

HOLY HATRED: CHRISTIANITY,  
ANTISEMITISM, AND THE HOLOCAUST

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# Chapter 1

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## Christianity, Antisemitism, and the Holocaust

*In the last analysis, antisemitism is a religious problem.*

—Jacques Madaule

Without a thorough knowledge of history, men and women can neither fully understand themselves nor make wise choices for their present and future, for all human beings have been shaped by the values and institutions they have inherited from the past. Of all these values and institutions, those of religion have been primary in their influence on people, who, at their core, are religious beings, *homini religiosi*. Even those not consciously involved with the momentous theological issues of life and death, good and evil, right and wrong are still emotionally caught up in them and often base their most important decisions on ideas, values, and attitudes handed down to them, in the case of the Western world, by the Churches and their theologians.

Of all historical events, the Holocaust seems the most unfathomable. Scholars, especially, understand the inadequacy of historical explanation. And yet, just as historians try to explain the decline and fall of Rome or the causes of the First World War, they struggle to explain the inexplicable, measure the depths of the unfathomable, understand why the Holocaust happened.

Christianity's precise influence on the Holocaust cannot be determined and the Christian churches did not themselves perpetrate the Final Solution. But two millennia of Christian ideas and prejudices, their impact on Christians' behavior, appear to be the major basis of antisemitism and of the apex of antisemitism, the Holocaust.

In the earliest centuries of the Christian era, preexisting pagan antagonism toward Jews (about a quarter of pagan writers were hostile to the Jews because pagans could not understand, on the one hand, Jewish monotheism, and on the other, the Jewish Sabbath, circumcision, and kosher foods) was replaced by the conviction that Jews, all Jews, were forever responsible for murdering God. And so the Jewish people were abhorrent and any injustice done to them, short of murder, according to Augustine, was justified—and even murder was sometimes justified. The “deicidal” Jews became the archetypal evildoers in Christian societies. This anti-Jewish attitude became a permanent element in the fundamental identity of Western Christian civilization. Christian writers transformed Jewish virtues into vices, and transvaluated Jewish values into sins. They called “evil good and good evil . . . everything was completely turned upside-down.”<sup>1</sup> This theology assumed that the Christian Church, the “new Israel”—ordained and sanctioned by God—succeeded the cursed and rejected old Israel morally, historically, and metaphysically. This ideology, often termed triumphalism, or *theologia gloriae*, considered Jews an inherently evil people who, long before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, slaughtered their prophets, then betrayed and murdered their true messiah. These ideas dominated Christianity’s position on Judaism and Jews for 2,000 years. As Jacob Neusner wrote, “At no time before our own century did Christianity contemplate Judaism as an equal, identify in Judaism a medium of salvation distinct from the Church, find in the Torah as read by sages a message both true and also original, or in any way accord to Judaism a place within that tradition of truth that the Church alone nurtured.”<sup>2</sup>

This book examines how the Christian Churches initiated and elaborated this theological, mythical, and defamatory image of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness. Over the past 2,000 years, this anti-Jewish theology—along with its institutionalization and its primitive racism—has influenced, and sometimes determined, the Churches’ Jewish policy, that of secular Christian authorities, as well as the behavior of the majorities in the Christian nations in which Jews lived.

Once the break between Christianity and Judaism was made theologically in the first century of the Common Era and finalized politically in the fourth century, the Church attempted to establish its own, unique identity, as independently as possible, from Judaism. To achieve this, the Church cast the Jews in the role of aliens, monsters, pariahs. What most Christian Churchmen taught about the Jews centered around the story of Cain and Abel. But the lesson was not the moral message that we should be our brothers’ keepers. Instead, it was the idea, originating in Augustine, that all Jews were Cains—Jewishness and Judaism their stigmata—and the Jews’ fate was to wander as suffering examples of what it meant to reject and

murder God. For two millennia, Christian theology institutionalized in the Churches has been history's most profound source of antagonism toward Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness; and the Churches have been by far the most significant instruments of Jewish suffering.

It is important to note, however, that throughout Christian history, there existed side by side with *theologia gloriae*, another kind of Christian ideology. It required ethical Christian treatment of all human beings and has been termed the theology of the cross (*theologia crucis*). It is based on Jesus' statement in the Gospel of Matthew (16:24–5): "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." This belief required the Christian faithful to follow the moral teachings of Jesus concerning all human beings even at the risk of their own lives. Emphasizing the humanity of Jesus, his fears and anxieties as well as his courage and faith, the theology of the cross underscores the solidarity of suffering among all human beings, Gentile and Jew. Analysis of Christians who helped Jews during the Holocaust, for instance, reveals many different motivations for their behavior, but most of these motives derive from the model of human behavior found in the Judeo-Christian morality of Jesus of Nazareth.

During the Holocaust, however, most Christian Churches and most Christians were not adherents of *theologia crucis*, for they stood by in silence, or collaborated, when Jews were taken away by other Christians to be tortured and murdered. This Christian silence was not an ordinary silence. It was special because it justified the murder of Christianity's brothers by the authority of Christian culture (the Churches, their teachings, Christian art and education). Thus many, if not most, Christians became directly or indirectly what they claimed to despise, murderous Cains.

Authorities as dissimilar as Karl Barth and Hannah Arendt believed the connection between the Christian Churches and the Holocaust impossible.<sup>3</sup> The Churches' moral principles, so antithetical to the genocidal morality of Nazi Germany, should preclude, they thought, any connection between Christian precepts and the Final Solution. But those who argue that Christianity's role was indispensable in the etiology of the Holocaust do not refer to Jesus' moral principles, but to a Christian ideology that disdains and hates all things Jewish.

This explains why people—almost all of them born as Christians, baptized and married in a church, and later buried in consecrated soil, coming from a Christian environment, and absorbing a form of Christian culture that condemned Jews—attempted to murder all the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. And why most other Christians either actively collaborated

in this murderous endeavor or tacitly permitted it to happen. In his introduction to *Lessons and Legacies*,<sup>4</sup> Peter Hayes asks two central questions: “How could [Christian] people permit such things?” and “Why did so few brave souls try to intercede?” The answer is that most European Christians—not just in Germany—collaborated actively or passively, to a greater or lesser extent, with what Hitler called for, not so much because of the pressures of fear and anxiety, although these were often present, but because a millennial anti-Jewish Christian ideology had conditioned them into antisemitism.

Nearly every Nazi administrative order—from yellow stars to ghettos, from defamations to deportations, from round-ups to slaughters—had a precedent in the Christian West.<sup>5</sup> Millions of Jews were murdered in Europe before Adolf Hitler was a twinkle in his mother’s eye. Jews were condemned as devils from the time of the Church Fathers and regularly massacred from the Middle Ages onward.<sup>6</sup> During the Dreyfus Affair, 20,000 French Catholics—often writing on behalf of their children and their pets—wrote that they planned to flay and butcher and boil the Jewish vampires alive, or bake them in the ovens of Baccarat. A certain Abbé Cros donated three francs for a bedside rug made of “Yids’ skins to trample on morning and evenings.”<sup>7</sup> They called Jews bugs. A generation later, Germans and their collaborators treated Jews like insects and murdered them in the millions employing an insecticide called Zyklon. The Nazis added a comprehensive organization and a fanatic willingness and technology to follow through to their horrific end the murderous impulses inherent in Christian antisemitism.

Richard Steigmann-Gall points out that Nazism was not essentially an anti-Christian pagan movement,<sup>8</sup> that Christianity played a crucial role in most Nazis’ lives and in their Nazism, that Christians believed in the Jewishness of Germany’s woes and pointed to a “final solution” of these Jewish-generated problems, that the so-called Nazi pagans—whom many Christian Nazis opposed—were anti-ecclesiastical but not anti-Christian, that Nazi anti-semitism fit neatly into Christian antisemitism, that leading Nazis strengthened Protestant Christianity, that in their social policies the Nazis were guided by a Christian ethic, and, finally, that Nazism may have been hostile to the churches but never “uniformly anti-Christian.”<sup>9</sup> Many Nazis, both Catholic and Protestant in background, adhered to a “positive Christianity,” expressed as early as point 24 of the 1920 Nazi “25 Points”<sup>10</sup> in which they appropriated a divine Jesus Christ as the leading antisemite; they claimed to be authentic Christians above and beyond the artificial division of Catholic and Protestant confessions; “they held that Christianity was a central aspect of their movement [and] shaped its direction, [and] world view.”<sup>11</sup> Rosenberg, the Nazi “pagan,” called Jesus “a lynchpin of [German] history . . . God of the Europeans.”<sup>12</sup>

Ideology was not the only cause of the Nazi Holocaust. A whole raft of political, economic, military, and psychosocial factors also contributed.<sup>13</sup> But the anti-Jewish aspects of Christian thought and theology, the anti-Jewish Christian mindset and attitudes, and the anti-Jewish precedents provided by the churches' historical relationship to Jews significantly conditioned, and may have determined, the plan, establishment, and prosecution of the Holocaust. The churches and their theologians had formulated compelling religious, social, and moral ideas that provided a conceptual framework for the perception of the Jew as less than human, or as inhuman, devilish and satanic, and these churches and theologians had proclaimed Jews traitors, murderers, plague, pollution, filth, and insects long before the National-Socialists called Jews traitors, murderers, plague, pollution, filth, devils, and insects.

Aggravating matters was the racism that crept into Christian anti-Jewish theology. Racism holds that human beings are permanently divided into genetically different groups and that each and every individual within a group manifests the identical intellectual, moral, social, and physical traits of all other members of their group.

Marcel Simon claims that theological anti-Jewishness and racial anti-semitism are totally different, because "from the Church's point of view, at any period, . . . if [a person] was converted, [this person] ceased to be a Jew."<sup>14</sup> But because Christianity has often conceived of the Jews as intrinsically evil and essentially unconvertible, Christian antisemitism has often superseded the Christian sacrament of baptism. From the first centuries of the Common Era onward, many Christians found an inherent theological repulsiveness as well as "a horrible and fascinating physical otherness" in Jews.<sup>15</sup> In 1941, K.E. Robinson, an official of the British Colonial Office, considered the Jews "entirely alien in every sense of the word."<sup>16</sup> Many Church Fathers claimed that every Jew was fundamentally and repugnantly un-Christian, if not anti-Christian, and that Jews transmitted indelibly evil characteristics to their offspring. Because of this, the sacrament of Christian baptism could not wash away the "stink of Jewish unbelief." Associating the Jews with heresy, the second-century Christian apologist, Justin Martyr, for example, argued that God had given Moses' Law to the Jews because God wanted to keep the inherently sinful Jews' evil in check. Augustine observed that no Jew could ever lose the stigma of his forebears' denial and murder of Christ.<sup>17</sup> He wrote that the evil of the Jews, "in their parents [*in parentibus*], led to death."<sup>18</sup> His teacher, Jerome, claimed that all Jews were Judas and were innately evil creatures who betrayed the Lord for money.<sup>19</sup> John Chrysostom called Jews *deicides* with no chance for "atonement, excuse, or defense."<sup>20</sup> Citing Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or

the leopard his spots?" in the seventh century, Isidore of Seville declared that the Jews' evil character never changed.<sup>21</sup> A Byzantine proverb stated: "when a Jew is baptized, it is as if one had baptized an ass."<sup>22</sup> In the next century, John of Damascus wrote that God gave the Jews the Sabbath because of their "absolute propensity for material things."<sup>23</sup>

These early forms of Christian racism persisted into the Middle Ages. When in 1130 Anacletus II, great-grandson of a converted Jew, was elected pope, Bernard of Clairvaux took the racist position that "it is an insult to Christ that the offspring of a Jew has occupied the chair of Peter."<sup>24</sup> A century later Thomas Aquinas wrote, "The Lord, in order to stir to compassion the Jewish people, naturally inclined to cruelty [*ad crudelitatem pronum*], wished to exercise them in pity even to animals, by forbidding certain practices savouring of cruelty to them."<sup>25</sup>

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain saw the most extensive development of the Christian racial idea.<sup>26</sup> As Léon Poliakov has pointed out, "Spanish theologians worked out a doctrine according to which the false beliefs of . . . Jews had soiled their furthest descendants . . . . The theologians . . . maintain[ed] that the rejection of Christ had corrupted the *conversos* biologically."<sup>27</sup> Spanish Catholics discovered that once Jews were converted and traditional legal discriminations were removed, many of the perhaps million *conversos* did brilliantly well in Spanish society. Although most *conversos* were of humble origins, others gained influence in the judiciary, the municipal and national government bureaucracy, tax-collection, the army, the universities, and the Church itself. One way for Old Christians to eliminate these successful *conversos* from competition was legally to define their impediment of origin.<sup>28</sup> As Yosef Yerushalmi has noted, "the traditional mistrust of the Jew as outsider now gave way to an even more alarming fear of the *conversos* as insider."<sup>29</sup>

Spanish theologians agreed that "despicable" Jewish ideas and religiously motivated behavior had so corrupted the Jews' descendants that all Jews were impervious to baptism and salvation, so full of the "proverbially 'Jewish' traits of cunning, sharpness, and a boundless lust for money and power defying all moral scruples."<sup>30</sup> By the sixteenth century, when almost all vestiges of Spanish crypto-Judaism were eliminated, King Philip II along with Popes Pius V, Sixtus V, and Clement VIII sanctioned race laws based on the Jews' *mala sangre*, bad blood, whereas Old Christians were exalted by their *limpieza de sangre*, pureness of blood. Spanish race laws—*estatutos de limpieza de sangre*—applied to all *conversos*. A play of the time praised a "noble dog" who smelled out Jews dressed in Christian clothes. In 1604, Father Prudencio de Sandoval wrote, "Who can deny that in the descendants of the Jews there persists and endures the evil inclination of their ancient ingratitude and lack of understanding. [One Jewish ancestor] alone



defiles and corrupts him.”<sup>31</sup> In 1623, 126 years after the conversion of Portuguese Jewry, a Portuguese scholar held that “a little Jewish blood is enough to destroy the world.”<sup>32</sup> Later in the century, after calling the Jews carnal, sensualist, and cruel, a Fr. Francisco de Torrejoncillo warned Catholics: “There is no evil that the Jews do not desire, as they wait for their messiah. . . . To be enemies of Christians, of Christ, and of his Divine Law, it is not necessary to be of a Jewish father and mother. One alone suffices.” Christian children must not “be suckled by Jewish vileness because that milk, being of infected persons, can only engender perverse inclinations.”<sup>33</sup>

Spanish racism was so widespread that, except for the Jesuits, all the major Catholic orders in Spain in the sixteenth century adopted racist regulations to exclude men of Jewish background from their brotherhood.<sup>34</sup> The Jesuit’s founder, Ignatius Loyola, and his immediate successors were traditional religious antisemites who saw the Jews only as theologically, not racially, inferior. Loyola even wished that he had been born with Jewish blood. But in 1608, the Sixth General Congregation of the order voted that no candidate could enter the Society of Jesus unless his Gentile heritage could be traced back five generations. Even the General of the Order could not dispense with this “impediment of origin,” which lasted until 1946.<sup>35</sup> Ironically, in 1935 the Jesuits condemned Hitler for the same “purity of blood” principle that the order itself adhered to.<sup>36</sup>

All extensions of Spanish race laws to Catholic orders required papal approval; when the majority of an order wanted to exclude *conversos*, most popes approved the rule.<sup>37</sup> Even the National-Socialist Nuremberg Decrees of 1935 were less exclusive, defining a Jew as having one parent or two grandparents who were Jewish by religious identity. (In the early sixteenth century the warrior pope Julius II reversed the racist momentum, describing such discrimination as “detestable and corrupt and contrary to the wishes of Christ and Paul.”)<sup>38</sup> In 1588 and 1600, Popes Sixtus V and Clement VIII approved a Portuguese law that forbade men from Jewish families to be ordained as priests.<sup>39</sup>

These anti-Jewish racial ideas spread from Spain across Europe. Erasmus, the Dutch man of letters and satirist of Church excesses, maintained that Christians must be careful about allowing Jews into the fellowship of the Church, for a fully converted Jew could not exist: he was always pernicious. Erasmus wrote that the Jewish apostate Johannes Pfefferkorn “appears quite typical of his race. His ancestors attacked Christ only, whereas he has [betrayed] Christendom, hypocritically claiming to have become a Christian. . . . This half-Jew has done more harm to Christendom than all the Jews together.”<sup>40</sup> One of the authors of *Letters of Obscure Men*, Ulrich von Hutten, described Pfefferkorn in a similar manner. “Germany could not have produced such a monster. His parents are Jews, and he remains

such, even if he has plunged his unworthy body into the baptism of Christ.”<sup>41</sup> The apostate Jew and Pfefferkorn’s friend, Victor von Karben, testified that many Christians mocked Pfefferkorn as a baptized Jew, saying, “anything that is done for you is a waste. [Jews] will never become good Christians. . . . Though you act like a Christian, you are still a Jew at heart.”<sup>42</sup> Reuchlin, Germany’s foremost student of Jewish literature and mysticism, bucked the trend. His opinion was that “the Jew belongs to God just as much as I do.”<sup>43</sup> In his youth a follower of Jerome, Reuchlin at first accused the Jews of hating and persecuting Christians, of unbelief and depravity, and of blasphemy against Christ and Mary. But he later argued that the Jews were citizens of the Holy Roman Empire, they deserved its full privileges and protection, and the medieval accusations of heresy against Jews were false.<sup>44</sup>

Some of Martin Luther’s omnibus attack on the Jews was also racist. Luther wrote of the Jews as if they were a “race” that could not truly convert to Christianity. And by making the Jews the devil’s people, Luther put them beyond conversion. Trying to convert the Jews, he argued, was like “trying to cast out the devil . . .”<sup>45</sup> “They have failed to learn any lesson from the terrible distress that has been theirs for over fourteen hundred years in exile. . . . If these blows do not help, it is reasonable to assume that our talking and explaining will help even less. . . . Much less do I propose to convert the Jews, for that is impossible.”<sup>46</sup> In a sermon of 25 September 1539, Luther tried to demonstrate through several examples that individual Jews could not convert permanently,<sup>47</sup> and in several passages of *On the Jews and Their Lies*, Luther appeared to reject the possibility that the Jews would or could convert.

Speaking to them about [the Law, aside from the Ten Commandments] is much the same as preaching the gospel to a sow. . . . From their youth they have imbibed such venomous hatred against the Goyim from their parents and their rabbis, and they still continuously drink it. . . . It has penetrated flesh and blood, marrow and bone, and has become part and parcel of their nature and their life. Dear Christian, be advised and so not doubt that next to the devil, you have no more bitter, venomous, and vehement foe than a real Jew who earnestly seeks to be a Jew. . . . Their lineage and circumcision infect them all. A Jewish heart is as hard as stone and iron and cannot be moved by any means. Even if the Jews were punished in the most gruesome manner so that the streets ran with blood, so that their dead would be counted not in the hundred thousands but in the millions, [it would not be] possible to convert these children of the devil! It is impossible to convert the devil and his own, nor are we commanded to attempt this.<sup>48</sup>

In his trenchant comparison of Spanish and modern German racism, Yosef Yerushalmi observed that these similar forms of racism developed

independently and indigenously, oblivious of each other, and that “any hostile conception of the Jews which implies that their negative characteristics are permanent must already be considered as essentially, or at least potentially, ‘racial.’”<sup>49</sup>

The Jesuit journal *Civiltà Cattolica*, sponsored and controlled by the Vatican, conducted a racist antisemitic campaign commencing in the last decades of the nineteenth century at least through 1945. In 1880, Father Giuseppe Oreglia wrote: “The Jews—eternal insolent children, obstinate, dirty, thieves, liars . . . barbarian invasion by an enemy race, hostile to Christianity and to society in general. . . . Oh how wrong and deluded are those who think that Judaism is just a religion like Catholicism, paganism, Protestantism, and not in fact a race, a people, a nation. . . . The Jews are not only Jews because of their religion. . . they are Jews also and especially because of their race.” Even should they convert, he went on to say, Jews remain Jews for all eternity. The next year, Oreglia added that inspired by the devil, Jews cannot become members of another nation or race, “they are born Jews and must remain Jews. . . . Hatred for Christians they imbibed with their mother’s milk.”<sup>50</sup> In 1897, Jesuit Father Raffaele Ballerini warned the Catholic world that “the Jew remains always in every place immutably a Jew. His nationality is not in the soil where he is born, nor in the language that he speaks, but in his seed.”<sup>51</sup>

When newly appointed Archbishop Theodore Kohn, a Catholic scholar and convert from Judaism, rose to speak at a Catholic Congress in 1896, he was shouted down and the Vatican asked him to resign.<sup>52</sup>

At the time of the Catholic Church’s anti-Dreyfus press campaign in 1898, the Catholic daily *La Croix du nord* described Jews as a “race, a foreign race camped among us, a race that has neither our blood nor our ideals, a race that is cosmopolitan by its nature, a race without a country, an intransigent, usurious race lacking moral sense, a race capable of selling and buying anything.” Some of these accusations trace back to Jerome’s attack on Jews as Judases and later Spanish race laws. Eight years later, another French Catholic newspaper wrote that “the Church of Satan is incarnated in the Jewish race.” In 1934, a Polish Catholic journal *Pro Christo* observed that even after seven generations, converted Jews still gave off their “Jew-stink”—a concept related to the association of Jews with the devil, who smelled like feces.<sup>53</sup>

Traditional Christian antisemitism and racism are not incompatible. In the early twentieth century, the Churches denied racist attitudes toward the Jews, assumably because of the Christian sacrament of baptism, but they often acted as if they were judging Jews on the basis of their race. Moreover, many, if not most, racists do not cleanly substitute their pseudo-scientific judaeophobia for their Christian antisemitism. Instead, they build their

racist ideology into their already established religious prejudice against Jews. Traditional religious antisemitism has existed side-by-side with racist antisemitism for nearly 2,000 years. For two millennia, through sermons, theological writings, laws, art, and literature, Christian antisemitism has concentrated on the Jews' enduring "sins" and "crimes"—their stiff-necked persistence in their *perfidia*, their greed, their treason, their servitude, their murderous rage at Christ and Christians. On some occasions, Christian racism resulted in mass murder of Jews. The Crusaders and other medieval Christians often massacred Jews, whom they felt were hopelessly unconvertible, without offering them the choice of baptism. These murderers, as had John Chrysostom and Martin Luther, perceived the Jews as irreparably Jewish and worthy of slaughter. The National-Socialists felt the same way and, *mutatis mutandis*, chose the same solution to the "Jewish Problem."

After their study of American opinion in the 1960s, Charles Glock and Rodney Stark discovered that even at a time of growing ecumenical harmony led by the Catholic Vatican II Council, about half of the Americans interviewed—both Catholic and Protestant, both lay and clergy—believed that:

- All Jews were responsible for crucifying Christ, and they could not be forgiven for this act until they converted
- God punishes Jews because they reject Christ
- The Jews are responsible for their own suffering

And the interview respondents were the same people who, associating the Jews with materialism, faulted them for being greedy.

The researchers concluded that far from being exclusively secular, "the heart and soul of antisemitism rested on Christianity." Fully 95 percent of Americans got their secular stereotypes of Jews from the Christian religion.<sup>54</sup> Christianity, as other religions, stands as the focus of prejudice because "it is the pivot of the cultural tradition of a group."<sup>55</sup> This group, Christians, is unlike any other group in Western history; it has been the controlling in-group over the last 1,700 years.

Other studies of prejudice and stereotyping indicate that although the human mind has an inherent tendency to classify, it is not inevitable that people will categorize others by race or ethnicity. This is caused by cultural conditioning. In the England of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, for example, Jews were stereotyped as they had been from the time of the Church Fathers, or at least, the Middle Ages and would be into the Nazi era, as: cursed, Antichrists, avaricious, blasphemers, brutes, cheats, circumcisers, cowards, crucifiers, cutthroats, deicides, desecrators of the Host, devils,

dogs, fences, parasites, stinking, bleeding, infidels, lascivious infidels, locusts, usurers, murderers, obstinate, stiff-necked, peddlers, perfidious, poisoners, pigs, proselytizers, ravens, reptiles, ritual murderers, serpents, witches, subverters, traitors, thieves, tricksters, cheaters, unclean beasts, wolves. The same pattern occurs in late nineteenth-century France during the Dreyfus Affair.<sup>56</sup> Seventy percent of Americans in the late 1990s demonstrated unconscious stereotyping not because their minds inherently categorized, but because these Americans were emotionally induced to have false memories.<sup>57</sup> It was learned behavior.<sup>58</sup> Many Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, Hutu and Tutsi, Serbs and Albanians hate and fear each other not because of any inherent predisposition to perceive racial differences, but because of learned religious and political motives.<sup>59</sup>

Christian associations of the word *Jew* with despicable acts and traits have been woven into the languages of the West. In the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, begun by the Brothers Grimm in 1838 (and completed in 1960), *Jude* was defined as, “Jew: . . . of their evil traits—they are offensive and slovenly, greedy and extortionate[. One says] in a whole variety of idioms—dirty as an old Jew; he stinks like a Jew; . . . to taste like a dead Jew . . . to practice usury, to cheat, to profiteer, to borrow like a Jew . . .” The dictionary also noted that *Jew* refers to part of a pig’s spinal column; *to jew* (*jüdeln*) means to talk, bargain, or smell like a Jew.<sup>60</sup> In the seventeenth century, Littre’s *French Dictionary* defined *Juif* as someone who lends at usurious rates or anyone who gains money by means of deceit. In colloquial (Brazilian) Portuguese, as in English, everything associated with Christian is good and valuable, but to *jew* (*judiar*) means to mistreat, to torment, to mock—references to the Gospel interpretation of the Jews’ relationship with Jesus. *Judeu*, Jew, means an evil, miserly individual. One saying is that “a Jew, not a Christian, killed my dove, my dove so tame that it would eat out of my hand.” *Judiada* refers to inhuman, barbarous, cruel behavior. In popular belief, Jews drank human blood and ate babies. Who would do this? asks the scholar Célia Mentlik, “no other than the Antichrist.”<sup>61</sup>

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) lists dozens of historical examples of the use of the words Jew and Jewish in English.<sup>62</sup> Fully half the definitions are compound words that are offensive and repulsive. A “jewbush,” for example, is one that causes vomiting and death.

The word *antisemitism* has traditionally been distinguished from the term *anti-Judaism* or *Judaeophobia* or *Judenhaß*.<sup>63</sup> *Antisemitism* (*Antisemitismus*) is a nineteenth-century German neologism replacing *Jew-hatred* (*Judenhaß*) in polite discourse and carrying with it overtones of scientific authority, political activity, and racism. Narrowly conceived, *antisemitism* suggests that it was not the religion of the Jews that stirred hostility (anti-Judaism), but biological-race aspects of the Jewish character manifested in their behavior.

But the historical continuity of anti-Jewish ideas and imagery is clear testimony that no essential difference exists between anti-Judaism and antisemitism. One recent author outlined a dozen beliefs of modern antisemites about Jews: (1) conspiracy, (2) intent to conquer the world, (3) desire to harm Christians, (4) immorality, (5) money-grubbing, (6) control of the press, (7) ruination of Christians economically, (8) creation of godless Communism, (9) murder of Christian children and drinking their blood, (10) destruction of the Christian religion, (11) traitors to their nation, (12) Jews must be segregated and their rights curtailed.<sup>64</sup> All these traits—control of the press and creation of Communism could be subsumed under “conspiracy”—are *not* modern but stem from the writings of the Church Fathers and/or the Christian Middle Ages.

Three analogies from the chemical, medical, and biological sciences may clarify antisemitism’s ideological functions. First, although they exist within different historical contexts, anti-Jewish ideas, emotions, and behaviors are reactive elements easily combining with other ideologies, such as nationalism, racism, social darwinism, conservatism, fascism, and socialism to form an explosive compound. Second, like a virus, anti-Jewishness rests dormant at different levels of the societal and individual psyche, surfacing especially during the throes of social or personal crisis. Third, although Jews have often been compared to parasites in both medieval and modern antisemitic imagery, antisemitism itself is a parasitic idea, growing more powerful by feeding on the human emotions of fear, anger, anxiety, and guilt.

I use *antisemitism* in the broadest sense, as hostility toward everything Jewish. *Antisemitism* and *anti-Jewishness* are used interchangeably. Both words refer to the irrational dislike or hatred of Jews, the attempt to demoralize or satanize them, the rejection of the validity of the Jewish religion, the Jewish way of life, the Jewish spirit, the Jewish character, and, ultimately, the Jewish right to live. Both antisemitism and anti-Jewishness express themselves as avoidance, antilocution, discrimination, assault, expropriation, expulsion, physical attack, torture, murder, and/or mass murder.<sup>65</sup>

Although an interpretation of Christian theological attitudes toward Jews and its tragic bearing on Jewish history, this book has two underlying moral assumptions. Everyone is responsible for preventing “innocent blood” from being shed and we should love our neighbors as ourselves—both first expressed in the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>66</sup> Shortly after the Holocaust and the Second World War, the German-Christian philosopher Karl Jaspers pointed out that as witnesses to any crime we must intervene, lest we suffer the deepest kind of “metaphysical guilt.”<sup>67</sup> Standing in silence before evil is a form of participation in it, although passivity is not as morally tainted as directly committing the evil itself. The Church Fathers who created the

theological system in which Jews were cast in the role of the worst people in the history of the world; the medieval theologians and popes and Christian secular authorities who elaborated and enforced this system; American presidents, British government officials, National-Socialists, and, after the fact, those who deny the Holocaust—they all have participated in the evil of antisemitism over the last 2,000 years and have played different, but crucial, roles in the most momentous expression of evil, the Holocaust. We must realize that although history cannot be changed, the past should be studied; what wrong was done in our name should be learned and remembered; we should resolve not to allow such evil ever to repeat itself.