

Antisemitism and Racism in Nazi Ideology

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Before elaborating on antisemitism, racism, and Nazi ideology, including the interaction among them, let us clarify the meaning of each phenomenon. Regarding antisemitism, a letter written by Ernst Richter, addressed to Professor Friedrich Heer, the Roman Catholic scholar who attacked Christianity for its wrongdoings to the Jews, is quite illustrative:

Filled with dismay by your article about the Jews – and with satisfaction at the indignation it has aroused everywhere – I am writing to you to protest most vehemently against the purpose of your arguments, which is to force the peoples of the earth even more under Jewish domination, and even to press the church into its service. Who are you, sir, that you cannot acknowledge what is acknowledged by millions of right-thinking people everywhere? And this you call, in defiance of all the facts, 'the cancer of Christianity!'?

Sir, what are you, perhaps you are yourself a Jew, or part-Jewish, so, that with typical Jewish blindness to your own failings, you profess not to recognize this 'infamy'? Or have you been bribed with Jewish money to work against all ideas of Right and Justice, for the subjugation of all peoples under the Jewish yoke? We have no wish to eliminate the distinctions which God in His wisdom made between the various peoples, nor to tolerate amongst us parasitic agitators, such as the Jews in fact always have been. God has not only asked us, He has commanded us to fight against wrong. And that is why we ask Christ, our beloved immortal King, to deliver us from our and His enemies, and to destroy all efforts to betray us forever to our murderers.¹

This letter contains the classic topics of traditional Jew-hatred. I will return to its origins shortly.

Regarding racism, I do not want to deal with the history and origins of race theories and the emergence of racism in the Western world, since George L. Mosse has already done so.² What is of specific concern to us is Nazi racism. It was Hitler who linked Jew-hatred with racism. For the moment, it will suffice to listen to his credo: 'The racial question gives the key not only to the world, but to all human culture',³ 'And all occurrences in world history are only the expression of the race's instinct of self-preservation, in the good or bad sense'.⁴

¹ Friedrich Heer, *Gottes Erste Liebe. Die Juden im Spannungsfeld der Geschichte* (Frankfurt/M., 1986 [1st ed. 1976]), p. 19.

² George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York, 1978).

³ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, 1971), p. 339 (hereafter M.K.).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

Nazi ideology should be equated with what Hitler called 'Weltanschauung'. In this modern research has followed Eberhard Jäckel's analysis, which is still valid today.⁵ Hitler stated in *Mein Kampf*:

Every philosophy of life, even if it is a thousand times correct and of highest benefit to humanity, will remain without significance for the practical shaping of a people's life, as long as its principles have not become the banner of a fighting movement'.⁶

And in another passage he wrote:

For the philosophy is intolerant; it cannot content itself with the role of 'one party beside others', but imperiously demands, not only its own exclusive and unlimited recognition, but the complete transformation of all public life in accordance with its views.⁷

We may pose this question: In what way is the traditional Jew-hatred a challenge to the Nazi *Weltanschauung* that promotes the primacy and self-preservation of the German race?

Reinhard Rürup stated that since the Hellenistic period we have not been able to talk of a continuity of an 'eternal antisemitism' (ewigen Antisemitismus).⁸ Although he admits that 'for centuries Jews were oppressed, isolated, hated and despised', Rürup contends that there was no 'Judenfrage', no Jewish problem. Jews did not constitute a problem that profoundly needed to be solved. Only in the late eighteenth century was a Judenfrage established'.⁹

According to his analysis, Jews in earlier ages were economically exploited and a Judenpolitik was initiated by German princes and feudal lords, but there was no Judenfrage.¹⁰

Rürup distinction between antisemitism and Judenfrage is essentially correct. Antisemitism was prevalent in German history, but the Judenfrage was a modern phenomenon that became widespread after the 1842 publication of Bruno Bauer's brochure *Die Judenfrage*. It was no longer attributed to a particular nation or state but now reflected a world problem, as Alex Bein has postulated in *Die Judenfrage: Biographie eines Weltproblems*.

Antisemitism and the Judenfrage became one in modern times. Antisemitism underwent a process of universalization. Ernst Nolte, in his study *Three Faces of Fascism*, commented that:

It must not be forgotten that every significant ideology of the 19th century had its own brand of antisemitism. Liberal antisemitism accused the Jews of anti-historical rigidity, intolerance and 'national separateness'. In socialist thought the Jews stood for the chief exemplifiers of the

⁵ Heberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's Weltanschauung: Entwurf einer Herrschaft* (Tübingen, 1969).

⁶ Hitler, M.K., p. 380; I believe Manheim's translation "Philosophy of life" is misleading. The German term "Weltanschauung" should remain unchanged, as Hitler's opinions are in no way a philosophy.

⁷ Ibid., p. 454.

⁸ Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus* (Göttingen, 1975), p. 74.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 75-76.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 76.

capitalist spirit and its 'mamonism'. What conservatives disliked most about the Jews was their spirit of unrest, their tendency toward revolution.¹¹

All these theories and ideologies were manifestations of universal ideals and outlooks, hence also 'their' particular brand of antisemitism became universal.

Hitler's Antisemitism

Adolf Hitler was born in 1889 in Braunau, Austria. He moved in 1908 to Vienna and became acquainted with the so-called 'Jewish Problem'. In 1913, he moved to Munich. Upon returning to Munich from his stint with a Bavarian regiment of the German Army during World War I, he stated in his first political document, in 1919, that the final goal of antisemitism must be 'the total removal of the Jews'. In 1921, he became the chairman of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the NSDAP. His efforts to bring down the government in 1923 failed, and he was sentenced in 1924 to five years imprisonment. In Landsberg prison, he dictated *Mein Kampf*. In 1928 he wrote another book, *Das Zweite Buch* (published in 1961), in which he delivered the grounds for his racist antisemitism, which became so central in his Weltanschauung and political activities.¹²

If we examine Nazi ideology and the movement as a whole and its relationship to Hitler's personality, we face the basic question as defined by Karl D. Bracher: To what degree does a biography of the 'Leader' disclose the nature and essence of National Socialism? Could we – should we – simply speak of Hitlerism?¹³ Hitler was the driving force of antisemitism in the Nazi movement, not only by setting the ideological tone but also by elevating his intense personal antipathy to an affair of state. Hitler alone defined the Jewish menace.¹⁴ This clear link between Hitler's anti-Semitic ideology and anti-Semitic practice is further examined in the studies of Helmut Krausnick, Karl D. Bracher, Eberhard Jäckel, Andreas Hillgruber, and Gerald Fleming.

Other historians, popularly known as functionalists, do not see such a clear connection. For example, Karl Schleunes stated that 'during the early years of the Third Reich no one in the Nazi movement, from the Führer down, had defined what the substance of a solution to the Jewish problem might be'.¹⁵ The psychohistorical efforts to explain Hitler's antisemitism exclude the possibility of discussing the problem historically. In Hitler's case, the weakness of these efforts, evaluated from other angles, has already been exposed by Bracher.¹⁶ Hitler's case, as any other one, would be looked at as a general human complexity, ignoring its

¹¹ Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (New York, 1966), p. 332.

¹² Eberhard Jäckel, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York, 1990), p. 672.

¹³ Karl D. Bracher, "The role of Hitler: Perspectives of Interpretation", in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide*, ed. Walter Laqueur, 2nd ed. (London, 1979), p. 196.

¹⁴ Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (London, 1987), p. 17

¹⁵ Karl Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz* (Chicago, 1992), p. 257.

¹⁶ Bracher, "Role of Hitler", p. 207.

specific unique personal-historic development. In both volumes of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, we read the following:

Was it possible that the earth had been promised as a reward to this people which lives only for this earth?... If with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will as it did millions of years ago move through the ether devoid of men. Hence today, I believe, that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.¹⁷

And in the second volume:

If our people and our state become the victim of this bloodthirsty and avaricious Jewish tyrant of nations, the whole earth will sink into the snares of this octopus; if Germany frees itself from its embrace, this greatest danger of nations may be regarded as broken for the whole world.¹⁸

Eberhard Jäckel has emphasized another 'new' aspect in Hitler's antisemitism, namely, the universal-missionary trend. The adversary in the struggle of the Jews, Hitler proclaims, was not this or that nation, but all nations, the principle of nation as such, the law of nature and history. Hence, the Jews were not an enemy of the German nation alone, but of all mankind; their elimination was not only a national task but a universal task.¹⁹

German Antisemitism Before Hitler

As to German antisemitism before Hitler, it will suffice to refer to Fritz Stern's monumental study *Gold and Iron*. Stern scrutinized the history of antisemitism during the Bismark era. He noted the fact that German liberalism was weaker than, and ideologically different from, its Western counterparts, and that the German Bürgertum never acquired the self-confidence and historic importance of the French or British bourgeoisie. This meant that the Jewish community did not have a liberal shield that would defend its rights as part of a code of universally recognized human rights. Stern also stressed the peculiarity of German nationalism, characterized by its aggressiveness and xenophobia. The resonance to antisemitism among the leading classes of society was greater in Germany than elsewhere.²⁰

In latter-day studies of the German cultural, economic, social, and religious antisemitism of nineteenth-century scholars such as Lagarde, Marr, and Treitschke, one finds that the 'Jewish Question' was raised loudly.²¹ Stern stressed that the core of all variations of antisemitism was

¹⁷ Hitler, M.K., pp. 64, 65.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

¹⁹ Jäckel, *Hitlers Weltanschauung*, p. 68. See also *idem*, *Hitler in History* (Hanover, 1984), pp. 47-48.

²⁰ Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder and the Building of the German Empire* (New York, 1977), p. 462.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 495.

the belief that the pariahs had become the true power in the new Germany.²² Gradually, the antisemites converted the particular into the general and 'leaped', to use Stern's words, from fact to fantasy.²³ The German nation encountered the forces of modernism while barely united from above by Bismarck. Industrial capitalism and the rise of the industrial worker put the middle class, the Bürgertum, in fear of rising socialism. The Jews was identified with capitalism, with socialism, and with modernism. He was perceived as the visible threat to the middle class.

George L. Mosse has described the 'middle-class morality', the upholding of middle-class ideals, of German society. It was this class, frightened by the upheaval of modernism, that sought to uphold the importance of family life and moderation. The Nazis claimed to protect such middle-class respectability, that part which found its expression in those clean-cut young men who marched down the street.²⁴ Hitler wanted to reestablish these values in Germany by destroying the Jewish part of the middle-class – the part that was thought to have corrupted the class as a whole.²⁵ Richard F. Hamilton's recent study *Who Voted for Hitler* has demonstrated that the middle class was the base of Hitler's support. Its motivation was, according to Jäckel, fear of future misery.²⁶ The fear of the Jew, who was believed to endanger middle-class ideals in Kaiser Wilhem's time, continued to stir the anxiety of the middle class, who voted for and identified with Hitler's antisemitism. The anti-Jewish attitude of the middle class was a dominant and continuous element in modern German society.

The Jews were viewed as powerful, mortally dangerous enemies. The myth of Jewish might was disseminated by German antisemites in nineteenth-century German society. The image of the powerful, destructive Jew, however, originated in Christianity. Christian responsibility has been belittled, minimized, and sometimes overlooked, when dealing with modern – even anti-Christian – antisemitism. According to Christian belief, the election of the Jewish people manifests itself in the Jewish people's riches and wealth. The Jewish Messiah, as represented in the Christian catechism, symbolizes the earthly king who became mighty because of his wealth. Out of this misconception the legend of the 'mighty Jew' was born.²⁷

When secularism began, from the seventeenth century forward, to shape the Zeitgeist in Europe, a distorted, ambivalent image of the Jew – rich in money but poor in political power

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p. 497.

²⁴ George L. Mosse, *Nazism: A Historical and Comparative Analysis of National Socialism* (Princeton, 1978), p. 44.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

²⁶ Jäckel, *Hitler in History*, p. 19.

²⁷ Edmund Kroenes, *Homiletisches Reallexikon: Zum Handgebrauch für Prediger und Religionslehrer* (Regensburg, 1856), vol.3, p. 49: "Die Juden damaliger Zeit waren voll irdischen, fleischlichen Sinnes und vom Stolze aufgeblasen. Sie Betrachteten sich als das auserwählte Volk dem allein ein Messias verhasst ware und schauten aus ihrer ertäumten Höhe mit Verachtung auf die übrigen Volker herab".

– prevailed. International Jewish domination substituted for religious Messianism. In Hitler's eyes, Marxism-Bolshevism appeared as the illegitimate child of Judaism-Christianity.²⁸ The idea of Jewish power became the keystone for Hitler's obsession with the mighty Jewish Chosen People. It took Hitler to connect the Jews with what he termed the 'deeper' struggle in the world and to proclaim that there could not be two chosen peoples. For him, Germans were God's people, and the world was now composed of two opposing entities – men of God and men of Satan.²⁹

Hitler's Ideology of Race

Concerning Hitler's ideology of race, it should be noted that racist antisemitism is anti-Christian and pagan in its essence; it is the antithesis of the transcendental religious outlook. But it is, as Hitler well knew, nourished by the absolutely negative image attached to the Jew by Christian theology. Even if the power and influence of the Church diminished over the generations, the negative image attached to the word 'Jew' retained its ideological moorings.³⁰ 'Parasitology' – the Jew as a parasite, according to Hitler's antisemitism – became crystallized in Hitler's ideas through the political pragmatism that aspired to conquer 'living space' (Lebensraum) in Eastern Europe in order to sustain the existence of the Aryan race, the German people. In the spirit of Carl Schmidt's 'friend-foe' theory, Hitler presented the Jew as antithesis, as parasite, as counterrace (Gegenrasse), as a corrupter of nature embodying every anti-Nazi element.

Hitler portrayed the Jew as the carrier of the concepts of internationalism, democracy, and pacifism, which were the 'three plagues of humanity... that had killed the nations' race value'.³¹ The struggle against these three principles became, in Hitler's hands, the foundation and motivational force of his political programs, both internal and external. Traditional antisemitism served as an ideological nucleus for Nazi racial doctrine. Through this doctrine, he portrayed his ideological and political enemies in a harmful, mighty, flesh-and-blood image – the image of the blemished Jew – that perverted the character of nature itself.³²

By relying on traditional antisemitism, Hitler played upon themes of continuity in German history. The uniqueness of pre-Hitler antisemitism was expressed in its rebuttal of the Jewish

²⁸ Adolf Hitler, *Monolog im Führer-Hauptquartier 1941-1944: Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich Heims*, ed. Werner Jochmann (Hamburg, 1980), p. 41.

²⁹ Hermann Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks* (London, 1940), p. 238. On Rauschning's credibility, see note 41.

³⁰ Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Antisemitism 1700-1933* (Cambridge, MA., 1980), p. 321: "Antisemites wished to perpetuate the inferior position of Jews, or even reinstitute some features of their pre-emancipatory situation. Thus, even if they negated the Christian motives responsible for the creation of the situation, anti-Semites still took it as the basis of their operation. There is a patent historical continuity between the two phases of the Jewish predicament".

³¹ M. Domarus, ed., *Hitler, Reden und Proklamationen, 1932-1945* (Würzburg, 1962), pp. 70-71.

³² Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, pp. 233-34; Jäckel, *Hitlers Weltanschauung*, pp. 131-32.

essence. This nationalistic view sought to exalt and give precedence to 'Germanism' (Germanentum), and, therefore, focused less on the Jew himself.³³

Hitler and the Nazis reversed the order of priorities. Hitler demonstrated the greatness of Germans – in a down-to-earth manner, not through exclusive theories. With the aid of military power and marches of conquest and oppression, he proclaimed German greatness while denouncing the Jew and portraying him as a real enemy; the evil Jew became the central theme of his racist policy. He incorporated the Jew's negative image, the continuation and the result of classic Jew-hatred, as a convenient basis and concrete goal within his operational plans. Hitler's method in particular, and that of the Nazis in general, did away with all litigation and a public ideological or legal debates with the Jews. The ideological components of Nazi antisemitism introduced nothing new compared to its predecessors. The innovation is not in the internal content, but in the functional character.

Nazi sources confirm the assumption that we must clearly distinguish between general Nazi racism and Nazi anti-Jewish racism. The first appeared as an opportunistic, arbitrary, and cynical weapon, which even Nazi activists were prepared to take lightly. In contrast, Nazi racial antisemitism was a consistent, calculated Weltanschauung and was well-anchored in Hitler's practical plans. Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, in several articles and finally in their book *Vordenker der Vernichtung: Auschwitz und die Deutschen Pläne für eine neue Europäische Ordnung*,³⁴ have presented their thesis, as summarized by Christopher R. Browning, that

The economic and social planners of the German occupation in Eastern Europe saw in the mass murder of the East European Jews the means of solving a problem of overpopulation that blocked the path to economic modernization.³⁵

Browning disagrees with several of their claims: that the cooperation and consensus among the 'planning intelligentsia' transcended the polycratic rivalries of the Nazi regime, that these planners strove for a Final Solution long before 1941, that working upward from below they had a major impact on the decision-making process, and that without their input the racial hatred of the regime would not have gone beyond pogroms and massacres.³⁶

Taking into account the consistency of Nazi racial antisemitism, it is impossible to overlook the deeply rooted Jew-hatred that directed Nazi polity (infused by Hitler's racist

³³ Werner Jochmann, "Struktur und Function des Deutschen Antisemitismus", *Schriftenreihe Wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen* 33, Leo Beck Institute (Tübingen, 1976): 389-408

³⁴ First ed. Hamburg, 1991; 2nd ed. Frankfurt, 1993.

³⁵ Christopher R. Browning, "German Technocrats, Jewish Labor, and the Final Solution: A Reply to Götz Aly and Susanne Heim", in *The Path to Genocide: Essay on Launching the Final Solution* (New York, 1992), p. 59.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

Weltanschauung) against all Jews, not only those of Eastern Europe. Therefore, the idea of some economic planning, of 'politics of overpopulation', distorts the historical truth.³⁷

It is equally difficult for me to accept the thesis offered by Sybil Milton in her article 'Gypsies and the Holocaust' that

The preoccupation with antisemitism as a central motivation in Nazi policy has resulted in Michael Marrus's failure to include Gypsies in his recent analysis of the historiography of the Holocaust, although literature is available.³⁸

This is not the place to deal with the polemic that emerged between Yehuda Bauer and Sybil Milton as a result of her article.³⁹ What is of concern is her remark that 'Nazi pejorative attacks against the Gypsies as 'asocial and criminal' were seldom perceived as unambiguously racist.⁴⁰

This is explicitly my emphasis in these reflections. Because Nazi non-Jewish racial policy was of an inconsistent nature, manipulative and opportunistic, as I will show, the Gypsies did not appear as the 'counterrace' (Gegenrasse) in Hitler's and the Nazi's Weltanschauung. The racial enemy was the Jew.

The Nazi Revolution: Radical Political Antisemitism

Some examples from Nazi sources will clearly establish the flexibility and inconsistency with which a general theory of race was maintained. Hitler outlined his concept of race in his conversations with Hermann Rauschning. The credibility of these conversations has rightly been challenged. Still, the late Martin Broszat spoke of an 'inner authenticity' characterizing Rauschning's stance and report.⁴¹ Although his conversations are not to be accepted in a primary and strict sense, they deliver a genuine insight into Hitler's racist Weltanschauung. Hitler said:

In the scientific sense there is no such thing as race. But you, as a farmer and cattle-breeder, cannot get your breeding successfully achieved without the conception of race. And I as a politician need a conception which enables the order, which has hitherto existed on a historic basis, to be abolished, and an entirely new and anti-historic order enforced and given and intellectual basis... and for this purpose the conception of race serves me well. It disposes of the old order and makes possible new associations.⁴²

³⁷ Hermann Graml, "Rassismus und Lebensraum: Völkermord im Zweiten Weltkrieg", in *Deutschland 1933-1945: Neue Studien zur Nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, ed. Karl D. Bracher, Manfred Funke, and H.A. Jacobsen (Bonn, 1992), pp. 440-51.

³⁸ Sybil Milton, "Gypsies and the Holocaust", *History Teacher* 24/4 (August 1991): p. 376.

³⁹ Yehuda Bauer-Sybil Milton Correspondence concerning "Gypsies and the Holocaust", *History Teacher* 25/4 (August 1992): 513-21.

⁴⁰ Milton, "Gypsies", p. 377.

⁴¹ Martin Broszat, "Enthüllung? Die Rauschning-Kontroverse" (1985), in *Nach Hitler: Der Schwierige Umgang mit unserer Geschichte* (Munich, 1998), pp. 263-65.

⁴² Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, p. 229.

Scrutinizing Hitler's words reveals the following assertions: racism was not seen as a science by Hitler, since the politician 'needs a conception' to implement his political aims. In other words, the politician need a myth. The concept of race is imposed on the empiric-history factor (the old order) in order to arrive at a new, anti-historic regime.

The innovation in Nazi racism is the politicization of this racial theory. In their first year in power, Nazi zealots in the ranks interpreted and implemented Nazi racial theory. For example, Professor Tila of the Institute for Race Hygiene in Munich approached Hans Schemm, the Minister of Culture, with the suggestion that seven hundred to eight hundred illegitimate children born to German women from Moroccan soldiers in the years 1918-1919 be sterilized by means of x-radiation. He argued that they had to prevent 'the corruption of the German race'. The answer he received (through Dr. Walter Gross) was unequivocal; he was forbidden to take any private action, since such action was liable to involve Germany in 'the greatest complications regarding foreign policy'. He was also informed that determination of this matter must remain in the hands of the 'responsible political institutions'.⁴³ The opportunism is clearly uncovered when questions arise concerning the Nazi stand with regard to foreign elements who were not Jews. The Nazis, of course, knew that Germany's potential allies included races that did not belong to the 'Nordic blood' group. What racial policy was to be applied in their case? If they were to be considered inferior in terms of blood origin, their political loyalty was questionable from the start. To extricate themselves from this dilemma, one Nazi declared:

Politics is not an idea but the realization of ambition... Politics is a matter of what is practical, thus, under certain circumstances, it will not recoil from doing what seems correct even by devious means... I must adapt myself to changing conditions and must accordingly formulate the political racist concept every time.⁴⁴

The racist ideas in Nazi political manifestos were to be adapted to the changing conditions of everyday reality. Therefore, when non-Nordic elements allied with the Nazis needed to be taken in account, it would be best 'not to overdo songs of praise to blond hair and blue eyes... otherwise the non-Nordic blood would be insulted' (Song schnappen die nicht-Nordischen ein!)⁴⁵ A second example may suffice.⁴⁶ Racist ideology decreed that German soldiers had to keep their distance from women of 'foreign blood', but the 'natural drives' (satisfaction of the

⁴³ Bundesarchiv Koblenz, NS 12/748.

⁴⁴ Directives for propaganda work concerning race policy, September 1935, Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IFZG), IFZG/Ma/115917407/4.

⁴⁵ IFZG/MA1159/17426.

⁴⁶ I have dealt in depth with this issue in my book on Nazi racism: see Walter Zwi Bacharach, "Racism – The Tool of Politics", in *Monism toward Nazism* (Jerusalem, 1985) (in Hebrew).

German soldiers' sexual urges) shoved the doctrine aside to such an extent that the suggestion was put forward to 'delay the explanation of these matters until after the war'.⁴⁷

Just how far the principles of blood purity and preservation of the race were allowed to lapse can be deduced from what occurred at the front. In many cases, the 'natural drives', in fact, put the race theory out of mind. The leadership was confronted with incontrovertible facts, and they became part of declared policy. Heinrich Himmler admitted to army officers that, while on Russian soil, German soldiers had sired 'between a million and a million-and-a-half children'. This problem, he claimed, had aroused Hitler's concern. The solution Himmler suggested was 'to take children of 'value' away from their mothers and bring them to the German Reich, and if the mothers were of 'racial value' they could also be brought'.⁴⁸ The fact that such a relationship existed testifies to the extent of the lack of or relative weakness of racial consciousness among many in the ranks of the SS in everyday life.

Relationships with Jewish women were out of the question. That is what was particular to Hitler and Nazism as expressed in the relationship between racism and antisemitism. Hitler imposed his racial theory on anti-Semitic concepts that had long been in existence. By this method he turned the negative image of the Jew into a satanic image, which was interpreted as the consequence of necessity; the image was one of an essentially parasitic entity. He concluded chapter 11 of his *Mein Kampf* as follows:

Now begins the great last revolution. In gaining political power the Jew casts off the few cloaks that he still wears. The democratic people's Jew becomes the blood-Jew tyrant over peoples... The end is not only the end of the freedom of the peoples oppressed by the Jew, but also the end of this parasite upon the nations. After the death of his victim, the vampire sooner or later dies too.⁴⁹

Hitler dreamed of a new Nazi regime that would arise out of a war-to-the-end against the 'old regime', which he described as the regime of the parasitical Jew. He took the negative image of the Jew from the early anti-Jewish traditions. The Nazis fortified this image with absolute racist doctrine, and this was the reason why they employed such a vast number of racist slogans in everything related to the Jews. As Bracher has argued: 'If a revolutionary is defined by his ability to combine a radical concept of change with the capacity to mobilize the necessary forces, then Hitler can even be called the prototype of a revolutionary'.⁵⁰

The Nazi revolution was an anti-Jewish revolution. It did not invent hatred for Jews, but it radicalized and activated an antisemitism that was already existent – an antisemitism that was, in fact, dominant and continuous in German history. The innovation in Nazi anti-Jewish policy could be summarized as follows: Nazi antisemitism became political. It turned theory

⁴⁷ Regulations governing relations between foreign residents and German girls, IFZG/MA/666.

⁴⁸ Himmler's speech, September 16, 1942, IFZ/MA/312, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Hitler, M.K., p. 326.

⁵⁰ Bracher, "Role of Hitler", p. 206.

and ideology into practice. In Hitler's words, 'There is no making pacts with the Jews; there can only be the hard: either-or. I for my part decided to go into politics'.⁵¹ Such a verdict was never passed on other enemies of the Nazis.

Eugen Fischer, professor of anthropology and the first Nazi rector of the University of Berlin, expressed the view that scientists must be the infrastructure of politics. The Nazi achievement was that 'the Führer, Adolf Hitler, for the first time in the history of mankind, translated the recognition of the biological foundation of a race-nation, heredity, and natural selection into deeds... German science placed the tools in the politician's hands'.⁵²

Hitler radicalized traditional antisemitism by underpinning it with the race doctrine and giving it a biological basis. The Jew was conceived of as an unnatural outgrowth. His disappearance from this world should be a blessing for humankind.

Hence, Hitler's antisemitism, originating from German-Austrian tradition, was intermingled with his vision of a universal mission to create a new world order based on what he called race purity. Yet, Hitler was not the first to universalize antisemitism.

Christianity and Antisemitism

Christianity strove to de-Judaize the world, portraying Judaism as a world evil. The difference between Christianity and Nazism was not in the attitude toward Jews, but in proposed solutions. Hitler's was final. Nazi anti-Jewish racism was the ultimate, uncompromising climax of antisemitism. It was focused on the Jew, because antisemitism had, during the ages, only one target: not the Semite, but the Jew, and the Jew alone.

The uniqueness of Nazi racism lies in its consistent radicalizing – through biological slogans – of traditional antisemitism. Adolf Hitler knew where to turn when he sought to explain and justify his antisemitism. The process of transition from traditional Christian anti-Jewishness to Nazism is heightened when one is aware of the similarity between them. Both needed an enemy, an antitype. They were required, in order to survive and justify their existence, to translate the image of the Jewish enemy as created by prejudice into the everyday, mundane Jewish enemy antagonist. Hitler openly asserted that he learned this tactic from the Catholic Church.⁵³

The central components of the Christian view of the Jew and Judaism were used as the basis for consolidation of the anti-Jewish ideology of the Nazis. The Nazis perceived the Jew to be the foe of the Christian God and the enemy of the Aryan type. The negation of Judaism was essential for the justification of Christian superiority. Hitler sought to bring about the salvation of the German-Nordic race by destroying Judaism. Nazi ideology was able to base

⁵¹ Hitler, M.K. p. 206.

⁵² Eugen Fischer, *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie* 24 (1933).

⁵³ Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, pp. 58, 60, 234; Jochmann, *Monologue*, p. 321.

its attacks on the Jews on prejudices shaped by Christian theology. The Jew was regarded by both ideologies as a powerful, omniscient enemy and threat to world order.

The suffering of the Jews in world history are anchored in these facts. Even if Christianity did not call for the death of the Jews, since it had 'theological need' for them, one cannot ignore the fact that this was an a posteriori need. Degradation of the Jews was the substitute for their extermination. Christianity could not demand the killing of the Jews, even though this act was the logical outcome of the principles we have noted, since their extermination would have cast doubt on the Christian demand to be considered the legal heir of the Jewish creed: 'No jury would agree to grant a legacy to someone who won it through murdering the testator'.⁵⁴

The difference between Hitler and Christianity is that the latter chose the path of degradation of the Jew out of its own particular interests, while Hitler humiliated and murdered as well. The tragedy is that substantiation for both policies can be found in Christian theology.

Walter Zvi Bachrach, "Antisemitism and Racism in Nazi Ideology", Michael Berenbaum (Ed.), *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined*, Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1998, pp. 64-74.

⁵⁴ David Flusser, *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity: Studies and Essays* (Tel Aviv, 1979), p. 449 (in Hebrew).