

# ANTISEMITISM

in the Contemporary World

edited by  
Michael Curtis

Westview Press

# Antisemitism in the Contemporary World

edited by Michael Curtis

---

Westview Press / Boulder and London

1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Copyright © 1986 by Westview Press, Inc.

Published in 1986 in the United States of America by Westview Press, Inc.; Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher; 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Antisemitism in the contemporary world.

Papers originally presented at a conference sponsored by the International Center at Rutgers University in association with the American Jewish Congress, held at Rutgers University, Nov. 1983.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Antisemitism—Congresses. I. Curtis, Michael, 1923– . II. Rutgers University. International Center. III. American Jewish Congress.

DS145.A64 1986 305.8'924 85-13919

ISBN 0-8133-0157-2

Printed and bound in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## Preface

---

This volume stems from papers originally presented at a conference sponsored by the International Center at Rutgers University in association with the American Jewish Congress, held at the university in New Brunswick in November 1983.

As organizer of the conference, I am indebted to a number of organizations and individuals for financial assistance and logistical support. In addition to the sponsoring bodies, these include the New Jersey Committee for the Humanities; the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; the Bronfman Foundation; Alvin Rockoff; Joseph Littenberg; Bernard A. Mollen; Edward Weiss; Kenneth Wolfson, dean of the Graduate School; Tilden Edelstein, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and Kenneth Wheeler, provost at New Brunswick, Rutgers University.

I am also indebted to a large number of individuals for advice and help in facilitating arrangements for the conference. In particular I want to thank Henry Siegman, Philip Baum, and Raphael Danziger of the American Jewish Congress; Jeffrey Maas of the ADL; and Bernard Lewis, Alvin Rockoff, Carole Levin, and Miriam Murphy for their support and enthusiasm. I very much appreciate the interest of the members of the International Center and the participation of the colleagues in the Rutgers faculty who chaired the six panels of the conference. Above all, I am grateful for the dedication and effort beyond any reasonable expectation of Henriette Cohen of the International Center, who contributed so greatly to the success of the conference.

These papers are presented here in the belief that it is important to inquire into the question of whether there has been a resurgence of antisemitism or whether new forms have appeared in the current age. The papers are not concerned primarily with the history of the subject nor with localized manifestations, but deal instead in a thematic fashion with the ways in which antisemitism has been expressed or implemented. The different views expressed about the nature and significance of antisemitism today, and in particular about the relationship between antisemitism and anti-Zionism, provide the basis for a new analysis of a historic phenomenon.

*Michael Curtis*  
New Brunswick, N.J.

# Contents

---

<i>Preface</i> .....	xi
----------------------	----

1 Introduction: Antisemitism—The Baffling Obsession, <i>Michael Curtis</i> .....	1
---	---

## **Part One Philosophy and Ideology**

2 Philosophical Reflections on Antisemitism, <i>Emil L. Fackenheim</i> .....	21
3 Marxism Versus the Jews, <i>Paul Johnson</i> .....	39
4 The “Jewish Question”: Left-wing Anti-Zionism in Western Societies, <i>Robert Wistrich</i> .....	51

## **Part Two Religion and Politics**

5 Radical Islam and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, <i>Emmanuel Sivan</i> .....	61
6 Antisemitism in the Contemporary Arab World, <i>Norman A. Stillman</i> .....	70
7 Arab Antisemitism in Peacetime: The Egyptian Case, <i>Rivka Yadlin</i> .....	86
8 Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist Speaks on the Jews, <i>Ronald L. Nettler</i> .....	97
9 New Testament Antisemitism: Fact or Fable? <i>John T. Pawlikowski</i> .....	107

- 10    The German Churches and the Jewish People Since  
1945, *John S. Conway*..... 128

**Part Three**  
**Israel and Zionism**

- 11    Is Anti-Zionism a New Form of Antisemitism?  
*Dan V. Segre*..... 145
- 12    Anti-Zionism—A Global Phenomenon,  
*Nathan Glazer*..... 155
- 13    Zionism as Racism: A Semantic Analysis,  
*Arthur Hertzberg* ..... 164
- 14    Is There a New Antisemitism?  
*Michael R. Marrus*..... 172

**Part Four**  
**Discrimination: Action and Expression**

- 15    Soviet Antisemitism and Its Perception by  
Soviet Jews, *Zvi Gitelman*..... 185
- 16    Economic Boycott and Discrimination,  
*Terence Prittie* ..... 206
- 17    Antisemitism and the Law: Effects and Options  
for Action, *Stephen J. Roth*..... 214
- 18    Stealing the Holocaust,  
*Edward Alexander* ..... 227
- 19    The Psychology of Antisemitism: Conscience-Proof  
Rationalization and the Deferring of Moral  
Choice, *Wendy Stallard Flory* ..... 238
- 20    Antisemitism, Sexism, and the Death of the  
Goddess: Some Problems with New Readings of Old  
Texts, *Judith L. Goldstein*..... 251
-

**Part Five**  
**Contemporary Perceptions**

21	Perceptions of Antisemitism in France, <i>Dominique Schnapper</i> .....	261
22	Problems of Perceiving and Reacting to Anti- semitism: Reflections of a "Survivor," <i>William Safran</i> .....	273
23	Attitudes Toward Israel and Attitudes Toward Jews: The Relationship, <i>Earl Raab</i> .....	288
24	American Jewish Organizational Efforts to Combat Antisemitism in the United States Since 1945, <i>Leonard Dinnerstein</i> .....	302
	<i>List of Contributors</i> .....	313
	<i>Index</i> .....	315

# Introduction: Antisemitism—The Baffling Obsession

---

*Michael Curtis*

## **The History of Antisemitism**

Discrimination, bias, hatred of outsiders, patterns of prejudice, bigotry, racism, denial of equal rights, and xenophobia have existed in all historical eras and in all countries. Racial, religious, national, social, and cultural minorities have suffered from past and present injustices. Slavery, caste systems, denial of civil and political rights, lack of economic opportunity, and deliberate massacre have been familiar parts of social experience. All countries have been subject to the lunacy of believing that whole races or nations were mysteriously good or evil.<sup>1</sup>

Hegel saw history as a slaughterbench. Yet, notwithstanding the horrors and bitterness of past experience and recent example, there is something distinctive and compelling in the extraordinary persistence of antisemitism, or hatred of Jews, historically and spatially. Indeed, much of the case made by early Zionist proponents such as Theodor Herzl and Leo Pinsker for an independent Jewish state rested on the normality of antisemitism. Only with the creation of such a state, which would end the role of Jews as an external minority, would the anti-Jewish attitude change.

A wholly disproportionate amount of the attention given to the existence of Jews has been critical in character, irrespective of any specific behavior. Or it has focused for varied and often contradictory reasons on the alleged negative qualities of Jews. No other group of people has suffered from a regime like that of Nazi Germany, whose leaders had the total extermination of a whole people as their main ideological motivation.

Expectation that the unprecedented horrors of the Nazi regime and the scale of the Holocaust would lead to a climate of opinion that would not countenance antisemitism has been sadly disappointed. It is true that all surveys, using such customary indexes as non-Jewish attitudes toward work relationships, housing, college admission, employment, and intermarriage with Jews, show a decline in the post-World War II period



in discriminatory attitudes and in the numbers of those who are strongly prejudiced against Jews. Moreover, antisemitic prejudice appears to be less prevalent among young white non-Jews than among middle-aged and older persons.

Antisemitism is now not politically or intellectually respectable in an era when Jews form part of the political elite. In the U.S. Congress of 1982–1984 eight Jews were members of the Senate and thirty of the House of Representatives. The British Conservative government in 1984 included four Jews in senior positions. The prime minister appointed in France in 1984 was of Jewish origin. No important political organization in the United States or in other democratic countries openly advocates antisemitic views; nor are Jews denied civil or political rights in those countries; nor is much overt public expression of antisemitism heard.

The medieval conception of Jews as the demonic, accursed people who killed Christ, or as cannibals and blasphemers, is rarely present in the pluralistic societies of the Western world. Historical solutions proposed for the “Jewish problem”—forced conversion, expulsion, strict segregation, or extermination—are seldom advocated. Extreme passions of antisemitism, familiar until the end of World War II, are limited to the lunatic fringe in politics or the literary world.

Yet an atmosphere of disquiet persists. The phenomenon of antisemitism has still not disappeared, even if a Richter scale would show it to be less violent than in the past.<sup>2</sup> A survey in 1981 revealed that in the United States, some 53 percent of the population felt “Jews stick together too much,” 22 percent believed that “Jews are not as honest as other businessmen,” and 40 percent believed that “Jews should stop complaining about what happened to them in Nazi Germany.” Recent incidents and political activity suggest that temporary immunization against the virus may be wearing off and that any guilt felt by non-Jews about the Holocaust may be lessening.

Small political parties of a neo-Nazi tendency have erupted in Western Europe and the United States. Atrocities, including bombing of synagogues, desecration of cemeteries, attacks on or assassinations of Jews, and destruction of Jewish property, have occurred in a number of countries. Verbal violence has taken the form of fundamentalist preaching that God does not hear the prayers of Jews and of racial slurs by a candidate for the U.S. presidency. Political writings of the French New Right, couched in the language of sociobiology, have denigrated the Judeo-Christian heritage, blamed Jews for the creation of Christianity, and argued for a return to the Aryan roots of European civilization. Books in the United States, Britain, and France (for one of which, Robert Faurisson’s *Mémoire en Défense contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier l'histoire*, Noam Chomsky wrote an introduction), as well as in the Communist countries, have denied or minimized the reality of the Holocaust; other works have suggested that the *Diary of Anne Frank* was a forgery. By contrast, the real forgery, the *Protocols of the Elders*

*of Zion*, has been republished in a variety of countries since the war. Recent literary works and films have, perhaps inadvertently, expressed a change in sensibility about Jews, who are now sometimes portrayed as aggressors who take pleasure in killing. Prejudice has come not only from the Soviet Union and the Arab and Islamic countries, as might be expected, but also from the black community of the United States, Third World countries, the United Nations, and, above all, the political left and some of the opponents of Israel.

What can account for the extraordinary persistence of antisemitism in world history? How can one explain its protean character? How can one understand the avidity of so many to believe in the killing by Jews of non-Jewish children, in ritual murders, or in Jewish responsibility for events such as the Black Death in 1347 and false accusations such as treason in France in 1894 (the Dreyfus affair) or the murder in Georgia in 1913 (the Leo Frank case)? What explains the massacres, burning of Jews, expropriation of property, expulsions, wearing of special badges, imposition of quotas, legal and social discrimination, and denial of and limits on emancipation?

Antisemitism has emanated from all political persuasions, from holders of all religious beliefs, from those critical of Christianity or Judaism, and from all social groups. Even a document like the Magna Carta, which has been of such symbolic significance in the struggle for human freedom, has its antisemitic clauses. Hatred of Jews has been manifested when they lived in segregated ghettos and when they shared emancipated environments with non-Jews. It has persisted in an age of universal suffrage and change in the nature of economic systems and social relationships in postindustrial societies. Although higher education has had some impact in reducing the intensity of antisemitism, the belief that antisemitism would disappear with the spread of education, which would bring with it more humane and tolerant values, has not been fulfilled.

What distinguishes antisemitism from the ever-present prejudice or hostility directed against other (non-Jewish) people and groups is not so much the strength and passion of this hatred as its many-faceted character and the range of arguments and doctrines that see Jews at best as peripheral (or as pariahs, to use Max Weber's term) in society and at worst as destructive monsters and forces of evil. In its lowest form, as in the hands of a Julius Streicher, antisemitism takes the form of pornography depicting a struggle between Aryans and Jews for women.<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere, arguments—whether of a political, economic, social, religious, or psychological nature—make a greater claim to rationality. Always the claim is that the Jews, because of their religious customs or insistence on monotheism or dietary habits or tribal exclusiveness, were alien to the traditions and ways of life of the societies in which they lived or tried to subvert those societies or were able to control both these societies and other diabolical forces in the world.

But the charges against Jews cannot be true, partly because they are mutually contradictory and partly because no one people can have a monopoly on evil. The uniqueness of antisemitism is that no other group of people in the world has been charged simultaneously with alienation from society and with cosmopolitanism, with being capitalist exploiters and agents of international finance and also revolutionary agitators, with having a materialist mentality and with being people of the Book, with acting as militant aggressors and with being cowardly pacifists uttering (in Michelet's phrase) "the groan of the slave," with adherence to a superstitious religion and with being agents of modernism, with upholding a rigid law and also being morally decadent, with being a chosen people and also having an inferior human nature, with both arrogance and timidity, with both individualism and communal adherence, with being guilty of the crucifixion of Christ and at the same time held to account for the invention of Christianity—as Nietzsche put it, "the ultimate Jewish consequence"?

### The Obsession with Jews

Ever present is what Jacob Talmon called the "baffling obsession with the Satanic ubiquitousness and malignant effectiveness of the Jews."<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the obsession is directed to Jews as a category; at other times it pertains to particular groups of Jews, impoverished masses of alien immigrants with a culture of their own, or a financial elite, or shopkeepers denounced as nonproducing parasites. Sometimes the concern is with the defects of Jews—their physique, odor, or health or their moral and social inadequacies. At other times it is their economic, intellectual, or cultural prominence that disturbs, as in the case of Charles de Gaulle, who spoke of "un peuple élite, dominateur et sûr de lui-même."

Underlying the obsession with Jews are a number of difficult issues: the tension between the principle of universality and the particularity of Jews, the unique status of Jews as members of a nation as well as of a religion, the role or burden of being a chosen people, the relegation to inferiority in a racial hierarchy, and the role accorded to Jews in a world conspiracy.

### *The Charge of Particularity*

Universality, with its practical connotation of a homogeneous political culture and of devotion to a national unity or to a concern for all humanity, is in dialectical tension with the particularity of Jews, "a people that dwells apart," having marked differences from the beliefs and practices of the majority. The tension exists for those Jews whose commitment to a left-wing political ideology often provides them with a new universal religion to replace any attachment to the religion of their origin.<sup>5</sup> In his celebrated essay "The Non-Jewish Jew," Isaac

Deutscher typifies those who identify with the brotherhood of all "humanity" rather than with Jewry.<sup>6</sup> The cosmopolitan Arthur Koestler left his early Zionism to search "for the knowing Shaman, then . . . the pursuit of utopia . . . to embrace the perfect cause."<sup>7</sup>

But the issue has been more important for non-Jews and their consequent intolerance toward Jews. Even in ancient Greece and Rome, the refusal of Jews to recognize pagan gods and their different rituals, their practice of circumcision, their observance of Sabbath, their dietary laws, and intermarriage among Jews set them apart from those who conformed to the universal beliefs and patterns of behavior in their societies.<sup>8</sup> Christian hostility, expressed at its strongest by Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), was based on the responsibility of Jews ("deformed monsters" who rejected Christianity and the Messiah) for the crucifixion of Jesus, which justified their "perpetual servitude." For Augustine, Jews were carnal beings who had rejected the spiritual truth of Christianity. The Spanish insistence on purity of the blood, *limpieza de sangre*, largely stemmed from fear that the blood of an inferior people transmitted by the Marranos might taint the Spanish populace. From early modern European history on, Jews were castigated for their ethnic separation, culture, and autonomous community. This separation, accompanied by a purported Jewish personality or character type, occasioned the denial of equal rights to Jews.

Logically, it might have been expected that the criticism of Jewish particularity would cease in the more enlightened era that brought with it the first "civic betterment of the Jews,"<sup>9</sup> emancipation, and the gradual removal of many traditional restrictions and forms of discrimination. Emancipation would, it was believed, bring with it assimilation, if not religious conversion, and the elimination of supposedly Jewish behavioral characteristics.<sup>10</sup> The assimilation process, or, in Walter Rathenau's phrase, "the conscious self-education of a race for its adaption to outside demands,"<sup>11</sup> would transform the nature of the Jewish community such that it became indistinguishable from the rest.

The religious element of antisemitism, resting on Jewish rejection of the true faith, may indeed have been reduced, if not eliminated, since the Enlightenment either through growth of tolerance, increasing skepticism about religion, or expectation of conversion. But in its place greater prominence was placed on Jewish characteristics, which were partly genetic in nature and partly the result of alien cultural and ethnic traditions. Purported characteristics such as moral insensitivity, superstitious habits, lack of social graces, and cultural inferiority now rendered Jews incapable of true citizenship.

Unexpectedly, the Enlightenment helped produce a new rationale for antisemitism. Some of its major figures—including Diderot, Holbach, and especially Voltaire, who believed Jews to be an ignorant and crude people without art or science and Judaism to be an obscurantist and intolerant religion—were instrumental in providing a secular anti-Jewish

rhetoric in the name of European culture rather than religion. Although the medieval assignment of perpetual servitude had largely ended—indeed, Judaism was now condemned as the foundation of Christianity—and their legal status had improved, Jews were still incapable of true citizenship because of the innate nature attributed to them and their inability to belong to communities characterized by blood ties, common race, and historic memories.

Not surprisingly, the very prominence of the Jewish community, especially in Central Europe, accentuated the argument that Jews were aliens who were disproportionately prominent in elite positions. Envy of economic success by Jews, resentment of their position in certain businesses and professions, criticism of their prominent role in the sphere of distribution and of their crucial situation as intermediaries, and jealousy of their prominent role in cultural and intellectual life led to the charge that Jews were subverting the economic basis of society and were responsible for its problems, economic crises, dislocation of individuals, and any reduction in the standard of living. To this charge was added that of cultural alien. Xenophobic attitudes might have excluded the prosperous “cravat Jews” of Central Europe, but the larger number of Eastern European Jews, the “caftan Jews,” immediately discernible by appearance, were severely castigated.<sup>12</sup> It was the black caftan that Hitler said first drew his attention to the “alien” face, which from then on he could distinguish from other faces.

### *The Charge of Racial Inferiority*

Reinforcing this charge of the particularity, or alien nature, of Jews has been a second one, more recent in history, of racial inferiority. Greater insistence after the Enlightenment on supposed Jewish genetic characteristics coincided with the formulation of racial theories by Renan, Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Nietzsche, Wagner, and the Social Darwinists and with the rise of anthropological thought.

The concept of race may never have been completely neutral in its allocation of character, physical, and even moral qualities to peoples. A theoretical basis was now available for different peoples not only to be regarded as distinct but also to be ranked in order of superiority. And those using racial theory usually applied it only to the Jewish people. Jewish racial qualities were thought to be a negative and inferior nature that merited exclusion, discrimination, and, at the most extreme, extermination. Religious conversion was insufficient if behavior resulted from the inherited characteristics of racial groups. The very coining of the term *antisemitism* by Wilhelm Marr in 1879 suggested that it was racial characteristics rather than religious beliefs to which opposition was being registered. In reality, of course, there is no such thing as a “semitism” that is characteristic of Jews. The original opposition between Semite and Aryan made by Renan and others was concerned with differences in languages, but in debased form it coincided with the

distinction between Jews and non-Jews, secular as well as Christian. Secular racial antisemitism has never really been anything else than antagonism to Jews. The myth of Jewish biological inferiority justified the systematization of antisemitism and the continuing attacks in a more secular age since evils in society supposedly resulted from the presence of the Jewish race. The argument of biological differences propounded by anti-Christians marks the emergence of the genocidal strain in modern antisemitism. The world, it was concluded, must be saved from Judaization.

In other words, Jews were considered a threat to culture itself, as the materialist spirit of their race presumably eroded true values. Much of the original support for Nazism rested on its claim that it was defending the true European values against the threat to Aryan virility—a claim that stemmed from the inculcation of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century German ideology of the *Volk* in both racial and nonracial forms. The *Volk*, which embodies feeling and inward spiritual growth, the true and the beautiful, must overcome and reject the materialism and capitalism symbolized by the urban and rationalistic Jew, whose religion had no ethical foundation.<sup>13</sup> In this view, Jews at best might exemplify materialism and unspirituality—both inferior to culture, a living organism. If in the Enlightenment a distinction could still be made between Judaism as a fossil and the possibility of assimilation for individual Jews, the stress on inherent differences between races meant the erosion of the distinction.

Ironically, the whole argument rests on a misnomer, inasmuch as Jews do not constitute a race as that term is used today but include people from many races. Composed of individuals of different colors, backgrounds, religious views, and countries of origin, Jews are a heterogeneous people made up not only of those born to Jewish mothers but also of converts. They cease to be Jews by conversion to other religions. They are also unique in being members of both a religion and a nation with common experiences—historical, recent, and current—that have been welded together by shared tragedy and aspiration.

Paradoxically, the charge that Jews were a separate ethnic group, thus justifying denial of their individual rights, did not lead to a recognition that they were also members of a collective entity with its own self-consciousness and interest in collective self-determination as a nation-state. It was inequitable already that the criticism of individual particularity was confined, with rare exceptions, only to Jews, who were therefore seen as aliens. But it was even more inequitable that recognition was not accorded to the national particularity of Jews nor to the legitimacy of a Jewish political entity in its own nation-state. If the historical experience of Jews has been a varying combination of adherence to God, Torah, or Law, and to Israel or Jewish nationhood,<sup>14</sup> recognition of that nationhood is just as important in demonstrating toleration of Jews as a function of understanding Jewish ethical monotheism or the significance of Jewish law for the behavior of Jews.

But recognition of Jewish nationhood was denied as early as 1789 when Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre in the French National Assembly argued that "the Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals. . . . There cannot be one nation within another nation." Emancipation would thus mean the end of Jewish national identity. The price of civil and political equality in this view was renunciation of any collective identification by Jews. For two centuries this argument has been made, but in the present it has another dimension. The question of Jewish nationhood or collective identity is now, of course, linked with the state of Israel. Most Jews are committed to the existence of the state; to be anti-Israeli in principle is to be anti-Jewish as Jews now understand Jewishness.

### *Anti-Zionism*

In world politics, the principle of Jewish self-determination as a people with the right to form its own state has often been regarded less sympathetically than in the case of other peoples. Not only has the creation of Israel been opposed by Arab and Muslim countries, which usually only refer to it as "the Zionist entity," but its claim to legitimacy as a sovereign state also troubles left-wing Western intellectuals who have no similar difficulty with the claims of other groups. The equation of Zionism with illegitimacy has now turned to farce, with the Soviet Union in Outer Mongolia denouncing the Chinese as Zionists and Haitian exiles attacking the Zionism of the ruler Papa Doc Duvalier.

More recently, anti-Zionism has taken another form in addition to its rejection of the collective right of Jews to form their own state. Now it also embraces an attack on a state of a particular kind—a conspiratorial and imperialistic state as well as a tool of colonialism, with demonic qualities.<sup>15</sup> The historic complaint from Tacitus on the "intransigence" of Jews has now been transferred to the state of Israel.

The establishment of the state led in part to the transformation of the traditionally perceived image of Jews. That image—of the sinister economic force, usurer, moneylender, landlord, parasite—still survives, if in much reduced fashion, but it has now been superseded by that of the Israelis, or Zionists, who are criticized as arrogant, colonialist, imperialist, and racist. Political anti-Zionism is not synonymous with traditional antisemitism. Surveys in the United States show that the attitudes of a group toward antisemitism and toward Israel may not coincide. Moreover, criticism of the acts of Israel cannot and must not be taken *per se* as examples of antisemitism. Individuals may oppose Israel because they are honestly convinced of its errors, or for commercial reasons, or by following currently intellectually fashionable position. Nevertheless, many current examples show that one reason is not readily distinguishable from the other.

Soviet persecution of its own Jews is accompanied by leadership of an anti-Israeli bloc at the United Nations. Polish antisemitism remains

in a country where only 6,000 Jews are left of the former 3 million.<sup>16</sup> In some Third World countries antisemitism exists without any experience, past or present, of Jews. The myth of worldwide Jewish conspiracy survives with the continuing publication of the forgery entitled *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in a number of countries, including not only the Soviet Union but also Saudi Arabia, whose late king viewed international politics as dominated by the Zionist-Communist conspiracy.

In the Arab and Islamic countries, antisemitism, once less violent than in Christian countries, has dramatically increased since 1948. This increase is evidenced not only by the rhetoric used internally in those countries but also by actions on the international level. The Arab economic boycott of Israel extends (erratically, it must be admitted) to non-Israeli businesses under Jewish control and to individuals of Jewish origin. And the continual Arab attacks on Israel at the United Nations have degenerated into antisemitic utterances. Particularly flagrant examples of these attacks can be witnessed in the speeches by the Libyan ambassador, Ali Treiki, on December 6, 1983, and by the Jordanian representative Hazzem Nusseibah on December 8, 1980. The former stated that "the Jewish Zionists here in the United States attempt to destroy Americans. Who are the owners of pornographic film operations and houses? Is it not the Jews who are exploiting the American people and trying to debase them?" The latter attacked "the representative of the Zionist entity" and "his own people's cabal which controls and manipulates the rest of humanity by controlling the money and wealth of the world."

A conference in Germany in 1981 attempted to define the "New Anti-Semitism." Included in the definition were the following points: that antisemitism exists when Israeli politics is judged without regard to the special problem of the state of Israel threatened by hostile states, and that it exists when actions by the Israeli government are automatically judged one-sidedly. Examples of this new antisemitism now abound; probably the most explicit of these were the political attacks on Israel for its actions in Lebanon in 1982, attacks in which a similarity between Israel and Nazi Germany was often asserted. In this "semantic hysteria," as Bernard-Henri Lévy called it, Israel was accused of racial genocide and "final solutions" against the Palestinians; the Israeli government was also said to be "pounding the Star of David into a Swastika."<sup>17</sup> The litmus test proposed by Conor Cruise O'Brien is a useful one.<sup>18</sup> An individual is anti-Jewish if that person cannot keep the name of Hitler out of conversation, or compares Jews, whether Israelis or not, to Nazis, or characterizes Israel as a racist, Nazi, fascist, or imperialist state.

### *The Chosen People*

In addition to the criticism of Jewish particularity, a constant and continuing source of antagonism has proceeded from the concept of Jews as the "chosen people." The concept was meaningful for the early



leaders of the Church and by Islam, following from their recognition of its significance for spiritual leadership and, in a sense, from their attempt to supplant Jews in this role. But the concept is usually misunderstood by antisemites. For them the chosen people embody fanaticism, evil, or an attitude of superiority to other peoples. They perceive the Old Testament as the source of Jewish fanaticism, tribal nationalism, and communal exclusivism, and as the basis for the aggressive attitude of the state of Israel, whereas the New Testament represents for many such antisemites a universal belief and community.

The "chosen people" must shoulder yet another burden—the imposition of adherence to stricter rules and to the highest standards of conduct from which other peoples and groups may be exempted. Departure from or failure to reach those standards has been subjected to castigation in ample fashion, as evidenced not only by the Western use of double standards of behavior but also more recently by the media commentary on Israeli actions in Lebanon in 1982.

The concept of chosen people may reflect "the envy and admiration of the world," but it is not a claim of superiority of a people or a racist belief, nor does it confer any privilege. It is only an assertion that Jews have been chosen by God to uphold ethical monotheism, to show "a light unto the nations" (Isaiah 49:6) on moral questions, and to spread "God's salvation unto the end of the earth."<sup>19</sup> It is a charge to perform special duties and to bear responsibility—even suffering.

Yet the antisemitic argument has always been that Jews perceive themselves as superior to other peoples. It did not come as a surprise when Yakov Malik, the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations, said in 1973 that "the Zionists have come forward with the theory of the Chosen People, an absurd ideology." It is more surprising that 59 percent of those questioned in a 1969 survey in the United States agreed that "Jews still think of themselves as God's chosen people."<sup>20</sup> Given the abundant evidence of the misunderstanding of the concept, Sholem Aleichem's character Tevye is, indeed, not the only Jew to urge God, "Please, next time choose someone else."

To explain the pathological obsession with Jews some have resorted to psychological factors, as did Sartre in his famous definition of the antisemite as a person who is afraid.<sup>21</sup> Troubled people project their own anxieties, drives, impulses of which they are ashamed, and negative self-images onto Jews, who are then seen as aggressive, competitive, and secretive; are resented as a "chosen people"; and are made a scapegoat for the failures of society and themselves.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, sadism is a powerful force behind antisemitism. But not all those interested in the psychological explanation can accept the Freudian view that the Christian charge against Jews of deicide has been transformed into a secular one of parricide. More, however, will agree that collective psychopathology is at work when Jews are seen as the embodiment of evil aiming at the domination of mankind.