumnies and racist concepts taught for centuries, and European nations have made an effort to educate people about a variety of religions. Still, this has not brought anti-Semitism to an end, but it has allowed controlling violent eruptions of anti-Semitism. It is therefore possible to deduct that acceptance, security and respect for Jews and Judaism depend heavily on the policies of religious leaders and head of states.

(S.M.C. February 2005)

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Ignatieff, “The Danger of a World without enemies.” *The New Republic*, February 21, 2001.



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