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THE MEANING OF JEWISH HISTORY



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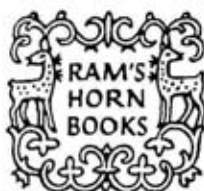
THE
MEANING
OF JEWISH
HISTORY

Foreword by Salo W. Baron Professor Emeritus of Jewish History, Columbia University

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Volume II



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Part II:
The Medieval Period

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SURVIVAL IN THE MEDIEVAL ERA

The survival of the Jew through the long, dark night of the Medieval era is not as surprising as the continued creativity and vitality of the repressed, hapless, and driven tribe. In spite of frequent and deliberate efforts to reduce them to a state of vegetative stupor, they managed to remain culturally alert and even effervescent. Nor did the inner processes of withdrawal and retreat from the outside world, inherent in the Jewish as in all dogmatic, religious traditions, succeed in paralyzing their creative powers. That they endured, weathering the storms of barbarian inundation, religious fanaticism, feudal wars and crusades, is wonder enough. But wonder is enhanced when one considers a fact which superficial and unfriendly observers frequently overlook; namely, that the Jews did not accept for themselves the status of a *pariah*-people, nor did they allow the princes and the potentates to impose this servile badge upon them. While in Christian Europe and in the Moslem East, certain unwanted trades and handicrafts, such as dyeing and tanning, trading and money-lending, were at various times allowed to fall into the hands of the Jews, they did not become a caste of "untouchables" or an inferior, proletarian class. Even the fanatical hate of their enemies was not unmixed with admiration and envy.

Throughout the cruel era, when private wars were virtually a way of life and religious fanaticism fixed the coordinates of all thought and feeling, the Jews did not sink to the lowest levels of society. Economically they were always a potent factor, which princes could ignore only at their peril. The problem for legislators was often what to do with Christian servants in Jewish homes, not with Jewish servants in Christian or Moslem homes. Culturally and educationally, they were generally far above the untutored masses, with a highly literate population, participat-

ing in the dialectic of their own tradition. In many countries, there was also a financial-cultural Jewish aristocracy, which took part in the contemporary commerce of intellectual ideas and artistic fashions. The Jews did not become gypsies, degenerate wanderers on the fringe of society; neither did they sink to the proletarian status of the Ainu in Japan, the untouchables in India, or the serfs in Medieval Europe; nor did they retreat into the isolation of a monastic, self-sufficient community, like the Amish and the Mormons. In Moslem Spain and in the first centuries of the Christian Reconquest, the Jews managed not only to endure but to participate in the intellectual and cultural life of the Mediterranean and European worlds. Not merely the survival of the Jew but his retention of the creative impulse is the wonder that we encounter as we survey the Medieval scene.

The Holy Roman Emperors of the Germanic lands announced that the Jews were *servi camerae*, the theory being that Titus brought them to Europe as captives and that the head of the Holy Roman Empire inherited them as his personal slaves. The Kings of Spain and France operated on the same principle.¹ Those who killed Jews had to pay compensation to the King (*wergild*), who, if he chose, could transfer ownership of an entire community to a favorite.² In feudal society, where nearly everybody belonged to somebody, the status of the "King's slaves" did not have the sinister connotation of servitude that the phrase evokes in our minds today. The Jews paid taxes to the King, and he owed them protection. Yet this status did separate the Jews from other city-dwellers, sowing the seeds of jealousy and dissension.

We need to recall that the economic rôle of the Jew brought rewards and amenities, altogether out of keeping with his official status. The tide of affairs in Europe was moving irresistibly, if unsteadily, toward an expansion of commerce and industry, fields in which Jews were concentrated. The explosion of urban areas in our own day is merely the accelerated phase of a continuous phenomenon. The theological doctrine, relegating the Jews to the status of the despised and the rejected, was generally counteracted by the actual positions held by Jews in the economy of the nation. Socio-economically, Jews were pioneers, even if in Medieval ideology they represented an ancient and lapsed dispensation.

The economic skills of the Jews militated against the isolationist tendencies inherent in the Jewish tradition. The Jews could not become a closed society, in spite of the forbidding barriers of the ghetto and all the segregationist laws of the Talmud, because their role in the general economy necessitated the maintenance of open channels of communication. Commerce-minded people cannot be imprisoned in air-tight enclaves. As a matter of fact, the recurrent expressions of Jewish humanism were generally centered in the circles most in contact with the outside world, around the "court-Jews" in the Medieval period, in cultural cities like Padua and Amsterdam, and in the growing centers of bourgeois life in the era of Enlightenment.

The Jews of Europe belonged to the city-building section of the population. Even in Spain, where large numbers were still engaged in agriculture in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the drift to the cities was continuous and irreversible.

It is easy to see that, for sheer safety, Jews would tend to draw together. In many localities, hostile laws hastened the removal of Jews from the land. Still, the question arises whether qualities of race or tradition predisposed the Jews to be city-dwellers.

Antisemitic theorists attributed Jewish virtuosity in the domain of commerce and in the diverse arts of urban living to a peculiar, inborn evil genius. Some pseudo-scholars even went so far as to ascribe the entire capitalistic system to the satanic impulse of the Jew, which drove him to devise ways of exploiting an innocent, idyllic society and corrupting it by the false standards of a money-economy. Such myths, for all their tenacity, are the products of the painful dislocations caused by the Industrial Revolution; they are of value only in providing an insight into the tortured souls of their authors. The "agricultural myth" of nineteenth-century rural America, depicting the struggle of the honest farmer, who is the source of all decencies, against the city-slicker, who is the cause of all forms of corruption, is as ancient as civilization itself. Already in Genesis, Cain, the builder of cities, is described as the murderer of his innocent, God-beloved brother, Abel.

Actually, the Jews were fitted for city-trades and the arts of commerce first of all by their historic position in Western Europe as remnants of the Latin city-dwelling population. They

were the natural successors of the Hebrew-speaking Phoenician traders in the western Mediterranean provinces. Strangely enough, Roman civilization was preserved in the West by the devotees of two non-Roman doctrines, Christianity and Judaism. The church kept alive, albeit in moribund fashion, the Roman achievements in law, literature and administration. In the Christian monasteries, the skills of classical agriculture were retained. It was left for the Jews in many parts of the Empire to preserve the skills of city-life. The remnants of Jewish communities in the Latin cities were reinforced by migrations of merchants from the Byzantine Empire and the Moslem East. For a long time, the Jews were the only international merchants, crossing the turbulent No Man's Land between the Moslem and Christian worlds, enjoying a relatively privileged status in both areas, precisely because they did not belong to either of them. On the other hand, in the Byzantine Empire, where the non-Jewish population was long familiar with the skills of urban life, Jews did not monopolize any important economic areas. Byzantine religious fanaticism drove the Jews to Khazaria and to the Caucasus, where they became a typically mountain people, cultivating crops and wine; conducting feuds among themselves and against their neighbors; delighting in intoxicating drink, horsemanship, and swordmanship; sinking into ignorance, isolation, and barbarism.

But while neither Jewish blood nor Jewish faith evoked the arts of capitalism, Talmudic dialectics helped to prepare Jews for the arduous tasks of city-life, by nurturing the active, objective, enterprising, and calculating mood of the businessman. In Judaism as in Calvinist Protestantism, there is a close association between hard work, success in the management of the affairs of this world, and the assurance of being Divinely chosen. The "elect" are called upon to prove their superiority by pitting their skills against the "multitude without the Law." While the Christians considered the combination of Jewish accursedness and relative prosperity as an offense and a paradox, the Jews accepted their occasional spurts of affluence as marks of Divine favor, proving that the *Shechina* was with them, even in their dispersion.

More to the point, the Jewish faith was articulated in patterns of self-discipline that habituated the Jew to tasks requiring self-

reliance and a venturesome spirit. The legalistic subtleties of the Talmud served to sharpen the wits of traders, physicians, and artisans. His religious training predisposed the Jew to shun the dreamy piety of other-worldly mystics. Max Weber and Werner Sombart stress the role of the intellect in the emergence of the capitalistic society. They speak of capitalism as "economic rationalism." Weber's claim that the Protestant ethic produced the capitalistic society and Sombart's identical claim in behalf of Judaism are true only insofar as a well-trained, disciplined mind is needed for any successful enterprise.

Finally, the Talmud provided the basic legal principles of Jewish self-government. While it is true that the Medieval communities developed the institutions and principles of municipal government far beyond the level which obtained in Babylonia or in Palestine, the basic doctrines of self-government are contained in the Talmud.³ Hence, they could be enforced wherever Jews were to be found.⁴

In the non-Christian and non-Moslem fringe of Mediterranean civilization, Jewish survival was a matter of course. In the Persian world, there were only rare and scattered attempts to impose Zoroastrian or Magian fire-worship upon all the inhabitants of the land. For the most part, diverse nations and groups lived side by side, in virtual autonomy and with a minimum of mutual contact. In the absence of a common realm of values and a secular framework for society, the diverse ethnic-religious communities did not have sufficient social contact or cultural communication to engender conflict. When at the beginning of the sixth century, a communistic religion did manage to obtain control of the government in the Persian Empire, the Jews, along with the rest of the anti-communist population, suffered persecution.⁵ If this movement had endured, the Jews would have been expelled or converted, but the movement collapsed and Persian paganism regained its usual tolerance.

In other pagan lands, such as India and China, the Jews were too small in numbers to matter much. In India, where Jewish merchants came to sell and buy spices, the *Bene Israel*, a Dravidian tribe that was probably converted in the first centuries of our era, carried on their existence, without arousing either in-

terest or antagonism in the general population. In western China, where Jewish merchants probably began their continent-spanning trek to Germany and France, the Jewish community slowly disappeared, since it did not have the cultural-religious energy to win a considerable portion of the population, nor did it possess a sufficiently massive base of its own population.

In Khazaria, perched precariously on the trackless steppe extending between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, Jewish merchants and refugees from the persecutions of the Byzantine Empire managed to convert the king, many of his nobles and a considerable portion of the nomadic, Khazarian population. Striving to keep the balance between the contending empires of Christianity and Islam, the Khazarian kings accepted Judaism. As we noted previously, a barbarian people ensconced on the border of a civilized area tends to accept a heretical form of the faith associated with the civilization. For the Khazars, Judaism was the great heresy of both the Christian and Moslem worlds. However, the Khazars allowed all religions to live in mutual tolerance within their borders. Apparently, the Jews in Khazaria did not attempt to utilize their favored position for the purpose of Judaizing the heterogeneous population of that area. Legend tells of the appearance of a delegation of Jews in the court of Vladimir, Prince of Kiev (980-1015 C.E.), for the purpose of urging the conversion of the Russians to Judaism. To the Russians, the test of a religious truth lay in the number of victories on the battlefield that a church could claim. By this test, the case of Judaism was, in the eyes of the Russians, hardly worthy of consideration.⁶ With the disappearance of the Khazarian Kingdom under the blows of the Russians, the Jews and Jewish Khazars settled in the Crimea, in Hungary and in Lithuania. As long as these countries were pagan, there was no barrier to the conversion of people to Judaism. Servants in Jewish households and slaves of Jewish merchants probably constituted the major source of converts. We know that for many centuries, Jewish merchants were prominently engaged in the international slave trade. Lithuania was the last country in Europe to accept Christianity. When the Lithuanian prince, Jagello, married Jadwiga, Queen of Poland, to become the king of a Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom (1385 C.E.), we may assume that the situation of the Jews did not change over-

night. It was only by slow and gradual stages that the Catholic missionaries managed to penetrate the countryside and to convert the Lithuanian peasants.

In the Moslem world, the right of the Jewish community to maintain its institutions was questioned only occasionally and sporadically, chiefly by dissident sects. The Almohades in North Africa and southern Spain (1148 c.e.) and the Khalif Al-Hakim of Egypt (996-1021 c.e.) as well as some Persian Shiia sects repudiated the Orthodox Moslem principle of relative tolerance toward "the protected communities," and compelled the Jews to renounce their faith. However, these waves of compulsory conversion were rare. Generally, the Orthodox doctrine prevailed, permitting and protecting all monotheistic faiths. In Orthodox Islam, the prophet Mohammed himself undertook to provide "protection" for a price to the "people of the Book." Nor were the Jews alone in the dubious classification of "protected people." In the early Khalifate, the Jews and the Christians shared the same fate and constituted the major part of the population. Later, the remnant of the Zoroastrians in Persia was put into the same category. Furthermore, the "protected peoples" bore the entire burden of taxation for a long time, so that when the Moslem faith gained a convert the Moslem treasury lost a taxpayer.

The fate of the "protected peoples" in Moslem lands was by no means a pleasant one. The so-called "covenant of Omar" required that non-Moslem minorities be distinguished by the color of their turbans, be prohibited to ride on horses, and be subjected to numerous special disabilities. Nevertheless, the "protected peoples" had an official status and they were not barred from engaging in any economic activity. Except in periods of extreme fanaticism, Jews and Christians were allowed to hold the highest offices in the land.

In general, the position of the Jews in the Moslem East depended on the degree of tolerance that the governing authorities showed toward all the non-Moslem peoples. Every upsurge of anti-foreign agitation affected Jews and Christians alike. "The common factor in all the anti-Jewish excesses at the time of the Mamelukes was the suspicion entertained by the Moslems of the loyalty of the Christian population," and the fate of the Jews was directly bound up with the lot of the Christians, "for when

the storm rose [against the Christians], the Jews too had to drink the cup of poison."⁷

As a result of the Christian Crusades and the Saracen counter-attacks, Moslem mobs would from time to time take the law in their own hands, and Moslem scholars would call for the dismissal of unbelieving officials or for the enforcement of the stringent laws separating the believers from the unbelievers. During these outbursts of fanaticism, diverse calumnies would be promulgated by demagogues against both Jews and Christians. But the right of these minorities to live was not seriously questioned, nor were they regarded as the accursed outcasts of society.⁸

We encounter occasional Moslem polemics against the Talmud, in which the zealous critics maintain that it discriminates against non-Jews and relegates them to the status of animals. But the Talmud was never burned in Moslem lands and the right of the Jews to protection was not challenged.⁹

In the Eastern Mediterranean, the population was not nearly as homogeneous as it was in Western Europe, so that the ethnic cause of antisemitism was relatively weak. And the Jews were not concentrated in any one economic class. Again, the Moslem authorities were not as united and as effective as the Catholic priesthood. For these reasons, the Jews were not socially isolated from the general population as they were in Christian Europe. And, as the Moslems sank into economic poverty and cultural somnolence, the Oriental Jews shared the general decline.

The phenomenon of *Marronism* (in which Jews retained their loyalties under the mask of compulsory religious conformity) was not unknown in Moslem countries. In North Africa under the Almohades, the pulse of Jewish life continued to beat powerfully, even though the Jews were forced to maintain a public appearance of Moslem piety. In Egypt, "Moslems" who kept their stores closed on the Sabbath were numerous in the sixteenth century. But in the absence of an Inquisition, these converted Jews were slowly assimilated by the general population. In general, Jews found it easier to reconcile themselves to an acceptance of the Moslem faith than to Christian baptism. Theologically, Islam was not radically offensive to Jews, and the relative tolerance of Moslem officials toward tax-paying Jews softened the stubbornness and mollified the zeal of Jewish piety. We encounter tidal waves of conversion to Islam among the Jews

of Egypt and Syria, as well as among the Christians, waves of an order of magnitude which Western Europe did not know before the nineteenth century. In the fifteenth century, a popular proverb was coined by the Moslems in Egypt, "If you seek to lord it over a Jew, he will become a Moslem to be your equal."¹⁰

The openness of the Jewish community to outside influence is seen in the fact that the cultural movements within the Jewish world paralleled and reflected similar movements in the Moslem world. And the converse was also true. Jews helped to create the great Moslem Renaissance, centering in Syria and Iraq, of the seventh and the tenth centuries and of the Western Moslem Renaissance of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, centering in the Khalifate of Cordova. In the brilliant blaze of Moslem culture, the Medieval Jews produced their greatest men. But when the combination of Orthodox rigidity and Mongolian invasion brought about the steady decline and degeneration of Moslem culture, the Jewish community did not escape the debilitating influence of its environment. By all appropriate yardsticks, the decline of Jewish faith and culture among the Near Eastern Jews was roughly parallel to the decay of culture and the creeping fossilization of Moslem orthodoxy in the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian worlds.

The relationship of the Jewish ethos to the spirit of capitalism has been an open field for sociological intuitionists and racist dogmatists. To many French socialists all Jews were loan-sharks and tax-farmers. The study by Werner Sombart (1863-1941) of this theme is a pedantic elaboration of the same antisemitic axiom, executed with characteristically Teutonic thoroughness. He assumes that all Jews formed one company, "the most extended trading company in the world,"¹¹ that famous Gentile financiers were "crypto-Jews,"¹² that the Scottish Presbyterians and the Yankee traders were all Jews. "For what we call Americanism is nothing else, if we may say so, than the Yankee spirit distilled."¹³ With such broad generalizations at his command, he asks rhetorically, "whether all that Weber ascribes to Puritanism might not with equal justice be referred to Judaism? . . . that which is called Puritanism is in reality Judaism."¹⁴ At the same time, the Jewish spirit, in his view, is "Saharism," the mood of the desert, harsh, dry and devoid of personal feeling and romance.¹⁵

The ideas of Max Weber (1864-1920) belong in a different category. In his brilliant study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he asserts that the Calvinists were largely instrumental in the emergence of the spirit of capitalism, which he construes as a single-minded devotion to worldly enterprise, to one's "calling" in life, and to the manipulation of the labor of other people. He seeks to account for the fact that business leaders and owners of capital in Germany and in other countries are more likely to be Protestant than Catholic.

Weber's perception of the relationship of Protestantism to capitalism is important for the understanding of the role of the Jew. As we pointed out earlier, the Jew like the Protestant, was trained to esteem reason, independence, and enterprise as marks of the elect. The Jewish intellectuals remained part of the community, not set apart from it. Like the Puritan preachers, the rabbis were largely an unprofessional class. Learning was imperative for salvation, among Jews, as much as among Protestants. And self-control is the prerequisite to learning.

However, while Weber's study is replete with the *aperçus* of genius, it also contains raw generalizations concerning the Jews, which are totally unwarranted.

The Jews stood on the side of the politically and speculatively oriented adventurous capitalism; their ethos was, in a word, that of pariah-capitalism. But Puritanism carried the ethos of the rational organization of capital and labor. It took over from the Jewish ethic only what was adapted to this purpose.

The idea that success reveals the blessing of God is of course not unknown to Judaism. But the fundamental difference in religious and ethical significance which it took on for Judaism on account of the double ethic prevented the appearance of similar results at just the most important point.¹⁰

In the first place, Weber ignores the role of the Jews in Slavic Europe, where their role was precisely the organization of farm labor. In the second place, he ignores the role of Jewish manufacturers in Germany itself, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He operates with the stereotype of the Jew as the alien money-lender or tax-farmer, whom the princelings import for a while in order to extort increased revenue from their subjects.

Insofar as Jewish money-lenders were used by kings and princes as sponges with which to soak up the available cash in

their domains, the alien status of the Jews was important. They were used by the ruling power in the same way as mercenaries, and they were preferred over native bankers for the same reason that mercenaries were preferred over native troops: "The Moor has done his work, the Moor can go." The Jews could indulge in a "double ethic," as against the local population, only when the sovereign power in the region willed it so.

The kernel of truth in Weber's observations is that the Jew by virtue of being a loose cog in the feudal system was disposed to join the new class, the pioneers of "economic rationalism" (Weber's term for modern capitalism), and to take advantage of new opportunities as soon as they were opened up. When they served the nobility as tax-farmers, estate-managers, and money-lenders, they performed a "parasitic" role only because the class to which they ministered could be regarded as parasitic by the peasants. But it is wrong to assay the role of a socio-economic caste in one society by the standards of a different society.

At the turn of the century, Simon Dubnow proposed the concept of the worldwide Jewish community as one cultural entity, with different centers at different times assuming the leadership of the ecumenical nation. This concept of a global nation, marked by a succession of foci of hegemony, is, of course, the product of Western nationalist or racist doctrine. Translated into the dogmatic language of a fundamentalist religion, this concept is the reflection of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, centering in Rome, or better of the Greek Orthodox Church centering first in Italian Rome, then in the Byzantine capital and finally in Moscow, "the third Rome."

Actually, as we survey the world-wide Jewish Diaspora, extending through the Medieval era and on into modern times, we encounter no such ecumenical unity as Dubnow postulated. There is neither a unity of intellectual climate, nor a community of common culture, nor the global umbrella of one fate. The growth of rationalism and secular culture in Spain may be regarded with horror in the contemporary academies of Northern France. The establishment of monogamy by Ashkenazic Jews may be separated from a thoroughly polygamous society south of the Christian border. The Jews of Spain may go through the

nethermost caverns of hell, while in Poland and Turkey their brethren boast of living in an earthly paradise. The faith and culture of the scattered Jewish communities was related intimately to the shifting winds of the cultural climate in their respective host-nations. While the Jews of any one part of the world were affected by the creative achievements of their brethren in other parts of the world, this mutual influence was not, before the opening of the modern era, due to the interaction of contemporary communities. It was the historic tradition of the diverse communities that belonged to all of them, with the commentaries of Rashi (1040-1105) eventually becoming part of the heritage of North African Jews and Rabbi Joseph Karu's *Shulhan Arukh*, written in Safed, Palestine becoming, after due modification, the chief Code of Polish Jewry. The cultural-religious pattern of Franco-German Jewry in the twelfth century was not affected by the work of Maimonides as much as it was in the thirteenth century. And when French Jewry was divided in its sentiments toward Jewish philosophy, the division was due to the diverse cultural climates that prevailed in the communities along the Rhine as against those of Provence, with the southern provinces favoring an incipient humanism. The philosophical literature which Spanish Jewry produced did not influence the contemporary German Jews, who were rather shocked by the rationalistic, heretical approach of the great philosophers, but this rationalistic stream helped the German Jews of the eighteenth century to enter the age of Enlightenment, not as aliens and outsiders, but as partners and insiders, bearing the impetus of a mighty, liberal current within their own tradition. Similarly the Qabbalah of Cordovero and Luria of sixteenth century Palestine produced the seventeenth-century pseudo-messianic movement of Sabbattai Zevi, centered in Turkey, and the eighteenth-century Hasidic movement of Poland and Russia. All Jewish communities share in the fructifying waters of the same historic stream of tradition, and what each community selects out of the stream is likely to be determined by the cultural climate prevailing in its time and place. But the assumption that the Jews of the world had at any time accepted the hegemony of the Jewry of any geographical locality is a baseless myth. No such hegemony existed after the decay of the Gaonate (circa 1040

C.E.). It is significant that the abolition of polygamy and the elevation of the woman's status relative to divorce that was carried out by European Jewry in the tenth century was never accepted by the Oriental Jews.

The characteristic mark of Jewish piety was the loyalty of each community to its own local custom. Even when ideological issues were not involved, the Jewries of different countries tended to develop unique customs and powerful, provincial loyalties. If different Jewries were thrown together into one city, their tribal conservatism tended to preserve their separate identities for many centuries. Babylonian and Palestinian Jews, living side by side in Egypt, insisted on retaining their own distinctive customs and congregations. In Renaissance Italy, local Italian Jews, German Jews, and Spanish Jews maintained separate communal organizations. Particularly instructive was the case of Venice, where the German and Italian Jews were herded into a ghetto in 1516, while the Spanish Jews continued to dwell outside, and even when the latter were pushed into the ghetto, a separate quarter was prepared for them, where they maintained their own communal organization.¹⁷ In general, the Spanish Jews maintained their own communal separateness in all the lands of their dispersion.

The typical unit of Medieval Jewry was the *kehillah*, or community organization and the association of *Kehilloth*, on a regional basis. The *Kehilloth* made treaties with the princes of their domains; they enjoyed quasi-governmental status, imposing taxes upon their members and settling their disputes. In the class-conscious society of the Medieval era, with its guilds, monastic orders, and feudal reservations, it was not unnatural for the Jewish enclave to be self-governing in all internal affairs. Its range of authority depended on the political configurations of the time.

However, as the Middle Ages slowly gave way to the modern era, the diverse Jewish localities came to show a greater measure of unity. The improvement in transportation made it possible for rabbinic messengers — collectors for Torah-institutions and charities in Palestine, itinerant preachers and beggars generally — to migrate from place to place. It was the modern period that led to the emergence of visible bonds of Jewish unity, creating institutions of international philanthropy and anti-defamation.

The European Jew. Down to the opening of the eighteenth century, the majority of the Jews lived in the Moslem and Oriental worlds. Their periods of cultural creativity were terminated by the Mongolian invasion and by the general decline which set in after the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the modern era, they were part of a culturally dormant, if not altogether stagnant society; consequently the Oriental Jews showed little of the pathos of their European brethren; not their inner tension, not their hectic drive, not their dynamic movements, not their secular ideologies, not their massive elan in the social and intellectual domains. The European Jews multiplied rapidly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so that they came to think of themselves as the sum and substance of world Jewry. The European Jews did in fact have many ethnic, linguistic, and cultural traits in common. With few exceptions, they spoke Yiddish, a low-German dialect. The constant migration of Jews from Germany into Poland led to the acceptance of Yiddish even by those who came to Central Europe by way of southern Russia. Only some Jews in parts of Hungary, in the Caucasus, and in the Balkans held out against the sway of Yiddish. Even the Jews in Holland and Germany spoke Yiddish so that Goethe found it necessary to study Yiddish in order to understand the dialect of the Frankfort Jews.

In addition to language, there were other cultural factors common to European Jewry, such as, economic skills and occupations, and especially the structure of the family. While the Oriental Jews continued to foster the patriarchal, polygamous family of the Biblical-Talmudic period, the European Jews had accepted monogamy since the tenth century. In sociological terms, the difference between polygamous and monogamous societies is more fundamental than any other distinction, for the structure of family unity is the ultimate cell of the social organism.

European Jews also had to bear in common the same burden of Christian antisemitism. The differences between Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christianity did not affect their interpretation of the role of the Jew in the cosmic drama of salvation. The fundamentalist masses in each group were imbued with the same basic bias against the Jew, even if the intellectual circles in one country or another mitigated this bias at various times. Thus the career of Moses Montefiore as the defender of world Jewry be-

gan with the Damascus affair (1840), in which Syrian Jews were accused by Christians of a ritual-murder. The formation of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* (1860), the first Jewish international defense organization, was occasioned by the challenge of a European, all-Christian antisemitism.

In the ten centuries of the Medieval era, from the close of the Babylonian Talmud (*circa* 500 C.E.) to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, there was rarely a time when all authority was concentrated in one person or even in one institution. Down to the end of the Gaonic period, Babylonia was the preeminent center of world Jewry. Its two academies, Sura and Pumbeditha, were headed by Gaons (Excellencies), and the Gaons presided over a hierarchy of scholars. The rivalry between the two schools left room for diversities of approach and emphasis, with one school favoring proto-Qabbalistic ideas and mystical exercises and the other opposing them. The Exilarch, claiming descent from David, was a quasi-secular prince. So, in Babylonia, authority was divided officially between the Exilarch and the two Gaons. Unofficially, the bankers and the court-favorites at Baghdad constituted the power behind the throne.

Even prior to the death of Rav Hai Gaon (1040 C.E.), the authority of the Gaons and the Exilarch was contested by the heads of the lingering Palestinian center. Well-known is the dispute between Saadia and Ben Meir concerning the right of the Palestinian academy to determine the calendar. The rise of the Qaraites was the most massive challenge to the authority of the Babylonian center. And this challenge stimulated the revival of creative thought in the domains of exegesis and philosophy.

With the spread of Talmudic learning to Spain, North Africa, and France, authority was diffused. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was no longer possible for any one person or academy to establish a firm line of thought and policy for all of Western Europe, let alone for the entire Jewish world. The rise of Jewish grandees and court-favorites limited the power of the Torah-authorities, who, if they resided in different countries, could themselves disagree on crucial issues. Thus the controversy regarding the place of philosophy in Judaism could not be settled one way or the other. The ban pronounced by one group

of rabbis on the study of philosophy was balanced by a counter-ban by another group of rabbis. Accordingly, the individual Jewish thinker was allowed a measure of flexibility and freedom. He could follow the light of reason and science, as a disciple of Maimonides, or he could seek consolation in the mysteries of Qabbalah, or he could restrict his horizon to "the four ells of Halachah (Law)."

This freedom of the individual scholar was limited, however, by the power structure of the local community. The grandees or the communal authorities, following the instincts of their species, were not disposed to favor freedom of thought, though in liberal times court-Jews generally were patrons of learning and culture. They regarded it as their duty to use "the shepherd's rod," in governing "the holy sheep" of Israel.

In nearly all European countries, Jewish people were ruled by their own leaders, who had the right to apportion taxes and special assessments among the residents of the Jewish communities. In Castille, Jewish authorities did not hesitate to put debtors in chains and cut off ears, noses, hands or feet in punishment for certain ethical or religious offenses.¹⁸ From time to time, pietists would call for "supervisors" to watch the morals of the men and women in the community.¹⁹ The walls of the ghetto were by no means proof against the frigid winds of fanaticism. Many a rabbi envied the power and zeal of the Inquisition. Consider this excerpt from the *Responsum* of one of the mildest and gentlest sages, Rabbi Solomon Ibn Adret (1241-1310), concerning a rationalistic preacher:

He is worse than the Gentiles who differ with us in the interpretation of a few verses. His colleagues do not spare even a letter of the Torah. The Gentiles do leave most of the Torah intact, but he and his colleagues distort everything. Is there a Gentile who overturns all of Scripture and says that Abraham and Sarah stand for matter and form?²⁰

However, the power of the rabbis was usually balanced by the authority of the local nobles and the favorites of the Kings, who, in Spain at least, were unusually liberal. By virtue of mingling with men of other faiths, these favorites were more liberal than the rest of the community, providing a counter-weight to the pietistic zeal of the rabbis and the narrow fanaticism of the

masses. Both the coercive policy of the Jewish grandees and their relative liberalism is illustrated in the case of one Jewish family, living at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Rabbi Todros Halevi and his kinsman, Joseph Ibn Alfakhar, carried to a successful conclusion the religious purge begun by Cidellus and continued by Judah Ibn Ezra. With the help of the crown, they drove the remnants of the Qaraïtes out of their last refuge in the fortresses of Castile. But while they thus prided themselves on preserving the purity of the orthodox faith, members of their own circle and even of their own family were accused by the religious zealots, and it seems with good reason, of harboring even more dangerous heretical beliefs. The rift between the ancestral religion and the rationalism of the prominent men of the day was becoming more pronounced.^{20a}

In Judaism, as in other faiths, freedom could flourish only when authority was divided. The absence of a centralized, all-governing power made it possible for scholars to pursue their own bent and to develop different schools of thought. Free from the entanglements of power, the Medieval rabbis were men of impeccable character and deep learning. While they differed in regard to the merits of philosophy, Qabbalah, or allegorism, they could hardly be accused of the sins which vitiated the influence of the official Christian clergy.

The rabbis of the different communities considered themselves to be "co-responsible" for the evils and sins of the entire Jewish Diaspora. Yet united action on a large scale was rare, so that different patterns of piety developed in the several regions of western Europe. In northern France and Germany, the naive, insular piety of the Tossafists took deep root. In southern France, the lovers of philosophy and science appear to have flourished. In Spain, where rationalism was long entrenched, there appeared to be a steady drift toward mysticism throughout the thirteenth century, particularly after the catastrophes of 1280-1281 c.e. The ban against the allegorists and against the study of philosophy prior to the age of 25, which was signed by the heads of many communities (1305), was the exception rather than the rule. Generally, each region developed its own pattern of piety.²¹

The life of the Jews in Asia and Africa deteriorated along with that of the rest of the peoples in the Moslem world in the latter centuries of the Medieval era. Had the Jewish faith been extinguished in the Christian world during the Medieval era, the Jew-

ish religion of our time would not have been dead, but worse, moribund and fossilized. Even as the physical survival of the Jewish people was unthinkable apart from events in the history of the nations among whom the Jews lived, the cultural-religious life of the Jews depended on the stimulation and challenge of the other prevailing cultures in the environment. Modern Judaism, in all its depth and pathos, is in part a product of the Christian world and of the diverse cultural influences in Western civilization. Just as the Christian ideology in antiquity cannot be understood apart from its root in Judaism, the modern ethos of the Western Jew cannot be understood apart from the cultural movements in the Christian lands. It is to the understanding of the Jewish-Christian symbiosis in the Middle Ages that we now turn our attention.

The survival of the Jews in Christian Europe was made possible by the character of Christian dogma. If the Jewish religion had been regarded as a heresy, or as a non-Christian faith, the Jews would have been ruthlessly eliminated from Western Europe, even as all other non-Christian groups were suppressed. If Charlemagne could bring himself to massacre the Teutonic Saxons for their refusal to accept Christianity, he would not have hesitated to kill or to expel all the Jews in his broad dominions. Economic considerations would not have deterred him, as they did not deter Ferdinand and Isabella, who expelled the Jews and the Moors at the time when they constituted a most important and productive element in the Spanish kingdom. Nor did considerations of humanity avail to soften the harshness of Medieval dogmatism. The Catholic Church did not hesitate to order the total extermination of the Albigensian population, when they were convicted of heresy. In the dark ages of fanatical faith, the dogmas of religion helped to shape the policies of kings and emperors. And long after the emergence of the Reformation, the authorities of the Catholic Church maintained that the burning of heretics was unquestionably a solemn and inescapable obligation.

The continued existence of Jewry in the lands of Western Christendom was therefore due to the peculiar dogmatism of the Medieval Catholic Church. The Visigothic Christian Kings and the Byzantine Emperors proscribed the Jewish religion again

and again, and we have no reason to believe that *marrano*-Judaism in those countries would have survived in any meaningful sense. The remnants of *marrano*-Jewry in Spain and Portugal retain only a few insignificant practices. Jewish survival in Catholic Europe was shaped and determined by the conviction that the Jews must be allowed to live, since they were destined to find their way back into the Grace of God in due time. Saint Paul saw a "mystery" in the refusal of the Jews to accept their own Messiah, and this mystery had to be respected.

For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. . . ."

For as ye in times past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown to you, they also may now obtain mercy.²²

The abortive attempt of the Spanish King, Alfonso XI, to ban usury and to direct Jewish enterprise into other branches of the economy (1348) was motivated as follows:

"The Jews remain in our kingdom; or the Holy Church hath commanded, for they will one day accept our faith for their salvation, according to the words of the prophets."²³

Thus we can see that the Christian attitude toward the Jews contained a basic polarity in its inner dogmatic structure. On the one hand, the Jews were "the witnesses of the Lord," demonstrating the living reality of the Old Testament. On the other hand, the Jews were to be degraded and debased, made to wander homeless and friendless, like Cain, bearing the stigma of a Divine curse. There was high admiration and reverence in this estimate of the Jews as the people of the Scriptures, the kin and kith of the Savior and his disciples. But there was also profound contempt and ever-renewed malice in this view, which made Jewish misery a thing of faith and an unfathomable mystery of Divine Providence. The exceptional status of the Jew and his "uniqueness," for both good and ill, was therefore an intrinsic element of Christian as of Jewish theology. At the same time, the Christian world also inherited the humanism of the ancient Roman world and the inherent, humanistic emphasis of the Holy

Scriptures, extolling the virtues of gentleness and love, of mercy and pity. Hence, the Christian view was compounded of four different concerns and ideals, with resulting tensions and paradoxes — contempt for the Jew as a "deicide" and reverence for the "mystery" of his being, the secular humanism of Roman law and the religious idealism of the Bible.

The writings of the Christian Fathers contain many variations of these essential themes. The Jew is both extolled and condemned, praised as of "the holy seed" and "the good olive" and scorned as being "of the blood of vipers." Chiefly, the Fathers charged that the Jews participated in the persecution of Christians, and that they were the main instigators of such attacks. Naturally, the Fathers asserted that the Jews knew neither the Father nor the Son and that they lived under a "curse." But, we encounter no excoriation of Jewish commerce or of Jewish usury. The Jews are constantly described as "perfidious," as in the prayer "Let us also pray for the perfidious Jew." (The word "perfidious" was dropped by Pope John XXIII in 1959). Already in Saint Augustine we find the persistent comparison of the Jew to Cain, who was condemned to wander restlessly across the face of the earth with the mark of his sin on his forehead.²⁴ The picture of Jewish depravity in Patristic literature was rarely related to the actions and sentiments of contemporary Jews, being largely, if not entirely, derived from the postulates of their faith. All the good adjectives and promises of the Old Testament were interpreted as referring to the community of Christians, and the evil threats, curses, and personalities were interpreted as referring to those who rejected their own Messiah. In keeping with the demon-ridden mentality of early Christianity, John Chrysostom warns his followers against going to the Synagogues of Antioch where the demons dwell. Saint Jerome applied to the laws of the Jews the bitter words of Ezekiel, "Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life."²⁵

However, in the eyes of the Christian Fathers, the longer the Jews persisted in their "stubbornness," the more their sin was multiplied. The continued existence of the Jews was a self-compounding enormity. As long as the Holy Temple was functioning the Jewish "error" was understandable, said John Chry-

sostom; but now that all efforts to rebuild the Temple, including the one made by the authority of Julian the Apostate, have failed, what sense does Judaism make?²⁰

Every manifestation of vitality on the part of Judaism was an offense; hence the prohibition to build new synagogues, issued some time before the year 415 C.E., and the attempt of Emperor Justinian to prohibit the study of the Mishnah (*Deuterium*) in the synagogues. In the Byzantine Empire, the monks constituted the shock troops of the Christian church, and they did not hesitate to demolish synagogues and to prevent their building.

In Carolingian France, Agobard complained of Jews keeping Christian slaves in their homes, of their converting and circumcising pagan slaves, and of their being frequently in positions of authority over Christians, all actions which were prohibited by Canon and Justinian laws. To these charges, he adds the accusation that Jews sell to Christians meat which they themselves would not eat (*i.e.*, non-kosher meat). But his chief point bore no reference whatever to the Jews of his day. "All who are under the Law are under a curse, and are clothed with the curse as with a garment."²⁷

The conflicting attitudes of the Church prohibited Christian sovereigns from killing the Jews outright, but encouraged the princes and the mob to degrade, torment, and exile them. We read of an archbishop encouraging his people to stone Jews during the week of Easter, in order to avenge the death of Jesus, but to refrain from killing them. One of the rival popes wrote in 1084 to the Archbishop of Mainz, suggesting that he expel the Jews who do not convert, "since we ought not to dwell with the enemies of God."²⁸ On the other hand, the popes never expelled the Jews from their own domains, contenting themselves with the institution of a rigid ghetto-system. The popes sought to bar the Jews from any social and cultural contact with Christian people, discouraging all fraternal ties and attributing the popular hatred which was thus sown and nurtured to the mythological curse which rested upon the Jews. The Church devised many ways whereby Jews would be exposed to Christian preaching, but it treated as mortal sin any attempt of Jews to resist those efforts. While compulsory conversion was not allowed by the Church, Jews who had been baptized under duress could not resume their Jewish faith, according to Canon law.

Jews are not to be forced to adopt the faith, but if they accept it, however unwillingly, they ought to be forced to adhere to it.²⁹

If any prince were to take it into his head to compel the Jews of his domain to be baptized, he would commit the sin of disobedience, but he would earn incalculable merit in the saving of souls. His sin was of a single moment, but his merit was of infinite duration. Hence, time and again, pious sovereigns were minded to commit a minor sin for the sake of the greater glory of God.

King Rothari, the first Catholic ruler of the Langobards, forced the Jews of northern Italy to be baptized, killing those who refused. Belisarius, Justinian's general, forced the Jews of Barion in North Africa to accept Christianity. Thus, too, did the kings of Visigothic Spain, after they were converted from Arianism to Catholicism, and the king of Portugal, in 1498. Four times in four centuries, the Byzantine emperors resorted to this stratagem.

The "final solution of the Jewish problem," to use a Nazi phrase, was disfavored by the Church. This is the basic reason for Jewish survival in Christian Europe. As Pope Alexander II wrote to the Archbishop of Narbonne, rebuking a mob intent on pogroms, "They foolishly wished to kill those whom the Divine Mercy had predestined to salvation."³⁰ On the other hand, most of the murderous bands of Crusaders in France were led by priests.³¹

Gregory the Great established the policy of the Popes in regard to the Jews. Opposing compulsory baptism of Jews on the ground of their possible reversion to their previous beliefs, he wrote:

Therefore, just as the Jews in their synagogues must not have the license to undertake anything beyond what the law permits them, so ought they not to suffer, contrary to justice and an equitable order, any prejudice and diminution in their rights.³²

This toleration of the Jews in an age of fanatical intolerance was motivated by the "mystery" of Saint Paul, which Gregory phrased as follows, "Christ, who arose from among the Jews, will revert to them at the end of the world."³³

The dynamic and uneasy tension of motivations in the Christian conscience was liable to be upset by the intrusion of any additional factor into the situation. Any rumor concerning Jew-

ish "perfidy," or any friction resulting from commercial rivalry, or any ambition on the part of kings to create a uniform population, was sufficient to upset the balance and lead to the forced conversion of Jews or to their expulsion. Sisebut, Visigothic king of Spain (612-620), ordered the Jews of his realm to accept Christianity on pain of death, refusing them the chance to leave the country. This action was probably prompted by the news from Syria and Palestine of the Jews joining the Persians in an invasion of those lands and instigating a massacre of the Christian population. The later Visigothic kings treated Judaism as any other heresy which threatened the unity of the kingdom. In this vein, King Receswinth addressed the Toledan Council (653):

I denounce the life and mores of the Jews, whose contagious pestilence pollutes the lands of my realm. For after the omnipotent God had radically extirpated all heresies from this region, this sacrilegious shame alone has remained.⁸⁴

Many centuries later when Ferdinand and Isabella set out to create a unified Spanish nation, they allowed the Inquisition to go far beyond the precepts and pleas of the popes. While the piety of the Spanish monarchs led them to promote the salvation of the Jews through Christianity their concern for national unity prompted them to institute the Inquisition and to expel the non-conformist Jews and Moors, and their cupidity, aroused by the substantial sums derived from the confiscation of *Marrano* property, induced them to follow the counsels of "piety" and national unity with unrelenting zeal.

The survival of the Jew in Christian Europe and his peculiarly tragic fate was therefore a direct result of the theology of the Church. While he was allowed to live, his nature and his status were fixed by the dogmatic structure of the Catholic faith. An ugly stereotype of his heritage and his character was imbedded in the faith and culture of the European peoples. The perennially reenacted story of the Crucifixion became the central feature of the Jewish stereotype in the public mind, and the legendary curse of the Wandering Jew provided the mythological framework for the legal status of the Jewish community. The theology of the Church did not include the teaching to hate the Jew; it was not, therefore, antisemitic in the usual sense of the word. On the contrary, the Church set out to "love" the Jew, in

keeping with the limitations and interpretations that its dogmas imposed upon that exalted ideal. But its teaching concerning the nature of the Jew created the popular image of a people accursed and demonic, set apart from the rest of mankind, at once sub-human and superhuman. Outbursts of anti-Jewish fury derived from this persistent indoctrination as the devastating floods of spring result from the gentle snows of the winter.

Protecting its myth of the Jew, the church sought consistently to bar any friendly associations between Jews and Christians. Inter-marriage was prohibited in the early days of the church, visits to a synagogue were banned, friendly social intercourse, such as would result from the practice of medicine by Jews, was prohibited at various times. Eventually, there resulted the forbidding walls of the ghetto, the yellow badge, sundry restrictions on Jewish economic enterprise, and occasionally expulsions.

But while the Church sought to bar the development of friendly contacts between the Christian and Jewish population, it did not prevent Jews and princes from making deals. In the course of time, the European Jews discovered various ways of making themselves useful to the princes and kings of the realm. First, as roving merchants and peddlers; then as settled traders and artisans, and still later as money-lenders, pawn-brokers and tax-collectors. In Eastern Europe, as artisans, estate-managers, and inn-keepers, Jews represented the major portion of the middle class. But the more useful the Jews made themselves to the princes, the more hateful they became to the people. The Jew was used as a sponge to soak up funds from the people, which the princes then obtained for themselves by way of ruthless taxation and arbitrary confiscation. This image of the sponge was already used by the clergy of sixteenth-century Germany. It was an apt simile, since the Medieval princes could not tax their affluent subjects directly. In many localities, the princes would, as a matter of course, confiscate for themselves the property of deceased Jews.

In Medieval Europe, the concept of usury was wide enough to embrace even such commercial transactions as selling on credit and charging such prices as the laws of supply and demand dictate. While the Byzantine government regulated the amount of interest and itself engaged in banking, the lands of Central and Western Europe were taught to look upon commerce

itself as evil and upon usury as the work of the devil. Money-lenders in the Medieval era were regarded in the same light as publicans in first-century Palestine. Both enterprises were used by the ruling powers as instruments of extortion and exploitation.

The Jews were not the only money-lenders of Europe. Italian merchants and many priests resorted to the same practice. The Church fought against the practice of usury by Christians and monastic orders, but it allowed the Jew to engage freely in this despised occupation.

Since the political authorities were the ultimate beneficiaries of Jewish enterprise, they experienced on occasion twinges of conscience. King James I of Aragon "confiscated for the crown all the outstanding Jewish debts, as an act of piety 'for the salvation of our soul and the souls of our forebears.'"³⁵ On the other hand, King Edward I of England attempted to turn the Jews from money-lending to more productive enterprises (1275), but he expected to achieve this revolution in a few years. When the Jews failed to adjust quickly, he expelled them from his dominions.

The Lateran Council of 1179 ordered the exclusion of usurers from communion and from burial in Christian cemeteries. To indicate the severity of this offense, usurers were classed with witches, gamblers, adulterers, et cetera.³⁶

The people of French, English, and German towns would drive out the Italian money-lenders from time to time and make pogroms against them, even as they attacked the Jews. In fact, the Italians were usually attacked and expelled before the Jews.³⁷ The reputation of the Lombards and the Cahorsins as harsh and ruthless usurers was far worse than that of the Jews.³⁸

As urbanization and commerce grew apace and as the prestige of Roman law increased, governments came to accept and to regulate the practice of money-lending, but the image of the hateful money-lender had become one of the myths of the European tradition, and this stereotype came to overlay the one of "Christ-killer." After the Crusades, Jews in Western Europe turned from commerce to money-lending. As more and more Christians learned the arts of commerce, this trend was intensified. Money-lending came to be regarded as properly a Jewish enterprise, since it was sinful but necessary, and the Jews were

"lost" anyhow. The *Sachsenspiegel*, a compilation of Germanic law (circa 1225), states, "By the law of God no Jew shall take usury; but their station in life had ordained it otherwise."³⁹

The rabbinic *responsa* of Moslem Spain indicate that a goodly number of Jews in that country were engaged in agriculture. In the Moslem areas, where the associations of artisans were apparently kept free from involvement with religious ceremonies, a large number of Jews were employed as artisans. At the same time, Moslem Spain was, in the ninth century, the western terminal point of the vast intercontinental enterprise of Jewish traders (*Radhanites*), who brought the goods of Cordova and the slaves of Central Europe to the gates of China. Indeed, the variety of the medieval Jewish economy in different parts of the world is astounding.⁴⁰

But in the myth and memory of the European peoples, usury was identified with the Jew, so that even a stout defender of the Jews like Saint Bernard of Clairvaux employed the term *Judaisare*, for usury. The usual rate was 33%.⁴¹ The Christian money-lenders were individuals (Lombards, Cahorsin, Catalans, Florentines) and soon forgotten. The princes and kings who profited from Jewish enterprises were unseen beneficiaries, whom the popes excoriated but whom the ignorant public did not see.⁴² But the Jews as a people were blamed for the role they were forced to play.

On the other hand, the Medieval Jews accepted their economic role in society without feeling debased or degraded by it. Their norms of judgment were derived from their own legalistic tradition, not from the world around them. Abner of Burgos reports his Jewish interlocutors as saying:

We are comfortable, collecting usury from the peasants and from the other Gentiles who toil and labor for us. The fact that we pay taxes to their kings is not as distressing as you think, since you too pay taxes. Even if we had a Jewish king, we would have to pay taxes.⁴³

They regarded their economic function in Christian society as a God-given opportunity to preserve the one true faith. The quick profits of money-lending enabled them to exert a certain leverage in behalf of their own people; their gold was their only shield in a predatory world. They did not argue that usury was either good or useful or inevitable, since they were constrained

by both Scripture and Talmud to regard usury as a sinful, thoroughly antisocial act. From personal experience, they knew usury to be an evil, destructive practice. But usury afforded them a powerful weapon in the struggle for survival as well as leisure to study Torah and money with which to support Torah-students. For some Jews in vengeful moods, it was also an instrument of hurting those whom they regarded as enemies. Since it dramatized the vastness of the gulf established by God and man between them and the lesser breeds without the Law, money-lending was for some Medieval Jews not only a useful but a desirable, indeed an ideal, way of earning a living, making possible a holy and dedicated life. In fact, we find that the dependence of Jewish life on usury created in many periods a highly pious and, in a narrow sense, a Jewish dedicated community. Such is the strange paradox of human nature. "The reason that the Torah is better observed in Germany than in other countries derives from the fact that they live on the usury which they exact from the Gentiles, and they do not have to resort to manual labor. Thus, they have leisure for the study of Torah. And those who do not themselves learn Torah, assist the learners out of their profits."⁴⁴

To see the business of usury in focus, it should be remembered that the exorbitant rates of interest (in 1244, official rate in Austria was 174%) were kept at such high levels in order to satisfy the endless greed of the princes who were the ultimate beneficiaries of this cruel enterprise. At different times, Jewish dealers attempted to set limits to the permissible rate, obtaining the help of the rabbis and utilizing the threat of excommunication as a means of enforcing reasonable standards. Such attempts ended in failure, chiefly because central Europe was broken up into hundreds of principalities and the regulations governing Jewish business methods had to be approved by all the princes involved. While in the Byzantine Empire, interest on loans was regulated as a matter of course, Western Europe maintained a schizophrenic attitude, at once condemning the least return on loans and tolerating the most destructive usurious practices.

Not as well known as that of usury is the role of the Jews in managing the estates of the nobility and in exacting taxes from the peasant and burgher population. This hate-breeding enter-

prise was virtually monopolized by Jews in Central Europe down to the opening of the modern era. In this role, the Jews aroused the resentment of the masses of the people to a greater extent than they did as usurers. Jewish leaders tried at various times to limit the participation of Jews in the tax-collection enterprises of the king and the nobility. An ordinance of the Conference of Four Lands (*Va-ad Ar-ba Aro-tzoth*) prohibited Jews from collecting these revenues on a large scale. This prohibition, issued in the year 1580 C.E., was motivated by the needs of defense against defamation and antisemitism. Apparently, however, these considerations were outweighed by economic pressures. In 1623, the Conference of Lithuanian Jews reversed this decision, urging Jews to retain tax-farming enterprises whenever possible.

This is a pillar upon which all our security is founded, for the Jew has the upper hand so long as he collects the taxes. Would that in all the places of their dispersion, Jews were tax-farmers, for then they would have been supreme.⁴⁶

In Europe, as a rule, anti-Jewish feeling increased as social rank decreased. To the kings and nobles, Jews were ideal managers, and tax-collectors. While the nobility was allied with the priesthood which aimed at the degradation of the Jew, it also derived inspiration and guidance from the humanistic tradition of the classical world. Solomon Ibn Virgo, writing in sixteenth-century Italy, points out that antisemitism is rare among the well-born aristocracy. When cities were small and in the initial stages of growth, their inhabitants welcomed Jews in order to encourage the growth of commerce and industry; at least the kings and princes who "owned" the cities were prone to welcome Jewish enterprise. As soon as the natives learned the merchandising methods and skills of the Jews, they began to resent the competition of the perpetual aliens. Hence, the rise of the bourgeoisie, first in the lands of Western Europe, later in the cities of Central Europe, resulted in a continuous migration of the Jews from the Roman-Germanic West to the Slavic East. The bourgeois were tolerant of Jews only in confident, expansionist periods. On occasion they also championed the Jewish cause in keeping with the liberal, individualistic ideology which they developed.

But the lowest classes in the European economy hated the

Jews most bitterly. To them, the Jew was the image of the ruthless oppressor and exploiter. In their tortured imagination, the naive, non-humanistic Christian tradition exhibited its dark mythology, in all its fundamentalist horror. The delicate balance in Christianity between its idealistic substance and its mythological shadow was weighted, in the peasant mind, on the side of myth and fantasy. Their hatred was massive and elemental because, in addition to economic causes, it derived from envy and superstition, from hoary myths stamped with the seal of religion, and from ethnic arrogance reborn in every generation. The mythology of collective aggrandizement is always more popular than the idea of individual responsibility among the masses, who find little in their individual lives to admire and extol. Only those whose lot has fallen in pleasant places can take pride in their individual identities.

While the Church and Medieval society combined to create external conditions for Jewish life, the role of the Jew was not entirely that of passive victim. In economic and social terms, he was the pioneer of the dawning age of commerce. In intellectual and spiritual domains, he was, strangely enough, at once a corroborator and a "witness" as well as a challenger and protester. In fact, there was an intimate correspondence between Christian theology and Jewish belief. The Catholic Church and the Jewish theologians concurred in the proposition that the Jew was "different," eternally set apart from the rest of mankind and doomed to wander as a "rootless alien amidst hostile nations." They debated the implications of that difference. That the Jew was for many centuries the peculiar object of Divine concern, far more so than the rest of mankind; that he is now punished far more than other nations, by dispersal and degradation; that in the end of time, he will be redeemed — regarding all these propositions, Jews and Catholics agreed although they differed about the causes of Jewish punishment and the manner in which salvation was to come.

The pietistic rabbis concurred in the Catholic theological policy of separating the Jews socially and culturally from the Christian world. Whereas individual Jews chafed at the restrictions, the anti-philosophical teachers who sought inspiration solely in the pages of the Talmud could not but rejoice in the seg-

regated status. Characteristic of this mentality was the action of the French rabbis who petitioned the Inquisition to condemn the philosophical works of Maimonides as heretical (1233 C.E.). The practice of usury was consistent in their minds with the basic axiom of their faith, namely, that a deep, cosmic gulf exists between Jews and the rest of mankind. In its strict interpretation, the Talmud did not prohibit Jews from charging Christian borrowers whatever the traffic would bear, though usury from Gentiles was discouraged on the ground that Jewish money-lenders would get into the habit of living off usury and then come to take usury from Jewish borrowers. In strict law, it was prohibited for Jews "to do any favor" to pagans, such as loaning money without interest, and it was easy for Jewish merchants to assume that the Christians of their day were like the pagans of the biblical period. Even when this assumption was challenged by some rabbinic interpreters, the point was rarely made that Christians were entitled to the same courtesies in commerce and philanthropy as were the Jews. Medieval dogmatism imprisoned the minds of the Jews as of the Christians within the rigid mold of fanaticism, dividing all things on earth and in heaven between the "chosen" sheep and the "rejected" goats. And yet, dogmatism did not enjoy monopolistic sway.

As we search the literature of the Medieval period for clues to the Jewish mentality, we find that the pietists occasionally chided the Jews for cheating Gentiles; at the same time, the masses of Jewish people took it for granted that the Law with its detailed formulation of the duties of man to his neighbors extended only to the inner boundaries of the Jewish community. Within Judaism as within Christianity, the essence of religion and its mythological-dogmatic expression were in polar tension; and the masses favored a self-exalting mythology. The *Book of the Pious*, reflecting the ascetic piety of the Jewish saints of thirteenth-century Germany, tells of a confession by an old Jew: "I never wronged a Jew in my life, but my Gentile customers, I used to cheat." The saint chided him, saying that in heaven. "The Holy One, blessed be He, acts justly to Gentiles as to Jews."⁴⁷

The prophetic impetus in Judaism was expressed in the Medieval era partly in the pietistic-ethical movements (*mussar*) and partly in the intermittent flashes of rationalistic philosophy. Jewish physicians, merchant-princes, and estate-managers were

themselves either devotees of philosophy, or else they maintained a "court," wherein philosophers, poets, and grammarians were welcome. On the upper levels of society, there was frequently a lively interchange between Jewish, Christian, and Moslem intellectuals. In these exchanges, it fell to the lot of Jewish scholars to be the transmitters of Hellenic wisdom, first from the Greek world to the Arab and Moslem cultural domain; and in the later Medieval world, from the Moslem to the Christian world. While the humanistic circles were usually tiny groups, they were exceedingly important in keeping alive the hope of the future. These enclaves of the "life of reason" frequently contained Jewish physician-philosophers or Jewish bankers, whose courts sponsored poets and scholars.

Medicine was a major Jewish occupation and, in the Medieval period, the art of healing belonged to the general field of philosophy. A painting at Pisa, dating from the year 1345, shows Thomas Aquinas vanquishing the Moslem rationalist, Ibn Rushd (Averroes). The latter is portrayed as an Arab, wearing the Jewish signs of ignominy, since his writings were translated into Hebrew and then from Hebrew into Latin.⁴⁸

Medieval Jewish philosophy contains a rich humanistic-rationalistic heritage. The social-economic position of the Jews as mediators between the Christian and Moslem worlds predisposed their thinkers to explore the horizons of a common universe of discourse for all faiths. This was particularly true of Jewish converts to Islam and to Christianity. But rationalism was relatively strong even among those who remained Jews. The Moslem liberal movement of the Mutazila, maintaining the rationality of faith and the goodness of God, was soon overthrown in the Abbassid Khalifate, but the Jewish Gaon Saadia, who represented a similar approach was not disavowed in Jewish circles. Saadia asserted that man can arrive at the truths of faith by the sheer power of reason. Maimonides in the last chapter of the *Guide of the Perplexed* ranks observant Jews below the philosophers of all nations in the common search for the "nearness of God." Ibn Gabirol's book, *Fons Vitae*, was phrased in terms so generally applicable that for centuries Christian scholastics imagined the author was a Christian. As a faith, Judaism contained far less irrationality than its daughter-faiths and it stressed the ideals of learning and meditating on the Will of God. However, Judaism

was also the self-awareness of a besieged and desperate ethnic community, impelled to erect high and forbidding barriers for elementary self-protection.

In the Medieval world, the appearance of a single Jew was sufficient to set off a disputation as to which faith was the one true religion. We know that numerous rabbis were involved in such private debates, in addition to the great public disputations recorded in history. In general, the logical position of the Jew was very strong. So long as the singularity of the Jew in the Divine scheme of salvation was assumed on all sides, and so long as the hereafter and the "world to come" loomed far more importantly in the human mind than the here and now, and since too the Holy Scriptures of the Jew were universally acknowledged as Divine, the Jew could feel utterly firm in his position. Furthermore, since it was generally conceded that his faith was at one time unassailably true, he could well feel that the burden of proof for its discontinuance lay upon his opponents. All the persecutions and persuasions of his Christian opponents did not touch the essentials of his own faith; namely, that he belonged to the Chosen People, the sole bearers of Divine salvation. And this awareness of belonging to the people of Israel served to add the cement of ethnic loyalty to the convictions and sentiments of faith. Whenever ethnicism is combined with religious loyalty, the resulting blend of loyalties is intensified many times over. Thus, it was with remarkable zeal that the Irish clung to Catholicism, the Armenians to their brand of Christianity, the Persians to their heretical form of Islam, the Hindu Parsees to their Zoroastrian faith. On the other hand, Martin Luther appealed to German nationalism, and John Huss to Czech nationalism, against the (Italian) papacy.

The central principles of the Jewish faith could not be challenged without arousing the passions of ethnic pride. As we have pointed out previously, the argument between the Jews and Christians was not *What is right?* but *Who is right?* Who are the bearers of the Divine Promise and the possessors of salvation? Who are the beloved of God, above all others, and who are the accursed, beyond all others? Once a question is phrased in this manner, the answer of the voice of blood is louder by far than the voice of reason.

To be sure, it took strength of character, firm resolution, and clear awareness of ideological issues to make possible the remarkable tenacity of the Jews. Not all men and women are made of the stuff of martyrs. Many thousands of Jewish people did in fact succumb to the lure of the dominant faith. The steel of Jewish resolution was tempered in the fires of persecution, which removed the weaker elements. Gradually a tradition of martyrdom was built up, predisposing the Jew to expect to give his life for his faith. When the crusading mobs besieged the Jews in the cities along the Rhine, the Jews, faced with the choice of baptism or death, proceeded to slaughter their wives, their children, and themselves rather than give up their faith. This readiness to die for the Sanctification of the Name was thoroughly in keeping with the mood of the Medieval era. It was the same spirit of absolute devotion and self-sacrifice that motivated many Catholic Crusaders. And the heretical movements in Western Europe, from the Albigensians to the Mennonites are replete with similar tales of self-immolation for the sake of faith.

The ideology of martyrdom was already an ancient and honored tradition to the Jews of Medieval Europe. Nevertheless, it took on the accents of the prevailing faith and the spirit of the Crusaders. The Jewish martyrs in the Rhineland, at the time of the Crusades, pronounced a benediction, before cutting the throats of their wives and children, as if they offered a sacrifice at the Holy Temple. Believing themselves collectively to be "sons" of God, they gloried in the opportunity to die, for "the sanctification of His Name." "He is our God and we are the sheep of His flock." "When does it become known that He is with us? When we are slaughtered like sheep for His Holy Name." The ecstasy of martyrdom is the ultimate proof of Judaism and the vindication of its cause. Such is the logic of popular feeling. And this self-intoxication of martyrdom made the people insensitive to physical pain.

For it is a tradition among the Sages that the man who decides in his heart to give himself for the Holy Name, come what may, does not feel the pain of the blows that are felt by those who have not so decided, with their whole heart.

Nahmanides recites the honor roll of martyrs in words which recall the ancient rites of sacrifice:

The pious saints who braved death for Thy Name . . . bringing holocausts and sacrifices . . . being human sacrifices . . . rejoicing the while: one says, "I now belong to God . . . I bring myself as sacrifice . . . I shall give my first-born for my sin, the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul." From fathers to sons, this is a heritage from Sinai, to make themselves into peace-offerings, acceptable unto the Lord.⁴⁰

The martyrdom of the Jewish people differed from the usual Medieval variety because it was endured by a whole people and for many centuries, not merely by a band of unworldly monks and nuns or by a generation of excited enthusiasts. The normal motivations of religious dogmatism and ethnic pride were reinforced by feelings of superiority, deriving from social status. As city-dwellers, the Jews were culturally far ahead of the peasants and serfs of Europe. Their commercial contacts lifted them above the narrow provincialism of their day and their long historical memory deepened their culture-consciousness to the point where they became unassimilable by the less-educated, less-skilled, less-sophisticated population, among whom they moved as ambassadors of an ancient, storied civilization and as precursors of an urban, commercial culture then still unborn.

The extreme difficulty of completely assimilating Jewish converts to Christianity was well known in the Medieval world. In spite of the "mystery" of Jewish survival as projected by Saint Paul, many more Christian princes might have compelled the Jews in their domains to accept the dominant faith, as some of them did. But the knowledge that many Jews would rather die than convert and that many others would remain secretly loyal to their faith acted as a deterrent. In the long centuries of the Medieval era, many Jews were converted by force and thousands were converted by persuasion. Most of these converts were absorbed by the general population, in spite of the continuation of *marranoism* in Spain and Portugal. But the enduring *marranoism* of some Jewish converts in Italy, France, and Spain made a powerful impression upon the Christian princes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A Medieval proverb, quoted by Solomon Ibn Virgo, states the general conviction very succinctly:

Three kinds of water are wasted, the water poured into wine,

the rain that falls on the ocean, and the water of baptism that is sprinkled on the Jew.

In the many debates between Jewish and Christian spokesmen during the Middle Ages, the Jewish position inclined to the pole of rationalism, while the Christian position leaned to side of mysticism. This was true both in matters of exegesis and of dogma. In the interpretation of Old Testament verses, the Jewish protagonists needed only to adhere to the plain meaning of the Scriptures. The real force of the Christian allegorical explanations derived from a tradition of allegorical interpretation, common in the Hellenistic world to both Jews and Christians. In the Middle Ages, no such common tradition existed any longer. In respect of dogmas, the Jewish debaters could assume the stance of rationalists, maintaining the impossibility of all the Christian "paradoxes" — the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Sacraments. In fact, they could urge the inner logic of Christian faith against the irrationality and injustice of Christian theology. Thus, they prepared the European soil for the Protestant movement.

If religion is a dynamic and unstable synthesis of mystical faith and rational criticism, then Judaism taken as a whole is closer to the pole of reason than Christianity taken as a whole. For Christianity assumes the entire heritage of Jewish dogmatics, down to the time of the birth of Jesus, adding thereunto a complex body of allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament and a vast accretion of fresh dogmas of its own. The romantic-mystical wing of Judaism came closest to the Christian position.

Discussing the reasons which led the notorious convert, Abner of Burgos, to desert his ancestral faith, Baer writes:

There can be no doubt that the streams of mystical thought then meandering through Spanish Jewry had a decisive influence upon Abner's thinking in the course of the intellectual crisis which he resolved by his conversion to Christianity. Abner began with a critique of the rationalist interpretation of Judaism, cultivated by the Jewish intellectuals who were his friends — and for this he found ample support in Qabbalistic doctrine — and moved ultimately to a position of complete identification with Christian ideology.⁵⁰

Anti-rationalists, like Isaac Arame could go along with their

Christian counterparts in demanding that Hagar, the slave-girl, representing Reason, should not dare to usurp the place of her mistress, Sarah, standing for Faith.

Indeed, the Christians, unlike our rationalists, admit the rightful role of philosophy and follow its pleasant pathways . . . but the moment the slightest blossom of their faith is involved, they insist that the weakness of human reason is to blame for the contradiction, for philosophy is unable to reach up to the things of God . . . Behold, ye men of this generation, their good example . . .⁵¹

But this anti-rationalist insisted that God could not act arbitrarily, choosing some men for salvation and condemning others to eternal damnation. While God's Essence is trans-rational, His Will must accord with rational-moral standards. In his debate with Christian theologians, Arame upheld the view that God chose the patriarchs of Israel on account of their righteousness.

It is an absolute lie to say that Divine Grace preceded the merit of the fathers . . . we could impute to Him no greater injustice than to say that He loves some people and does not love others."⁵²

Even Jewish mystics became rationalists, when Christian dogmas were under discussion. Nahmanides maintained in his public debate with Pablo Christiani (1263) that the Aggadic sayings of the Talmud were not binding; that it is not necessary for Jews to believe in the coming of the Messiah; that it is impossible for the "mind of a Jew or a man" to believe that God could enter into the womb of a woman and be born as a child. Yet, apart from public debates, Nahmanides was one of the architects of the myth-laden Qabbalah. Evidently, Jewish mystics fell back upon the rationalistic position without any embarrassment, whenever they were challenged by Christian debaters.

This rational spirit was exceedingly congenial to the mentality of Jewish merchants and bankers, whose daily occupation required them to engage in the objective balancing of diverse alternatives. Economic theorists, like Sombart, who attribute the rise of capitalism to the calculating mood of Talmud-trained Jews were basically incorrect. But the grain of truth in this assertion is the congruence of a rational faith with the mentality of the bourgeoisie, who favor the sober and unheroic virtues of a reasonable religion. In the Middle Ages, the Jews formed a

major part of the middle class, and in the inherent rationalism of their faith, they found strong support for the prudent norms and balanced values favored by the economic-cultural climate of urban life.

Jewish rationalism was also consonant with the natural ideology of an oppressed minority, persistently pleading for tolerance. The exponents of the minority have to contend that God could be served in more than one way. Such a position was occasionally espoused by Jewish spokesmen. In a sixteenth-century work, we read of a Christian king, challenging a Jewish sage to say which is the better faith, Judaism or Christianity. The sage replies, "My faith is better for me, for I was in Egypt a slave to slaves and the Lord redeemed me, and yours is better for you . . ."⁵³

Conversion from one cultural-religious faith to another is effected in two ways — by sudden revelation or by slow gradations. Usually it is achieved through a deep and transforming emotional upheaval, which revolutionizes the human personality and transforms imaginative life; it is even marked at times by hallucinations and the hearing of voices. Saul of Tarsus saw a blinding light and heard a voice, Constantine saw the sign of the Cross and was assured, "With this sign you will conquer." The final experience of conversion is generally sudden and intense, even if it was preceded by a long, subconscious development.⁵ Cultural assimilation, on the other hand, is brought about slowly and in the light of day.

Since all religions are in effect patterns of feeling and of thought, people may go from one faith to another either through the subjective-emotional pathway of sudden and ecstatic conversion or through the objective-intellectual pathway of thought, culture, and conviction. In the Hellenistic-pagan world, Judaism faced the challenge of objective values. Many of the "hellenized" Jews allegorized away their faith and left their people, because they moved in spirit toward the universal values of reason, with which Hellenistic culture was so well endowed. In the Medieval world, the culture of Hellenism was not completely forgotten, but before the Italian Renaissance, it was shunted aside. And the major challenge of Medieval culture was addressed

to the subjective phase of the human spirit, the testimony of tradition, the fervent fire of irrational faith, the appeal of powerful symbols, narrow zealotries, and paradoxical, reason-defying, emotion-stirring dogmas.

Judaism emerged alive and vigorous from the long ordeal of the Medieval dungeon because it was unusually strong in both its subjective and objective phases. Because of its potent appeal to the self-flattering and self-glorifying imagination of the masses, it retained the loyalty of its common people. By its appeal to the faculties of reason and conscience, it retained the allegiance of the intellectuals who aspired toward the universal values of mankind.

We have noted the primary elements of strength in Jewish subjectivity, the blending of ethnic and religious feeling, the fact that Jewish "uniqueness" and "chosenness" was implied even in the Christian world and confirmed by the universal reverence for the Jewish Holy Scriptures, and the urban character of Jewish life which made them scorn the culture of the peasants even as the peasants both feared and admired the skills and the sophistication of the alien city-folk.

To these elements of subjective fascination, we need to add the belief in the imminent arrival of the Messiah. While in Christianity, too, there arose from time to time millenarian movements which fostered the perennial expectation of the Second Coming of Jesus, the fever of messianic expectancy in Judaism was incomparably higher and more widespread. Throughout the Middle Ages, there was hardly a generation when the anticipation of the Messiah was not raised to a high pitch of intensity. Nearly every Jewish scholar suggested a fresh calculation of the time of the Messiah's arrival, and in nearly every case the writer, or his children, could reasonably expect to greet the Messiah in his lifetime. So protean was this "hope of Israel" and so many-faceted the description of the "pains of redemption" that every generation found it easy to interpret the political events of the day as signs and portents of the Messiah's advent. Even the rationalistic philosophers were not free from this magnificent obsession. Sober thinkers like Saadia and Maimonides were impelled to figure out the year of the Messiah's arrival, and by a

strange coincidence, the year of redemption of their calculations nearly always fell within the anticipated lifetime of their own contemporaries.

The messianic hope was not a distant, dogmatic assertion concerning the "end of days," which could be ignored in the welter of everyday problems. On the contrary, it was implied in the thinking of the masses and of their leaders as the ultimate justification of Jewish tenacity in exile. As individuals, the Medieval Jews confronted the alternatives of rewards in heaven and punishments in hell, and the belief in these alternatives was sufficient to keep them loyal to Torah and *mizvoth*. But when they thought of their collective destiny as Jews, it was not the hope of heaven and the fear of hell that stirred their fancy, but the resplendent vision of the messianic era, when the Jewish cause would be decisively and finally vindicated. As Jews, they were caught in the swirling currents of history, and it is within the actual, historical process that the career of the Jew needed to be justified.

The messianic hope was painted in realistic colors and conceived in terms of earthly, this-worldly satisfactions that the mass-mind could relish. Living as we do today in a rationalistic age, most writers tend to minimize the impact of the messianic hope on the minds of the Jewish masses, imagining that this hope came to life only sporadically whenever pseudo-messiahs arose to ensnare the people in their fantastic schemes.

The people expected the Messiah to be revealed by means of earth-shaking miracles that would uplift them from the dust and exalt them to the loftiest heights. The Israelites would be "ingathered," Palestine would once more become a Jewish state, the Gentiles would all become followers of the Jewish faith. And all this was predicated solely on the belief in a supernatural deliverance, to be achieved in God's own, inconceivable way in accordance with His unalterable Promise. "Can the hand of the Lord be too short?" While the messianic hope, in its historic fullness, embraced humanistic ideals, its effective core during the long and dark Medieval era was the belief in the triumph of the Jewish people and their measureless glories.

To get the flavor of Medieval messianism, let us take note of

some well-known passages, selected out of the representative literature of the time.

1. Of the Messiah on Cyprus, in the year 448 C.E., as reported by Socrates, a church historian:

He used to say that he was Moses, whom God sent from heaven to be their leader On the appointed day, he assembled many people on the rocks by the sea and, assuring them that he would lead them to the land of Judah, he ordered that they jump into the sea. Their madness and their blindness led them to heed his command and many of them were drowned.⁶⁶

2. From the *Mysteries of Rabbi Simon Bar Yohai*, the beginning of which was composed after the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs (638 C.E.), and additions to which were made after the downfall of the Ummayyad dynasty:

If they do not merit it, Messiah son of Ephraim comes; if they do merit it, Messiah son of David will come.

"And there will arise an evil king whose name is Armilus, bald with a small stain of leprosy on his forehead, with his right ear closed and his left ear open . . . and he is the son of Satan and a stone. And he will go up to Jerusalem to fight against the Messiah son of Ephraim And the Messiah son of Ephraim will die then, and the Israelites will mourn over him Then Messiah son of David will come and blow at Armilus and kill him And the Lord will call and gather the Israelites and bring them to Jerusalem And a new Jerusalem will come down, all built and perfected, adorned with seventy-two pearls that shine from one end of the world to the other And the temple will come down from heaven And the Israelites will dwell in safety two thousand years, eating Behemoth, Leviathan. . . ."⁶⁸

3. Of the effect of rumors about messianic pretenders in the East (Abu Isa, Sarini, et cetera) on Jews in the West:

In those days (723) the Jews of Spain rebelled because they heard that in Syria a deceiver, Zonoria (Sarini), appeared who claimed to be the promised Messiah for whom they wait. And all the Jews in Spain and Gaul left their property and went to Syria. The Emir, Ambiza, confiscated their goods in behalf of the state.⁶⁷

Saadia's famous summation of the messianic hope is exceedingly important because of the high authority of this tenth-century Gaon and philosopher, head of the Babylonian Academy of Sura:

THE MEANING OF JEWISH HISTORY

We have to understand the possibility of two Messiahs: If we repent properly, the Messiah son of David will appear suddenly, but if we do not the Messiah son of Joseph will come as his messenger, preparing the nation and making way for him.

The people massing together at the Messiah's coming will be of two kinds, totally wicked who come to die, and those who are prepared to accept the Torah of Israel. . . . Those that are condemned to die will perish in various ways.

Those that are willing to accept the faith will fall into four categories; some, the leading people among them, will serve the Jews in their homes; some will serve them in the villages and cities, some will work on the fields and in the deserts; the rest will return to their respective lands to live under the domination of the Jews. The son of David will command them to go up to Jerusalem once a year to celebrate the festival of Sukkoth. . . . And they will carry the Jews with them, when they go up. . . . And if a Jew should happen to live in a desert, where there is none to carry him, God will bring him swiftly as through the clouds. . . .

And when all the living and believing Jews are gathered together, there will take place the resurrection of the dead. . . and the Messiah son of Joseph will be at their head.

Then the Lord will bring about the building of His Holy Temple. The light of the Shekhinah will visibly shine over the Temple, so that the sun will appear dim by comparison. . . Then prophecy will be revived among our people. . . even our children and slaves. . . so much so that if any one of the Israelites should go to a distant land and say that he is an Israelite, people will say to him, "What will be tomorrow?" or "What hidden event happened yesterday?" and if he will tell them the correct answer, they will know that he is an Israelite. . . .⁵⁸

Needless to say, all these predictions are based on a literal interpretation of the relevant prophetic passages. When, a century later, Rav Hai Gaon (939-1038), by all odds the most authoritative personality in half a millennium, interpreted the messianic hope in a *responsum*, he followed generally the description of Saadia. However, he took it for granted that Messiah son of Joseph will precede Messiah son of David.

And why will Armilus be permitted to kill the Messiah son of Joseph? In order to break the heart of the disputers in Israel, who lack faith, for they will say, "Behold the man for whom we hope has already come. Now that he is killed there is no hope left for Israel." They will forsake the covenant of Israel and cling to the nations, and be killed. . . .

. . . for the body of the Messiah son of Joseph will lie for forty days, without being touched by an unclean object until Messiah

son of David will appear and revive him by the word of God, and this is the first sign that he will perform, the revival of the dead.

And who will be revived by this resurrection of the dead? All righteous Israelites and also those Israelites who sinned and repented. But he whose sins outnumbered his merits and did not repent will not stand up in the days of the Messiah . . .

Rav Hai Gaon expatiates more on the ultimate conversion of the nations and their acceptance of the ways of peace than on their becoming servants of Jews:

And then all the children of Israel will be prophets. Even the slaves and servant-girls of the Jews will prophesy . . . And those who will be left alive from among the nations will be converted. And when they appear before the King Messiah, he will order them to abolish wars and to cease rattling the sword . . .

And in those days, when the Temple and Jerusalem will be revealed, the Shekhinah will descend from heaven and stand as a fiery pillar from the ground to the sky . . .

4. Typical of the literalistic view of the Messiah is a question addressed by the communities along the Rhine in Germany to the Jewish communities in Palestine in the year 960 C.E.

We heard a rumor concerning the coming of the Messiah, and what do you do with a blemish on the heart? [There is no relationship between the two parts of the question. The first refers to the Messiah, the second relates to the laws of *Kashruth*.]

In regard to the coming of the Messiah, we should not reply to you. Don't you believe in the signs described by the Sages? The signs are not yet here.⁵⁹

5. In the *Travels of Benjamin of Tudela* (1160-1173), we find a description of the Messianic hope among the Jews in Germany:

. . . and when the Lord will remember our exile and uplift the horn of the Messiah, each one will say, "I will lead the Jews and I will gather them." And in these cities there are many scholars in the various communities. And when a stranger comes they rejoice with him and say, "rejoice our brother, for the help of God is swift, like the flick of an eye-lash."⁶⁰

6. We read about a pseudo-Messiah in Lyon, France (*circa* 1060-1070 C.E.), in the letter of Moses Miamonides to the Jews of Yemen:

. . . In Lyons, France, a big center with ten thousand Jews, there arose a man who claimed to be the Messiah. The miracle he performed before them was that, on a moonlit night he climbed on

the tops of the trees, from one to the other . . . Many people testified about this miracle and followed him.⁶¹

7. We know of messianic movements among the Byzantine Jews in anticipation of the first Crusade, in the year 1096; and of the migration of German Jews to Palestine in that year in order to await the Messiah;⁶² of the appearance of a Messiah in Cordova (*circa* 1100); of the rise of Solomon Hakohen among the Qaraites of Syria (*circa* 1121);⁶³ of a messianic claimant in North Africa by the name of Moses who persuaded nearly all the Jews to seal their possessions in anticipation of the advent of the Messiah on the night of Passover;⁶⁴ of a pseudo-Messiah in England (*circa* 1140) who claimed to possess the power of making himself invisible; of the famed pseudo-Messiah, David Alroy, who seems to have assembled a Jewish army (*circa* 1140);⁶⁵ of a messianic pretender with communistic ideas in Yemen, at the time of Moses Maimonides (1172);⁶⁶ of a movement among the Jews of Saintes, France, and described in a letter to the Jews of Egypt (*circa* 1240); of Christian chroniclers writing about a mobilization of the Jews of Prague in connection with the rumor of the Messiah's advent (1235); of Jews who hailed the Mongolian hordes claiming they included "hidden" Jewish tribes and who expected the Messiah in the year 1241.⁶⁷

This sketchy and incomplete record of a century-and-a-half of messianic expectation is sufficient to indicate the frequency and intensity of pseudo-messianic movements. Many such hysterical upheavals were not recorded in the documents and books that have come to us. It is sufficient to note that there was hardly a generation, to the opening of the modern era, which was not deluded by some specific expectation, in connection with some person, or with some calculated date of the "end of days."

Every international event was interpreted in accord with messianic speculations. The improvement in methods of navigation and communication at the end of the fifteenth century served to multiply rumors concerning the "ten tribes," and their relations with the legendary kingdom of Prester John. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain aroused a plethora of messianic expectations, centering on the years 1502, 1503, 1524, 1533, 1561, et cetera.

The frustration of these hopes resulted occasionally in a flood

of conversions. This was particularly the case after the failure of the movement led by Asher Lemlein, (1502). More frequently, contemporary preachers were able to "reinterpret" their signs and to point out that certain international events, such as the capture of Rhodes by the Turks, the emergence of Martin Luther's Reformation, the sack of Rome by the soldiers of Charles V, were indeed the first steps of the Redemption.⁶⁸ Occasionally, people continued to believe in a messianic pretender or announcer, long after his death. Many Jews in Italy believed that R. Solomon Molcho, the *Marrano* convert, was untouched by the flames of the *auto-da-fe* on which he was burned (1533) and that he visited his betrothed every Friday night in Safed. The Jewish intellectuals and humanists in Italy opposed the Molcho mass-madness from the very beginning.

The calculations of "the end" were always tentative and were hedged about with conditions. R. Abraham bar Hiyah (1065-1163) set the style of figuring out a whole series of "ends."⁶⁹ Said Maharal of Prague, "You must know that when our Sages spoke of an end, they did not mean to imply that the Messiah must come at that time. All they intended was to indicate that such and such a time was propitious for the Messiah's advent, but they could not speak of his coming at any one time with positive assurance, for the end belongs to those hidden mysteries that cannot be clearly revealed."⁷⁰ Every time an expected "end" arrived, the pious engaged in intensive fasts and acts of penance. And the saints saw visions which fortified the hands of the faithful.⁷¹

On occasion we encounter striking personalities of great charismatic power, who left an indelible impression upon their contemporaries. David Reubaini set out to reconquer Palestine for the Jews by posing as an ambassador of the Jews in Southern Arabia. Strangely enough, the diplomatic messiah made common cause with Solomon Molcho, a former *Marrano*, who sought to achieve redemption by mystical devices. Shrewd practicality and mystical hallucinations were frequently blended together in the messianic vision. And the pseudo-messiahs were occasionally revered by the learned authorities of Judaism. Solomon Molcho was adored as his teacher in Qabbalah by Rabbi Joseph Karu, the author of the standard Jewish code. *Shulhan Aruch*. And Moses Maimonides wrote reverently of the pietist, Moses

Hadarei, who claimed to be a herald of the Messiah in the time of his father. David Gans, writing of the pseudo-Messiah, Asher Lemlein, (*circa* 1500), who stirred up the Jews of Austria and Italy to a "year of repentance," tells us, "And I, the writer, heard from my teacher, R. Eliczer Trivas of Frankfort am Main, that it was not an empty or false matter, for it was accompanied by the right signs, adding, 'perhaps our sins were to blame!'" Yet, this pseudo-messiah caused many frustrated Jews to be converted to Christianity.⁷²

The pulsations of messianic fever have continued to our own time. The greatest pseudo-messianic tide of feeling was aroused by Sabbattai Zevi in the years 1665-1667. The Sabbattaian movement engulfed the entire Jewish world; for a year or so, the "believers" were in control, and even after Sabbattai Zevi's conversion to Islam, the movement did not die. A century later, Jacob Frank was able to bring 15,000 hidden "believers" in the Messiahship of Sabbattai Zevi into the fold of the Catholic Church. And Jacob Frank combined some vague military and colonial ambitions with his messianic pretensions. He taught his followers horsemanship and swordsmanship and bade them prepare for a war of liberation — another instance of the blending of mythical fancy with programs of action.⁷³

Israel Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, considered his Qabbalistic "unifications" and his ecstatic forms of worship to be designed to bring down the Messiah. Some of his followers believed that he was Messiah ben Joseph.⁷⁴

New calculations and predictions appeared as soon as the old ones were refuted by the march of events. The Napoleonic wars were generally interpreted as the pre-messianic battles of "Gog and Magog." In 1840, it was necessary for the anti-hasidic chief rabbi of Warsaw to assert publicly that the Messiah would *not* arrive in 1840; so great was the pitch of excitement! It is interesting that the year 1925 was affirmed to be the year of Messiah's arrival by Malbim, a famous nineteenth-century Orthodox rabbi.⁷⁵ When the aged Lubavicher *rebbe* arrived in the United States in 1940, he announced solemnly in a circular letter that the Messiah will come "in a few years."

The messianic movements were, as a rule, opposed by the enlightened, but enthusiastically embraced by the masses. Yet even

the most rationalistic teachers attempted occasionally to fortify the faith of the people by predictions of the nearness of the "end of days." Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel, the most noted Jewish leader of the exiles from Spain, sought to reconcile Maimonidean philosophy and popular faith. His commentaries on the scriptures are written in a rationalist vein and his commentary on the *Guide of the Perplexed* is as laudatory and expository as it is critical. Yet following the catastrophe of 1492, he wrote three essays, announcing the coming of the Messiah and describing the probable stages of the work of redemption. Maimonides himself did not find place in his chief philosophic work for either the advent of the Messiah or the miracle of the resurrection, but he wrote a warm letter of exhortation to the Jews of Yemen, announcing that the "end" was very near!

Therefore, our brothers lend strength to one another and fortify your faith in the coming of the expected one, who will soon be revealed . . . It is an important principle of our faith that a man of the seed of Solomon will arise to gather our scattered ones and to make the true faith prevail. He will destroy all who resist his word . . .

While the exact time is not known with certainty, we have a wonderful tradition which I received from my father and he from his father, down to the beginning of our exile from Jerusalem . . . that prophecy will be resumed in the year 4970 to the creation of the world (1210 C.E.) and there is no doubt that the return of prophecy will precede the Messiah's coming . . .

Though David Kaufmann questioned the authenticity of this passage, he had no grounds for his argument save the feeling that a sensible thinker could not be the victim of false illusions!⁷⁶

Rabbi Hisdai Crescas, the great philosopher of fourteenth-century Spain, also taught the imminence of the Messiah's arrival.

For the intellectuals in every generation, the ultimate anchorage of faith was the rationality and ethical integrity of Judaism. They maintained that the good God would reward in heaven those who on earth lived in accord with their best insights. Liberals and humanists usually think in terms of the welfare and self-fulfillment of individuals. But the masses needed to oppose Christian zealotry and fanaticism with a doubly impassioned zealotry and a reinforced fanatical faith of their own. Unable to take pride in their own identity as individuals, they could glory only in the reflected splendor of the Promise in the World

to Come. They were attacked as a people, humiliated and persecuted as an "accursed race"; it is as a people, then, and as the bearers of the "seed of Abraham" that they would be exalted and honored, beyond and above all others. The rewards of heaven in the hereafter might satisfy the individual, but not the people, in its earthly travail and wretchedness.

For the Jewish rationalists, the dispersal of the Jews was in part a Divine punishment and in part a Divine scheme to spread His Word among the nations. In a recently published manuscript of a Jewish polemic against the Samaritans, the writer asserted that the Samaritans were not of the "Chosen people," since they did not merit living in exile. Did not Abraham begin his life or wandering as soon as he was given the Promise? The Jews were scattered among the nations because "they are a kingdom of priests with a message for the whole world." This author could fortify his argument by a quotation from the Babylonian Talmud, "The Holy One, blessed be He, caused Israel to be scattered among the nations only in order that converts might be added to them."⁷⁷

For the masses, the dispersion of the Jews was God's subtle strategy, designed to enable them to take over the dominion of the world when the Messiah came. "For when the Messiah comes all men will be the slaves of Israel."⁷⁸ Said his father to Solomon Maimon, when the latter as a young boy admired a Polish countess: "Soon the Messiah will come and she will light the stove for us." For the Jewish masses, harassed and hounded because their Promise had been turned into a curse, the one longed-for satisfaction was to prove they were still the rightful heirs of the Promise.

The school of Maimonides minimized the cosmic role of the Messiah. He will restore Palestine to the Jews and gather the exiles from distant lands, winning many victories, gaining many converts and establishing a golden reign of universal dominion. But after a number of years, he and his generation will perish. The basic facts of the human situation will not be altered. Man's fulfillment is in the hereafter and every individual is judged on his own merits.

Do not imagine that the natural processes and the works of creation will be transformed in the days of the Messiah. But the world

will continue in its natural state The Sages and the prophets did not yearn for the messianic era in order that they might then be the masters of the world, lording it over the nations, or because they wanted the pleasures of this world, such as, eating, drinking and rejoicing, but because they wanted to have leisure for the Torah and its wisdom, to be free from the oppression of enemies and to merit the life of the "World to come"

And at that time there will be neither famine nor war, neither jealousy nor competition, for prosperity will be abundant and delicious food will be available like sand, and the business of all men will be to seek the knowledge of the Lord⁷⁹

Nahmanides, representing the rising school of Qabbalah saw in the messianic era a complete cosmic revolution. The dead will be revived and live on eternally in metamorphosed, radiant bodies. The end of human life is not to be sought in the misery of physical existence, which is only a temporary, interim form of life, but in the new ethereal body, the new heaven and the new earth of the post-messianic era, the Resurrection and the World to Come. And in that new world, the Jews as a people will be forever exalted and uplifted.

Wrote Maharal of Prague:

You may well ask, "What is the good of the messianic era, the sum and substance of our hope, if it should last only a short time? [In Tractate Sanhedrin, some Sages say, it will last forty years, and some maintain it will last four hundred years.] Then know that this question is based on the false assumption that our hope is only to await the good food and drink of the messianic era. But we maintain that the advent of the Messiah is not the ultimate goal. The Messiah will effect a completion and a perfection of this world, sufficient to make possible the resurrection of the dead and the World to Come. Why then should we worry about the length of time of the Messianic Era, since when it is over, we rise to an even higher level of existence⁸⁰

With the mounting tragedies of Jewish life in Western Europe of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the rationalistic school of Maimonides was increasingly shunted aside by the emergent fanaticism of Qabbalah. In times of distress, the objective mood of philosophy can be sustained only with the greatest difficulty. When external pressures become virtually unbearable, people can be solaced only by beguiling fantasies and comforting illusions.

Following the disasters of the fifteenth century, climaxed by the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the Jews were all but overwhelmed by the tide of despair and the general failure of nerve. Disillusioned with the glories of the intellect, they retreated behind the shadowed ramparts of a comforting mythology. The rational stream in Jewish thought was completely overcome by the self-glorifying romanticism of the Qabbalah. Yet medieval rationalism was still to play a most important role in the opening up of the modern era.

Rationalism was as important in maintaining the creative vitality of the Jewish people and in retaining the allegiance of the intellectuals as romanticism and mysticism were in sustaining the morale of the masses. As we have pointed out previously, the continuing dialogue between Jews and Christians inevitably cast the Jewish exponents in the role of rationalists and humanists, questioning the validity of prevailing dogmas in the name of reason, and on strictly ethical-universal grounds, rejecting the Christian claim to exclusive possession of the keys of salvation. It was also the rationalistic spirit that prepared the Jews for their economic and cultural role as pioneers of the arts of city-life, enabling them to adjust to the needs of the varying social and cultural climates of Europe.

Had the Jews been blind worshipers of the past in matters of faith, they would have become somnolent fossils in the economic-social sphere as well, hugging the fringe of society and shunning the busy turmoil of the marketplace. The impetus of rationalism imbedded in Talmudic dialectics and in Jewish philosophy nurtured the inventive enterprise of the Jew in the domain of social life, so that he became indispensable for long periods of time to the economies of the peoples among whom he lived.

If the myths of popular piety shielded the Jew against the infection of alien myths, the rationalism of Jewish philosophy lent him the stature and vigor to defend his beliefs in the intermittent interludes of prosperity and well-being.

We find that the subjective piety of the masses prevailed in the days of trouble and persecution, while the philosophic current of Judaism was indulged only in the Golden Ages of Jewish life. The Franco-German Jews in the First Crusade (1096) who so largely preferred martyrdom to conversion were unphilosoph-

ic pietists, with a literal faith that left no room for questioning. On the other hand, the Spanish Jews who, in the great pogroms of 1391 and in subsequent persecutions, sought the protective shelter of Christianity, contained an elite of aristocrats who were sophisticated and rationalistic. Wrote a leading survivor of the expulsion from Spain in 1492:

To all of you I address my plea: I am one of the exiles from Spain, driven out of that land on account of sin and failure. All who prided themselves on wisdom, or nearly all, forfeited their honor in that bitter day, while the women and the ignorant people willingly sacrificed their wealth and even their lives for the Holy Name of their Creator . . .⁸¹

We hear of a rabbi who delivered a learned, rationalistic sermon about the Divine attributes in a synagogue some time before the fateful year, 1391, when the distant rumbling of disaster could already be heard. The rabbi explained, in the spirit of the Maimonidean school, that all our human qualities could be applied to God only in a metaphorical sense; so too of His hearing, seeing, loving, and forgiving. Then a layman arose to protest. Said he, "All that I had in Seville was taken from me. I was beaten and left for dead. And all because of my faith in 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' And now, we are being given such sermons." In anger and protest, the majority of the congregation walked out from the synagogue.⁸²

A religion must be capable of serving the people in adversity as in prosperity. Because of its polarization, Judaism was double-edged. In periods of prosperity and well-being, the liberal, philosophical interpretation exerted its spell upon the intellectuals and upon those who looked to them for guidance; in periods of adversity, rationalism gave way to blind faith and mysticism. The Qabbalists came into their own.

Yet, the victory of either trend was rarely total and unquestioned. In the darkest periods of Jewish life, rare souls kept alive the spark of faith in humanity and in rationality, preserving a measure of freedom in the transmission of the tradition and in the confrontation of contemporary issues. Though Qabbalah triumphed in the sixteenth century, the gentle spirit of humanism was represented by such worthy protagonists as Judah Abrabanel (Leone Ebreo), whose *Philosophy of Love* is a beautiful interpretation of Platonism; Leon di Modena, whose mordant and

erudite skepticism helped to liberate future generations from the dead weight of naive faith; and Azaria di Rossi, whose historical researches inspired later scholars to reevaluate the lessons of Jewish history. While the faith of the many reflects the blind impetus of the past and the physical realities of their own day, the spirit of the few preserves the capacity to comprehend and overcome the momentum of historical forces.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE TRIUMPH OF SUBJECTIVISM: QABBALAH

While the roots of Qabbalah (mystical-theosophic literature) go back to the earliest generations of the Mishnah and Talmud, the Qabbalists did not begin to dominate Jewish life and thought before the end of the fifteenth century. In the first centuries of the Christian era, some rabbis fostered an esoteric lore in great secrecy. Occasional passages in Talmud and Midrash, if put together end to end, demarcate the outlines of this secret tradition. During the Gaonic period (640-1040 C.E.), the new impressive metaphysical theory was supplemented by the practice of mystical exercises. We have a description of these yoga-like trances in a *responsum* by the greatest authority of his day, Rav Hai Gaon:

Those who are worthy and desire to contemplate the chariot of God and view the angels above may follow certain procedures. They put their heads between their knees and, after they have learned to direct their thoughts, they come to perceive heavenly palaces and chambers, as if they could see them with their eyes; they then go from palace to palace, as it were. . . believing as we do, that the Lord performs miracles for saints, it is not far fetched to assume that He shows them, by means of visions, His palaces and angels . . .¹

The boundary between this esoteric "tradition," claiming descent from the biblical prophets, and the exoteric traditions of Talmud and Midrash was not ever drawn with clarity and precision. So clear-thinking a scholar as Saadia Gaon could write a commentary on *Sefer Yezirah*, one of the classics of Qabbalah, while at the same time ridiculing the doctrine of *gilgul neshomoth*, metempsychosis, which was an integral part of its world-view.

With the building up of centers of Jewish learning in the coun-

tries of the West, we find different elaborations of the same Qabbalistic ideas in the schools of Germany and Spain respectively. The German Qabbalists were concerned primarily with the "practical" aspects of their doctrine, how to combat various evils by way of juggling Holy Names; while the Spanish Qabbalists sought answers to various exegetical and metaphysical problems (*Qabbalah maasit* and *Qabbalah iyunit*). The completion of the *Zohar* at the end of the thirteenth century was a milestone in the rapid growth of the Qabbalistic philosophy. In form a commentary upon the Pentateuch, it contains homiletic elaborations of ancient secret doctrines. For many, if not most, rabbis of the late Middle Ages, the *Zohar* was second in importance to the Talmud. It was attributed to the second-century Sage, Rabbi Simon bar Yohai, though it was compiled by the thirteenth-century Qabbalist, Rabbi Moses de Leon. The Qabbalists exalted the *Zohar* far beyond the Talmud, maintaining that only those who studied Qabbalah knew the "soul" of Torah, while all others clung to the outer "garments" of Torah. "For every word in the Torah is intended to point toward other things."² Whoever says that the written Torah and the Oral Law are alone to be accepted, taking the Torah and the Talmud literally . . . woe is to him; it were better if he were not born and had not learned either the written or the Oral Law."³

Typical of the reticence of sheer legalists is the attitude of Rabbi Isaac b. Sheshet Barfat, a leading authority of the fourteenth century. He concurred in the ban against the study of philosophy.⁴ Yet he said of the Qabbalists:

His teacher, Rabenu Perez Hacoen, did not esteem highly the doctrine of Sefiroth. He listened without protest to a philosopher who compared Qabbalists to the Christians, saying, "These believe in a trinity and the others in a Decalogy" — He quoted Rabenu Nissim as saying that Nahmanides put too much faith in Qabbalah . . . Therefore, I decided to have nothing to do with hidden doctrines . . .⁵

The Qabbalists were arrayed against the rationalistic philosophers throughout the latter centuries of the Medieval period. Both groups of thinkers sought to understand the meaning of existence, the nature of the universe, and the place of Torah and Israel in the Divine scheme of things. They agreed that the literal meaning of Scriptures was insufficient for salvation and that

its precepts and tales pointed to another realm of teaching. Hence, the allegorical method of interpreting the Bible in both schools. But while the philosophers employed the insights of reason and the methods of prevailing science and logic, the Qabbalists resorted to the authority of a secret tradition, buttressed by personal, psychological experience. Where the philosophers spoke of the universal agreement of thinking people, the Qabbalists argued in the name of the peculiar testimony of chosen saints and prophets, arising from among the "Chosen People." While for the philosophers, the essence of Torah was a body of ideas and ideals, actually or potentially common to the intellectual-ethical elite of all nations, for the Qabbalists, the essence of Torah was not a series of ideas and ideals, but a Divinely granted "power," which was revealed only to certain sainted Jewish scholars. Its full meaning could be felt only in the blaze of ecstasy. In the "end of days," this secret wisdom, symbolized by the "tree of life" will supplant the wisdom of Torah, which is symbolized by the "tree of knowledge." The rationalistic current of Jewish thought was thus at the opposite pole from Qabbalah in nearly all matters relating to the understanding of man's existence and the destiny of the Jewish people. Qabbalah stood at the subjective-emotional pole of piety even as philosophy represented its objective-rationalistic, or humanistic phase.

Yet Qabbalah and philosophy shared in a certain *elan*, lacking in the naive mentality of the legalists. The scholars of the "revealed Torah" were frequently uninterested in any kind of speculation concerning the Nature of God, the "reasons for His Commandments," or the details of His ultimate design. As pragmatic legalists, they were certain they knew God's Will; namely, the Torah, and they were equally certain that it was vain to speculate about the mysteries of existence. The naive legalists could not suppress, ignore, or silence the insistent quest for objective thinking that reflects the vitality of the human mind. But with resolute determination, they channeled this hunger for understanding into the approved grooves of legalistic dialectics. Qabbalists and philosophers joined in defending the thesis that to perform the Commandments, without understanding their meaning and purpose, is of little importance. The Qabbalists felt the emptiness of the deed which does not kindle a flame in the soul and does not help to "redeem" the world. The philosophers,

all things from the standpoint of the twin lights of intelligence and conscience, could not think of God as a willful Autocrat, content with blind obedience. God was at least as rational and as moral as man — this is the basic axiom of philosophical religion.

The differences between Qabbalah and rationalistic philosophy in regard to the concept of God are most interesting. The Qabbalists agreed that God in Himself could not be the human-like Deity of popular religion. Indeed, they went far beyond the rationalists in denying that any anthropomorphic qualities could be applied to God, as He is in Himself. To the Qabbalists, God is an Infinite Sea of Being (*En Sof*), without any limits; hence, without any qualities, without desire or will of any kind. He is totally incomprehensible. But out of this Being there emanated the Ten Sefiroth, in the shape of Primal Man. And it is to this Secondary Deity that all the biblical adjectives apply.

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Daud wrote that the Talmudic reference to God, as putting on phylacteries refers to the supreme heavenly minister (Metatron), whose name is as the name of his Master, or, perhaps, there is still a higher being, emanated from the First Cause and possessing the power of the Highest. It is this Being that was shown to Moses, and Ezekiel saw him in the shape of a man, as indeed he was revealed to the prophets. But the Cause of Causes was not revealed to any man . . .⁶

By postulating a functioning, anthropomorphic Being, the Qabbalists were able to justify the yearnings of popular religion for a Deity concrete enough to be imagined and worshiped.

The Qabbalists taught that the study of their esoteric doctrine was itself an effective instrument for the attainment of redemption.

"And the wise will shine as the radiance of the sky" . . . this refers to your volume [Moses is addressing Rabbi Simon bar Yohai, the presumed author of the *Zohar*] . . . Because the Israelites are destined to taste of the tree of life, which is the book of *Zohar*, they will come out from exile by means of it . . . And the tree of good and evil, which is the source of the permitted and the prohibited, the clean and the unclean, will no longer dominate Israel.⁷

Philosophic Judaism and Qabbalah derived from the prophets and the "prophetizers," respectively. To the prophets as to the philosophers, the voice of God was revealed in the rational-ethi-

cal light of the universal conscience, while to the "prophetizers," revelation consisted in an ecstasy of feeling. The prophets, transcending the pride and prejudice of their contemporaries, achieved an objective standpoint, which allowed them to criticize the morals and mores of their people. The "prophetizers," ecstasies eager to arouse popular enthusiasm, could only confirm the self-laudatory judgments of the people, endorsing their prejudices and exaggerating their fears.

Reflecting the recoil of the Jewish mind from the cold comfort of philosophy and the harsh realities of Jewish life, Qabbalah maintained the *unreality* of the visible world and the relative invalidity of human logic. Instead, it fostered belief in the inner light of ecstatic piety and in the fond fancies of a dream-like world, built up by generations of visionaries. Chastened by the recurrent frustrations of militant pseudo-messianic movements, it directed impassioned efforts at redemption toward the channels that are not of this world. Reassertion of mystical intuition, proclamation of the exclusive truth of the Jewish tradition, and bold insistence on the supreme role of the Jewish people in the Divine drama of sin and salvation — these were the major themes of Qabbalah.

While philosophy seeks to explain life in terms of the categories of *spirit* — logic, ethics, and esthetic harmony — Qabbalah aims to take account of man's existence, especially the destiny of the Jew, in terms of the categories of *life* — the rhythms of the Divine Being and the various emanations deriving from it. To the philosopher, all human history is ultimately reducible to mechanical forces and mathematical formulae. To the Qabbalist, all explanations are ultimately the narration of a series of events in the *Divine Pleroma* (the Emanations and Sefiroth), which stands between God and man. Yet Qabbalah is not altogether a reversion to pagan mythology, since the impetus of monotheism is still contained within it. The Qabbalist strains with all the powers of personality toward the dark, comforting shadows of insulated piety, but there is a desperate tension in his soul for he has been driven from the paradise of naivete by the subtle serpent of speculation.

It is important to take a good look at the bizarre pattern of Qabbalistic speculations, for Qabbalah was not merely a temporary aberration of Medieval Jews. As a matter of fact, Qabba-

lah captured the Jewish mind at the end of the fifteenth century, at the very time when the diverse movements of Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation were struggling for supremacy. Steadily through the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it dominated the minds of Jewish thinkers.

At the very time when Pope Paul IV, marshaling the forces of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, ordered the burning of the Talmud (1553), he granted permission for the printing of the *Zohar*. Doubtless, the Pope was persuaded by the arguments of those who pointed out the amazing correspondences between Christian and Qabbalistic thought. The *Zohar*, printed in 1558, was enthusiastically received by the harassed Jewish communities as a harbinger of redemption.

The Qabbalists could not bring consolation to the Jewish people without fostering the mood of imminent expectation of the Messiah. The tragic debacle of Sabbattai Zevi (1665-1667) when, as we shall see later, the entire Jewish Diaspora was caught up in the wave of a pseudo-messianic movement, was a direct result of Qabbalistic miseducation. So widespread was the mass-madness centering around Sabbattai Zevi, that Jacob Frank, a ruthless adventurer, could revive it a century later in Poland and ride its crest down to the opening of the modern era.

The Hasidic movement of Russia and Poland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represented a massive application of Qabbalah to the life of the community and the individual. The Orthodox opponents of Hasidism did not doubt the Divine origin and authority of Qabbalah. The commentators on the *Shulhan Arukh*, the Code of Jewish Law, which spells out every detail of Jewish life, make belief in Qabbalah mandatory. Even such a secular movement as Zionism derived its popular appeal in part from the messianic fervor and ethnic zeal of Qabbalah.

The victory of Qabbalah at the end of the Middle Ages appears paradoxical. Should we not expect to find the Jews slowly shaking off the dark myths of medievalism in keeping with the stirring of fifteenth-century humanism, sixteenth-century reform movements, seventeenth-century scientific rationalism and eighteenth-century political rationalism? Actually, only a fringe of the Jewish community was affected by these liberating movements. The evolution of thought and feeling among the Jews of Central

Europe was directed toward a reassertion of mythology and fanaticism. It was Central European Jewry that multiplied by leaps and bounds during the post-Medieval centuries, so that in the modern era, the center of gravity of Jewish history was in the Russian Pale of Settlement. Among the Jews of Italy and the Netherlands, the humanist movement evoked the philosophies of Judah Abrabanel and Benedict Spinoza, the researches of Azariah di Rossi, the anti-Qabbalist critique of Leo de Modena, and the rationalistic dynamism of Uriel Acosta. But in the ghettos of Germany and in the forlorn distant villages of Poland and the Ukraine, the dark myths of medievalism grew apace, precisely in the era when Western Europe was beginning to glimpse the light of the Age of Rationalism. Surrounded by an ignorant and hostile population, the massive Jewish settlements of Central Europe retired to the comforting shadows of an isolationist tradition. In Poland, the Jesuits succeeded in rebuilding the shattered ramparts of the Medieval era, keeping alive the charges of "blood-accusation" and "Host-defilement" against the Jews. While in Western Europe Reason reigned, in Central Europe the Medieval era was relaunched with a vengeance. The nerve of the thinking Jew, who sought solace in the congruence of his heritage with the dictates of reason and morality, was broken by a succession of disasters — the expulsion from Spain (1492), the virtual annihilation of the Jews in the Ukraine (1648), the devastation which preceded and followed the dismemberment of the Polish state (1772), and the harsh rule of the Czarist government. Beaten and battered, the Jews clung with remarkable tenacity to the outer shell of their faith, but they no longer dared to examine their heritage in the sober light of reason. Precisely when the secular culture of Europe began to flower with amazing vitality, the Jews of Central Europe retired into medievalism, to spin the gossamer threads of a pious fantasy, while waiting supinely for the Messiah.

The rationalists of Western European Jewry disavowed Qabbalah as a rightful expression of Judaism. They excoriated its mysticism as well as its mythology, its passionate avowal of Jewish dignity as well as its complex demonology, its imaginative metaphysics as well as its fanatical isolationism. But while the German-Jewish scholars recognized the satanic impulse inherent in Qabbalistic mythology, they overlooked its massive, popular

appeal to the Jews of Central Europe. The rationalistic scholars were prone to write about Judaism as if Qabbalah were only a nightmare of the past, while the Jews of Eastern Europe, for whom the rationalism of the nineteenth century was conjoined with tyranny and hate, tended to transpose the self-exalting illusions of Qabbalah into the secular and political terms of romantic Zionism.

Qabbalah is not a monolithic body of literature; it rises to the loftiest heights of metaphysical speculation, but it also descends to the depths of popular superstition.⁴ Flowing on many levels, it consists of diverse currents and cross-currents, each with a long and intricate history. Nevertheless, we can describe the central concepts of Qabbalah as they were "revealed" and systematized in the sixteenth century.

1. *Of God.* The Qabbalists felt the need of mediating between the impact of the philosophical challenge and the pressure of popular needs. To the philosophers, God, as Thought contemplating itself, and as the Source of all motion, was a calm and unchanging Sea of Being. To the people, God was the loving Father, sharing their travail, heeding their prayers, making the sun stand still and holding the moon in the valley of Ayalon in order to avenge the wrongs of His people. In Qabbalah, the philosophical and popular notions of God were synthesized, as it were, the two views referring to different phases of the Divine Being.

In Himself God was the Endless (*En Sof*), a vast sea of indeterminateness, to which no adjective could be applied. But out of this Infinity there emerges a Divine *Pleroma*, that is at once God and not-God, and this effulgence is in continuous contact with the world. Consisting of Ten *Sefiroth*, arranged in the form of Primal Man, this *Pleroma* is a multiplicity in unity. Its ten *Sefiroth* represent ten qualities of the Deity, arranged in three parallel columns, constituting respectively the severity of the law, the leniency of mercy, and the evenness of balance between these extremes. The Divine *Pleroma* is the mediator between the Infinite God and the world in all its pluralistic diversity and material coarseness.

This concept was further elaborated and developed in the school of the "Divine Rabbi Isaac" (died 1572). The Ten *Sefiroth* were believed to form five "faces" (*Parzufim*). The first one was

a double-faceted entity, at once God in Himself and God in relation to the world. In the second stage, the Divine Personality was articulated in the form of a Father and a Mother, united face to face in love, or separated back to back in indifference, depending upon the actions of Jews on earth and on the mystical rhythms of its own life. Below this stage, six *Sefiroth* joined to form the masculine Divine ruler of the earth, "the Holy One, blessed be He," while the last *Sefiroh* (*malkhuth*) represented the feminine principle of God, the *Shechinah*, which was the spiritual counterpart of the people of Israel. The saints of Israel, by their labors here on earth, caused the *Shechinah* to ascend and join its heavenly Master, "the Holy One, blessed be He," thereby producing all kinds of blessings for the world. On the other hand, sinners caused the *Shechinah* to be preempted by satanic forces. The purpose of prayer was to repair the "blemishes" of the *Shechinah*, and the worshiper was to find his own fulfillment in the reconstitution of the Divine Presence. Before performing a *mizvah*, the pietist would say, "For the sake of uniting the Holy One, blessed be He, and His *Shechinah*, through that which is secret and hidden, in the name of all Israel," a formula which certainly strains the logic and imagery of monotheism. In a farther extension of erotic imagery, the Qabbalists taught that, by means of the power of repentance, the upper couple in the *Pleroma*, the Mother and Father, were united, causing a fresh increment of Divine love and blessing to descend to earth.

The reintroduction of eroticism into the concept of the Deity was denied by the Qabbalists in the same breath as they affirmed it. For in the twilight zone of mystical intoxication, all categories are dissolved in paradox, all limits interpenetrate, all definitions "reach and do not reach" — *moti velo moti* — all is unity in God; it is only our minds that split the One into the many. The logic of contradiction with which our mind operates does not apply to the Divine Being, in whom all contradictions are resolved.

2. *Of Creation.* The creation of the world was not due simply to a series of emanations that proceeded from the Divine *Pleroma*, coarsening and roughening as they descended ever further from their Source. Such a theory of emanation was indeed assumed in Qabbalah from the very beginning, but in itself it could not explain the reality of evil. In all theories of emanation, evil

is only the relative absence of good, whereas the later Qabbalists were obsessed with the potency and ubiquity of evil. The "outsiders" (*Hizonim*) were everywhere. Therefore, they assumed that a satanic *Pleroma* corresponded point for point with the Divine *Pleroma*. And much of their strategy in the service of God was concerned with outwitting the ubiquitous forces of evil.

To account for the low estate of mankind, they assumed a cosmic catastrophe, which set the pattern for an endless repetition of similar catastrophes. As the Divine Being proceeded to create the universe, He first "contracted" Himself in order to make room for the space-time world. Into the empty void, He poured His Being in the shape of the Divine *Pleroma*, the Ten *Sefiroth*. But these *Sefiroth* proved incapable of containing the Divine light. They "broke," and 248 "sparks" fell into the satanic naught.⁹ After the first catastrophe, the world was created, but the task of "redeeming the sparks" was now assigned to the souls of mankind. For this purpose, Adam and Eve were created. But the primal catastrophe was repeated during their lives.¹⁰ The task of mankind was then restricted to the "holy seed" of Abraham, and among Jewish people, to the "saints" that occasionally arise among them. The cosmic catastrophe of "the breaking of the vessels" was repeated again and again in the history of the Jewish people, the descent into Egypt, the worship of the Golden Calf, the acceptance of the unfavorable report of the "spies," the breakup of the Davidic kingdom, the scattering of the Jews among the nations. But each catastrophe was now also part of the strategy of redemption. Each descent of the saints into the dominion of the "shells," established contact between the saints and the fallen sparks, making possible the redemption of some sparks, whenever the saints ascended to the "roots of their souls" in the realm of Divine *Sefiroth*.

3. *Of the role of Israel and the place of Torah.* The entire world-view of Qabbalah was a desperate and elaborate vindication of the role of the Jew and the high place of Torah in the cosmic drama. Each facet of Qabbalistic thought reveals obvious parallels with the complex theosophies of Persian paganism, Greek neo-platonism, proto-Christian Gnosticism, and the Manichean philosophy. Like a vast, richly-colored mosaic, Qabbalah consists of many fragments, each of which is duplicated in the mythologies of other faiths. But the cohesion of Qabbalah consists of the

aspiration to "magnify and sanctify" the role of the Jews among the nations and secondly, the role of the saints among the Jews. The "sacred egoism" of the Jewish people is metaphysically exalted. And the obvious parallel between the theories of Qabbalah and other mystical elaborations of the self-sanctifying ambition are due to the fact that, in our most private depths, we are as much alike as in our moments of objective clarity. As Professor E. W. Hocking put it, there is an "intersubjectivity" of emotional self-glorification just as there is a range of universal validity to our objective thinking.

The whole world is groaning for redemption, the Qabbalists asserted, so that the yearning of Jews for redemption from "exile" (*galuth*) is a reflection of the inner aspiration of the cosmos. Every grain of sand, every blade of grass is in a fallen state, longing to be uplifted to its Source. And in the realm of the living, there are many souls of former men and women who have not fulfilled their destiny, who were condemned to return to earth in order to redeem themselves. Holy Sparks lie strewn in fields and forests, struggling silently against their imprisoning "shells." Even phases of the Deity are in a fallen state, driven into exile, as it were; not God in Himself, but the feminine principle of God which channels His Grace unto this world. This passive phase of the Deity is hurt by our sins and helped by our merits. The *Shechinah* is in mourning and grief, awaiting the redeeming merits of the saints.

Cast in the burning furnace of this redemption-hungry world is the Jewish people, in all its physical helplessness and melancholy humiliation. It is upon their prayers and deeds that the cosmic *nisus* of redemption depends. The rest of mankind are agents of the Shells, or helpless spectators of the Divine drama played by Israel. Only the souls of Jews are attached to the Divine *Pleroma*, so that they are "sons" of God; all others are strangers, with neither their sins nor their merits being weighed in the cosmic scales. And the Torah, which is the sole possession of Israel, is the one, authentic expression of the Divine Will, as it is articulated in the chain of the worlds. In its revealed and earthly form, the Torah is Bible and Talmud, tales and testimonies, psalms and prophecies; but in the upper realms of the great chain of Being, the Torah is an ethereal essence, a luminous spirit, the Name of God writ large.

Hence, the Jewish people, by virtue of the heavenly roots of their souls and because of the Torah in their possession, are the redeemers of the cosmos in its entirety — of mankind and the world, the animal kingdom, and even God Himself; *i.e.*, of the sparks of His Being that are fallen. The deeper import of Qabbalistic teaching was the assertion that the Jewish people as a whole were collectively the earthly embodiment of the Messiah, in all His Glory. The belief in a personal Messiah was retained, but he was thought to be helplessly awaiting the time for his arrival. He could not hasten the time of his coming. This task was for the Jewish people, especially their saints to accomplish. The personal Messiah was a passive pawn in the game of redemption, played between the forces of God and the agents of Satan. The crucial work of redemption could only be done by the people of Israel. For they were the Messiah-people.

The biblical prophets first projected the notion of Israel as the savior-people. But the prophetic vision related to a specific, clearly formulated message. The Israelites were to bring to mankind the doctrine of One God, Who delights in love and truth. The effect of the prophetic belief was to forge channels of communication to the outside world. The Jews were to share their treasure, and their treasure was an idea, comprehensible to all thinking people, acceptable to all men of good will. On the other hand, the effect of the Qabbalistic doctrine was to erect additional barriers between Jews and their neighbors. Jews were "different," in a mysterious, metaphysical manner. They were "holy," participating in the Divine essence not because of an idea offered to all, but because of an exclusive endowment, and their message was not an idea but a mystic "power," growing by its own resources. The Qabbalists thus raised ever higher the particularistic iron curtain of Torah. Rabbi Shabbatai Hurwitz claimed that his famous father (known as the author of *Shelo*) had added 400 new ordinances to the laws of Torah.¹¹

As a philosophy of life, Qabbalah was a reversion to the pagan faith that Jewish monotheism set out to combat. It reasserted the doctrine of an ethnic god, who was kith and kin of one people only; it reintroduced the mystery of sex into the nature of the Divine Being; it brought back multiplicity and contradiction into the conception of God; it reaffirmed the principle of mystical inequality among men, some possessing souls attached to the

noblest portions of the *Pleroma*, some belonging to the inconsequential mass of mankind; it retrogressed to the notion of religion as a ministry to the needs of God (insofar as He faces mankind), instead of being an expression of man's quest for the good life; it returned to the obscurantist notion that the course of human events was not to be understood in terms of visible phenomena and logical causes, but that, like a hieroglyphic scroll, it had to be construed in terms of esoteric myths concerning occult realities; it reverted to the dismal notion of pre-prophetic religion that the Divine Will can only be known by the authority of the ancients and the frenzy of ecstasies. And all this was motivated in large part by the aspiration to rebuild the faith and dignity of the Jew. Thus did the pathos of collective egotism stifle the heritage it set out to save.

Qabbalah, let us concede, aided the Jew in his struggle for survival under adverse conditions, but it also separated him from any intellectual-ethical communion with the emerging society of mankind. It provided an exciting mythology, elevating every Jewish custom and every nuance of the liturgy to the rank of a world-saving enterprise. At the same time, the speculative notions and the debris of ancient philosophical systems contained within its volumes offered substitute satisfactions to the insistent quest of the intellectuals. But these services of Qabbalah were purchased at the high price of deepening the isolation of the Jew. The ritual barriers were raised higher. Even more important, the division between Jew and Gentile was now universally assumed to be one of metaphysical substance and origin. It was no longer a matter of belief that separated the Jew from "the nations," but the fact that the Jewish souls were derived from the Divine Being, while the souls of the nations were sparks from the satanic *Pleroma* of shells, the so called "other side" (*Sitra Ahra*). On this basis, there could not possibly be any kind of intellectual contact between Jews and Gentiles. All that is Jewish, whether by design or by accident of history, was now presumed to be holy, the garments, the speech, the letters of the alphabet. And by the same token, all that was non-Jewish was unholy, an extension of the dominion of the "outsiders" and the "shells." Jewish life in exile was a concomitant of the life of the *Shechinah* in exile. While in appearance the Jews lived by the grace of Gentile society, in reality, the other nations were living by the merit of the

Jews, scattered in their midst, for only Jews were capable of affecting the "channels of grace," whereby Divine love softens the laws of nature. Only the Jews stand between God and the world; their good deeds bring benefit to all, their sins bring God's wrath down upon mankind. "A nail in the wall, how does it bother me? But a nail in my shirt, ah, that hurts." The Jews were in God's shirt, for better for worse — and only the Jews. A very influential authority even wondered why Gentiles look like human beings, indeed like Jews. If the structure of the body reflects the structure of the soul, as Qabbalah teaches, how do Gentiles, whose souls are attached to Satan, come to look like Jews, whose souls are attached to the Divine Throne?

This sense of metaphysical distinction, underlying all theological differences, was the counterpart in Judaism of the Johanine or mystical tradition in Christianity. John speaks of the Jews as "being of their father, the devil." Naturally, there is, in this view, no room for argument and debate, such as had taken place officially and unofficially during the Middle Ages. As one fine scholar puts it:

Differences in belief were only the consequence of a deeper biological-metaphysical chasm that separated the two camps. This quasi-naturalistic view came to predominate in this age, principally on account of the influence of Qabbalah, particularly the *Zohar*.¹²

Maharal of Prague (1515-1609), a noted Qabbalist, led the fight for the reinstitution of the ancient prohibition on Gentile wine. For him, wine was symbolic of the realm of ideas and Gentile wine takes a person out of the "heavenly congregation of Israel." By way of contrast, we may note that the Italian Jews had outgrown this bitter symbol of Jewish isolationism in the sixteenth century.

This deep feeling of metaphysical isolation left an indelible mark upon the Jews of Central Europe. While the earliest Jewish immigrants into Western Europe learned to speak the Spanish, Germanic, and Arabic tongues, the Jews of Poland and Lithuania cultivated their Yiddish version of a middle-German dialect, without bothering to teach their children the language of the people among whom they lived. Morally, the chasm was even deeper. All the ethical fervor of Jewish literature was stopped

dead, at the borders of the Jewish community. A formal declaration, asserting that the laws of the Talmud against idolaters did not apply "to the nations among whom we live," was always printed at the beginning of every edition of the Talmud. But this general formula, which the laws of censorship required, was nearly always ignored in the body of the discussion. The Talmud and its commentaries, Qabbalistic and sermonic literature, with rare exceptions, know only two kinds of human beings, Jews and non-Jews. Moralists occasionally protested against flagrant misdeeds of Jewish merchants in their dealing with non-Jews, but their protests were based on tactical considerations — not to accustom themselves to practice evil, not to give the Jews a bad name, not to arouse the hatred of the Gentiles. While moralists occasionally urged that pietists "should take up the seal of God which is truth and abstain from lying to Gentiles as well as to Jews, refraining from any action that might mislead them,"¹³ they insisted that there be no friendly contact between Jews and their neighbors. One of the Lithuanian authors of the *Shulhan Arukh* asserts that even in our day it is sinful for a Jew to greet Gentiles or visit their homes on their holidays.¹⁴ Another commentator of equal authority in seventeenth-century Poland boldly asserted, "It is clear that the Torah commanded us to maintain hatred between them and us, so as to remove the danger of intermarriage with their daughters, how then can we permit actions or things which might lessen the hatred between them and us?"¹⁵

It is certain that for the folk-mentality of the Jews in Central Europe, the realm of grace ended at the borders of the Jewish ghetto. Beyond those borders lay a hostile world, with which they were perpetually in a state of cold or hot war. Treaties could be made with rulers on a basis of *quid pro quo*, but there could be no friendly contact between the two peoples. Hence, whenever the peasants rebelled in Poland-Lithuania, the Jews were the first to suffer.

Part III:
The Modern World

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BETWEEN MEDIEVALISM AND MODERNISM

The Jews of Europe were destined to become the predominant branch of world Jewry. Though at the opening of the eighteenth century, Oriental Jewry may have outnumbered the total Jewish population of Europe, the latter grew in numbers and in power, so that, by the middle of the twentieth century, the Jews of the Arab and Oriental world appeared to be marginal, exotic communities, supplying the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for their dynamic, masterful, "white" brethren in the state of Israel. The science and culture of the West made the Jews of Europe strong in body and mind, creating the modern "self-image" of the Jew as the man of wide culture, aggressive energy, commercial enterprise, and international contacts.

In their turn, the Jews of Europe were divided by a deep cultural cleavage between the Eastern and Western branches. The line of demarcation was never fine, since the lands of Poland and Hungary were drawn now into the Western sphere of ideas, now into the Eastern, and these provinces contained the heaviest concentration of the Jewish population. A continuous stream of migrants from the Polish-Russian-Roumanian lands brought fresh waves of traditionalist tenacity to those elements of the Western community that lagged behind their own countrymen and sympathized with the patterns of thought and sentiment prevailing in the East. Nevertheless, the gulf between East and West was real enough in the nineteenth century.

At the threshold of the modern era, two men symbolize the polarities which came to prevail in the East and West respectively: Sabbattai Zevi of Izmir, Turkey, and Baruch Spinoza of Amsterdam, Holland. Both exemplified and expounded paths of redemption; both were driven by the extremism of their solutions out of the Jewish community; both left a heritage, which in

less extreme form, channeled the energies and hopes of entire communities.

Sabbattai Zevi became the focus of a pseudo-messianic movement that engulfed virtually the entire Jewish Diaspora. In the years 1665-1667, the Jewish communities of Turkey and Germany, of North Africa and Poland, of Italy and Lithuania were swept up in a mighty tidal wave of apocalyptic frenzy, which was unprecedented in all of Jewish history. "Prophets" and "prophetizers," announcing the imminence of redemption and proclaiming Sabbattai Zevi as the true Messiah, appeared by the hundreds, silencing the voice of reason and driving the proponents of good sense out of positions of power.

Sabbattai Zevi carried the redemptive impetus in Lurianic Qabbalah to its logical climax and inevitable frustration. Excited by visions, mystical voices, and ecstatic Qabbalistic "unifications," he came to believe that the messianic soul, awaiting the hour of redemption in its heavenly prison, would be soon revealed within his person. It appears he suffered from the alternation of manic and depressive psychical states, a circumstance which fitted in perfectly with the mystical doctrine of "ascents of the soul," with the visionary expecting to be alternately afflicted by "the dark nights of the soul," and uplifted by blessed moments of "illumination."¹ Certain facts about his birth and his name seemed to coincide with the various predictions concerning the Messiah scattered in diverse Qabbalistic works. A young enthusiast, the "prophet" Nathan from Gaza, Palestine, encouraged him in his messianic delusions and undertook to inform all the communities of the far-flung Diaspora that the long awaited Messiah had arrived. A tidal wave of mass-hysteria surged through the cramped alleys of the ghetto, sweeping aside all considerations of reason and prudence. Revolutionary forces, long repressed, lent their violent fury to the religious zeal of the masses. As in all messianic movements, the masses, thinking with their blood, pressed forward all afire with blind faith, while the intellectuals doubted, questioned, or hesitated. Fundamentalist faith tends to authenticate itself by the excesses of its own frenzy. The recalcitrant rabbis or *parnassim* (communal lay-leaders) were either expelled or compelled to follow the lead of the runaway enthusiasm of the masses. The very fact that "all the people" believe is proof, for the faithful, of the truth of their belief, especially when the

intensity of faith attains an unprecedented pitch. "My people will never agree on an error," said Mohammed, and his sentiments were shared by the self-sanctifying spokesmen of all creeds. People "repented" as never before, enduring penitential rigors that rivaled the tortures of hell. Hysterical women saw "visions" and staid businessmen sold their homes, and made ready to sail to the Holy Land.

The Sabbattaian bubble burst when the would-be messiah was confronted by the Sultan of Turkey (1666) and accused of treason.

Sabbattai Zevi, faced with the realization that mystic power had not been lodged in him, and finding himself in a state of depression, disclaimed responsibility for the movement centering around him and adopted the Moslem faith. While a small coterie of believers followed his lead, the vast majority were thunderstruck, unable to concede that their magnificent hope had fizzled out so ingloriously. The skeptical *parnassim*, who had resisted the popular wave of messianism, quickly regained their positions of power, and Sabbattaism was outlawed in nearly all Jewish communities. However, as an underground movement, it flourished under the mask of Islam, and under the name of *Donmeh*, down to the twentieth century. Within the Jewish community itself, subterranean Sabbattaism continued in two ways, through organized, semi-secret cells and by way of a broad current of half-belief and wonderment. It became exceedingly difficult to distinguish the works of normative Qabalah from those of secret Sabbattaians.

The emergence of the Frankist movement in eighteenth-century Poland demonstrated the latent power of the Sabbattaian heresy (1755). Jacob Frank was believed to be a reincarnation of Sabbattai Zevi. Designating himself as "the holy lord," he ordered his followers to demonstrate their allegiance to the new, secret order of things by committing breaches of the ritual and moral law, especially in family life. Leading the movement to anti-nomian extremes that had been only faintly anticipated in the career of Sabbattai Zevi himself, Jacob Frank encountered the implacable opposition of Jewish rabbis and leaders. Forced out of the Jewish community (1756), the Frankists accepted the Catholic faith in large numbers and even engaged in public disputations against their Jewish brethren. In 1757 they designated

themselves as *Zoharists*, believers in the central book of Qabbalah as against the Talmud-believing Jews. In two or three generations, they disappeared from the scene.

The Frankists grew out of the organized, secret cells of Sabbataism. What of the unorganized, broad masses of erstwhile believers? If the most brilliant Talmudic scholar of the mid-eighteenth century, Rabbi Jonathan Eibeshutz of Hamburg, Germany, could be a secret Sabbattaian in his youth, the deep penetration of the movement and its long-lingering effects can hardly be doubted. Even Rabbi Jacob Emden, the most rabid opponent of all the after-growths of Sabbataism felt impelled to concede that the movement was not totally compounded of illusions and fabrications. It must have had some justification in the occult substratum of the historic process; else, so many pious Jews would not have been misled.

"For indeed Sabbattai Zevi succeeded in bringing the wicked to penitence and to launch a great and wonderful tide of repentance Indeed, this thing was not a simple, natural phenomenon. It is only our sins that caused a postponement of redemption, inverting the propitious hour from goodness to evil."²

Sympathizers of the movement put the dilemma more forcefully.

Behold, the Holy One, blessed be He, does not put a stumbling block in the path of animals belonging to the righteous. How then can we suppose that He would cause the righteous themselves to err? Most certainly, we cannot believe that He would bring an entire people to so fearful a sin How then can we assume that all Israel was made to stumble unless there was some great, secret intention in the heavens above?³

With their infinitely inflated hopes dashed to the ground, how could the Jewish masses resume the normal threads of everyday life? They had come to feel that their long travail had ended at last. These feelings, deep and widespread, could be directed into fresh channels, but not repressed or ignored. The frenzy of the masses could be articulated in one of three ways.

1. By reveling in paradoxes, symbolizing the unreality of the external world.
2. By dispersing the tension of messianism into a variety of emotion-charged and mystery-laden acts.

3. By the repudiation of mystical faith in favor of a rationalistic-humanistic pathway of redemption.

The first pathway was followed by the Sabbattaians and Frankists. Their response to the challenge of reality was a desperate intensification of defiant unreason. The conversion of Sabbattai Zevi was necessary according to the believers, in order to rescue the "holy sparks" that are scattered among the Moslems. It is sinful to doubt the wisdom of the Messiah even as it is wrong to question the inscrutable policies of God. For "he [the Messiah] is good within, but his garment is evil." Once the Messiah was revealed, the reign of paradox was launched and things could no longer be what they seemed. Paradoxical though it sounds, the rigid ramparts of the Law must be shattered in order to be mystically established. Several phases of the One God were due to be revealed in diverse incarnations, the different interpretations of Torah corresponded to these epiphanies. The Torah assumes different forms in the four world, Emanation, Creation, Formation, and Action. According to the Frankists, a new phase of the Divine Will, the "inner" Torah of the upper domain of Emanation was now in order, replacing the earlier "revealed" Torah of Creation.

It is no longer necessary to arise at midnight to pray for the redemption of the *Shechinah* (*tikkun hazoth*) for it has now begun to rise up from the ground. The one who now cries and mourns for her obstructs the occult process of redemption, causing Lilith the wicked to embrace him, for now it is she that cries and moans.⁴

The Sabbattaians and Frankists brought into the open the latent mythology of Qabbalah. The Messiah is a phase of the Deity and God is both one and many. One of the "prophets" of the movement spoke of "the Holy One, blessed be He, rising to the upper heavens, and Sabbattai Zevi taking his place." The Frankists undertook to prove, among other things, that the doctrine of the Trinity is affirmed in the Zohar.⁵ One of their prayers ran as follows:

May it be Thy Will to help us prosper in Thy Torah and cleave to Thy *mizvoth*, purifying our thoughts to serve Thee in truth . . . that all our actions be in the *Torah of Emanation*, dedicated to Thy great Name Senior Sancta, acknowledging Thy Greatness that Thou art a true god and eternal King, our living Messiah, who has

lived in the material world and has negated the Torah of Creation, ascending to your place in order to govern the worlds.⁶

The laws of Judaism as formulated in the Talmud symbolized for the Frankists the era of suffering in exile. A new era has begun to dawn, a time of grace, of the love of life, of redemption.

"All creeds, all laws, all books of the past and all who patterned themselves after the teachings of these books are now useless and dead. I have come into Poland for the purpose of abolishing all creeds and customs, because I want to bring fresh life to the world."

Teaching in parables, Jacob Frank urged his followers to train themselves in the ways of war and to anticipate the glories of redemption in their present life, "for man was designed for happiness." Though he and his disciples converted to Catholicism (1759), he urged his followers to be firm in the belief that the final redemption was close at hand. The Messiah can be revealed only in a new, revolutionary way in which all institutions, ideals, and norms are inverted and turned inside out. Consider this parable:

A King had announced that he will give half his kingdom and his daughter to the one who captures a certain fortress. Many tried and failed, for the walls were impregnable. But, then, one man noticed that the sewer canals emptied into a river. He led an army through the sewers and won the city. So it is necessary to go down to lowest depths in order to capture the highest prize.

We have an autobiographical account of one who was raised in this sect. At the age of 14, his father began to reveal to him the secrets of the sect as follows:

Can you really believe that the revealed Torah contains all that is needful for the salvation of the soul? There are "hidden mysteries," which the *Zohar* hints at. Certain of the "elect" devote themselves to these mysteries. The purpose of these chosen souls is to bring about the redemption of the world.⁷

Manifestly, the paradoxes of Sabbataism-Frankism constituted an atavistic return to the mystical undercurrent of Judaism, out of which the early Christian church and the diverse sects of gnosticism had arisen in the first and second centuries of our era.

The third method of dealing with the disillusionment resulting from the Sabbataian catastrophe was adopted by a small coterie

of intellectuals, chiefly in the West, but also in the northern provinces of Poland and Lithuania. These disciples of philosophical Judaism called themselves *maskilim* (enlightened or rationalistic). To end the intellectual and social isolation of the Jews, they believed it imperative to repudiate the entire mystical tradition of Judaism. Moses Mendelssohn deliberately ignored the romantic-mystical streams of Jewish thought. Even Orthodox scholars, like Rabbis Jacob Emden and Elijah, Gaon of Vilna, cautioned against "mistakes" and "interpolations" in the writings of Lurianic Qabbalah. The bold pioneers of *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) went much further. They reasoned that if the mystical intuition of the Jewish people could not be trusted to identify the Messiah, the canons of rationality and experience should be reinstated. The "enlightened" were motivated by a deep distrust of all that was mystical and by a firm rejection of all that was peculiarly Jewish.

Professor Scholem finds the link between Sabbataism and *Haskalah* in the feeling of release from the burden of the law and the yoke of exile that was experienced by the generation that lived through the shattering upheaval of 1665-1667. This sense of liberation, he believes, led to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Since the Jewish faith is a field of tension between the poles of rationalism and mysticism, the failure and confusion of the Qabbalists could not but fortify the appeal of philosophy. Yet this result was exceedingly slow in coming, for the solace of rationality is rarely sought by the masses. Messianic frustration implied a total transvaluation even as the messianic faith represented the distilled essence of the Jewish faith. For the Jewish people as a whole in the pre-modern era, messianism was not a marginal hope, a "fringe" benefit, but the be-all and end-all of faith. Were it not for the continuation of the rationalistic tradition, the Sabbataian-Frankist disaster might have led to total despair and the desertion of the intellectuals. As it happened, the two pillars on which Jewish romanticism rests, the supremacy of faith above reason and the superior intuition of the Jewish soul in religious matters, were shattered. But the rationalistic temper within the Jewish polarity could now be reasserted. The emphasis in *Haskalah* on the canons of humanism and the principles of reason derived inspiration from an ancient and honored source within Judaism itself, as well as from the widening horizons of

Western culture. The rising intelligentsia of the eighteenth century did not desert their historic community, since in their view a goodly portion of their heritage was thoroughly at home in the dawning Age of Reason. However, in the benighted atmosphere of Poland and Russia, the *Haskalah* was slow in striking roots.

The second way of channelizing the frustrations of the Sabbataian-Frankist debacle was followed by the masses of southern Poland and Russia in the movement that came to be known as Hasidism.

In Hasidism, dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, the intense fervor of messianic expectancy was not dispelled or even weakened; instead the unbearable tension was made tractable and tolerable by the scattering of the foci of redemption. The hope of deliverance was seen to depend upon the labors of many "saints" (*Zaddikim*), who could be considered jointly as precursors of the Messiah. The messianic task was now no longer a totally irrational expectancy, a sudden volcanic eruption, transmuting the ordinary course of human experience; it had become a program of personal living and a pattern of communal structure. The battle against the satanic forces holding the *Shechinah* in bondage was turned into an ongoing struggle, like our contemporary cold war, to be waged steadily, relentlessly within the heart of every Jew. At the same time, this dispersal of the messianic endeavor did not result in a total blurring of the lines of battle, since the saints were themselves heralds of the world to come, companions of the Redeemer, living exemplars of the promised victory over the armies of "the other side" (*sitra ahra*).

To understand the bond between Hasidism and Sabbataism it is necessary to bear in mind the following:

The Hasidim emerged out of the same social classes and in the same provinces as the Frankists. The inspiration of the *Zohar* and the authority of Qabbalistic literature generally was nearly as intense among the Hasidim as among the Sabbataians and Frankists. Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism (died 1760), kept the *Zohar* always open before him, and when he wanted to see with clairvoyance whatever was transpiring in this mundane world or in the occult spheres, he would consult the pages of that holy text. This practice was followed by nearly all

the saints of the movement. When an attempt was made to arrange for a debate between Rabbi Sheneur Zalman of Liodi, on behalf of the Hasidim, and Elijah Gaon of Vilna on behalf of the Mithnagdim (opponents), the former claimed that the latter did not believe in the absolute truth of Lurianic Qabbalah. Elijah Gaon was a Qabbalist, we are assured by his disciples, but he was somewhat critical in his judgment of Qabbalistic sources. The Mithnagdim generally did not include Qabbalistic works in their curriculum of studies, though in theory they did not dispute the worth of this theosophic tradition.

The Sabbattaiaans had come to venerate the "masters of holy souls," who, they believed, were endowed at birth with special mystical powers. Such people were, even in flesh, citizens of the perfected world (*olam hatikkun*), advance heralds of the world to come.⁸ The cult of saints was thus foreshadowed by the sectarians, who also stressed the virtue of serving God in joy, by means of singing and dancing. Above all, the two movements shared the same feeling of living in a new era, where the dawn of redemption had already risen, heralding the imminent break of a new day.

While the Hasidim insisted on a meticulous observance of the Law, in contrast to the overt or hidden anti-legalism of the Sabbattaiaans and Frankists, there were resonant if occasional overtones of anti-nomianism in Hasidism as well. The Baal Shem's maxim, "The Holy One blessed be He, desires to be served in all ways," implied that the path of "Torah and *mizvoth*" was no longer the sole authorized pattern of worshiping God. Of particular interest in this connection is the doctrine of rescuing the "Holy Sparks," which played so prominent a role in the first generations of Hasidism. Sparks of divinity had fallen into the power of the "shells," as a result of a cosmic catastrophe and only the redemptions of those sparks can bring about the final Messianic deliverance. Naturally, the more potent and unclean a "shell," the more likely it is to contain a holy spark. Hence, the need of entering into the unholy domain. Hasidic lore is replete with tales concerning *Zaddikim* who were placed by Providence in unlikely places for the purpose of rescuing the imprisoned holy sparks. Wrote the famed Rabbi Levi Yizhak of Berdichev:

The story of Judith in connection with Hanukkah [*i.e.*, Judith who killed Holoferness in the famous apocryphal book by that

name] illustrates the rule that when the saints desire to bring up sparks, they have to transgress the words of Torah occasionally; so too, in the case of Gideon who built an altar. The Talmud says of Gideon, "Seven things were permitted for that night only." He built that altar because the Israelites were then worshiping idols, and the saints have to do similar acts, in order to break the shell.⁹

The awareness of spiritual kinship between Sabbataism and Hasidism was, of course, the chief motivation of the zealous opponents of Hasidism, who went so far as to prohibit intermarriage between their followers and the "new Hasidim." This kinship is also obliquely reflected in the Hasidic legend, telling of the soul of Sabbattai Zevi which came to the Baal Shem Tov in order to obtain *tikkun*, i.e., rectification. The Baal Shem agreed and began to unite the various phases of his soul with the corresponding phases of the soul of the pseudo-Messiah, when the latter suddenly began to tempt him. Thereupon, the Baal Shem kicked the soul of the tempter back into the lowest cavern of hell. The story concludes with the Baal Shem's remark that it was irrepressible pride which caused the fall of Sabbattai Zevi. In Lurianic Qabbalah, it is only souls belonging to the same heavenly root that can bring rectification to one another.

But while the Sabbataians believed that the one, hoped-for Messiah was already in their midst, the Baal Shem concentrated attention on the ways of hastening his advent. When some of the earliest preachers of Hasidism were chided for their departure from the customs of the fathers, they replied, "What if we do so depart, did our fathers bring the Messiah?"

The messianic fervor of the movement, especially in its early creative phase, is clearly affirmed in the letter written by the Baal Shem to his brother-in-law. This letter was printed in the first official book of the movement, *Toldoth Yaakov Yoseph*, as a kind of clarion call.

On Rosh Hashono of 1747, I performed the rites and pronounced the oaths which lead to the ascent of the soul . . . and I begged of my teacher [Ahijah HaShiloni, who was the legendary teacher of Elijah the prophet] to go with me, for it is very dangerous to ascend to the very highest worlds . . . I ascended level after level, until I came to the Temple of the Messiah, where the Messiah teaches the Torah to the saints and the masters of the law and the seven shepherds, and I asked the Messiah, "When will you come?" and he said to me, "This is how you will know. When your teaching will

become known, and you will be revealed in the world, with your fountains bursting forth. As soon as what I taught you and you understood will be widely disseminated and others too will be able to make unifications and ascents of the soul, like you, then the shells will be overcome and there will be a time of grace and salvation." I wondered at this and sorrowed greatly at the length of time . . . I was not permitted to reveal the Holy Names . . . But this I tell you . . . Whenever you pray or study or say anything at all, try to unify a Name, for in every letter there are worlds, souls and divinity.

Since the Baal Shem had the same heavenly teacher as Elijah, the herald of the Messiah, it is logical to assume that his followers took him to be the precursor of the Messiah. Indeed, there was no limit to the wonders attributed to him. A biographer reports that the Baal Shem said that if the Messiah does not come within a certain time, he will be "compelled" to return.¹⁰

His successor, Rabbi Dov Ber, believed himself to be descended from the Davidic family. Rabbi Sholem, Dov Ber's grandson, looked upon himself as an Exilarch, and established a princely court. One of the descendants, Rabbi David of Talmo, allowed this inscription to be carved on his chair: "David, King of Israel, is alive and established."¹¹

Among the *Mithnagdim*, messianic expectancy was also kept alive. There is a tradition that Elijah Gaon of Vilna shared the widespread belief, based on a prediction of the *Zohar*, that the Messiah would arrive in the year 1840. His disciples established a society of Torah-scholars in Jerusalem. We have a pathetic letter, written by these visionaries and addressed to "the king of the Ten Tribes," in which they plead for help in hastening the steps of the Messiah. In particular, they beseech that legendary personality to send some scholars, whose ordination goes back all the way to the Holy Temple, for according to Maimonides, a properly constituted Sanhedrin must precede the advent of the Messiah. It is difficult indeed for people today to realize that messianic mass-delusion played so crucial a role in nineteenth-century Jewish life.¹²

The messianic overtones of Hasidism became less and less perceptible in the course of time. The claim to the possession of the Holy Spirit (*Ruah Hakodesh*) by the saints was itself messianic in character, since the revival of prophecy was believed to herald

the advent of the Messiah. But as the gift of the "Holy Spirit" was a lesser form of prophecy, the sense of immediacy in messianic expectation was somewhat diluted. The Hasidim insisted on adding to the Kaddish prayer the phrase "and let His redemption spring forth and may His Messiah come near," reasserting the task of hastening his speedy arrival. But, this assertion was soon turned into just another formula. A *Zaddik* of the beginning of the nineteenth century could still send out invitations to a wedding, announcing that the wedding will be held in the plaza facing the resplendent Holy Temple in Jerusalem and that the Highpriest will officiate, adding, as if it were an afterthought, "But in the event the Messiah does not arrive, the wedding will take place in Berdichev." In the middle of the nineteenth century, a popular well-born and well-connected saint with an immense following in the Ukraine could build himself a magnificent palace and hold court like a king, in order to dramatize the belief that the Messiah will emerge out of his family.

All this high-pitched expectancy was kept from erupting into a pseudo-messianic movement by the scattering of the messianic focus and by the concentration of the movement on the redemption of the individual. Every saint was actually a miniature-messiah, for the Messiah represented the conquest of "the other side," and in the personality of the saint the material soul was believed to have been utterly transmuted into holiness. The Hasidim believed that even the occasional carnal thoughts that come to a saint, the so-called "strange ideas," were simply echoes of the evil desires of his followers, which intruded into the consciousness of the saint in order to be purified. In their turn, the saints devoted themselves to the development of individualistic pathways to the perfection of piety. Every *hasid* was to reflect in his life the philosophy of his spiritual master. The infinite dimension of mystic inwardness was opened up, and the perfection of piety was set up as the goal for every individual.

Thus, in the first generation, the Hasidic movement sent a number of its leaders to the Holy Land, following the pattern set by all other pietistic waves. One historian counts no fewer than fifteen *aliyoth* (ascents) from the time of Sabbattai Zevi (converted 1666) to that of the Baal Shem Tov¹³ (died 1760). In the same spirit, Rabbi Mendel of Vitebsk, the third all-Hasidic leader, led a delegation of elders to the Holy Land. But this early flowering

of mystical "zionism" died aborning. Following the usual course of mystical flare-ups, the movement became zealously conservative and quietistic. The redemption of Israel as a whole, it was believed, will result from a mighty tide of repentance involving the entire people of Israel. "The redemption of the totality will follow from the redemption of the individuals, *i.e.*, each one is called upon to redeem and perfect himself; only when this has happened will the Holy One, blessed be He, put an end to the darkness of exile and select the sparks that were caught in the gates of uncleanness. And this is the secret of the exile and the principal meaning of redemption."

It is tempting to assume a direct connection between the mass-movement of modern Zionism and the Hasidic longing for redemption. The Sabbataian precursors of Hasidism certainly nurtured the glowing embers of an activist redemptionism. Said Nehemiah Hian, "For even if one person from the family of Israel undertakes with all his might to redeem us, he can achieve the desired result."¹⁴ But the relationship is not that simple, since the Hasidim diffused and spiritualized the messianic hope. None of the Orthodox progenitors of the Zionist movement, neither Rabbi Zevi Kalisher, nor Rabbi Samuel Mohiliver, nor Rabbi Naf-tali Berlin, belonged to the Hasidic camp. The saints and their followers resisted the appeal of Zionism, even in its Orthodox form (*Mizrachi*), down to the triumph of Hitlerism in the middle-thirties of the twentieth century. Yet, as we shall see, Zionism did provide a modern facade for the latent messianic drive in Hasidism. But this result was achieved by the generations that rebelled against the sterile orthodoxy of their parents. The rebelling generation is apt to retain the emotional impetus of their elders, even as they substitute a "modern" or "scientific" rationale for the dogmas which they reject.

This development will concern us later. For the present it is well to note that the Hasidic movement which was begun with romantic vigor and youthful freshness soon became a mighty bulwark of rigid conservatism. While it is difficult to find any movement in Jewish history which so enriched the Jewish religion as did Hasidism, it is nevertheless true that its creative vitality was quickly exhausted. While in the first two generations, Hasidism mobilized the energies of the disinherited and disaf-

fected classes in the Jewish community, particularly the village Jews and the impoverished intellectual proletariat, the movement rapidly made peace with the communal "establishment."¹⁵ And in the strictly religious field, Hasidism of the nineteenth century provided the core of massive opposition to the intrusion of secular education in the Jewish schools. They intensified the awareness of Jewish uniqueness, they deepened the sense of isolation, and they raised high the ramparts of the inner ghetto.

In the nineteenth century, the leaders of Hasidism directed the offensive against secular learning and against the slightest concession to the spirit of the times. Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Liubavich represented the Hasidim of White Russia in a committee convened by Count Uvarov in 1843 for the purpose of liberalizing somewhat the course of instruction in Jewish schools. And when the other members of the committee prepared to conciliate the government by restricting instruction in Qabbalah and making room for a minimum of secular learning, he stood firm and uncompromising.¹⁶ Several years later when the Russian government ordered the Jews of Poland to adopt modern garments, the opposition was again led by a Hasidic saint, Rabbi Isaac Maier Alter of Ger. In 1850, the government issued an order requiring the shaving of beards and commanding all Jews to dress as other urban citizens. This attempt of the Russian government to hasten the course of Jewish acculturation by forced marches was the direct opposite of the medieval papal policy requiring that Jews be distinguished by pointed caps and yellow badges from the general population. It signaled the dawning of the democratic age, when it is the self-segregation of Jews, not their integration or assimilation that is resented. But now the Hasidim of Poland declared that Jews should resist this governmental pressure for their acculturation, even at the risk of their lives. The brilliant saint of Kotzk opposed this decision of his colleagues, but at that time he had withdrawn from public life.¹⁷ Naturally, the change from medieval exclusiveness to modernism in dress and appearance was strongly favored by the enlightened few. In Vilna, some of them even petitioned the government to prohibit the peculiar garments of the Jews in order to overcome Jewish isolationism and Gentile antisemitism. Not daring to reveal their names, this group prepared a memorandum pointing out that wearing special garments is not an integral part of

the Jewish religion, being merely a matter of custom and superstition.¹⁸ But the Hasidic leaders insisted that Jewish insularity was indispensable, and they did not scruple to make use of economic and social pressures in order to keep all Jews in line.¹⁹ When Sir Moses Montefiore who was scrupulously Orthodox and thoroughly westernized in dress and bearing asked Rabbi Isaac Maier, "Is it not necessary for Jewish leaders to know the language of the country in order to represent properly the Jewish religion to the non-Jewish world?", the latter replied, "We wait for the Messiah, and until he comes, such leaders as you are sufficient."

Isolationism was a natural development of the extreme emphasis on the cosmic uniqueness of the Jewish people in Qabbalah. The Jewish people were distinguished from their neighbors by a metaphysical gulf, impassable and unbridgeable. The souls of Jews are derived from God, while the souls of the nations are of a lower order and, in part, satanic in origin. The "wisdom of the nations" is a product of their unclean soul and likely to corrupt the souls of Jews.²⁰ Standing on these dogmatic assumptions, the Hasidim could not favor a more liberal policy.

Ahad Ha'am, the philosopher of cultural Zionism, was raised in a Hasidic environment; he tells us in his autobiographical notes that he was not allowed to learn the language of the country lest its "uncleanliness" defile the purity of his soul.²¹

Collective self-glorification, a component of every romantic-mystical movement, was carried in Qabbalah to fantastic lengths. Accordingly, the Hasidic leaders were not at all disposed to accept any lowering of the forbidding barriers that separated the Jews from their Gentile neighbors.

The rationalistic opponents of the Hasidim, in particular the group centering around Elijah Gaon of Vilna, were too enmeshed in the dogmas of orthodoxy to be capable of dispelling the fantasies of Qabbalah. Unwilling to accept or to repudiate the teachings of the Qabbalistic mythologists, they hesitated between the two alternatives, following generally the teachings of Qabbalah in their speculations, with only occasional glimpses of its true character. Elijah Gaon encouraged the study of mathematics and the sciences, but not of "accursed philosophy," announcing the principle, "Torah and wisdom derive from one source, and the Torah tells what is pure and impure in wisdom." His disciple, R.

Hayim Volozhin, insisted the Elijah Gaon firmly adhered to the Qabbalah of Luria, and that he was favored with visions and revelations.²²

It was only by rebelling against the insular mentality of Hasi-dim, that Polish-Russian Jewry could orient itself to reality. This revolt took several forms — a mass movement toward assimilation and conversion, an ardent drive for the transformation of society along Marxist lines, and a movement for the establishment of a secular nation in Palestine.

Before we turn to the study of these movements, however, we need to retrace our steps and note the character of Jewish life in the Western countries. Though the Jews of the West followed the broad highway of emancipation and liberalization, they were not free from the influence of their orthodox isolationist brethren in Russia. And the converse is also true. In fact, the tragedy of European Jewry was in no small measure due to the residual and inescapable co-responsibility of all European Jews, though they pursued opposing pathways to redemption. While the Jews of the West sought safety in cultural and national integration with their neighbors, they could not dissociate their collective image from that of their brethren in the East who were stubbornly nationalistic and isolationist. And we have noted how the continuous stream of Russian-Polish immigrants into the cities of the Western countries reinforced the lagging, hidebound remnants of Western Jewry which resisted the advance of acculturation. On the other hand, the fanatical resistance of the Hasi-dic leaders to the slightest intrusion of secular learning was derived in large measure from the spectacle of headlong assimilation in the enlightened countries of the West. Thus, while the polarization of European Jewry into Western integrationists and Eastern isolationists made possible the exploration of two opposing philosophies of redemption, the two segments of the Jewish world were so thoroughly entangled that neither program could be carried out completely or consistently.

In the dawn of the modern era the titanic figure of Baruch Spinoza dominates the horizon of Western Jewry. Some writers assume that Spinoza was expelled from Jewish life by the rabbis of Amsterdam, who pronounced a ban (*herem*) against him and

his writings. Actually, the ban was so freely employed in the seventeenth century, chiefly as a way of enforcing the authority of communal leaders, that in some Italian communities, half the Jewish population was at one time placed under the ban.²³ In particular, the rabbinate of Amsterdam was "*herem-happy*." In the absence of a central world-wide authority, no one can expel a person from the Jewish community as a whole. Though a convert to another faith expels himself, as it were, from the community, he remains nonetheless subject to the obligations that his soul presumably assumed in its oath at Sinai. "An Israelite, even if he sinned, is an Israelite."²⁴ Thus, the list of those whose works were banned by reputable rabbis and communal authorities includes some of the greatest Jewish figures of all time, from Moses Maimonides to Moses Mendelssohn and from Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, to the entire widely ramified Sadigurer dynasty of Hasidic saints.

Spinoza (1632-1677) never "resigned" from the Jewish community, since he did not convert to another faith. He lived as a solitary prophet of the modern, secular world, which was then still unborn. And all his labors were directed to the end of charting the ideological coordinates of such a rational-ethical society. A contemporary of the pseudo-Messiah, Sabbattai Zevi, Spinoza was also driven by a mighty messianic impetus. He aimed to release mankind from the yoke of bigotry and suffering and to establish a society, dedicated to justice, love, and peace. But he sought to achieve these aims by the pursuit of reason and by a resolute quest of truth.

Baruch Spinoza realized early in life that a free society in Western Europe could be built only on the basis of a radical reinterpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Since the Bible constituted the ultimate source of the prevailing public philosophy in all of Christendom, any radical reorientation of the existing social-political structure could be achieved only through a critical reinterpretation of the entire Bible, in particular the Old Testament. For if religion is a set of rituals, as in the Old Testament, or a set of dogmas, as in the New Testament, then the church, as the repository of these truths, must dominate every aspect of social life. Indeed, in the Old Testament, a system of laws is laid down which invades all domains of existence, cutting across the distinctions that we today draw between civil and religious legis-

lation, between public and private concerns. And if dogmas are all important for salvation, the agencies of the state are properly utilized in order to guard against the infection of dangerous thoughts, even as the state is properly charged with the task of preventing and combatting plagues and other communal disasters. The core of the dispute between the defenders of medievalism and the prophets of a free society was the nature of religion itself.

Spinoza addressed himself to this question in all his works and letters, exposing the inner impetus of the rationalistic current in Jewish philosophy. His answer developed the argument on two levels, on the low and broad plateau of popular religion and on the high and narrow pathway of speculative philosophy.

On the philosophical plane he combined Epicureanism, Stoicism, and medieval rationalism into a magnificent intellectual structure that has proved fascinating to great minds in many different generations. Along with the Epicureans, he maintained that happiness was possible; along with the Stoics, he asserted that virtue was attainable; along with the mystics, he pointed out that all pleasure was a form of surrender to the Will of God. And as a rationalist, he maintained that all these goals were attainable by way of the cultivation of pure reason.

All suffering is the result of the turbulence of our emotions and of our willful resistance to the course of natural events. To the extent to which we subdue our emotions and mobilize them in the service of understanding, we surmount the agonies of life and prepare ourselves to share in the delights of the mind and heart. As emotion graduates into reason, reason in its turn blends insensibly into the love of God. And the intellectual love of God, far from being an artificial synthesis, actually grows in strength, as it is used, maturing into the faculty of intuition, that is at once love, understanding, and joy. And those who reach this level are indeed part of "creative nature" (*natura naturans*), as contrasted with the "passive nature" (*natura naturata*) of suffering humanity. As such, they are assured of immortality.

Insofar as the domain of public life is concerned, Spinoza insisted that the Scriptures were not to be read as if they were literally the Word of God. He pointed out that the books comprising the Old Testament were too full of multiple imperfections and even errors to be taken as the articulation of the Divine

and Perfect Will. If the Scriptures are read, without any preconceived notions and with the single-minded quest of truth, it becomes obvious that they are the imperfect works of fallible men and women. The Scriptures *contain* the Word of God, insofar as they embody the ideals of compassion, love, humility, justice, and truthfulness. But the various authors of the biblical books, were, humanly enough, creatures of passion and prejudice, and their legislation reflected their failings and limitations as well as their insights and inspiration. Only the general principles of piety are Divine; the specific laws and the peculiar dogmas are the work of human beings.

Spinoza takes special pains to discredit the doctrine of the "chosen people," which permeates both Testaments. In the Old Testament, the "chosen people" are the Israelites and by implication, the Jews. In the New Testament, the emergent Christian community arrogates this distinction to itself, claiming that "Israel according to the spirit" has taken the place of "Israel according to the flesh" in the Divine scheme of things. In the sectarian struggles of seventeenth-century Europe, each denomination laid claim to the title and unique privileges of the chosen people. It was essential to reinterpret the biblical doctrine itself, if a free and secular world was to emerge.

Accordingly, Spinoza concluded that the "chosen people" doctrine was a human perversion of the Divine Word, more specifically, a Jewish perversion. In so distorting the Divine Word, the Jews displayed the motives of arrogance and prejudice that are unfortunately common to the masses of mankind. But intelligent people should resist the popular tendency toward collective self-sanctification. The doctrine of a special Covenant between God and Israel was a popular illusion, since God's concern is directed to all men. The laws of the Bible are no different from other national codes of law. Their validity depends upon the consent of the citizens as well as upon their ethical quality. It follows that ever since the dissolution of the Jewish state, the laws of Judaism ceased to be automatically valid for all Jews. By implication, Spinoza disavowed the corporative state of the medieval era, which recognized the Jewish community as a virtually self-governing community, constituting a state within a state. The state should deal with individual citizens, not estates or corporations, and religion should deal with individuals, inspiring them with

obedience and humility, compassion and joy. Spinoza took special pains to remove the aura of "uniqueness" from the Jewish people, a distinction which Jews interpreted to mean uniquely blessed, and which fundamentalist Christians took to mean uniquely accursed. Both groups pointed to the survival of the Jews as proof of their thesis, Jews stressing the manifest indestructibility of their group, Christians pointing to the inability of the Jewish group to find peace and surcease of sorrow by mingling with their fellowmen. For Spinoza, the explanation of Jewish survival lay altogether within the domain of natural causes. It was the peculiarity of Jewish laws; in particular, circumcision, that generated the turbulence of antisemitism. And this popular complex of hate, fear, and envy prevented the Jews from succumbing to the natural processes of social mingling and achieving rapid and complete assimilation.

In brief, Spinoza's philosophy of redemption called for the perpetual endeavor to submit all passions to the scrutiny of reason, to separate the rites of religion from their inner import, and to subject religious *institutions* to the control of the state. At the same time, he counselled the Jews as well as all other minorities to accept the external customs and rites of the majority population, providing no violence is done to their inner convictions. As for himself, he refused any and every offer that was liable to put him in the position of appearing to accept Christian dogmas. The mind of man must be free and uncoerced. But external rites are neither true nor false; they are either useful or not. Hence, minorities should not resist the legislated rites of the state.

Spinoza propounded the philosophy of liberalism for Western Europe, in most if not in all of its features. He also set the pattern for liberals to minimize the stature of the People of the Book in order to lessen the authority of the Scriptures in Western society. In this policy he was to be followed by a long line of writers, from Voltaire to Renan. It was Spinoza, too, who set the style for liberals to combine the advocacy of freedom for all groups, with total assimilation for the Jewish community. Be it noted, however, that he allowed the possibility of an eventual reestablishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, though he did not contemplate such an eventuality with relish.

Spinoza was not totally detached from the intellectual ferment

and political concerns of his day. He was actively associated with the liberal current in Dutch political life, and he maintained a lively correspondence with scholars in Germany, Holland, and England. Nor was he an isolated phenomenon in Jewish thought. Most of the principles that were incorporated in his philosophy were anticipated in the writings of the Jewish rationalists, from Maimonides to Gersonides, in the work of Hisdai Crescas who maintained the reality of the Infinite and in the beautiful volume of Judah Abrabanel, *Dialoghe di Amore*, who sought to identify the flow of thought with the cosmic current of Divine love.²⁵ In his repudiation of the traditional interpretation of Scriptures, he was preceded by Uriel Acosta in Holland and by Leo Modena in Italy. The latter scholar was an erudite rabbi, who rejected the entire cosmology of Qabbalah as a puerile cobweb of mythology and superstition.²⁶ On rationalistic grounds, he maintained that the vast multiplication of laws in Judaism hampered the development of friendly relations between Jews and their neighbors. He even went so far as to suggest that, were it not for the legislative barrier erected by the rabbis, the whole western world might now have been Jewish in faith. Since "the sole purpose of the Law is to train us in the knowledge and love of God, they should have stressed its general intent rather than the minutiae of its implications, certainly in this state of exile, when a lenient rather than a strict application of the Law is called for."²⁷

Even the suggestion that the Pentateuch was not authored by Moses but by Ezra was put forward, albeit tentatively and hesitantly, by the exegetes of the rationalistic school, notably by Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra.

Nevertheless, in the circumstances of the European world as it was then constituted, it was not possible for any organized Jewish group to embrace fully the doctrines of Spinoza. Like Sabbatai Zevi, he represented one of the poles in the Jewish craving for redemption, while he stood outside the dynamic equilibrium of Judaism. Individual disciples here and there, following the logic of his doctrine, would desert the Jewish community and, in the absence of a neutral society, drift into the Christian world. Or, they would embrace his philosophy in part or in whole, while retaining a tenuous connection to the Jewish community. Throughout the modern era, extreme rationalists, lacking the austere sincerity of Spinoza but following his line of thought, kept

up a steady stream of departure from the Jewish and into the Christian camp. This continuous attrition weakened the moderate rationalistic camp, which struggled continuously against the romantic-mystical-dogmatic elements of the Jewish community.

Within the Jewish community, the influence of Spinoza was counteracted either by a resurgence of ethnic feeling or by the counter-pull of Jewish romanticism and tradition. The impetus of Jewish national feeling was exceedingly feeble in the eighteenth century. Modern Jewish nationalism could appeal to the masses only after the hold of religion had been loosened and only after modern biological types of nationalism had given rise to secular antisemitism. In the eighteenth century, the few pioneers of "enlightenment" expressed only the overtones and undertones of ethnic feeling by cultivating a semi-secular, neo-Hebraic literature.

Secular Hebraic literature is generally dated from the work of Moses Hayim Luzzato, who devised a fresh and graceful style in poetry and drama. Strangely enough this author, a genuine Qabbalist, conversing with angelic beings and dreaming of a crucial role in the drama of messianic redemption, was the herald of the modern Hebraic Renaissance. But then his mystical faith was healthy-minded and affirmative in tone, stressing the all-sustaining love of God as the secret of existence, disregarding fears of "the other side" and basing the program of religion on man's need to fulfill his vocation in life.²⁸ Also in Judaism, the love of Hebrew was part of the dreamlike vision of national redemption. The major task of the Messiah was, to many minds, to turn back the tide of time, reinstating the biblical era in all its romantic grandeur, prophetic pathos, and storied glory. The Hebrew language symbolized the antique self-image of the Jew, ere the tragedy of exile had distorted his personality.

The tiny band of enlightened scholars in Germany launched the new literary era by the publication of the Hebrew magazine, *Ha-Measef*, 1789-1797. The purpose of this magazine was to print Hebrew songs, discuss the grammatic and political forms of the Hebrew language, analyze the meaning of difficult biblical verses, report on new ideas in the fields of science and social life and discuss the deeper meaning of Talmudic passages. The only enduring belletristic creation of this period was a long epic poem, glorifying the life of Moses. As translators, the writers of *Ha-Mea-*

sef brought to the attention of the Hebrew reader some of the lost treasures of inter-testamentary literature — the *Wisdom of Solomon*, *Judith*, the *Ecclesiasticus* of Ben Sira, and the books of the Maccabees.

Minor as their achievements now seem to us, the pioneers of Jewish Enlightenment in Germany celebrated the intrinsic worth of humanistic values. They shattered the inner ghetto-walls by their insistence on the dignity of the unfettered, intellectual quest, and they disturbed the complacency of the pietists by suggesting the validity of an extraneous source of judgment — the sense of fitness, harmony, and dignity.

So insular had the Jewish mind become that the biggest issue between the enlightened and the traditionalists centered on the right to teach secular subjects and the language of the country in Jewish schools. When the Austrian Emperor, Joseph II, issued in 1782 the famous Edict of Tolerance (*Toleranz-Patent*), ordering the establishment of schools for Jews, where secular subjects and the German language would be taught along with the Bible and Talmud, the Orthodox rabbis were dismayed. The social and political dimensions of tolerance for Judaism in Austria were still narrowly delimited, but the Emperor aimed to proceed very cautiously toward the goal of making the "children of the Israelite nation more useful citizens of the state."

In connection with this issue, Naftali Zevi Weisel (1726-1805) published a pamphlet *Divrai Sholem Veemeth*, in which he sought to persuade the Jews of Austria to cooperate willingly with their government. He pointed out that the "Torah of humanity" was coeval with the Torah of Moses. And by the "Torah of humanity" (*Torat Haadam*), Weisel meant the independent values and virtues of the intellect, the esthetic sense, and the ethical conscience. The Orthodox rabbis of Austria and Poland protested against Weisel's book and against the new school system. In the provinces of southern Poland, where the Hasidim were solidly entrenched, the new schools were combatted with zeal and guile.

The issue between the self-segregating pietists and the intrepid pioneers of enlightenment was one of essential principle, exemplifying the dynamic polarity of Judaism. The rationalistic current of Jewish thought which the modernists represented was an alien abomination to the isolationist rabbis, whose mentality was shaped by Talmud and Qabbalah, and tempered by the

memory of an endless series of pogroms and persecutions. While, in the rationalistic stream of Jewish thought, the faculty of reason was allowed an honored place beside the Torah and the Talmud, the romantic-mystical schools in Judaism insisted that only the revealed tradition was true and worthy of study. If the intellect is recognized as an independent source of value, there is a firm basis for communication across denominational lines; a set of common values is affirmed, and the arts and sciences are esteemed as worthy expressions of man's highest endeavors. To the romantics and mystics in Judaism, the intellectual disciplines and the esthetic arts of the modern world were only distractions and seductions, threatening to lure Jewish youth away from their fastnesses.

The Qabbalistic tradition was also involved in the second controversy between the modernists and the Orthodox of the late eighteenth century; namely, whether it was permitted to postpone for a day or two the interment of the dead. Several German provincial governments insisted on such a postponement, in order to avoid the mistake of burying those who were in a coma and only seemed to be dead. The modernists were all in favor of complying with the law of the government, while the Orthodox insisted on immediate burial for Qabbalistic reasons, involving the belief in the transmigration of the soul. If the soul of the corpse is due to enter the body of a newly born babe, the angelic accounting of souls might be knocked askew by any delay in interment, for the soul leaves the body only after the grave is covered.

The German Jewish champions of enlightenment were proponents of rationalistic Judaism. Like Spinoza, they drew their inspiration from that wholesome stream, which mingled the waters of reason and humanity with those of tradition, but unlike Spinoza, they added the elements of theistic faith and communal discipline to the compulsions of the unaided intellect. Like Spinoza, too, Moses Mendelssohn and his associates employed as their chief instrument a new commentary on the Scriptures. But unlike Spinoza, they conceded the sanctity of the Pentateuch, endeavoring to interpret it in accord with the principles of the medieval, philosophical exegets. The *maskilim* were guided by two chief purposes in publishing their German translation and Hebrew commentary on the Pentateuch, to introduce their readers

to the "pure" German language, as contrasted with the Yiddish dialect, and to disavow the Qabbalistic tradition in the interpretation of the faith. The rejection of the Yiddish dialect as an unworthy jargon was symbolic of their assertion of the need for self-transformation and their repudiation of the principle that anything Jewish is for that reason holy and unchangeable. And Yiddish symbolized the unlovely present, while the *maskilim* aimed at reviving the self-image of an idyllic past and invoking the futuristic vision of an ideal cosmopolitan society.

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) was the hero and prophet of the Jewish Enlightenment. He wrote in German, for the most part, but also in Hebrew. As a master-stylist of the German language and as an advocate of rationalistic religion, Moses Mendelssohn was greatly instrumental in correcting the contemporary image of the Jew. His Jewish and Christian associates labored under his guidance and inspiration on two fronts — to liberalize Jewish attitudes toward the emergent humanist values of a free society and to break down the social-political barriers deriving from Christian dogmatism and bias.

Moses Mendelssohn agreed with Spinoza that the human hunger for truth and goodness was the self-revelation of the Divine Being. Hence, all the *ideas* that are needed for salvation are revealed by God to all men. But, Mendelssohn added, the Torah is a set of supplemental *laws* that God, in His Wisdom, ordained for one historic group, the Jewish people. While Jews, like all other men, can find their way to God, without any legal encumbrances, they are not free to repudiate the specific ordinances which were given to them at Sinai. To Mendelssohn, as to Spinoza, Mosaic law was legislation for the Jewish nation, but while Spinoza maintained that the dissolution of the Jewish state nullified Jewish law, Mendelssohn called attention to the continuing rump of a state in the shape of the Jewish community.

Mendelssohn believed that he was simply restating the principles of Maimonides, but in fact he denied that sinaitic revelation was indispensable for the economy of life. For Maimonides, the revelation at Sinai consisted essentially of ideas; their authoritative character was that of Divine truth. But if ideas are open to all men and laws are not needed for salvation, being only so many ceremonies and rituals, Judaism can have neither an eter-

nal nor an obligatory character. Ritual practices may be described as action-symbols of great psychological effectiveness, but as such they are inevitably subject to the test of psychology: Do they really work this way? If the goals of salvation and fulfillment are universal in character, and the laws of Torah are not needed for the attainment of these goals, then, even for Jews, the laws of Torah can only be of minor significance.

Actually, in his letters to private friends, Mendelssohn looked forward to a gradual liberalization of Christian dogma and a concomitant softening of Jewish attitudes to Christian symbols, making possible an eventual Christian-Jewish synthesis. But in his public writings, he insisted that while the good God could not have restricted His revelation of the Vision of the Good Life to one people or one community, He laid down special laws for the guidance of the Israelites. These laws do not coincide altogether with the practices of contemporary Jewish pietists, bearing as these practices do the scars of a long historic struggle. In his open letter to Lavater (the Protestant pastor who challenged him publicly to state why he remained a Jew), Mendelssohn wrote that all faiths share the same truths and that each person expresses his faith through the patterns which have become part of him. He then added:

I will not deny that I found in my religion human accretions and distortions, which, to my regret, dim its radiance. Who is the man that can truly boast that his faith is altogether devoid of such human perversions? All of us who love truth recognize the poisonous odors of hypocrisy and superstition and seek to remove them without injury to the good and true core of faith.

While the enlightened Jews and Christians should strive for the purification of their own respective traditions, they should recognize that the essential core of religion has been revealed in the hearts and minds of all men.

"I do not incline to the belief that the power of human understanding is incapable of grasping the eternal truths which are needed for happiness, so that these truths needed to be revealed in a supernatural manner. The proponents of this view deduct from the power and goodness of God on one side more than they are able to add to them from the other side. According to them, He favored mankind greatly by bestowing His revelation upon them, but He could not build this capacity within them, to begin with. Furthermore, according to this opinion, the need for revelation will be far

more extensive than the actual range of true revelation. Why did He withhold His kindness and His truth from the greatest portion of mankind?

According to the concepts of true Judaism, all the inhabitants of the world share in the capacity to reach eternal happiness, and the instruments for this fulfillment are found everywhere.

The house of Judah never boasted of being alone the recipient of eternal truths, which man needs for the fulfillment of his destiny. There is a great difference between a heavenly faith and a heavenly law . . .²⁰

Mendelssohn's major purpose was to project the outlines of a free society, in which church and state are assigned to different domains of life. While religion deals with man's spirit, employing the methods of persuasion, the state deals with man's actions, employing the instruments of compulsion. But then the Mosaic law, concerned exclusively with external deeds, as he maintained, would be more political than religious. Mendelssohn met this dilemma with the claim that the Jewish state of the biblical period was a one-time phenomenon, unique and not to be duplicated. Thus he returned in part to the position of Spinoza. He had to concede that the Mosaic law was largely, if not altogether, obsolete. In Orthodox Judaism, some parts of the Law were temporarily inoperative, in particular the precepts relating to Palestinian agriculture and the Holy Temple, but no part of the Law was ever described as obsolete. A major portion of the Talmud deals with the Temple sacrifices and with laws of ritual purity that do not now apply. Pious Jews studied those pages with unremitting zeal; after all, "soon the Temple will be rebuilt"³⁰ and all the ancient laws will again be applied.

For Mendelssohn and his associates, the messianic hope became an embarrassment rather than an inspiration. Seeking salvation for the Jewish people through integration in the evolving structure of European society, Mendelssohn had to combat the notion that Jews regard the messianic hope as a practical, political program for the "ingathering of the exiles" in the Holy Land. An unknown contemporary proposed a Zionist scheme to Mendelssohn, but he brushed it aside as totally worthless. The Messianic Era, Mendelssohn asserted, is just a theological dogma, devoid of practical significance. It belongs in the realm of the supernatural, the miraculous, and the other-worldly. This great sage of German Jewry was disposed to relegate the age-old hope,

still so powerfully vibrant among his Russian Jewish contemporaries, to the domain of the dogmatic and the supernatural; yet, he claimed at the same time that dogmatics and the supernatural had no place in Judaism. As a disciple of Maimonides, he was wont to interpret the messianic hope in purely practical terms.

I acknowledge as true and certain, that the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will not always be removed from the Promised Land and scattered among other nations, but that the Lord will inspire, at a time known only to Him, a leader, the Messiah from the house of David who will make this people again into a free nation and rule over them in the land of their fathers.⁸¹

His rationalism led Mendelssohn to strip the messianic hope of its cosmic and universal aspects, while his political convictions led him to shunt the "hope of Israel" into the purely theological limbo. Mendelssohn's associates and disciples were less devious. Said Eliezer Bendavid:

No one can blame the Jew if he finds his Messiah in the circumstance of being granted equality by good princes and being allowed to hope that he will enjoy all the rights of citizenship if he fulfills all his obligations.

Another associate put it more clearly in the assertion that the "Emperor Joseph of Austria was part of the Messiah."⁸² Later, in the struggle for emancipation in France and Holland, several Jewish spokesmen did not hesitate to identify the Revolution with the messianic hope. This outburst of enthusiasm, greeting the partial fulfillment of the ancient dream, corresponded to the mystical description of the establishment of the State of Israel in our day as "the beginning of the growth of our Redemption."⁸³

While Mendelssohn and his associates sought to stress the purely academic or theological character of the messianic hope for the reconstitution of the Jewish nation, the Gentile foes of Jewish emancipation stressed the continuing national character of the Jewish community. The Jews were not merely a religious community, these anti-emancipationists maintained, but a foreign national body, and the national features of Jewish life are integral to its character, not merely vestigial and obsolescent. This judgment, far from being restricted either to the dogmatic or to the

pathological antisemites, was shared by those who favored a gradualistic approach to the emancipation of the Jews. Wrote one in a memorandum to the Prussian cabinet:

The Jews demand for themselves too the tolerance of philosophy, even as do the members of other minority religious groups; but the reluctance of the other inhabitants and even their hate were caused not only by the religion of the Jews, but by their nationality, and by their ambition to hold on to this national character. The Jews remained a nation within a nation.³⁴

This nationalistic interpretation of the character of Jewish separateness derived in large part from the inability of the Protestants to understand that such external actions as dietary laws, the wearing of beards and earlocks, even the wearing of certain special garments could be intrinsic parts of a specifically religious pattern of living.

The Jew removes himself by the commandments of his faith from any vital partnership, from any activity which serves to link the affections of people unto one another.³⁵

As the corporate state of the Medieval era began to give way to the new state that was to be constructed on rational lines, the ideologists sought to base the new state on the natural affections and social bonds that existed among the people. National consciousness emerged in western Europe as a normal implication of the democratic spirit: the state should reflect the feelings and ideals of the people. The living reality is the people as it was fashioned by history, and the state is only the contrived instrument of the organic community. A citizen was not simply one who observed the laws of the state, but the son of a certain nation. Even before the nation was conceived as a biological entity, its reality as a cultural-social unity was taken to be axiomatic. A Danish scholar formulated the issue of Jewish emancipation in this concise form:

How are we to deal with strangers — in this case, Jews who wish to become part of a political society without giving up their nationality — that is, without desiring to become part of the people which has created this political society?

In this formulation, nationality is not conceived in biological terms; yet, the Jews are apparently excluded from the host-nation because of their different ways of life.

The Jews are a nation, not a religious sect; this nation has its own laws, which it cherished in the past and which it intends still to keep. What does belonging to a nation mean if not loyalty to its laws? But the Jews form a different nation, since they have different laws, a different constitution, even a different king, for whose advent they continue to hope.³⁶

All the proponents of Jewish emancipation in France and in the Dutch Republic insisted on the condition that the Jews should give up their autonomous communal organizations and those cultural barriers which were not an integral part of their faith. The application of Alsatian Jews to the National Convention, which did include a plea for the preservation of Jewish autonomy, was not accepted in its original form, but reformulated and modified in keeping with the new national spirit. "The state consists of individuals, not of corporations." The resolution affirming Jewish equality in the Batavian Republic was so phrased as to indicate that it is granted only to the Jewish individuals who are ready and willing to transform themselves into unhyphenated citizens of the Jewish faith. As Professor Dinur correctly interprets the sense of the Batavian Parliamentary resolution:

In one respect, there was no dispute among the debaters — the autonomous organs of the Jewish communities. This organization was in the eyes of them all a realistic expression of the national separateness of the Jews, and all of them admitted that it is impossible for Jews to be both the children of a distinctive nation and citizens in the lands where they reside. The resolution of equality was so phrased as to be limited to those Jews who wish to accept fully the implications of Batavian citizenship. The meaning of such acceptance included not alone the rejection of an autonomous community but also the repudiation of any living participation in the laws and destiny of the Jewish people, insofar as this goal transcends the scope of religion.³⁷

Jewish emancipation in France and the surrounding territories was achieved on the strength of the general principles of liberalism.³⁸ The liberals hoped that the spread of enlightenment would lead to the gradual disappearance of Jewish national distinctiveness — the restrictive laws of diet and dress would be abolished; the concentration of Jews in money-lending and petty trade would give way to their diffusion into the general economic structure; the Jews would adopt the language, mores, and culture of the country and forge bonds of "fraternity" with the other citizens

of the realm; they would cease to look toward Palestine as the land of their future.

The liberals of Western Europe accepted the argument of the Jewish rationalists who maintained that the Jews desired to be an integral part of the nations among whom they lived, sharing in the building of a free and fraternal society. The Jewish hope of redemption had now changed direction. "France which first removed the shame of Judah is our land of Israel; its mountains our Zion; its rivers our Jordan."

Another writer described the American Revolution as "the beginning of our redemption." Zalkind Hurwitz, the leading Jewish apologist in France, defined the new situation very clearly, "The freedom of the Jews has put an end to our exile."³⁹ Pious Jews might continue to pray in their synagogues for the Messiah, but such prayers would be purely theological.

After all the Jews also wait for the day of death, no less than do other people, and they are even absolutely certain of its coming; nevertheless, this does not prevent them, any more than it prevents other people, from building, planting and sowing, wherever they are permitted to do so.⁴⁰

The messianic hope, the Jewish liberals maintained, was not different in essence from the belief of many Christian sects in the "second coming" and in the eventual establishment of the "kingdom of God." On the other hand, the non-liberal Jewish elements were very nearly inarticulate in the lands of Western Europe.

At this point, we need to inquire why Jewish nationhood appeared to be so insuperable an obstacle to the granting of civil rights to Jews. After all, other minority nationalities were to be found in France and in the other countries of the West. No one questioned the right of individual Italians in France or Poles in Germany to become citizens. Why should the presumed identification of Jews as forming a nation have been universally assumed to preclude their acceptance as full-fledged citizens? But this was the common assumption of friends and foes in all the debates of Western Europe. "The chief reason for the opposition to Jewish emancipation was Jewish separateness and alienism, based on national distinctiveness and on the aspiration to return to the land of Israel at the time of the Messiah."⁴¹

Doubtless, this argument assumed that the continued alle-

giance to Jewish laws made of the Jewish community an organized political entity, "a nation within a nation." This is why Napoleon demanded from the "Paris Sanhedrin" a clear acknowledgment of the validity of civil laws in all monetary and family affairs. But the objection of the reactionaries cut much deeper than this demand. For they implied that the Jews could not possibly be integrated into the nations among whom they lived, whereas they envisaged no such difficulties in the case of other nationalities. Why this difference?

Here we come to the crux of the Jewish tragedy. If, in the modern world, Jews are seen as a nation, then they are inevitably categorized as a peculiar, self-segregating, self-sanctifying nation. To conceive of the Jews as a nation is to identify the primary motivation of their long struggle for existence as ethnic in character. Then the entire range of the Jewish faith, from the practice of circumcision to the anticipation of a Messiah, is flattened out along the one plane of ethnicism, appearing to be nothing more than a projection of the ethnic will for self-segregation from the rest of humanity. All the rituals of the Jewish faith, seen in this monochromatic light, seem to be only so many instances of Jewish separatism, attempts to erect an inner ghetto-wall against the outside world. By the same token, the dietary laws take on the somber hues of Brahmin arrogance, suggesting misanthropy and the hatred of mankind. Even the monotheistic idea is transposed to a nationalistic key and interpreted as no more than a metaphysical extension of the Jewish will to dominate the entire globe; the killing of Jesus and the rejection of the Christian message is regarded as the prime example of the Jewish refusal to share the treasures of their faith with the rest of mankind; all the Jewish festivals appear to be no more than national holidays. Jewish civil law with its basic distinction between Jews and Gentiles is seen as an instrument of a continuing cold war — and who can distinguish in the heat of warfare between the weapons of defense and the arsenal of aggression? The social-economic aspects of Jewish life take on a sinister, quasi-metaphysical character, for, if the ethnic drive of Jews could be transposed into the absolute accents of religion, it can certainly sink to the dark underworld of socio-economic manipulation and conspiracy. In brief, if the Jews are viewed as a nation, then, by virtue of the ethnic-cultural aspects of their

faith, their world-wide dispersion, and their age-long battle against the normal processes of assimilation, they take on the aspect of a *super-nation*, endowed with an excess of self-love and accursed by the fear of the friendship and fraternity of other peoples. In the national perspective, the Jews are seen "through a glass darkly" enveloped by the mysterious clouds of metaphysics, magic, and superstition.

The category of nationhood is the dividing line between the in-group and the out-group. It erects a wall between the brother and the alien. But the walls of nationhood are not eternal divisions, but cultural facts, contingent on many circumstances. The Scotsman and the Englishman are so nearly alike that only extremists seek to break up the unity of Britain. Most Irishmen in Britain have come to think of themselves as belonging to the British nationality, while Irishmen in America used to nurture the ancient hates with fierce determination. Germans in the Slav-ic countries and Chinese in the Malayan world approximate the position of Jews, for the Germans and the Chinese were motivated in large part by a high regard for their own respective cultures and a corresponding contempt for the "natives." But no civilized people has gone so far as to make a god of its ethnic-cultural aspect and to exalt its nationalism into a faith. Such appears to be the case of Jewry — if it be regarded primarily as a nation.

The national interpretation of the character of Jewish life led inevitably to a caricaturing of the Jewish faith and to an emphasis on the "peculiarity" of the Jewish problem. The peculiarity is stressed in the same breath with the supposed nationhood of the Jew.

For seventeen-hundred years the Jews passed through the world and did not mingle with any people. The Jew in London is no Englishman; in Haag, is no Dutchman; in Metz, is no Frenchman . . ."

The very antiquity of the Jewish people makes it seem as if the attitudes of the Old Testament were still normative.

The Jews were never a people of workers, not even in the days of David and Solomon. They were always a lazy people, counting 108 holidays in the year. They are unsuited to the responsibilities of citizenship. You can hardly find a general who will agree to head a Jewish army on the Sabbath.⁴²

Herder in Germany, Vico in Italy, and Rousseau in France had

already popularized the comparison of a nation to a living thing, which after a normal period of growth and maturation begins to harden and atrophy with age. Wrote Rousseau:

Most nations, like most individual human beings, can be educated and trained only in the days of their youth; once they have aged, they can be neither retrained nor reeducated. After their customs have become fixed and their prejudices have struck deep roots, it is both dangerous and useless to try to change them.⁴³

Francois Charles Marie Fourier (1772-1837), famous socialist visionary, who petitioned Rothschild to found a Jewish state in Palestine that would offer the world a saving example of a non-exploiting society, was at one and the same time a virulent anti-semitic and an ardent Zionist. This combination was already common on the threshold of the nineteenth century. Fourier saw the demonic evil of the Jewish character not only in the medieval practice of usury and in the Talmudic maintenance of a double standard in business as between Jews and Gentiles, but also in the dietary laws of contemporary Jews.

This refusal of theirs to eat food prepared by Gentiles . . . is proof positive of the truth of all the contemptible things of which they are accused; such as, the doctrine that to rob a Christian is not a sin . . .⁴⁴

Those who think with their blood are fascinated by symbols. The present, the past, and the future constitute for them one massive symphony of the unconscious will to live. They hear the voice of blood, not the voice of Moses, in all that Jews do. Hence, the belief that in their deepest being Jews do not change; in European lands they will always be aliens. A healthy future for Jews can be founded only upon the restoration of their past, the return of the species to its native habitat.

The reestablishment of the Hebrews will be a glorious achievement for the lords of the house of Rothschild. Like Ezra and Zerubabel they will be able to go up to Jerusalem at the head of the Jews, reviving the throne of Solomon as of old and establishing on that throne the dynasty of Rothschild. . . .

Not only this, but by their support of the Phalanstere policy [co-operatives] they will be destined to redeem the Christian world from the social evils that it suffers.⁴⁵

The philosopher Fichte, who sought to interpret the whole of world-history in terms of the contest of two racial mentalities,

was by all odds the most influential theoretician of resurgent German nationalism in the Napoleonic era. It was natural for him to view Jewish life too in the same national-racial perspective. He maintained that the "Jewish God" is "the enemy of the human race," considering only Jews as "His children." The ethic of the Jews is limited to Jews, since it does not offer "one measure for Jews and Gentiles."

I do not see how citizenship rights can be given to them save by cutting off their heads in one night and giving them new heads in which even one Jewish idea will not be found. For our self-protection I see no other way than to conquer their destined land and to send them all to live there."⁴⁰

Here again the concept of Jewish nationhood is viewed against the background of the Old Testament and the Talmud, and conjoined with antisemitism and Zionism.

Beginning with the French Revolution and throughout the nineteenth century, the liberal and humanitarian statesmen scornfully rejected the idea that the Jews intended to preserve their nationhood, much less to rebuild it. With one accord, they resolved to treat Judaism as a religion, in the belief that the vestigial elements of ethnic separatism would gradually wither away.

The relative triumph of liberalism in Europe could indeed be assayed by the extent to which anti-Jewish legislation and bias were overcome. The "Jewish question," like the other remnants of medievalism, served to polarize European society between the defenders of the rule of reason, on the one hand, and the apologists of feudal habits, myths, and popular prejudices on the other hand. This tension between rationalism and romanticism was articulated socially in the split between the educated classes and the backward masses. Down to its eighth decade, the nineteenth century was predominantly an age of rising liberalism, with only slight interruptions, the educated classes subscribing to an enlightened faith and a rational basis of public morality. Officially, and within the churches, dogmatism was still strong. Unofficially and among statesmen, religion was believed to be the indispensable cement of society, but it had to be a faith tempered by reason; gentle, gracious, *salon-fahig*.

Liberal Jews could subscribe to an enlightened Christian faith

without qualms of conscience. David Friedlander, a disciple of Mendelssohn, addressed a letter to a renowned Christian preacher, in which he averred a readiness on the part of many Jews to join the Evangelical Church, providing they were allowed to disavow the dogma of Christ as Man-God.

We stand between two extremes — between the blind faith of the devotees of the Talmud and the atheism of the young. We accept these truths that lie at the base of all faiths: the unity of God, immortality and the aspiration to moral perfection. Both Moses and Jesus affirmed these principles to be essential, but both faiths departed from their essential teaching — Judaism became preoccupied with ritual commands and Christianity with mysteries. We cannot accept without hypocrisy the doctrine of the "son of God" But the rituals of Protestantism, we would be willing to accept, if it be understood that they symbolize for us the "eternal truths," not the "historical dogmas"⁴⁷

The times in Germany were not yet ready for any official concession to unitarianism, and the petition of Friedlander was disdainfully rejected. But unofficially liberal religion in Germany did not lag far behind progressive thought in the Anglo-American world. Certainly, Jews began to feel that the Christians wore their dogmas with no greater earnestness than the liberal Jews bore the "yoke of the law."

A massive movement of conversion engulfed the Jews of Western Europe in the nineteenth century, continuing with only occasional abatement, until the Hitler era. While the romantic nationalists of Germany and France, identifying Jewishness with blood, not with ideas, could see no point in the conversion of Jews to the dominant religion, individual Jews in large numbers flocked to the baptismal font in all the large cities of Western Europe. In the one decade of 1802-1812, fully one-third of Berlin Jewry accepted baptism. Heine and Börne, the leading figures of "Young Germany," were Christian converts. Of the six children of Moses Mendelssohn only one remained within the Jewish fold. Nor were the advanced views of the father solely responsible for the decision of the children to cast their lot with the Christian faith. A vast family-circle of the Aiger family flourished in Germany before the Hitler era, all of whom were descendants of the ultra-orthodox Talmudist, Akiva Aiger (1761-1837). The massive exodus of Jews from the beleaguered ghetto was not at all restricted to Germany and Austria. In England and in France, the

same process was at work. Benjamin Disraeli's father who led the family out of the Jewish camp was by no means a rare exception in his day. And all these converts became part of the dominant circles of their respective countries, leaving no more than a cherished family tradition of their origin, after the first or second generation. Oliver Wendell Holmes believed that he was descended from a converted Dutch-Jewish family.⁴⁸ For the Jewish converts, the Christian faith was initially hardly more than an "entrance ticket" into the European centers of culture, wealth, and power. And Christian society was often willing and even eager to absorb these newcomers.

The Jews who remained loyal to their faith were gradually accorded equal rights on the supposition, sometimes on the express condition, that they were willing to give up their national aspirations.

Napoleon believed that a formal, festive act of renunciation was needed, so that no doubt would be left of the purely religious character of the Jewish community. For this purpose, he convened first the Assembly of Notables and then the Grand Sanhedrin (1806-1807). Of the twelve questions addressed to the delegates, the first three dealt with marriage and divorce, the second three with the "fraternity" of Jews and Christians, the next two groups dealt with the authority of the rabbis and with the attitude of Judaism to usury. All the questions were attempts to formulate one basic issue — will the Jews now recognize France as their homeland, Frenchmen as their brothers, French laws as their laws? The notables and the rabbis were able to answer all questions in a positive manner, without being at all conscious of doing violence to the Jewish faith. They knew that they were entering a new era, and that their answers were as unprecedented as the new situation that confronted them. As they saw it, nations are not fixed human species, designed to endure forever in their separateness; they emerge in the course of history, and might merge with others in the course of time; at that great historic moment, the Jews were given the opportunity to conclude a fraternal covenant with the French people. Did not the Scottish and the Welsh become part of the British nation, with nearly all the people agreeing to bury ancient wrongs? Did not the Ukrainians under Chmielnitzky join the Russian nation? In both cases, only a few malcontents remained to nurture the embers

of ancient hates. Why then should not the Jews do likewise? Thus there was not the slightest nuance of apostasy in the festive declarations of the Jewish leaders, who asserted,

The Jews are not in a national category in our day, since they were privileged to become part of the great nation [France], and they see in their new status their personal salvation in a political sense.⁴⁰

The Jews of France all regard Frenchmen as their brothers and they will think of the Jews of Britain as members of another nationality. Such declarations needed to be publicly affirmed in those days, since up to that time, the Jews did not serve in the armies of Europe.

In the discussions at the Grand Sanhedrin, we can discern the tension between those who interpreted French-Jewish fraternity as implying cultural-social unity and those who restricted the application of the new social pact (*pacte sociale*) to the purely political sphere. Both groups could claim support for their respective positions in the principles of the Jewish faith. Such Talmudic principles as "the pious of all nations have a share in the world to come" and "the Gentiles of today are not idolators" could be stretched to permit the total fusion of the Jews with their neighbors. Exclaimed one delegate:

All of you agree that the Christians are not idolators, that they serve the Creator of heaven and earth as you do, that they are your brothers and deal kindly with you—what else is needed to permit the intermarriage of Jews and Christians?⁴¹

The Grand Sanhedrin did not endorse intermarriage, but it consented not to impose a ban (*herem*) on those who marry a person of another faith. This abandonment of the major instrument of communal control amounted to a radical change in the Jewish faith, which assumed the co-responsibility of all Jews before God. The liberation of the individual from the stifling embrace of communal control was long a crucial plank in the platform of the enlightened. But even the most pious rabbis of the Grand Sanhedrin admittedly felt that they participated in a great historic occasion and that they made use of the progressive currents in the tradition; but they did not believe that they did violence to any of the essential teachings of the faith. The noted Rabbi David Sitzenheim who presided at the sessions of the Grand Sanhedrin summed up its work by asserting, "It signed a social pact between

the people of God and the nations which have received it in their midst."

Of particular interest is the reply to the twelve questions which was written by Rabbi Ishmael of Modena (1723-1811), one of the leading authorities of the time, who could not attend the session of the Sanhedrin in person. On the crucial issue of "fraternity," he wrote:

Though the term brotherhood implies natural kinship, there is a unity of faith between the Frenchmen, or the other peoples of Europe, and the Jews. Since these nations serve the One God, each in their own way, they are accounted in the eyes of the children of Israel as brothers, for we are obligated to deal with them in fraternity and love, in friendship and peace, and the Holy Torah commands us to help their needy.⁵⁶

We may appear to be belaboring the obvious when we stress that the members of the Sanhedrin considered their repudiation of Jewish nationalism, in all its social-political implications, to be entirely in keeping with the Jewish faith. In becoming part of the "French nation" and in asserting that their social pact implied the dissolution of the Jewish "nation," they were reacting to an unprecedented challenge by an unprecedented act, but in keeping with the principles of Judaism. This circumstance needs to be borne steadily in mind, when we come to survey the later decades of the nineteenth century. As we shall see, the antisemites will argue that the members of the Sanhedrin were insincere, affirming principles which they did not believe and proclaiming policies which they did not intend to follow. For the Jews constitute "one nation" in a deep cosmic, metaphysical, meta-historical sense; hence they cannot truly become part of any European nation. In time, Zionist propagandists were to take up the refrain of the antisemites, echoing their charge that the Grand Sanhedrin was a sham and a delusion.

But we must not jump too far ahead. The full impact of nationalism was not yet felt in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The French Revolution was liberal and rationalistic, extolling the rights of man and the fraternity of all peoples. In all the romantic reactions against the philosophy and social impetus of the French Revolution, the Jewish issue was to play a crucial, albeit symbolic, role. To the awakening nations of Europe, par-

ticularly the Germans, the emancipation of the Jews came to stand for rationalism in philosophy, liberalism in social doctrine, the moral-legal concept of the citizen and the state as against the romantic-biological idolization of race and peoplehood (*Volkstum*), of medieval faith and feudal ideals. Social reaction, ethnic romanticism, and religious medievalism were destined to be the three sources of antisemitism in modern Europe.

It was in the politically divided and socially reactionary principalities of Germany that the decaying nobility joined hands with philosophical romanticists and religious fundamentalists in a joint attack against the Jew. The Germans discovered their national unity in the wars against Napoleon, whom they identified as the apostle of the French Revolution. The great classics of the German Romantic movement were created in the fervor of the newly-won national stature. And religion as the language of feeling came to symbolize the "soul" of the German nation, even as political liberalism was the "soul" of the French Revolution.

Romanticism is the philosophy of the night, when man relaxes and rebels against the harsh realities of life. While reason, activity, reality, and utility hold sway during the day, emotion, passivity, escapism, and nostalgia dominate the mood of night. Antisemitism was part of that nighttime web of symbols and slogans, of dreams and visions. In their dark, hurt, bitter moods, the Germans embraced as their very own the pathos of the night.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Western world was fitfully stumbling toward equality in politics, toward industrialization and commercialization in economics, toward rationalism in religion, toward a universal society and international culture — all this under the leadership of England and France. The Romantic movement in Germany, articulating sentimental and social resistance to change, rebelled against all these trends. It opposed the feudal ideals of knighthood and obedience within a stratified society to the rationalistic ideals of the French Revolution. It set up the ideal of a Christian state, of an organic society, of an intuitive Germanism (*Deutschtum*), allergic to all alien influences. In all these respects, the Jew was the symbol, evoking the combined hostility of German ethnocentrism, feudalism, and Christianity. The conservative guardians of religion in Germany held tightly to the crutch of antisemitism, even when

they yielded reluctantly to the advancing currents of liberalism. The diverse disciplines of history, philosophy, and science compelled this advance, but for the reactionaries of religion, politics, and economics, the Jew was the natural symbol of the alien doctrines that were transforming their life, catapulting them against their will into the glare of the universal day. Was not the Jew the eternal rebel against Christianity, a living embodiment of the liberal protest against the threefold unity of faith, blood, and command? The Jew then must be identified as the enemy. So the noted theologian of the Romantic movement, Schleiermacher, represents the Jew along with the hated Frenchman and the feared, mysterious Russian as the enemy of true religion.⁶²

Schleiermacher (1768-1834) had broken with the naive, fundamentalist faith of medieval Christianity. He no longer accepted the dogmas of religion in their literal sense, but he considered the ancient theology to be a fitting symbolization of man's condition in the face of reality. Religion appeals to feeling (*Gefühl*), not to reason, operating in the twilight zone of the human mind where myths and symbols are far more potent than the principles of logic. It is through his concentrated "feeling" that man perceives the soul of nature, and the call of the Divine. And the course of feeling is by no means arbitrary; it has a tenacity, a structure, a rigidity of its own. The ancient dogmas of Christianity may not be literally true, but they, and they alone truly reflect the numinous reality by suggesting that man is impaled on the cross of mundane life. Judaism in Schleiermacher's theology is the dark background, against which the radiance of the true faith is projected, for it is of this world, rationalistic, part of the onrushing, industrial society. And the modern Jew, the uprooted city-dweller, the ally of liberalism and rationalism and of all the clamorous ideologies that remade the medieval world, is the central symbol of the unfeeling modernist who is a stranger to the mythological underworld of Europe.

As Schleiermacher was the theologian of the Romantic movement, Fichte was the prophet of resurgent German nationalism. A disciple of Kant, he carried the notion of a numinous Categorical Imperative far beyond the rational limits imposed by his master. Founding his system on Kant's demonstration that the categories of the external world are imposed by man, he concluded that the inner world of ethics and esthetics is decisive in shaping

the picture of the outer universe. This inner domain of reality is manifested primarily in an intuition of belonging, in a responsiveness to command, in a sense of harmony with nature and with the established order of things — all anti-revolutionary sentiments. The rationalistic, atomic individual, clamoring for his "rights" in a society of equals, is the exact counterpart of Fichte's ideal citizen, who looks for his vocation within the natural stratified order of a hierarchical society. Under the impact of the humiliating defeats inflicted upon the Germans by Napoleon, Fichte began to see the contest between France and Germany in terms of the metaphysical struggle between good and evil, between loyalty to the inner melody of abiding reality and the pursuit of the false glitter of passing appearance. If the French Revolution expressed the demonic spirit of France, then a fixed order, determined by a "higher reason" must be posited as the expression of the Germanic soul.

As Fichte saw it, people cannot bear to live alone; they need to feel part of a transcendent whole, endowing their life with worth and meaning. In Fichte's philosophy, there was no room for a supernatural God, and the Moral Order which he put in its place was cold and hollow. Gradually, the heady wine of Teutonism came to suffuse his abstract concepts with a feverish exhilaration. Though he still adhered to some of the tenets of the Enlightenment, he now began to propound the new myths of Teutonism and anti-liberal reaction.

As in all mythologies, the luminous forces of good are arrayed against the dark forces of evil. The lines are clearly drawn. The good are all-good and the evil are all-evil. But both forces are provided with an elaborate metaphysical outfitting. The good are those who live from within, permitting their unerring intuition (*Vernunft*) to guide their actions with absolute moral certainty. The evil are those who have lost their roots in reality; bereft of the light of intuition, they follow the mechanical logic of reason (*Verstand*); with cleverness and cunning, they manage and manipulate, amassing material fortunes in a vain attempt to fill the emptiness within, but they remain unable to feel the soul of things.

Then, as in the Manichaeon philosophy, a catastrophe happens; the people of *Vernunft* and of *Verstand* get to be mixed up. This commingling of good and evil works generally to the advantage

of the clever rogues, for their prowess runs to the surface of things. The French Revolution with its clear and abstract concepts of the "rights of man" is the most triumphant expression of the shallow rationalism of uninspired reason (*Verstand*). But victory belongs ultimately to the slow and solid people of intuition, pre-eminently the Teutonic races, as we could have guessed, who are relatively free from the superficial cleverness of the French.

Yet the French for all the rigorous logic of their Revolution could not really serve as fitting symbols of the devil. After all, the political boundaries of Europe were recent and shifting; the Franks were also Teutons, and the French themselves were divided concerning the merits of liberalism. Furthermore, the devil must be enveloped in the clouds of mystery and sheltered by time-honored symbols from the scrutiny of common sense. Hence, it was natural for Fichte to conjoin the Jews and the French into one mysterious pack of evil. To the German nationalists, France was the enemy; to all the religious fundamentalists and political reactionaries, the French Revolution was the *bête noir*. The Jews supplied the element of mystery, the impetus of an inherited, long-standing focus of hate, the medieval stereotype of anti-Christ, the symbol of a money-civilization that was aggressively reshaping the heart of Europe. Through the identification of liberalism with the anti-Christian genius of Judaism, there emerged an integrated pattern of symbols, whereby the romantic rebellion against reason, the nationalistic rejection of an egalitarian universal society, the repugnance of the cultural elite toward the emerging moneyed aristocracy of the Industrial Revolution and the longing of the clericalists for the return of the Medieval era could be gathered into one focus and mutually reinforced. In the subconscious realm of feeling, things belong together if they evoke the same amorphous cloud of impotent hate.⁵³

To complete the picture of the Romantic protest against Jewish emancipation, we need to take account of the contributions of the early socialists to the complex mythology of antisemitism. European socialism, in all its diverse forms, possessed the ideological structure and the emotional overtones of a religious faith — the assumption of a state of innocence, a pastoral or peasant society, which is succeeded by a catastrophic fall from grace

through the emergence of capitalism; the course of events drives inevitably toward an ultimate Armageddon and the recapturing of pristine happiness in a new paradise. Apart from the inherent patterns of socialist theory, the socialist parties needed a structure of myth and symbolism in order to appeal to the masses of the people and to articulate their resentment against the ruthless captains of industrial society.

The Jew in Western Europe was the concrete embodiment of ruthless usury and of a money-based culture. He was also the precursor of the commercial order of things, of that bourgeois atomistic society which had no use for the non-utilitarian values of honor, glory, and grandeur prevailing in the age of innocence. It was difficult for the early socialist authors to dispense with the aid of this popular antisemitic stereotype. The populace wanted none of their economic theories, but it was as avid as ever for a mythological narration of the battle between the "children of light and the children of darkness." Some authors, like the self-educated Charles-Marie Fourier (1772-1837), shared the naivete of the masses and really believed that usury was the reflection of the Jewish soul. For him as for so many utopian socialists, money generally was a sinister, mysterious invention of a ruthless cabal of exploiters. The emerging modern society was, as he saw it, based on "generalized selfishness." In the good old days, only the Jews lived by commerce; now, the whole world is turning "Jewish." Fourier believed that all the Jews formed a secret society, operating their varied businesses together in one grand scheme of exploitation. As we noted earlier, the dietary laws were, for him, symbolic of Jewish exclusiveness.⁶⁴

A whole school of socialist writers in France derived its inspiration from Fourier. They were at one in regarding the enterprise of banking as the soul of all evil. Most of them were prone to deliberately identify the banker of any nationality with the popular image of Shylock. This device was employed by Tousse- senel, author of *Jews, the Kings of the Epoch*, in order to fortify his crackbrained socialist plans with the potent impetus of popular mythology.

Like the masses of the people, I apply the odious name of Jew to all the people who lived by the manipulation of money, to all the exploiting parasites who live by the sweat of others. A Jew, a money-

lender, a businessman, these are all synonymous to me . . . I did not find in my mother-tongue another name than Jew with which to stigmatize those that I wanted to condemn.⁵⁵

Socialism as a rebellion of intellectuals could be truly effective only if it tapped the massive resentments of the masses. Hence, the eagerness to use the language of the masses, with all its twilight myths, in order to effect a common front against the regnant elements of society.

This policy was followed by many other noted socialist writers. Pierre Leroux (1797-1871) excoriated the Jewish spirit, which he identified with commercialism, banking, and capitalism generally. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) preached of a new society, based on the ideal of cooperation. For him, too, the Jew was one with all capitalists, entrepreneurs, bankers, and exploiters. Even so clear-headed a thinker as Karl Marx (1818-1883), who was by all odds the most influential writer of the nineteenth century, resorted in his youth to the deliberate conjunction of Jews with capitalism. Descended from a long line of distinguished rabbis, Marx adopted the stereotypes and symbols of the masses. He was still in his twenties when he wrote two articles on the issue of Jewish emancipation. In those articles, he dealt with "the Jew of the week-day," not the "Jew of the Sabbath." "What is the week-day god of the Jew?" he asks, and, with tongue in cheek, he answers, "Money."

Of course, Marxism, as it was developed in later years, had no room for racial or religious prejudice. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, it became more and more obvious that antisemitism was an effective tool of reaction, not an aid to revolutionary progress. From time to time we still encounter the claim that antisemitism will ultimately lead to "anti-capitalism," since those who gained revolutionary experience by burning the houses of Jews can easily be induced to burn the palaces of all capitalists. "Antisemitism is only a prelude to the movement that is now taking shape. Its conclusion will be anticapitalism."⁵⁶ Up to 1898, the socialists generally flitted with antisemitism.⁵⁷ But these voices became exceedingly rare among socialists after the Dreyfus affair, when the utilization of the antisemitic issue by the reactionaries was all too obvious. The socialist movement turned its face to the future, affirming its faith in the certainty of cultural progress and determining to win by means of mass-educational

tion and through the growth of enlightenment. But the heritage of primitive socialism was not dissipated altogether. Clear-eyed observers did not fail to note that antisemitism could be employed as a convenient smoke-screen, or as a red rag to lure the brute populace to its own destruction. Karl Kautsky, a leading German socialist, acutely characterized the resurgent antisemitism of his time as "the socialism of fools." Those who cannot and will not think need pleasing symbols and flattering myths, rather than clear ideas and a true estimate of reality. They are eagerly waiting for a leader who will promise to make them "lords of the earth," and they will not hesitate to trample on the bodies of the unfortunates in their way.

These three sources of Romantic reaction against the new liberal society — nationalism, religion, and utopian socialism — discovered a common target of hate in the popular stereotype of the Jew. Yet the advance of the liberal movement could not really be halted during most of the nineteenth century; at least, not in Western Europe. The economy of the Western world expanded at a phenomenal pace, the middle class achieved stability and self-confidence, and the philosophy of the Enlightenment became progressively more self-evident. The undying, hydra-headed monster of Romantic reaction was not utterly vanquished in any generation, but it seemed at times as if final victory over the compulsive neuroses of humanity were no longer in doubt. The leading Jewish thinkers of Western Europe could justly feel that the Age of Reason and Justice had dawned. The Messiah of the universal "knowledge of the Lord" was about to arrive. It was time to transform the entire structure of Judaism, in keeping with the new realities on the threshold of the messianic era. And thus, Reform was born.

The Reform movement in Western Europe was nurtured in the faith that the reorganization of society along rational lines was certain and irresistible. The Romantic reaction, the Reformers believed, was doomed to be short-lived. It was time for the Jews to fall in step with the progressive vanguard of society, to re-examine all their doctrines and institutions in order to help usher in the new world.

Armed with the tools of historical criticism and philosophy, the Reformers sought to reveal the inherent rationality of the

Jewish faith and its compatibility with the modern spirit. In opposition to Mendelssohn, they contended that the Law is not the essence of Judaism but only the ideas and principles of ethical monotheism. The body of practices and rituals, deriving from primitive times, is only the outer garment of faith and doctrine. The Reformers were compelled to pursue this line of reasoning since the laymen of their congregations had already drifted far from the rigid ramparts of ancient Jewish Law. As rational philosophers, they could not accept the naive belief in the literal revelation of specific laws. As historians of comparative religion, they knew that many of the rites and tabus were the frozen heritage of pre-Mosaic semitic cults. Belonging for the most part to the camp of intellectual and political liberals, they entertained little sympathy for the attempts of Romanticists to reassert the glory of naive faith and the supra-rational validity of ancient myths and mysteries.

For the most part, Geiger and Hildheim returned to Maimonides for the first principles of their faith. An act of Divine inspiration took place in the wilderness of Sinai, with the people being moved to feel the truth and power of the opening verses of the Ten Commandments — "I am the Lord, Thy God . . . Thou shalt have no other god beside Me . . ." Uplifted by this revolutionary insight, the people saw the truth of the Ten Commandments and agreed to transform themselves into "a people of priests and a holy nation." They became children of the Covenant in order to fulfill their historic mission, to be "a light unto the nations." The multitude of laws and customs described in the Talmud were altogether natural in the ancient and medieval milieu of the Jews. Separation from the other nations was then virtually inevitable, and the high barriers of the law were altogether in keeping with the forbidding walls of the narrow ghettos. But in the new world of the Emancipation, integration, not separation, is the call of the hour. Hence only the moral and spiritual principles of Judaism should be considered binding; the rest of the Law may well be regarded as obsolete.

Along with the divisive barriers of the Law, the vestigial symbols of national insularity should be discarded. The Hebrew language, until then the exclusive vehicle of worship in the Synagogue, was for the Reformers a symbolic assertion of alienism.

So, too, the frequent references in the Prayer Book to Zion, the ingathering of the exiles, and the advent of the Messiah carry the overtones of isolationist ethnicism. With varying degrees of consistency, the Reformers aimed to eliminate all these stigmata of nationalism from Jewish worship.

Yet the Reformers shied away from the prospect of biological assimilation with the surrounding population. While they favored cultural unity, patriotic ardor, and complete social integration, they insisted that the Jewish community must retain its identity for the sake of cherishing the Divine truths that have been entrusted to its care. The Jews were given a sacred mission by the Father of all mankind, and it remains their task to carry the light of monotheism to all the nations of the world. The doctrine of the Messiah, duly purged of its nationalistic entanglements, should be interpreted as a symbolic affirmation of the ultimate fulfillment of the Jewish mission, and the emergence of a unitary society, dedicated to the worship of the One God.

So involuted is the complex of Jewish sentiments that the early Reformers who fought consistently against the traces of nationalism in Jewish ritual and worship, were impelled to reassert their faith in the "chosenness" of the Jewish people. The doctrine of a "chosen people" is manifestly ethnocentrism crowned with a mystical halo. It is inevitably a belligerent claim to supremacy, affirming not only the right to collective existence, but the unique importance of its communal character and destiny. No matter how subtly it is interpreted, it can serve as a hedge against assimilation only if it retains the connotation of "better than," not only "different from," all the families of the earth. Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), the leading theologian of the Reform movement, even maintained the high worth of the racial qualities of the Jew. It was the Jewish "race" that was chosen by God to be a "prophet unto the nations." And the Divine fiat so impressed its metaphysical seal upon the souls of Jews that they were all predisposed, by their biological heritage, to be pure monotheists, fulfilling their mission even at the cost of enduring the fate of the "Suffering Servant." By their reassertion of the metaphysical distinction of the Jewish race, Geiger and his associates virtually negated the effect of their own repudiation of Jewish nationalism. In their eagerness to stem the tide of intermarriage and total assimila-

tion, the Reformers reintroduced through one gate that which they expelled through another.

Actually, it is the belief in Jewish metaphysical difference that lies at the heart of the antisemitic mythology. That the Jews stand on one side of an uncrossable gulf and the rest of humanity on the other is the central axiom of the Aryan myth. This perverse axiom derives from the popular reading of the Bible, which speaks so consistently of Jews and Gentiles, as if they were two species of humanity. It is implied in the doctrine of "chosenness," and exemplified particularly in Ezra's undertaking to keep the "holy seed" pure and uncontaminated. And it is also this myth that underlies the romantic racism of Fichte and the rabid Nazi *Weltanschauung* of our own day.

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the excesses of biological nationalism were still unknown. The Reformers were not aware of setting up new dogmas; they thought that in glorifying the Jewish race, they were merely continuing an essential ingredient of ancient and medieval Judaism. Though they were generally rationalists and liberals, they allowed the impetus of Jewish racial romanticism to govern their thinking on this point. But if they reaffirmed the metaphysical uniqueness of the Jewish race, what did they mean by the repudiation of nationalism?

Manifestly, the Reformers operated with the abstract concept of nationalism then current among liberals. A nation is a group of people that affirm, "as if by a daily plebiscite," their desire to form one political entity. Thus, as they saw the unfolding process of Emancipation, the German Jews were called upon to give up any lingering aspirations for a common homeland and to join the German people in working together for the *Vaterland*. But at that time, this political aspect of nationalism did not appear to extend into the cultural-social domains of life. Nearly all Jewish leaders deliberately ignored the implications of the rising tides of nationalism, preferring to join the liberals of all European countries in the advocacy of a national state, conceived in utilitarian terms and unencumbered by either historic or ethnic associations. They advocated the concept of the multi-national state, that deals with individual citizens, not the nation-state, which seeks to serve one ethnic group. The life and destiny of the state, they felt, are articulated in law and politics, not in culture, religion, or the patterns of social life.

The Reform movement vastly underrated the explosive potentialities of biological-cultural nationalism. But it did advance far ahead of other denominations in acknowledging the evil effects of the myths and symbols of Jewish ethnic isolationism.

Apart from the remnants of Medieval Orthodoxy, all Jewish groups in Western Europe approved the purpose and program of the Emancipation. Seeking integration with the social and political life of their native lands, the Jews in the West were determined to abjure the status of exiles, wanderers, homeless drifters. They now had a country and a nationality, a fatherland of which they were native sons. The Conservative and the neo-Orthodox shared the determination of the Reformers to give up all social and political nationalistic ambitions, but they insisted on their right and duty to retain those symbols and aspirations of ethnicism that had become part of the Jewish faith. Zechariah Frankel (1801-1875) seceded from the Reform Conference when his motion to declare the Hebrew language "indispensable" to Jewish worship was defeated. The Conference agreed that Hebrew was "important," but averred that as an ethnic asset, it could not be integral to a universal faith. The Conservative movement, which Frankel launched as an alternative to Reform insisted on the indispensability of all "positive-historical" elements of the Jewish faith; such as the love of Zion, the sanctity of "all Israel" as it extends to the furthest horizons of space and time, the observance of the dietary laws, and of the customs which had become part of the "normative" tradition. While some Conservative rabbis joined their Reform colleagues in preaching a universalistic interpretation of the messianic era, there were not a few who clung to the nationalistic interpretation. For the Orthodox, the concept of a supernatural Messiah was meta-historical, hence irrelevant to all social issues; it belonged to a structure of ideas which had no direct relation to the work-day world, projecting an eschatological vision of a universal judgment day, the conquest of all evil and the triumphant resurrection of the dead.

The Conservative and the modern Orthodox leaders were at one with the Reform rabbis in repudiating any national ambitions for a Jewish state or a Palestinian homeland, but only on the legalistic-political plane of life. The argument among them centered on the extent of traditional ritual and symbolism that the Jews had to reject in order to dramatize the new "pact with the

nations" that the Emancipation effected. The neo-Orthodox, led by the Frankfurt Rabbi, Samson Raphael Hirsch, maintained that the acceptance of Western dress, speech, manners and outward "culture" was sufficient; hence, his slogan, *Torah in Derech Eretz*. Within the Conservative movement, there was widespread recognition that a new phase of Jewish ideology had emerged as a result of the Emancipation. The Jewish Conservatives were sympathetic to the moderate wings of German romanticism. Their emphasis on the "positive-historical" was a reflection of the antiliberal political philosophy in Germany; i.e., the institutions which emerged in history contain values which the reason of contemporaries cannot completely fathom. While change is legitimate, it must be slow and nearly unconscious, like the silent growth of a tree. The Reformers alone were bold enough to recognize the deeper layers of the national ethos, which thrives on symbols and rites. To become part of the nations of Europe, the Reformers reasoned, Jews must share their sentimental-cultural life and publicly surrender their own isolationist ideology. But even the Reformers were not fully aware of the irrational depths of romantic nationalism.

The awakened nations of Europe needed to create a secular self-image that would function as the focus of the national endeavor. This self-image could only be related to the history, real or imagined, of the nation. And the more people refined their self-image by idealizing their medieval heritage, the less the Jews fitted into that picture. For the Jewish stereotype is part of the tradition, myth, and folklore of the peoples of Europe.

Ezekiel Kaufman, in his excellent study of the tragedy of European Jewry, attributes the failure of the Reform formula, *reject nationalism, retain religion*, to the fact that the Jewish religion inevitably delimited a group of people ethnically different from the nations among whom they lived. The Jewish religion was inextricably associated with the Jewish people, as an historic group, no matter how loudly the official leaders maintained that they were Jews by religion alone. The historic-ethnic lines of division became steadily more decisive as the passions of religious dogmatism waned. In the nineteenth century, the study of his-

tory exerted a peculiar fascination for the people as well as the scholars. And popular history is pretty generally a form of epic poetry, dramatizing the glory of the nation.

In the same study, Kaufman points out that the European masses resented the "national" character of the Jews much more strongly than they resented the other minority nationalities in their midst. We have already called attention to the fact that while there were Basques in France, Slavs in Germany, Lithuanians and Ukrainians in Poland, friends and foes of the Jews asserted with one accord that the Jews must cease to be a "nation."

Therefore, you find that when the emerging democratic society came to end the exile of the Jews and to endow them with the rights of complete citizenship, the crucial condition was laid down of national assimilation, and Judaism undertook to fulfill this condition.⁷⁸

Kaufman attributes the peculiar resentment of Jewish nationhood to the ghetto-character of Jewish settlement; *i.e.*, the fact that the Jews lived in the interstices of European society, not in compact masses. Massed settlement on land creates an "awareness of sovereignty," which the building of ghettos in cities does not.

Kaufman's analysis is cogent but overly fatalistic. It is not true that, in view of the psychology of nations, there was no hope for the Jews of Europe. Doubtless, the dispersal of the Jews enlarged the area of tension, but this fact did not lead inevitably to the extermination of the "six million." As a matter of fact, wherever Jews lived in serried ranks, they kept up a more "peculiar" pattern of life and aroused a correspondingly more embittered antisemitic passion.

To keep the total situation in perspective, we must remember that the Emancipation in Western Europe did not fail in England, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Scandinavian countries, though sporadic antisemitic movements did arise in those countries from time to time among the so-called "lunatic fringe." The tragedy of the Jews in Germany and in Central Europe was due preeminently to the resurgence of romantic nationalism, and to the anti-democratic "plot" that powerful industrialists made together with ruthless demagogues. The Jewish "pact with the nations" was made on the level of public law, common sense, and the emerging elan of Western civilization. But the human spirit

oscillates from the objective pole of reason and humanity to the shadowed recesses of ethnic and ritualistic subjectivity. In the subjective realm, even the Jewish Reformers made only external concessions; they clung forcibly to the collective egotism of their people, their yearning for self-glorification as the race peculiarly endowed with a genius for religion. Reform and Conservative scholars devoted their talents to the cultivation of Jewish history in order to deepen Jewish self-consciousness. Though it is ideally possible for history to be objective, the usual tendency is for scholars to cater to the nationalistic hunger for glory and grandeur.

Among the Germans, romantic nationalism grew in depth and intensity, because political fulfillment was delayed so long after France and England had become mighty powers. And as German nationalism became steadily more ingrown and subjective, it turned first to history and then to biology for support. On both scores, the Jews were obviously outsiders. Their historic roots went back to the dawn of history and their blood was semitic, non-European, "non-Aryan." The powerful nations of Europe could hope to assimilate the minor national group in their midst, who were in their eyes only so much "demographic material," as Danilevsky puts it, but could they assimilate a group that had proved its durability for thousands of years?

In addition to the aura of mysterious indestructibility, the Jews were part of a large, globe-circling community. The Jews of Germany were only the outer fringe of European Jewry, which was concentrated in the Pale of Settlement, extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. While the Western Jews did their best to adopt the national ways and customs of their host-nations, they could not erase the image of the East-European Jews from the minds of the people. The Jews of Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Russia were engaged in a steady migration westward. And the more "peculiar" they appeared to the masses of the West in speech, manners, or religion, the more they were thought to be the "real" Jews, revealing by their outward outlandish appearance that which the Western Jews managed to dissemble and hide.

Strangely enough, the Jews of the East were driven by the currents of history to become consciously and romantically nationalistic at the very time when the Jews of the West were under-

going the opposite transformation. Far from being subject to one destiny, as nationalistic dogmatists allege, the Jews of the world were many times driven into divergent historic channels, and each portion then suffered from its identification in the popular mind with the other portion. We took note of the chain of disasters resulting from this association in the chapters dealing with the Greco-Roman Diaspora. In the nineteenth century, Oriental Jewry did not share in the intellectual and cultural upheavals of the Jews of Europe. Nor did they acquire any of the peculiar characteristics generally associated with the Yiddish-speaking Jews of the Pale of Settlement — neither the vigorous elan, nor the individualistic, skeptical spirit of an intellectual proletariat. However, European Jewry was fairly undifferentiated before the French Revolution and in the early decades of the ensuing Emancipation.

While the Jews of the West embraced the cultures of their respective countries, their brethren in the East were forced into embittered isolation. Political and cultural reaction was powerfully entrenched in the Russian government along with the fundamentalist zeal of Orthodox Christianity. The cruel policies of Nicholas I caused the Jews to strengthen their defenses and to shut themselves off from the slightest influence of the secular enlightenment. They resisted the introduction of secular studies in their schools; they refused to adopt the dress and ways of Europeans; they clung to the multiple minutiae of the Law, cherishing all the embellishment of custom, all the encrustations of superstition. In the broad empire of the Russians, where the vast majority of the Jews lived in the nineteenth century, neither the Christians nor the Jews were ready for any cultural-social rapprochement.

This melancholy situation was due in part to outside pressure and in part to the inner development of Jewish thought — the influence of Qabalah and Hasidism. But this division of the Jews into Western liberals and Eastern fundamentalists produced harmful consequences for both communities. The Western Jews were prevented from building a convincing self-image, and the Eastern Jews were horrified by the impiety of their Western brethren.

The Orthodox rabbis of Russia recoiling from the "apostasy" or Western Jewry, plunged their communities into the torpor of to-

tal isolation. They came to identify all that existed beyond the ramparts of the Law as evil and demonic. On the other hand, the Russian government, taking account of the vast contrast between the liberal and "acculturated" Jews of the West and the self-segregating Jews of its own domain, could only regard the latter as willfully reactionary. The liberal elements within the Russian government were inspired by a genuine desire to refashion Russian Jewry after the patterns of the West. And the attempt to catch up with the West by forced marches, under the driving whip of an autocratic ruler, was familiar to the Russians from the days of Peter the First. At the same time, the fundamentalist Orthodox members of the government (who were in almost continuous control) favored the battering down of the inner barriers of the Jewish ghettos in order to lead the Jews to the altar of Orthodox Christianity. The liberal and Orthodox governmental leaders in Russia could work together only in minor areas, insofar as the breaking down of Jewish defenses were concerned, but not in behalf of any genuine policy of rapprochement between the Jewish and the general population.

The missions to Russia of Moses Montefiore (1846) and Max Lilienthal (1841) demonstrated that there were hardly any channels of communication between the Jews of Western Europe and those of Russia. Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), who enjoyed the highest regard of the British ruling circles, was received with great ceremony by the Russian Czar and with deep feeling by the Jewish masses. But the Russian government was not disposed to accept Montefiore's argument that the Jews would become "westernized," if they were given civil rights unconditionally. And the leading rabbis of the Jewish communities were not willing to accept Montefiore's plea to give up the policy of self-segregation, to favor the diverse processes of "acculturation" and to accept the cultural mores of Russia in the expectation that civil and political rights would follow in due course.

Max Lilienthal's "mission" was even more instructive. A young German rabbi, he won the acclaim of the Czar for his liberal ideas. He was commissioned by the Minister for Education, Uvarov, to obtain the consent of the rabbis and leading laymen to the establishment of secular, western-type schools in the cities of the Pale. Most of the rabbis distrusted the motives of the autocratic government and shuddered at the thought of lowering the

defenses against assimilation. Max Lilienthal found that he was laboring in isolation, with the Greek Orthodox zealots of the government seeking to use secular education as a tool of apostasy, and the Jewish fanatics opposing the slightest concession to modernity on the ground that secular learning could only lead to conversion. In his despair, Max Lilienthal left for the United States, where he became one of the leading founders of the Reform movement.

Actually, both sides underestimated the compatibility of Jewish loyalty and secular learning. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when the liberal Czar, Alexander II, relaxed some of the severe restrictions on Jewish enterprise, the movement for secular learning and humanistic values began to gather momentum. In a few decades, Jewish students started to flock to the great Russian universities. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Russian reactionaries began to reverse the direction of their pressure. Instead of encouraging the entrance of Jews into secular high schools and colleges they now sought to limit their enrollment by raising the barriers of a *numerus clausus* against them. No longer protesting Jewish isolationism, they now complained of Jewish enterprise and intelligence. In ever increasing numbers, Jewish students from Russia attended the universities of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. These "colonies" of Russian-Jewish students became the breeding places of all kinds of rebellious ideologies, reflecting the restlessness, rootlessness, and hopelessness of Russian Jewry. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Anarchists, the Zionists and the Bundists, all drew their inspiration and leadership from those idealistic and starving emigres, whose messianic fervor and intense convictions generated endless arguments and feverish enthusiasms.

But, though many Jewish students from Russia studied in Switzerland and Germany, the liberal mood so congenial to the Jews of the West remained virtually alien to the vast majority. The young Jews, rebelling against the rigid dogmatism of their elders, either rushed headlong toward the "flesh-pots" of apostasy or joined the revolutionary socialists. Only a minority sought to evolve a liberal faith. Lack of balance and extremism remained the hallmark of Jewry in the East, reflecting these qualities of Russian politics and culture. By their tens of thousands, baptized

Jews massed in the big mushrooming cities, devoting their pent-up talents to the rapid industrialization of that vast country. According to some writers, the rate of intermarriage among young Jews in the great centers of Russia was greater than in the big cities of the West, where it ranged between ten and fifteen per cent. At the same time, the masses of Russian Jewry, especially in the small towns, continued to wage a desperate, rear-guard struggle against the Enlightenment. Russian-Jewish Orthodoxy did not allow the introduction of secular learning into its academies (*yeshivot*) until the Communist Revolution. Rabbi Reines, the cultured and liberal rabbi, who did try to establish in Lidda an Academy where secular learning and Talmudic studies would be pursued side by side, had to give up the attempt when the full fury of Orthodox fanaticism was directed against him.

Russian Jewry was torn between two worlds, and there was hardly any communication between them. Fundamentalist Orthodoxy did not have a common language with the burgeoning ideologies of the younger generation.

Under the sponsorship of the Russian government, rabbinical seminaries were instituted in the cities of Vilna and Zhitomir, where students were trained in the disciplines of history and philosophy as well as in the fields of Bible and Talmud. But the graduates of these seminaries were ignored by the Jewish masses. The governmental rabbis (*Kazionny Rabbiner*) were regarded as secular employees of the government — public relations officials at best, "traitors" at worst. In the eyes of the Orthodox, these European-trained rabbis were not religious leaders at all. Contrast the "governmental rabbis" of Russia with the modern rabbis of Western Europe and America! In the latter countries, the seminary-educated rabbi became "the Jew" par excellence, both in the direction of inner communal affairs and in the interpretation of Judaism to the non-Jewish world. In Russia, these rabbis lived in a virtual no man's land, between the assimilationists who took on the protective coloration of Greek Orthodoxy or of Lutheranism, and the Orthodox Jews who ignored them.

In terms of our analysis of Jewish consciousness, we may say that the balance of tensions within Judaism had broken down in Russia. On the plane of religion, the tension between fundamentalism and the philosophic temper reached this breaking point, with the Orthodox pietists concentrating on the raising of

barriers against the outside world. The enlightened few were generals without an army, too few and isolated to maintain an effective balance. Their followers drifted into the camps of the assimilationists and the socialists.

However, the very progress of secularism plus the continued reaction of the Czarists government created by degrees a measure of common ground between the Orthodox masses and the champions of enlightenment. Unable to communicate on the plane of religion, they could fight together for the rights of Jewish people. This ethnic awareness could draw inspiration and solace from the Jewish tradition. The national dimension of the Jewish faith provided the basis for a new renaissance of cultural values and social ideals.

Cultural or spiritual nationalism managed to restore the creative balance of tension for the Jews of Russia, as the Reform-Conservative movement restored the spiritual equilibrium of the Jews in the West. But while in the West, with its long heritage of enlightened religion, modern Judaism achieved a renewed sense of destiny on the plane of religion, in the reactionary and fanatical East, Jewish renaissance was effected on the plane of nationality. Both ideologies cut the ethnic-religious consciousness of the Jew into a single plane on the supposition that the other component of the tradition was inconsequential. Both movements sought to purge from the Jewish soul the corruption of ghetto-existence and the blindness of fanaticism. Both movements were messianic in character, seeking to end the long and harrowing tragedy of exile; both movements sought to expound the quintessential genius of Judaism and to reject the Orthodox dogma of an unchanging Law, which had become an intolerable burden.

Cultural nationalism assumed three major forms in Russian Jewry — the Zionist philosophy of Ahad Ha'am, the autonomy program of Simon Dubnow, and the Yiddish-Socialist ideology of the *Bund*.

The Zionist philosophy of Ahad Ha'am was a monumental expression of the ideals and sentiments of the Talmud-trained Jews of Russia, who had become disenchanted with religion and disillusioned with the prospects of liberalism in European society. A series of pogroms, instigated by reactionary feudal circles and

connived at by governmental authorities shook the towns of the Pale of Settlement in 1880 and 1881, sending a flood of harried immigrants to England and America. In addition, the liberal faith in humanity that prevailed at the beginning of the century had been undermined in diverse ways by the materialistic philosophy of socialism, by the moral nihilism of the Darwinian world, governed by fang and claw; and by the upsurge of nationalistic movements, extolling the primacy of the nation as the natural, biological unit in the universal struggle for survival. It was in the name of the supreme dignity of the individual, as embodied in the so called *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, that the Jews of the West were emancipated. But the sentiments of the American Revolution and the ideals of the French Revolution were now defamed by the socialists as bourgeois, attacked by the motley crowd of social Darwinists as untrue to the nature of life in the raw, and shunted aside by romantic nationalists as the lifeless abstractions of "cosmopolitans."

The Czarist government affirmed its dissent from liberalism in the name of Holy Russia, asserting that nothing should be done to alleviate the lot of "those who had killed our Savior and spilled His priceless blood." The reactionary circles of the government were determined to channelize the growing bitterness of the masses toward the Jews and to solve the Jewish question in Russia in accordance with Pobiedonostsef's principle, "One third will be killed, one third will be converted, one third will emigrate."

Following are the central assumptions of the cultural-Zionist ideology:

1. *Dogmatic religion is reactionary and obsolete.* In the revolutionary circles of nineteenth-century Russia, the established Greek Orthodox Church, dominated by the Czar and his Holy Synod, was bitterly condemned as the servile stooge of despotism. Marx's scornful verdict that religion is "the opium of the masses" seemed to be particularly appropriate in the circumstances of that unhappy country, where priests and Cossacks were arrayed together against the welfare of the people.

To the Jewish fighters for enlightenment it seemed that the Russian rabbis were equally reactionary, since they resisted all efforts to introduce secular education into the schools. The pen-

dulum of the spirit swings from one extreme to the other, and those who rebelled against religion in Russia tended to drift toward a total denial of all religious values.

In keeping with the prevailing mood of the Russian intelligentsia, Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927) maintained that the role of institutional religion in human affairs had ended. In his personal philosophy, he sought to combine the temper of the positivists who were averse to all kinds of metaphysical speculations and the moral sentiments of the idealists. While he rejected the fears and fantasies of a supernatural faith, he maintained that man's quest for the Good was somehow at the heart of the universe, that "religious feeling" and "religious values" need not be discarded along with the dogmas and rites of religion. Trained in an intensely Hasidic atmosphere, Ahad Ha'am knew of the reality and potency of religious feeling, at first hand. He wrote:

It is possible to be truly religious, without being a believer; that is, to possess religious feeling without religious beliefs. Such people are numerous among all nations, constituting the foundation of organized religion. For in the last resort, religion is the product of feeling, not of ideas; it is possible for ideas to be changed from end to end, while the fund of feeling remains intact.⁵⁰

The enduring religious values, according to Ahad Ha'am, were those of ethics. In this judgment, he followed the moral-rationalistic tradition of Judaism, especially the teachings of Maimonides. All the *mizvot* in Judaism were intended "for the refinement of the soul and the improvement of the body."⁵⁰ But, while Maimonides put metaphysical ideas concerning God and man in the center of his world-view, Ahad Ha'am believed that the age of metaphysical affirmations, dogmas, priests and rituals had ended. But the sentiments and ideals of religion, nurtured under the protective canopy of ancient myths, were now to be cultivated under the auspices of the secular ideal of nationalism. To transfer the focus of motivation and inspiration from God to the national ideal did not seem artificial, since as he saw it, the collective vision of the good life was always determined by national instincts. And is not the Golden Rule the heart of religion? Thus we come to the second assumption of Ahad Ha'am's philosophy.

2. Nations are distinguished not only by such external signs as language and cultural mores, but also by psychological predi-

positions or aspirations, which may be designated collectively as a "national soul." This is revealed in a vision of the good life and in a drive for the preservation of the national character. While the national soul may not express itself in the same terms at all times, it is likely that the same theme underlies all its efforts. In his various articles, Ahad Ha'am outlined a variety of stages in the evolution of Judaism, but he maintained that all the variations centered on one motif—the quest for absolute justice. A nation is, like a biological organism, compounded of memories from the past, experiences in the present, hope for the future, all held together by an awareness of essential identity. Its collective personality is a blend of high ideals, consciously formulated and superimposed upon a complex pattern of instinctive drives.

Ahad Ha'am's paradoxical combination of a romantic-mystical concept of the national soul with a positivistic-materialistic interpretation of religion was entirely in keeping with the prevailing patterns of thought in the Russia of his day. Pisarev, the influential preacher of materialism, whom Ahad Ha'am read avidly, was also a protagonist of the movement among the Russian intelligentsia to "return to the people." To Pisarev, this return implied a veneration of the earthy wisdom and the crude instincts of the peasants. To the son of the "people of the book," the ideal of returning to the people in love and affection could only mean the adoration and acceptance of "the spirit of the people," as expressed in its life and literature.

In his quest for the true "spirit" of Israel, Ahad Ha'am went back to the philosophy of Yehuda Halevi, who expatiated on the metaphysical superiority of the Jewish soul to that of non-Jewish humanity. But while Halevi asserted that the peculiar genius of the Jew consisted in his intuition for things Divine, Ahad Ha'am found the essence of Jewish genius in a unique endowment for the values and ideals of ethics.⁶¹

Is it not strange that Ahad Ha'am, the philosopher of the modern Hebraic Renaissance, should have hit upon the same concept of nationalism as Fichte, the philosopher of German nationalism? The reader will recall that Fichte, too, found the genius of the Teuton in a peculiar endowment (*Vernunft*) for the determination of right and wrong. It is even possible to discern instructive parallels in the details of their respective ethical philosophies. For nothing is so universal as the tendency of people to

glorify their collective self-image. The Slavophiles wrote of the immense depths and mysterious potencies of the Russian-Slavic soul just as the German Romantic writers extolled Teutonism (*Deutschum*), insisting that "the world will now be healed by the essential character of the Germans." Not to be outdone, Mazzini put in a similar claim for the Italians.

Ahad Ha'am maintained that there was objective justification for the Jewish claim to ethical superiority. If true religion came to mankind by way of the Jews and if the core of truth in religion is the ethical ideal, then the Jew may well recognize the genius of his national soul in the ethical ideals that are incorporated in his religious tradition. To be sure, in ethics it is the welfare of the community that matters, while in religion, the individual is the focus of attention — his anxiety, his sinfulness, his purity, his justification, his destiny. But then, as Ahad Ha'am saw it, biblical religion was indeed community-minded, eschewing speculations about personal salvation and immortality. It was only after the soul-shattering catastrophe of the Babylonian exile, that the Jews surrendered to the sickly seductions of individualism. They were no longer content to see their personal fulfillment in the welfare of the nation and to find satisfaction in the intrinsic rewards of virtue. The individual emerged as a self-contained entity, hungering for personal salvation, for heavenly rewards, and for the bliss of immortality. To meet the needs of troubled and frightened generations whose spirit was all but broken, the scribes and sages of the Second Commonwealth began to weave the threads of ritual commandments, creating an intricate texture of *mizvoth*, "the garments of exile," that would serve as the protective armor of the Jew, shielding him while he hibernated, more or less, in the cheerless lands of the Diaspora. In the modern period, the exilic garments of rite and dogma are neither necessary nor efficacious. They tend to fall apart under the ruthless scalpel of the scientific mind. But, fortunately, when the garments of religious mythology wear thin, the subterranean national soul then projects a new ideal for the hard-pressed nation, the ideal of the love of Zion, which is certain to reinvigorate the flagging "will to live" of the people and restore their spiritual stature in their rebuilt homeland.

The fruit of a tree which grows freely in its natural environment cannot be compared with the fruit that it will produce in places

where it is cultivated artificially; but the tree is one in its inner nature, both here and there, and so long as the stem is not dead it produces its own distinctive fruit. The spirit of our people generated its own characteristic fruit, creating cultural values in its own original way in the lands of the Diaspora, as well as in its own land, as long as the conditions of its existence allowed it to unfold its inner powers.⁶²

In Ahad Ha'am's view, all nations possessed characteristic concepts of the good life.

In spite of the fact that some ethical maxims are accepted by all cultured nations, every people has a peculiar ethical slant of its own, that follows from the qualities of its national spirit and from the course of its history.⁶³

But the Jewish people is distinguished by the circumstance that its ethical point of view is true to the nature of things and is of crucial importance to the advancement of mankind toward the goal of messianic redemption.

If we agree that the purpose of all things is the ethically perfect man, then we have to assent that an essential implication of this purpose is the superior people: That there be one people in the world that is peculiarly qualified by the endowments of its soul to develop ethically more than other nations, all the patterns in its life being molded by a high ethical doctrine that is extraordinarily exalted. Such a people may then form the fruitful soil that is perfectly suited for the production of the desired type of a superior human being.⁶⁴

Ahad Ha'am was wont to criticize the doctrine of the Reform leaders in the West who spoke of the Jewish "mission" to teach the principles of ethical monotheism to mankind. In his view, principles and ideas, insofar as they refer to the lives of individuals, are available to all thinking people. Yet, he, too, favored a special vocation for the Jewish people to demonstrate the meaning of true communal or national ethics by its collective existence and by its original culture. As he saw it, the Jews had the saving truth of the good life built into their "national soul," and this ethnic spirit was the reflection of a healthy, strong, national community; hence, they needed only to think of reinvigorating their national existence; the golden fruits of truth and nobility would then naturally be produced by the replanted tree.

Stated in this fashion, the argument between Ahad Ha'am and the Reformers is essentially that between self-glorifying romantic

ethnicism and the collective dedication of prophetic religion. For the Reformers, the people of Israel were subsidiary to their ideas and ideals; for the cultural Zionists, universal ideals were the by-products of the dynamic vitality of the people. Ahad Ha'am's philosophy, extolling the virtue of the living people as the ultimate source of all ideals, could easily be made to serve as a moralistic fig-leaf for chauvinistic egotism. But he himself was sensitive to this danger:

If on the altar of rebirth, the people should sacrifice their prophets and the great ethical principles for which it lived and suffered and which alone justify its restoration to the land of its fathers . . . if this be the Messiah — let him come, but I do not wish to see him.⁶⁵

The Jewish people need to regain their soul. If they become healthy in body and soul, they will bring healing to mankind. Hence, the third central principle of Ahad Ha'am.

3. *The Jews need to establish a spiritual center (merkaz ruhani) in Palestine.* This principle is a logical corollary of the organic analogy of nationhood — if the tree is to produce healthy fruit, it must be replanted in its native soil. We may hopefully anticipate that the Palestinian Jewish community will be "normal" and "natural," as in the halcyon days of the Bible, free from the multiple corruptions induced by the humiliation and abnormality of life in exile. Though the majority of the Jewish people is likely to remain in the lands of the Diaspora, their spirit will be redeemed by the salutary influence radiating from the center.

This relationship of center and periphery between the land of Israel and the countries of the Diaspora will be necessarily limited to the life of culture; the influence of the "center" will strengthen national consciousness in the lands of exile, purifying the spirits of the people from the baseness of exile . . .⁶⁶

All the scattered limbs of the body of the nation, feeling the beating of the national "heart" in its true place, will then return each to its proper place around the heart to receive from it the flow of living blood . . .⁶⁷

In the "cultural center," the Diaspora Jews will be able to observe "the true type of authentic Jew, whether he be a rabbi, a writer, a scholar, a peasant, an artisan or what have you . . ."⁶⁸

Through this reinvigorating influence, the Jews of the Diaspora will be morally transformed. We must remember that the Russian government was constantly harping on the need of bring-

ing about a "moral improvement" of the Jews by means of its oppressive legislation. It was assumed that the excessive concentration of Jews in commerce and the professions was immoral. Jews must become peasants once again. Such a transformation would be achieved, Ahad Ha'am felt, as soon as the Jews oriented themselves around a national, spiritual center. For, to the nationalists, all that is evil in Jewish life is a product of exile; all that is authentically Jewish is pure, noble, charged with redemptive power. Who could resist so flattering a concept of the national character?

With commendable consistency, Ahad Ha'am asserted that the pioneers must be carefully selected so that they might constitute an elite body of dedicated builders, a company of intellectual tillers of the soil. Hence, his slogan, "Let us return to Judaism first; the redemption of the Jews will follow." He defined "the love of Zion" movement as "a living aspiration of the heart for the unity of the nation, its revival and its free evolution in accord with its character, on the basis of universal, human principles."

He scored the stated aim of the political Zionists, liquidation of the Diaspora communities, as a pseudo-messianic enterprise, impractical and undesirable. As he saw it, the cultural center in the Holy Land could conceivably cure "the ills of Judaism," but not the ills of the Jews, since most Jews will inevitably remain in the Diaspora. While Herzl anticipated the total assimilation of all who will not make their home in Palestine, Ahad Ha'am looked to the revival of nationalistic Judaism in the periphery as well as in the center. But, as we noted previously, by Judaism he did not mean the Jewish religion but its inherent ethical dynamism, "the Torah of the heart," the spiritual values of the good life, the "feelings" of reverence for things of the mind, and total surrender of the individual to the welfare of the community.

He was essentially a national pantheist, seeing the creative power of the spirit of the people "in what transpires within them, while the religionist sees only a supreme outer force, overturning the mountain of Sinai as a tank and suspending it over the heads of the people."⁹

This national pantheism of Ahad Ha'am did not imply a veneration of *all* that the nation creates. He condemned the resurg-

ence of the Yiddish language, its magnificent literature, and popular culture generally. For him, the true spirit of the people was expressed in its greatest men, in its noblest creations, and only in the periods of national health.

In spite of its paradoxes and its dogmas, cultural Zionism exerted a powerful appeal at the turn of the century. Its complex mythology, consisting of "national souls," "national spirits," "national wills," and "national philosophies of ethics," was altogether congenial to the ethnocentric feelings of the people, even while it coincided with the brash accents of European biological nationalism. Sentiment retains its hold on people, long after the ideology which generated it fades into oblivion. Thus, the thousands of young people who had been raised in the Orthodox world and who had ceased to believe in God, could now feel justified in retaining some elements of the tradition as creations of the "national soul." They could say, *Ani margish* (I feel), even if they could not repeat the traditional formula, *Ani Maamin* (I believe). From the conviction of possessing the one true faith they could easily graduate into the belief that the Jewish genius alone was capable of evolving an authentic ideal of the good life.

The belief that the Jew is different, set aside from the rest of mankind by a gulf both physical and metaphysical, is deeply ingrained in all who have been nurtured within the Jewish tradition. Ahad Ha'am cultivated and glorified this feeling of uniqueness. He laid it down as a general rule that every authentic Jew "feels" that there is an essential distinction between his "inner Torah" and the prevailing doctrines throughout the world. He allowed that there might be many ways of formulating Jewish ethics, but an instinctive feeling of difference is essential to them all.

This negative demarcation by way of "feeling" is logically absurd, but it was true to the sentiments of a transitional generation, refugees from orthodoxy, who had not yet found a secure spiritual anchorage. In the life of Ahad Ha'am, this feeling may be illustrated in action as well as in theory. He combatted any admission that Christian ideas might have affinity with Judaism. He protested against Joseph Klausner's reference to Jesus as "an ethical personality" on the ground that "in Hebrew no such statement should be made."⁷⁰ He urged the withdrawal of support from a Hebrew magazine because it contained this statement by

I. H. Brenner: "It is possible to be a good Jew and to experience a religious thrill over the Christian legend concerning the son of God." And when his daughter married a Russian writer, he felt that he had forfeited the right to write about Judaism.

In a word, Ahad Ha'am's cultural Zionism, for all its rationalistic pretensions, was actually a version of ethnic romanticism, consonant with the deposit of sentiment left by Jewish Orthodoxy and reflecting the melancholy experience of Jewry in Russia. But along with the dreams and fancies of ethnic self-glorification, cultural Zionism did cherish and cultivate the moral-rational tradition of philosophical Judaism. It restored to the secular Jew a sense of balance between his Jewish heritage and the outside world.

Along with cultural Zionism, another movement of "auto-emancipation" made its appearance in the nineties of the last century. Directed to the Jewish working class, this movement adopted the slogans and accents of Russian Marxism. In the nineties, factory-workers numbered fifteen per cent of the Jewish population⁷¹ in the western provinces of Russia. The growing impoverishment of the Jewish middle class in the Pale of Settlement drove masses of literate people into the ranks of the proletariat. In view of their relatively high cultural level they naturally responded eagerly to the gospels of unionization and socialism. The Jewish workers may have been the first laborers in Russia to employ the weapon of the strike.⁷² They did not share the "stolid and stunned," ox-like docility of the erstwhile serfs. Perhaps, too, they remembered the Talmudic principle that a man's freedom cannot ever be bargained away, "A laborer is entitled to change his mind even in the middle of the day."⁷³ As soon as the Russian socialists realized that the city workers, not the country peasants, would be the bearers of the Revolution, the Jewish workers became the prime target of Marxist propaganda.

Most Marxist socialists in Russia maintained that the Jewish workers should be organized as part of the Russian Social-Democratic Party. The Jewish Marxists, associated with Lenin and the magazine *Iskra*, were as anti-nationalistic as they were anti-religious. Throughout Europe, the fervor of nationalism with its emotion-laden myths and its romantic imagery was employed by the reactionaries as a counter-weight to the mass appeal of so-

cialism. Antisemitism was a convenient psychological weapon for the nationalists in every European country, though the governing circles of Russia could claim the "honor" of being the first reactionary group to employ this weapon consciously and consistently in its fight against the ferment of revolution. It was natural, therefore, for the socialist ideologists to combat the forces of nationalism along with those of religion.

However, in actual practice, the organizers of the Jewish labor movement soon discovered that they needed to employ the language and cultural symbols of Jewish life in order to make any headway. Culturally, the Jewish workers were part of the Jewish community, not part of the proletarian culture of Russia. The oath taken by members of the *Bund*, as the Jewish labor party came to be called, was replete with the symbols of Judaism and inspired by its messianic vision. It became necessary to deal with the specific Jewish quality of the Jewish workers in terms of the rising Marxist ideology.

Slowly and inevitably, the *Bund* of Jewish workers drifted toward a frank acceptance of a separatist-nationalist ideology, though in its initial stage, it was simply a branch of the all-Russian movement.

Socialism is the only means of Jewish liberation. The "Bund" aimed to be the midwife of the birth of Jewish Socialism. This was the only thing which it perceived with clarity of mind. So far as the further perspectives and historical diagnosis of the National existence and National significance of the Jewish masses are concerned, the Bund refrained from giving an answer.⁷⁴

A nationalist ideology is a natural outgrowth of collective activities on a national basis, even if it is consciously resisted. In actual fact, the Jews in Russia were culturally isolated from their neighbors. And the pogrom-organizers of Russian reaction did not distinguish between Jewish capitalists and proletarians. Hence, there was continuous pressure from the rank and file of Jewish workers for a more positive nationalistic orientation. This pressure was steadily counteracted by the anti-nationalistic dogmas of Marxist socialism.

In European socialism, the ideal of nationalism attained more and more recognition and even sanction, especially among the more conservative elements of the movement. Otto Bauer, an Austrian-Jewish socialist elaborated the doctrine of "personal na-

tionalism," on a Marxist basis. The ideal society need not be a grey and nondescript cosmopolitan babel of tongues and cultures, he argued. National cultures can be integrated in an international society, with different cultures prevailing in different areas, while each person could choose to identify himself either with his own inherited culture or with that of the majority of people in his province. According to this view, the multi-national form of an international society is inevitable, because each national group reacts to new experience in accord with the specific bias of its own culture. Nations grow away from each other culturally, by virtue of their distinctive traditions, ("apperceptions," it was then called) even if in terms of essential economic interests, they approach each other ever more closely.

Otto Bauer's concept of "personal nationalism," superimposed upon the cultural autonomy of different territories, appeared to provide an ideal basis for the solution of the Jewish national problem. Though the Jews were scattered among many national territories, they could enjoy the privileges of separate schools and separate cultural activities wherever they lived in sufficient numbers to justify such activities.

As an assimilated Jew of the West, Otto Bauer did not think of the Jews as a national group; consequently, he did not include the Jews in his plan for a multi-national state. Since the Jews did not constitute a majority in any one territory, they were not a "natural" historical nation. Their national characteristics were formed by religion on the one hand, and economic specialization on the other. With the presumed disappearance of these two factors in a socialist society, the historical basis for a Jewish nationality will disappear. Furthermore, as Bauer saw it, the Jews were steadily losing "in the process of assimilation the upper classes, the bearers and creators of National culture." The leading Jewish intellectuals of Austria and Russia did in fact write and think in German and Russian respectively.

Otto Bauer's concept of nationalism was ultimately embraced by the Communist Party and made the foundation of Soviet policy. The Jews were to cultivate their national heritage as an interim-culture, employing the Yiddish language merely as an instrument of propaganda, not as an independent national asset. Lenin and his associates, many of whom were Jews by birth, bitterly opposed the "separatist," nationalist program which the

Bund adopted at its Fourth Conference in the city of Bialystock, in the year 1901, calling for the organization of Russia as a federation of nations.

The Conference believes that the concept of nationality applies also to the Jewish people . . . but we must also guard against any artificial whipping up of nationalistic sentiments, which are liable to shunt the feelings of class-consciousness and to lead to Chauvinism.⁷⁵

At its sixth Conference in 1905, the *Bund* spelled out the implications of its demand for national-cultural autonomy:

The legally guaranteed opportunity for the Jewish population to employ its own language in legal affairs and in relation to municipal and regional authorities . . . Exclude from the domain of government all cultural and educational functions and turn these matters over to the separate, democratically elected agencies of the nation itself . . . The central government could set norms for all national schools — such as for instance, that all studies must be purely secular in character.⁷⁶

The *Bund* of Jewish workers provided powerful mass-support for Yiddish culture, in all its secular manifestation. It organized a network of schools, workers' clubs, newspapers and magazines, nurturing and developing the talents of many writers and artists. It provided a moral and popular milieu for the marvelous efflorescence of Yiddish literature, which soon won world-wide acclaim. Such writers as Sholom Aleichem, Mendele, Sholom Asch, I. L. Peretz, Sh. An-ski, and many others found a large part of their audience in the *Bund*-trained workers' organization.

But the *Bund* was never at ease concerning its own basic orientation toward Jewish nationalism, caught as it was between the conflicting attractions of socialist universalism and Jewish particularism. Under the leadership of Vladimir Medem, it devoted itself with fanatical intensity to the cultivation of Yiddish culture, establishing a network of schools, literary clubs and publishing ventures. But at the same time, Medem proclaimed the principle of "neutrality" toward the future existence of the Jewish nation. The *Bund* accepted Jewish nationality as a fact, not as an ideal; yet its own feverish cultural activities generated an ethnic "will to live," nurturing a sense of isolation from the culture of the majority. While their Socialist faith condemned any tendencies to national isolation, the members of the *Bund* found that the momentum of their organizational labors nevertheless

contributed to this result. The tragedy of Jewish dispersal consists principally in this fact that its preservation, as a nationality, is contrary to the "natural" trends of events. Hence, the cultivation of national values and institutions is inescapably associated with a conscious effort to stay apart, a steady escalation of existing social distinctions into an elaborate mood of withdrawal, an ideology of self-segregation. As a scattered minority, Jews cannot cultivate separate secular institutions without becoming separatists; they cannot orient the momentum of their institutions toward national values without elevating the ideal of nationalism to the supreme rank of an ethnic religion. Vladimir Medem and the *Bund* thought they could ignore these considerations, and maintain indefinitely their opposition to the two contrasting goals of nationalism and assimilationism. This is how Medem formulated his philosophy of neutralism:

The mistake of the nationalists and the assimilationists consists in the fact that they accept results as goals.

If history decreed that Jews must assimilate among the nations, we shall not either oppose this process or hasten its consummation. We do not interfere; we are neutral . . . We are not against assimilation, though we oppose the *striving* toward assimilation as a goal.

If history decreed that a distinctive Jewish culture shall remain, we shall neither work for this goal, nor oppose it. We do not interfere; we are neutral.

Every compulsion, every form of oppression, direct or indirect, must be set aside; only the inner needs of the people should play a role in the formation of its cultural life . . . The organism of the people, free of any kind of external coercion must determine its own fate, through its own development.⁷⁷

The difficulty of this position is self-evident. And within the ranks of the *Bund*, its absurdity became steadily more obvious. In the life of a people, no collective activity takes place without projected ideals and conscious anticipations of desired goals. In the course of time, the leaders of the *Bund* were driven by the very momentum of their own activities to emphasize the goal of national survival. Compelled to fight for the Yiddish language, its literature and culture, they came to regard *Yiddishkeit* (Jewishness) as a secular religion. As *Yiddishkeit* expanded in scope and depth, it gradually embraced Jewish ethical and social values, including a thorough reevaluation of Jewish historical experience. Hayim Zhitlofsky maintained that it was sheer antisem-

itic bias that prevented Bauer, Lenin, Martov, and the Communists of Russia from recognizing the independent worth of the Jewish nationality. In a series of essays, he pointed out that the Jews were the most "historical" of all the nations of Europe. If any kind of nationalism was culturally worthwhile, that of the Jews was more so.⁷⁸ Through the very need to hold their own in the endless debates among socialists, the *Bund* leaders became steadily more committed to Jewish nationalism.

Their opposition to Zionism was based on the fact that the Zionists, in their view, were deserters from the international struggle of the proletariat. Zionist nationalism was, in their eyes, an expression of bourgeois values, associated with religion, marked by an exaggerated idealization of the past, perverted by romantic self-glorification and poisoned by contempt for the language and culture of the proletarian masses, which was Yiddish and European, not Hebrew and Asiatic. The *Bund* leaders resented in particular the efforts of the Zionists to control Jewish communal life in Poland and Russia. The Zionists wanted to exploit the human, cultural, and financial resources of the European communities for the purpose of upbuilding the Palestinian center. Disbelieving in the future of Jews in Europe, they could act occasionally on the supposition that the worse things get in the Diaspora for the Jews, the better. The *Bund* fought bitterly against Zionism under the slogan, *Do-igkeit*, "here-ness." It is here, in the lands of Europe, that we propose to live and build our future. Thus, Medem addressed the Zionists in 1908, and again in 1918:

Farewell and don't look back. You have nothing to see here. You are strangers here, visitors — you have repeatedly said it yourselves. We, however, will stay here, we will work and fight, and life will remain with us.

Journey preparations, travel-fever! Pack your belongings. Turn your back on our life, on our struggle, on our joys and sorrows. You have decided to desert the Galuth! Well, leave it in peace, don't interfere in our affairs, don't show your generosity by throwing alms [to us] from the window of your rail-carriage — and please don't talk about defending our rights here.⁷⁹

The philosophy of historical materialism led the ideologists of the *Bund* to reinterpret the entire past of the Jews in terms of the class struggle. At the same time, the impetus of the Jew-

ish tradition pushed the *Bund* toward an idealistic revision of the tenets of Marxism. The attempt to wed the pure materialism of scientific socialism to the inveterate idealism of the Jewish heritage could result only in the diversion of both cultural currents from their historical river-beds. In the eyes of the fanatical Socialists of Eastern Europe, the socialism of the *Bund* was thus considered to be deviationist and suspect. And wherever the Bolsheviks came to power, they selected *Bund* leaders among their first victims.

In assessing the worth of the *Bund* ideology, we note first that here was an attempt to retain the Jewish skeleton, as a basis for a socialist society, while consigning its nationalistic flesh and blood and its religious soul to oblivion. But even the skeleton retained traces of its former life, and as it came to life in a mass-movement, the ghosts of nationalism and religion came to haunt their former body. Ever more decisively, the *Bund*, as it matured, adopted the ethical-spiritual heritage of Judaism, welding the idealistic messianism of the prophets to the pseudo-messianic vision of the proletarian, classless society. The *Bund* was successful in rallying the majority of the Jewish workers under its banner. But it was crushed by the Bolsheviks in Russia and by the Nazis in Poland and Lithuania. In the United States, the massive labor organizations that it built up were progressively emptied of Jewish workers, as the children of the erstwhile immigrants rose into the ranks of the middle class.

In a deeper sense, the failure of the *Bund* was twofold. Within Judaism, it attempted to ignore the two motivating ideals of Jewish life, nationalism and religion. Within the context of historical materialism, it is hardly possible to comprehend the inner dynamism of Jewish history. And in the larger context of European society, the *Bund* failed to forge bonds of brotherhood with the non-Jewish workers and peasants. When the holocaust of Hitlerism burst upon the peoples of Poland and Lithuania, the Jews could count upon only indifferent support among the workers and erstwhile socialists.

If the *Bund* had not followed its own pathway to the socialist millennium and had devoted itself instead to the building of a non-nationalistic socialist party, would the situation in Poland have been different in the final years of reckoning? This is cer-

tainly an unanswerable question. But one can hardly question the fact that the spirit of brotherhood grows out of common labors. Separatist undertakings breed separatist mentalities. The poison of nationalist separatism may well work its deadly havoc in a socialist society, where it operates through subterranean channels in spite of official disclaimers. Jewish separatism is not "natural," since it is not based on any objective, indubitable factors like territorial separation or even racial appearance. If maintained in practice, it must be affirmed in theory as an ideal, reinforcing the myth of Jewish metaphysical uniqueness. Jewish socialist secularism continued to suffer from the accumulated malice engendered by the forces of religion and nationalism, though it disavowed the stirring visions of these two idealistic forces.

The *Bund* set itself against the ideals of the Jewish past, insofar as they have taken form in Hebraic nationalism and religion. But in continuing the separateness of organizational life, it transmitted the fatalistic impulse inherent in the Jewish past. The Jewish masses of Poland may not have been ready for an integrated socialist movement, inured as they had become by centuries of Orthodoxy to total cultural insulation from their neighbors. Nevertheless, the fact remains that European socialism could have functioned as a powerful integrating factor in Eastern Europe. It had all the fervor, depth, and vision of a religious faith. As in the days of Saint Paul, the socialist philosophy was sufficiently deep in feeling and wide in implication to batter down the walls between Jews and their neighbors. The high idealism and massive achievements of the *Bund* must be weighed against this failure to surmount the separatist impetus of the Jewish past.

If the *Bund* attempted to steer clear of romantic attempts to glorify history and destiny, Simon Dubnow based his philosophy of Jewish *autonomism* on the assumption that the Jews are the most "historical" of all European nations. As a socialist party, the *Bund* was committed to the interpretation of the Jewish past as a function of ancient economic and sociological factors, which it sought to undermine and to transform. Dubnow, as a gifted and imaginative historian, found that an idealistic program for the future of mankind was contained in the heroic saga of Jewish history.

Simon Dubnow (1860-1941) directed the movement of Jewish

autonomism, which received widespread recognition in the Versailles Treaty and in the constitution of the League of Nations. The essence of this doctrine is the belief that a free society should make it possible for its "cultural-spiritual" minorities to govern themselves in cultural matters, establishing their own schools, civil courts, and theatres. The parliaments of the various states should allow the representation of the national minorities in their midst as political parties. In their turn, the minority groups should overcome the disruptive tendencies of the class struggle and send representatives to the national parliament, on a purely ethnic basis. For the ethnic ideal nurtures the unifying, vitalizing, creative, and recuperative powers of society, while class-interests are selfish, materialistic, and divisive.

The sociological basis for Jewish *autonomism* appeared to be secure in the early decades of the twentieth century. More than ninety-five per cent of the Jews of Russia lived in the provinces of minority-populations, where the Russian language was spoken only by the governing circles. The Ukrainians, White Russians, Lithuanians, and Latvians were then still culturally undeveloped, with hardly any schools, newspapers, or literary works of their own. In the cities of Minsk, Grodno, Siedlitz, Vitebsk, Mohilev, Kieltz, Vohlin, and Radom, the Jews numbered between fifty and ninety-five per cent of the population. In addition, the Jews constituted the largest urban element in the towns centering around Lomza, Lublin, Vilna, Kovno, Suvalk, and in the provinces of Podolia and Bessarabia.⁸⁰

In all these places, the Yiddish language held undisputed sway. It therefore seemed altogether plausible to argue for Jewish *autonomism* in all of Eastern Europe, supplementing territorial cultural autonomy with the right of each individual to choose his nationality.

Dubnow based the program of *autonomism* on an impressive philosophy of Jewish history. The survival of the Jews was due to their having developed in ancient times the high ideal of cultural self-government. In secular and nationalistic terms, the Jews were "first-born," having become a "spiritual nation" in the Roman-Hellenistic period. It was then that they matured sufficiently to live in a world-wide chain of colonies, without the protection of a national government. Dubnow argued that while the diverse laws of the Talmud were consciously motivated by

religious reasons, they were in truth and subconsciously created by the instinct for ethnic separatism. The high barriers of the Law were accepted by the people as a subtle strategy for survival. The Jews escaped the fate of the other nations of antiquity, who died when they were uprooted from their native soil, only because they learned to enter into a state of hibernation. They allowed the myths and rites of religion to lull them into the comforting torpor of a dream-world. Their intellectual and esthetic faculties were mesmerized and rendered inactive, in response to the overwhelming needs of national survival. But even in the long night of Medievalism, Jewish life was directed by quasi-national, communal organizations, *Kehilloth*, which looked after the economic and social interests of their members as well as their religious needs. Culturally, the Jews withdrew from reality, awaiting a new world of freedom for all minorities. Pending the arrival of the Messiah, they were content to live in the hypnotic trance of religious fables, dogmas, and illusions.

The work of Zerubabel, Ezra and Nehemiah is entirely permeated by the thought that it is necessary to put religion and ritual in the service of ethnic unity and segregation.⁸¹

In the Hasmonean period, the Greeks were the political oppressors of the Jews and, by their tyranny, the national feelings of the Jews were aroused even as their moral judgments and habits of modesty were outraged.⁸²

Like Pfeiffer from whom we quoted before, Dubnow believed that the Pharisees of the Second Commonwealth gave authentic expression to the ethnic drive for survival.

The far-seeing leaders of the people arrived at the full conviction that religion is the one safe and reliable instrument of the Jewish nation and that the unity of the nation can only be maintained by the firm establishment of religious law, so designed as to embrace all the external manifestations of the life of the people.⁸³

In keeping with this interpretation of Jewish history, Dubnow regarded the Golden Age of the Jews in Spain as an anomaly. The winter-sleep of the people was disturbed by poets and philosophers, in whose souls the creative vigor of genius outweighed the collective need of the people for the dream-world of religion. Similarly, the various sects that arose in Jewish life, from the Qaraites to the Hasidim, reflected the activity of individualists, pitting the insights of their own hearts and minds against the eth-

nic compulsions which were embodied in rabbinic Judaism. These non-conforming men of genius, articulating the expanding horizons of human wisdom or the tender melody of religious feeling, were wrong only because they were ahead of their time. Down to the coming of the Emancipation, the historical needs of the Jewish people required that they forego the glories of the intellect and the solace of esthetic refinements.

But in the twentieth century, the self-imposed isolation of Jewry should be radically modified, since mankind is now ready to reexamine all its institutions in the light of reason. The veil of communal discipline, imposed in the name of religion, may now be dropped, and the Jew may feel relatively free to satisfy the hunger of his intellect. The "religion of the individual" may be given free expression, in terms of modern feeling and the contemporary understanding of reality. Now that the secular walls of cultural autonomy are achieving recognition, the Jew may with complete confidence confront the infinite horizons of the modern world, knowing that the survival of his people is assured.

Dubnow arrived at the philosophy of a "cultural" or a "spiritual" nation by slow degrees. In his early years, he was associated with the radical wing of Russian *maskilim*, campaigning for the abolition of all the laws and practices of Judaism. He combatted the "love of Zion" movement as an endeavor "to concentrate the Jews in a national-spiritual sense in Europe, in order to segregate them politically in Asia."⁸¹ Danilevsky's philosophy of history, which distinguished between "historical" nations and "ethno-graphic material," doubtless influenced Dubnow to consider the historical consciousness of a people as its patent of nobility. His reading of Graetz's history of the Jews strengthened his belief that the Jews were indeed the most "historical" of all people.

If there exist in the world historical and non-historical nations, then it is doubtless permitted to designate the Jews as the most historical nation.⁸⁵

Dubnow held the Jewish religion in low esteem. It was, in his view, devoid of inspiration and significance for the individual, being no more than a texture of laws ministering to the will to survive. His anti-religious animus was typical of a large segment of Russian Jewry. There was no Conservative or Reform syna-

gogue in Russia; the routine of the Orthodox synagogue repelled him on esthetic as well as intellectual grounds; from the age of twenty to that of forty-four, he did not enter a synagogue even once. In that latter year, following a pogrom in Homel, he visited a synagogue in Vilno on Yom Kippur. Yet Dubnow, like so many Russian Jews, was passionately idealistic in thought and deeply religious in feeling. At one time, Ahad Ha'am urged him to apply for the post of "public rabbi" (*Kazionny Rabbiner*) in Russia's capital.

Dubnow's interpretation of Judaism reflected in large measure the prevailing opinion of his day. Biblical scholars like Wellhausen and Renan regarded the "religion of Jesus" as being the rebellion of the religion of the individual against the restricting barriers of national zealotry. Like many other Jewish scholars, Dubnow accepted this distorted interpretation of the Jewish faith, but to him, ethnic loyalty was far superior to the ideals, sentiments, and anxieties of the individual. Accordingly, it was right for the Pharisees to "reject" Jesus and all others who were concerned with the feelings of individuals.

The novelty of the new faith [Christianity] consisted in the sharp opposition that it presented between the religion of the heart or the ethics of individual life to the communal religion and to the customs that were suited to the life of the nation . . . The spiritual Pharisees saw in the new doctrine a hidden intent to oppose the ideal of nationalism. They understood well the implications of the principle, "the kingdom of God is within you," but they considered this ideal to be subversive of the national interest. This noble doctrine fortifies the faith of the individual, but it weakens the discipline of a people. It is suited for a person who rises above his historical environment, but it hardly meets the needs of a nation, which has grown up through the processes of history and which seeks to maintain its identity by means of laws and *mizvoth* which unite the nation. Such an external materialization of the "kingdom of God" through the bonds of national-religious discipline was an absolute necessity, according to the Pharisees, at a time when Roman rule weakened the political forms of national discipline. Therefore, they accounted Christianity, "the Torah that is not of this world," to be unsuitable to the historic hour, incompatible with the psychic needs of the nation — hence, harmful.⁸⁰

Writing of the three-cornered debate that developed on the eve of the Great Revolt in 65 C.E., Dubnow states the issues as follows:

The Zealots said, "Arm yourselves with the sword to save the state!" The Pharisees said, "Arm yourselves in spirit to save the nation after the destruction of the state!" And the Christians said, "Dis-arm! Let go of the sword of the Zealots and of the shield of the Pharisees, since neither the state, nor the nation, but the salvation of the individual is worth fighting for. . . ."As the individual sought for himself, and rightly so, the freedom to think without subjection to the communal yoke, so that historic community demands, and rightly so, the freedom to live without subjection to alien cultures⁸⁷

But if it was the sin of Jesus and the Christians to defend the "religion of the individual" and his freedom to think for himself, this sin was shared by the Qaraites who disputed the authority of the Talmud and by the disciples of Maimonides, who dared to put the myths and rites of the community under the scalpel of criticism. Though he recognizes the parallel between the campaign of the Inquisition and the effort of the French anti-philosophical rabbis to suppress the works of Maimonides, he contrasts the spectacle of the Churchmen, "battling for power and the Vatican," with the picture of the rabbis "battling against the specter of manifold dangers to Judaism, who saw in Maimonides the pagan spirit of Aristotle, which shatters the faith and holy principle of the nation."⁸⁸

In the secular nationalistic perspective of Dubnow, the Orthodox fanatics were right and the Maimonidean liberals were wrong. Discussing the tragedy of Uriel Acosta, the rationalistic thinker of Amsterdam and predecessor of Spinoza, he writes:

In the sad fate of Uriel Acosta, there is reflected the great tragedy of the free individual who rebels against the prevailing order in the community because he is unable to appreciate the purpose of this order, which is the existence of the community. Seeing only the yoke of conventions and mores, the individual rebels against the laws of the community, which enslave him, his thought and his will.⁸⁹

Dubnow sided with the defenders of national authority in their attempt to suppress all who rebelled against its sway, whether they were prophets of a higher faith or heralds of new intellectual horizons. But while the nation may be despotic, the state which governs people of more than one nationality must not resort to the tactics of despotism. The continuity of the nation as an organic body was, to him, more basic and significant than

either the peace and welfare of the state, or the freedom and the welfare of the individual, or the freedom and the welfare of universal society. Still, Dubnow and his "folkist" associates would have been among the first to protest any imposition of religious tyranny in his own day on the ground of the needs of national survival. As a secularist Jew, he felt that the ideal of national autonomy assured the continued life of the people, so that the disciplines and the dogmas of Judaism were no longer needed.

The *autonomist* ideology of Dubnow enjoyed considerable vogue at one time because it corresponded in large measure to the realities of Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement. But those circumstances were themselves unstable and doomed to radical transformation. Following World War I, the American Jewish delegation to the peace conference, headed by Louis Marshall, agreed to press for clauses respecting national minority rights to be inserted in the treaties with Poland, Roumania, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Each of the minorities was to be assured of cultural autonomy. A committee of the League of Nations was set up to watch over the faithful execution of these clauses. Mr. Marshall, reflecting the sentiments and thoughts of American Jews was opposed to the classification of Jews as a secular nation, entitled to "minority rights," but, against his personal judgment, he yielded to the pressure of the European Jews and of the Yiddish-speaking masses in the United States.

As events were soon to prove, the "minority rights" of the Jews in Central Europe were of little or no avail in the countries that were carved out of Russia and Austria. The new nations were actually provoked by the symbols of minority group-life to regard the self-segregating groups as enclaves of aliens in their midst. Their national struggle for economic and political gains was now directed against the organized aliens within as well as against the foreign nations outside their border. In Poland, particularly, where Jews constituted ten per cent of the total population, nearly all the governmental cabinets conducted an inner economic crusade against the minorities in general and the Jews in particular. The demon of nationalism, which justifies and sanctifies all that conduces to the national interest, now directed its fury against the inner enemy. For, in the logic of sacred egoism,

the alien is your enemy if he possesses things that you need.

The economic campaign of the Polish government had its counterpart in the campaign of the university students for the segregation of Jewish students by assigning to them separate benches. How is a fine line of demarcation to be drawn between cultural segregation and educational ghettos? The logic of nationalism knows of no natural stopping-point. It needs to be tempered by non-nationalistic and even anti-nationalistic forces, if any measure of humanity is to be preserved. Democracy alone cannot serve as such a restraining force, since it idealizes and glorifies the will of the people. The National Democrats of Poland constituted in fact the vanguard of the antisemitic movement.

In Soviet Russia, all nationalities were encouraged to develop their cultural autonomies. The Jews were recognized initially as a Yiddish-speaking nationality and assisted to develop their schools, newspapers, and theatres, within the narrow confines of Communist ideology and Soviet policy. Ideal as this situation seemed to the Yiddish secularists, who could count on generous governmental support for all kinds of literary projects, this sudden burst of prosperity was imposed by the fiat of the central government which made and unmade cultural policy in keeping with its zigzagging party-line.

The hollowness of Yiddish-Communist culture was soon made apparent. The *Yevsektzia*, the Jewish committee for culture, began to demolish the entire structure of religious and Hebraic institutions. Synagogues were confiscated by the hundreds and only a minimal number were allowed to function; religious education was proscribed; Hebraic books were declared to be expressive of bourgeois, romantic nationalism. Faced with the cruel mockery of his theories, Dubnow pleaded to be allowed to leave Russia, on the ground that he did not accept the theory of historical materialism. In 1922 he was permitted to leave Russia.

The brutal caricature of cultural autonomy in Russia was certainly not proof of the vacuity of the concept itself. Yet it can hardly be denied that there was no vital content to the concept of the Jews as a "historical nation," and of Judaism as "a historical awareness."⁹⁰ The essence of history is change, and what is to govern the process and the pace of change if not the regnant ideology?

The Yiddish-Communist schools ceased to appeal to the Jewish masses, after a few years of acculturation to the prevailing Soviet pattern. The Jews of Russia gave up the Yiddish language for the same reasons that the Jews in America forsook their native tongue. The Communist variety of Yiddish culture was particularly incapable of arousing enthusiasm. Dedicated to an anti-religious materialist philosophy, the Communists proceeded to stand Jewish culture on its head, as it were, making saints out to be villains and *vice versa*. Jewish parents preferred to send their children to Russian schools, where Jewish history was largely ignored, rather than send them to schools where their language was cherished but their heroes were reviled; where men like Moses, Isaiah, and Hillel were described as "fascists" and misleaders of the people. The Yiddish culture of Russia was hardly an inspiring example of sheer, vacuous, formalistic nationalism.

This misbegotten child of two frenzied idolatries, nationalism and communism, would have died a slow, natural death, were it not for the Nazi attack against Russia and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel. The Nazi invasion of western Russia proved that the Ukrainians and other nationalities were not completely won over by the concessions of cultural autonomy. Many Ukrainians became willing partners of the Nazis in the extermination of the Jews. A generation of Communist education was not sufficient to extirpate the dragon-seeds of antisemitism from the Ukraine. The Stalinists were convinced of the need to suppress the national loyalties of non-Russian peoples.

The establishment of the state of Israel and the subsequent appearance of the Israeli Ambassador in the large cities of Russia provoked massive enthusiasm among many Jews. This evidence of lingering sympathy for a Jewish nation, allied with the West, was aggravated in Communist eyes by the persistent propaganda of Israeli leaders for the emigration of Jews from the Soviet lands to Israel.

With their customary fury and fanaticism, the Soviet leaders abolished at one stroke all that was left of Yiddish "culture." The sickly suspicion of Stalin led him to proceed from one enormity to another, so that his last years will be remembered as a period of horrors, one of the darkest nightmares of Jewish history. Under Stalin's successors, a more lenient policy has been introduced. In the last census, more than two million people declared their

nationality to be Jewish, while nearly a half-million declared Yiddish to be their mother-tongue. There is no doubt that the venom of antisemitism is still potent and widespread in the provinces of the Soviet Union. Even formalistic nationalism is likely to keep alive the virus of hate, though it is not strong enough to resist the process of biological, total assimilation. It is therefore a double failure.

A contemporary historian sums it up:

All the hopes for the resistance of the national feeling of the masses, all the expectations which derived from the great achievements of the Jewish intelligentsia and the rich treasures that it amassed in the last generation, faded in one historic moment under the warming rays of freedom, which opened vast opportunities for national betrayal.⁶¹

The core of formalistic nationalism consisted in the axiom that the drive of nationalities for cultural self-government was the highest ideal and the source of all cultural creativity. Therefore, all who rebelled against communal discipline in Jewish history were wrong, even if they served the noblest ideals of philosophy and religion. This view is likely to penalize, indeed to paralyze the creative personalities in every age. The national ideal is produced by individuals who break through the cake of custom, and it is the function of ideals to transcend national boundaries and to become the treasured possession of all mankind. Apart from the body of ideals comprising the national purpose, nationalism is devoid of intrinsic significance.

The source of all creative values is manifestly the individual, as he battles against the oppressive weight of custom and tradition. He expands the horizons of knowledge or he deepens the range of feeling of his contemporaries, and his initial efforts are always achieved against the resistance of the majority. By the same token, the test of all ideals is their ultimate acceptance and validation in the universal society of which all human beings are constituents. The individual and the great society are the two poles of culture and value, while the nation serving as the intermediary between the individual and humanity, is significant culturally only to the extent that it fosters the conscience of the individual and ministers to the welfare of humanity as a whole. Sheer nationalism is the *reductio ad absurdum* of social idealism; it is like a horse without a rider.

However, even in its vacuous torpor, the national designation continues to be a factor in the life of the Russian Jews. Since their passports identify them as belonging to the Jewish nationality, there remains the probability of their suffering from the lingering traces of antisemitism and from the "natural" rivalries of the ethnic groups that compose the Soviet population. In spite of a high rate of intermarriage, the Soviet Jews are "surviving" — but in the hollow and pernicious sense of the term. For it is not ethnic survival that is at stake, but its purpose and content.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ETHNIC ANTISEMITISM AND POLITICAL ZIONISM

Ethnic antisemitism is a late-modern phenomenon. While it rationalizes and structures popular feelings and attitudes which always existed to some extent, the political ideology and program of racial antisemitism was launched at the end of the nineteenth century. Some vague sentiments of racial antagonism doubtless accompanied Christian Judeophobia even in the Medieval era, but only as a subsidiary, subterranean current of myth and mystery, envy and hate. These hostile sentiments were usually characteristic of the uneducated, the underprivileged, and the vulgar. A fifteenth-century Jewish historian asserts that Jew-hatred is restricted to the masses and that the learned classes are relatively free of this social disease.¹ During the modern period, Jews entered the highest ranks of European aristocracy by way of the baptismal font and intermarriage. A manual of German nobility, published at the end of the nineteenth century, contained the names of a thousand families into which Jews had married. To be sure, in Medieval Spain, "purity" of blood, up to four generations, was required of all appointees to high office. But this requirement, too, was "religious" in nature, a refinement of dogmatism, being the direct product of the activity of the Inquisition.

Down to the end of the nineteenth century, racial pride retained the character of crude prejudice, being devoid of any pretensions to intellectual and moral justification. Even the conservative politicians who esteemed social prejudices generally as valuable cohesive forces, which retarded the sway of liberal ideas, did not as a rule regard the pride of race as a positive ally for their cause. Concerned with the maintenance of the prerogatives of their class, they were inspired more by pride of caste than by pride of ethnic origin. The self-image of European aristoc-

racy was projected against the contrasting background of the unworthy masses, not against that of alien races. Bismarck could still speculate about the excellence of the breed that would result from the mingling of German and Jewish seeds. Napoleon proposed at one time that every third Jewish marriage be with a non-Jewish spouse.

The reaction against the Jewish "race" derived from the frustration of French aristocracy and from the newly projected myth of a primeval, Indo-European race of culture-heroes. Count Gobineau was the prophet of the new faith. Grasping vainly for the vanishing ghost of the *ancien régime*, he set out to prove that purity of race was the sole factor in the emergence of a great culture, and that in France, the ancient nobility, consisting of the descendants of Frankish conquerors, was alone in possession of unmixed Teutonic blood.² To him, the masses of the French nation were hopelessly hybrid, "corrupted" by Latins, Moors, and Arabs. The outbreak of the French Revolution was essentially a "racial" conflict, with the degenerate masses rebelling against the men of "pure blood." Expressing the bitter frustration of an arrogant and repudiated caste that no longer had any social function, Count Gobineau set out to demonstrate that all of French culture was produced by the Nordic aristocrats, while the French merchants, proletarians, and farmers, being Gallo-Roman in origin, were as incapable of sustaining the grandeur of the nation as they were insensitive to knightly honor.

In France, Gobineau's racism could only divide the nation and build up a fifth column of Nazi sympathizers. The pitiful self-glorification of an elite class struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the opponents of liberalism who needed a "scientific" basis for their ambitions. The new reaction menaced the freedom of France throughout the life of the Third Republic and emerged for a brief period of open treachery at Vichy. But it was in Germany that racism was ideally suited to the uses of a war-centered nihilistic philosophy of enslavement and conquest. Since modern culture was so largely derived from Hebraic and Greco-Roman sources, a profound moral upheaval in Germany could appeal to the age-old, victory-laden struggle of the Teutons against the classical peoples, classical culture, and Judeo-Christian religion.

Even in Germany, racism was certain to transcend the bounds

of normal nationalism. As Hannah Arendt points out, the racist program of the Nazis was worldwide in scope. In the course of time, a new race of men was to be created by artificial, scientific breeding, while the weak and the "superfluous" would be exterminated. Biology would replace ethics and religion as the source of all values. The new "chosen people" would be those who were the first to liberate themselves from the spell of Western culture, to heed the call of the wild in their blood. "We shall breed the new aristocracy from the human reserves of the S.S.," Hitler declared to his confidants.³ "Certainly we shall admit to our new ruling class members of other nations who have been worthy in our cause," he asserted on another occasion, pointing out the international appeal of his movement.⁴ Nazism was to serve the cause of German nationalism, but only up to a point.

We are obliged to depopulate, as part of our mission of preserving the German population. We shall have to develop a technique of depopulation Nature is cruel, therefore we too must be cruel.⁵

The association of Jews with religion and with liberalism made it necessary for the proponents of "the new ideas of biological politics" to set up a new mythology in which the Jews play the role of "children of darkness," forever fighting against the Aryan "children of light."⁶

"Conscience is a Jewish invention. It is a blemish like circumcision."⁷

"There cannot be two Chosen Peoples. We are God's people. Does that fully answer the question?", Hitler retorted in answer to a question about the reasons for his antisemitic mythology.⁸

When a nation asserts that it is "chosen," it points to a goal outside its own being. Nevertheless, we cannot agree with Arendt's thesis that racism was unrelated to nationalism. She traces the mood and myth of Teutonic racism to the caste system of Medieval Europe. "Historical Aryanism had its origin in eighteenth-century feudalism and was supported by nineteenth-century Germanism."⁹ It is true that the efforts of the aristocracy to reassert their right to rule could only be grounded in the doctrine of race; it is also true that in the last agonies of the western Roman Empire, the barbarian conquerors were for the most part Germanic tribes. Hence it was that "Frenchmen were to insist earlier than Germans or Englishmen on the *idée*

fixe of Germanic superiority."¹⁰ French aristocrats like Gobineau and Boulainvillier and English expatriates like Chamberlain might preach the doctrine of Aryan superiority, but they could not arouse mass enthusiasm either in France or in England. As a mass movement, racism is essentially nihilistic nationalism, stripping the national vision of its humanistic ideals and reducing it to a physical base. The supreme object of worship is now neither God nor humanity, but the "people," a blood-brotherhood which evolves its own standards of right and wrong, and disregards the needs and opinions of others.

As we have seen, nationalism is not a simple ideal but a dynamic tension between tribal fellow-feeling and a national vision of the good life, between subjective self-glorification and collective dedication to some objective principles. In his analysis of the emergence of the national idea, Professor Hans Kohn goes back to the notion of a "cultural mission" of the Hebrews and the Hellenes.¹¹

The concept of a national mission is ambivalent, consisting of a meeting of two opposite drives, the tendency to idealize the people and the aspiration to serve certain universal ideals. As when the right hand is pressed against the left, each motivation balances the other without either losing its inherent impetus. Should the ethnocentric ideal prevail, we obtain a situation in which the "unique" and "mysterious" virtues of the nation are extolled and made primary. The "mission" of the nation is then left vague and inchoate, postponed to the end of days, when the temporal triumph of the people shall have been assured. If the universal component of this dynamic equilibrium becomes dominant, we behold the appearance of prophetic nationalism, when the nation is truly placed in the service of universal ideals and judged by them. In the following maxim of Nietzsche's, we have a succinct statement of this goal, *Gut deutsch sein heisst sich entdeutschen*, "To be German in a good way is to de-germanize oneself" — that is, to be all-human.

It follows that nationalism can be dissolved in two ways. It can be elevated to the domain of liberal humanism by its ideal component or it can be reduced to nihilistic racism by the evaporation of its ideal content. European racism emerged when the spiritual values and sentiments of nationalism ebbed away under the impact of materialistic cynicism and modern skepticism.

The religious associations of nationalism in the Western countries were rejected in the rationalistic-liberal circles, which were insisting on the creation of a secular society. On the other hand, the liberals were rejected in their turn by the rise of the new mechanistic psychology extolling the role of the blind irrational forces in man. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the left wing of European liberalism was converted to the somber, apocalyptic philosophy of "historical materialism." On this view, ideals are only the ephemeral froth on the wind-driven waves. The harsh and ruthless class struggle between capital and labor determines the dialectic of history, with moral principles and religious dogmas serving only as weapons of propaganda. Only the crass and the selfish is real, while so-called noble ideals are only sham and disguise.

The Marxist attack against the ideals of liberalism was reinforced by the new concepts of man and society which derived from Darwin's theories of the nature of life and evolution. The new categories of life in the raw turned the attention of people away from the imperatives of reason and ethics, as if they were merely naive illusions, hiding the ruthless struggle of existence from the gaze of the weak-minded. Since the human heart could hardly remain long without some powerful attachments, either socialism or racism became the *ersatz*-faith of the masses as soon as religion and humanism ceased to charm them. Thus many Europeans clung to their national ideal, even as they dropped first its religious associations and later its liberal, universal ideals. When humanism and faith are gone, only the ugly morass of racism is left.

The individual finds dignity and status either by relating himself to a faith or by sinking his own identity into that of an ethnic group, or by some restless blend of these ideals. Religion exalts him by framing his life within the vertical structure of values, deriving from and leading to God. Ethnicism uplifts a person from the wasteland of insignificance by enlarging his horizontal dimensions so that he shares in the "glory" of the race and participates in its immortality. In the modern period, nationalism became the religion of millions of people who were dispossessed, disoriented, and disinherited. As the society in which each person enjoyed a fixed place gave way to the open horizons of the modern industrial state, more and more people were deprived

of their previously secure place and thrown back upon their own resources. Unable to find purpose and meaning in their own life, they could only share in the reflected glory of their "national character" and in the high vision of their national destiny. As Immanuel Kant observed, on the threshold of the modern era, "If everybody in the nation has his own character, the nation has none. If no one has character, the nation has one."¹²

Once it became a surrogate for religion, ministering to man's need for a status and a purpose, nationalism was virtually certain to dispense in time with the restraints of humanism and the ideals of faith. The religious mood tends to turn authoritarian, absolutist, and intolerant, if unchecked by the light of reason. This process was accelerated in our day when, as a result of the rapid increase of knowledge in physics, biology, and psychology, many moderns lost first their God, then their soul, then their conscience, and finally their minds. For what is mind to Darwinian sophisticates but a device and a tool in the ongoing struggle for survival?

Even in Germany, however, racism might not have triumphed, even for a brief moment, were it not for the corrosive poison of antisemitism. The idealized account of the German barbarians, written by Tacitus in a nostalgic mood, when he was disgusted with the effete civilization of his day; the glory of Herrmann's triumph over the Romans and the grandeur of the Holy Roman Empire; the crusades against the Slavs in Prussia; the liberation of the mind and conscience of Europe through the Protestant revolution — all these memories served to fortify Germanic pride. The mentality of colonialism, the call of the "*white man's burden*" and the manifest destiny of Germany to establish its colonial empire in Europe itself — these factors doubtless contributed to the rise of racism. But antisemitism appeared to be the indispensable catalyst, which beguiled antagonistic interests into a working partnership and fused diverse frustrations into one witch's brew. The Pan-Germans who were only mildly antisemitic never succeeded in striking deep roots into the soil of German life. If it be true that love is blind, hate is doubly so, and the peculiar hatred of Jews managed to bring together in France clericalists and atheistic racists, while in Germany it provided a common myth for Prussian state-worshippers, Ruhr-industrialists,

religious fanatics, championing a "Christian" state, nihilistic revolutionaries and Teutonic enthusiasts, longing for the revival of the gods of Valhalla.

Modern antisemitism is an exceedingly complex phenomenon, which consists of many different strands. There is the simple conception of the Jew as an alien, deriving from the spirit of nationalism, since as we pointed out, the national feeling of the masses is largely, if not entirely racist in character. Natural and understandable are the feelings of rivalry, bias, envy, and suspiciousness that thrive on the awareness of national differences. In the case of the Jews, their economic success served as the matrix for the growth of the second strand in modern antisemitism — the conception of the Jew as the evil genius of the modern industrial system. The Jews of Western Europe happened to be so situated as to be likely to fare exceedingly well in the period of transition, when Europe moved from an agrarian economy to a highly complex industrial and commercial structure. In the same manner, the Dutch and the English had emerged in the forefront, when in the sixteenth century the lines of economic expansion moved into the Atlantic areas. In turn, the relative success of Jews, who were habituated to the processes of commerce in the rapidly growing age of capitalism, was certain to attract the envy and the hate of the other classes of the population. But even this economic aspect of modern antisemitism presupposes the axiom of Jewish racial distinctiveness. For the Jews are assumed to be firstly a foreign group, and secondly an unusually successful class. The combination of alienism and prosperity is universally resented. Witness the hostility of the South Pacific peoples towards the Chinese among them, the antagonism of the African Negroes to the Indians in all the provinces of Eastern Africa, the hatred of the Japanese on the American coast. Economic rivalry was the chief factor in the antisemitic attitude of the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Rumanians. This strand of envy and hate is easily comprehensible. It is likely to loom large in periods of economic stress and to shrink into relative insignificance whenever the economy bursts its bounds and achieves new levels of abundance.

But in addition to the racial foundation and the economic superstructure, the haunted house of modern antisemitism contains

a certain air of mystery, the pretense of a *Weltanschauung*, the ghostly dimensions of an "ideology," however irrational, perverse, even bizarre. We must not judge the effectiveness of a social "ideology" by its rational, or even by its symbolic content. The antisemitic myth is actually an atavistic return to primitive ways of thinking. But the primitive mentality is the permanent basis of mob-psychology. The aura of myth is indispensable to every mass-movement; even if it is only half-believed, it serves to distort the events of daily life and to "refute" the counsels of intelligence and conscience. It cloaks the impetus of emotionalism and unreason in an elaborate facade, so as to flatter the vanity of the populace and confound their feeble ventures into the domain of objective judgment and self-criticism.

The antisemitic myth consists of the following affirmations:

1. The Jew in his essential being is *different* from the rest of mankind. A cosmic, metaphysical gulf separates the Jew from the rest of mankind.

2. All the Jews of the world constitute one ethnic unit which is more solidly united than other nationalities or religious groups.

3. In his struggle against the rest of humanity, the Jew employs diverse weapons — capitalistic manipulation and communistic propaganda, the "opium" of religion and the acid of atheism. Since the Jew cannot fight openly against overwhelming odds, he must employ secret weapons and conspiratorial devices; hence, secret conclaves, like those described in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Of these three assumptions, the first one is the most basic. Grotesque as it might appear to an observer from Mars, indeed to a reader from cultures not founded on the biblical heritage, the axiom of Jewish metaphysical difference is central to all Orthodox Jews, Christians, and Moslems. This *meta-myth* provides the mystical aura which envelops the primitive passions of antisemitism, shielding them from the bright rays of common sense. Within each of the religious traditions, the *meta-myth* was imbedded in a context of ideas and ideals, which mitigated its virulence. But, with the breakdown of religious traditions in the modern world, the *meta-myth* was liberated from its ancient context and allowed to play a new, independent role.

To understand the various ways in which the virus of anti-semitism was used in France and Germany, it is necessary to take account of three "Newtonian" laws of history.

As in physics, so in history, the law of momentum applies. Ideas, sentiments and even complex habits of thinking tend to endure from generation to generation, though the impulse which first set them in motion is no longer operative. The "cultural lag" characteristic of the more backward elements of the population does not explain this phenomenon in its entirety, for even those who are intellectually "emancipated" continue to be emotionally and culturally enmeshed in socially outworn and intellectually untenable patterns. Frequently, they discover new "reasons" for old attitudes, alleging that the promptings of the "heart" are wiser than the mere calculations of the mind.

The course of a complex idea may be analyzed into its several components. If one or more components are counteracted by opposing forces, the other components are likely to be carried along by the sheer impetus of tradition. Thus, we encounter many instances in history of the separation of ideas and their recombination in other patterns. In each case, the momentum of an idea is an important factor, regardless of the official reasons for the transfer of the idea from one context into the other.

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is true in the relationship of economic classes as well as ethnic groups. The emergence of European liberalism evoked from the Jewish community a mighty tide of humanistic fervor, resulting in the rise of the Reform-Conservative movements in Germany, France, and England. The subsequent decline of the liberal movement and the triumph of political reaction encouraged the formation of the neo-Orthodox group and the dominance of the Conservative wing at the Augsburg Conference. The upsurge of European nationalism evoked a new spirit of ethnic assertiveness among the Jews of the West. It was manifested first in the emergence of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, in the Zionist manifesto of Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, and in the publication of the eleven volumes of Heinrich Graetz's monumental work, *The History of the Jews*. In turn, Graetz's impassioned "Palestinian nationalism" evoked the climactic attack of Heinrich Treitschke, which signalled the emergence of respectable "scientific" antisemitism.

The history of modern antisemitism is an excellent demonstration of these three "Newtonian" laws. In their investigation of the psychology of modern antisemites, Doctors Ackerman and Jahoda have shown that the perpetuation of the Fundamentalist image of the Jew provides the initial focus for the growth of the irrational complex of hate and envy. "Thus the first, and perhaps most important, cultural contribution to the existence of antisemitism is the perpetuation of a stereotyped image of the Jew."¹³ This stereotype was built up by Christian dogma and interpretation of the Bible, on the one hand, and by the image of the Medieval money-lender, on the other.

To this stereotype, the first generations of the new secular society added an awareness of Jewish exclusiveness and aloofness. The mystical slayers of the "god of love" suffer from their inability to love those who are not their kin. In the experience of the young Goethe, the Jews of Frankfort were still an alien group, dressing in their peculiar garb, wearing unkempt beards, living apart in their own ghetto where the gates were closed at night, and speaking a dialect of their own. It was natural for people living at the time of the French Revolution to identify their inherited stereotype with the Jews of the marketplace rather than with the elite circles of enlightened Jews in Berlin and Paris. We have already had occasion to refer to the bitter resentment aroused by Jewish aloofness at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As the intense fervor of Medieval religion waned in the modern era, the dietary laws and the self-enclosed communal structure of the Jewish community took on the aspect of perverse isolationism. Even a friendly diplomat like Arnold White, who, as the representative of Baron de Hirsch, undertook several missions to Russia in behalf of its Jews, could write as follows:

The Aloofness of Israel, as I have ventured to term one characteristic of the Hebrew community, is another reason why popularity has not been obtained. Different diet, unwillingness to intermarry with Gentiles and separate worship . . . Racial pride . . . The close connection, both by blood and faith, of English Jews with an alien community.¹⁴

In keeping with the law of the separation of components, the Medieval stereotype was disassociated from the religious traditions of Judaism and Christianity and recombined with the new myth of racialism to produce the mythology of "Aryanism."

These myth-makers assert that between the Jews and *all* other nations, there yawns a gulf deeper by far than that which divides other nations. Bernard Lazarre concluded at the end of his study of antisemitism that the Jews and their enemies combined to "differentiate them from the world," not merely from another nation, but from the world.¹⁵ As an estranged Western Jew, he thought he could rightfully criticize the isolationism of the Eastern Jews. "The Jew retains his animosities against the outside world, wherever the Talmud still predominates."¹⁶ Lazarre did not realize that the Talmud placed Jewish "chosenness" within a religious context that referred to a people long extinct. The Christian theological context also mitigated the harm of the *meta-myth* interpreting the Crucifixion in all-human terms. But in the modern world the contexts were weakened. Though Lazarre was briefly associated with Herzl in the early years of the world Zionist movement, he condemned the self-segregating impetus in Jewish nationalism:

Modern Judaism claims to be but a religious confession; but in reality it is an *ethnos* besides, for it believes it is that; for it has preserved its prejudices, egoism and its vanity as a people; a belief, prejudices, egoism and vanity which make it appear a stranger to the peoples in whose midst it exists, and here we touch upon one of the most profound causes of antisemitism . . .¹⁷

Bernard Lazarre shared neither the vanity nor the prejudice that he attributed to Jewish people; yet, he could write of these feelings as objective phenomena because they were, in his view, characteristic of the Central European Jews. While the Rabbis of Germany disclaimed any national loyalties to Jewry, and leading personalities disavowed the latent nationalism of Graetz, these claims sounded hollow because they were belied by the massive reality of isolationist, self-centered Jewry in Russia and Poland. In the eyes of Western observers, the "real" Jews were those clustered in the slums of Warsaw and Lodz, not the polished gentlemen of Paris and Berlin. Much as the German Jews tried to build up a new image of Jewish identity, they could not prevail against the impetus of the past and the spectacle of massive ethnic separateness in the lands of Central Europe. In addition to geographical proximity, the new image of the Western Jew was controverted by the constant migration of Jews from Poland and Hungary to Austria and Germany. The number of Polish Jews

settled in Germany, apart from transients, rarely fell below twenty per cent of the indigenous population. In the Austrian empire, the isolationist masses of Poland and Hungary constituted the preponderant section of the Jewish population. It is interesting to observe that Hitler, in his reminiscences, mentions that he first became conscious of antisemitism when he encountered a bearded Jew, with *kaftan*, earlocks, and ritual fringes standing on a Viennese street corner.¹⁸

Before it became the cornerstone of the Teutonic Aryan myth, antisemitism was an integral component of German nationalism. This earlier phase is exceedingly important, for it was shared by the natural leaders of the people, not only the lunatic fringe and the fevered mob.

The historian Treitschke lent his high prestige to the nationalistic brand of antisemitism. As Paul Massing summarizes it:

Treitschke's antisemitism was anchored in his nationalism, but this nationalism was still related to some of the traditional values of Western civilization. For him the national state was the most worthy object of an individual's devotion. As a consequence, Treitschke thought that the Jews were dangerous because he felt that they remained aloof from the State and the Protestant monarchy.

Treitschke's program aimed at the integration of Jews, not their elimination. It held out to Jews the possibility of complete national and social integration if they would but side with the forces of national self-assertion whose passionate advocate Treitschke had become.¹⁹

Throughout the continent of Europe, an antisemitic undertow accompanied nearly every political movement that based its appeal on the ideal of nationalism. "Antisemitism," said Franz Oppenheimer, "is the face of aggressive, chauvinistic nationalism turned toward the nation itself."²⁰

Other national minorities were generally tucked away in remote provinces or relegated toward the outer fringes of the socioeconomic structure. Even the most feverish brand of nationalism allows an alien minority the role of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." But the Jews, by virtue of their historic occupations and cultural tradition were prominently represented in the highest echelons of cultural and economic leadership. The ethnic egotism of the Germans was offended by the rapid rise of the

Jews in their midst, and sought solace in the shadowy underworld of myth and fancy. The rootedness of antisemitism in European ethnicism is made more understandable today when we behold the Asians being driven from their economic positions in East Africa almost as soon as a black nation achieves independence.

In the modern world, the appeal of nationalism was employed by the conservative forces of society, in order to counter those who pointed out the irrationality of existing institutions, or those who complained about social injustice. As a political ideology, nationalism sought to drape the veil of sanctity over the historic structure of the nation's life. Inevitably, its mood hovered on the borderland of mythology. As a living organism, spanning the generations, the nation is all-good; hence, all advocates of change are evil, un-national, subversive.

Nationalism may find its crowning myth in religion, particularly if the religion of that people is more or less confined to its own ethnic base. Following the Reformation and the fragmentation of Christianity, the English could continue to associate their ethnic pride with the symbols of the Anglican church, the Irish could effect an alliance between their national aspirations and the Catholic church, the Prussians could unite their Lutheran faith with their adoration of the State, and in the Eastern half of Europe, Polish nationalism effected a mystical union with the Catholic faith while Russian Orthodoxy came to be identified with the "soul" of the great Russian nation.

In the unreal world of mythology, the lines of meaning are not logical but sentimental and psychological, following the twisted ramifications of symbols rather than the implications of ideas. Without the bond of common symbols of hate, industrialists and army-leaders could hardly dream of choosing nihilistic racists as allies against liberals and socialists. Yet it is precisely such an alliance between the old myths and the new that the Nazis brought about, employing antisemitism as their catalytic agent. The antisemitic myth could rally the masses, by satisfying their emotional need for a sacrificial victim; by answering their incipient "intellectual" need for a simple explanation of the manifold ills of our complex society; by making use of the rutted grooves of religious prejudice; and by suggesting the inherent su-

periority of the seed and blood of the non-Jewish majority. At the same time, the Jew was an opponent worthy of the steel of the mythical image of the national hero. Did not God Himself tilt His lance against the Jews?

A conscious alliance of the conservative forces with those of the nihilistic, racist mythology could only be effected by their sharing in a common language, a common enthusiasm, and a common enemy. By itself, each group was virtually helpless. The conservatives in Germany had the army and the church on their side, but in a democracy they could rarely count on a majority of the population. The purveyors of the drug of racial mythology would normally appeal only to lunatic fringe elements. Their propaganda could rally the masses only if their obvious frauds were shielded from view by the glamour of national heroes. The conservatives needed a myth to keep the masses in line, against their manifest interests, and to oppose the rational arguments of the liberals. The myth-ridden lunatic fringe and their gutter-minded demagogues needed the fig-leaf of respectability to cover their crude nakedness. To the conservatives, the Jew was the symbol of the new liberal, industrial age; to the masses, the Jew was the powerful and cunning "outsider," and the "outsider" in the primitive mentality of the masses is altogether rightless. Hence, a union between the conservatives and the exponents of nationalistic-antisemitic mythology was natural in the context of the struggle against the liberals and the socialists, so natural in fact that either or both parties to the alliance could be persuaded that it was not a marriage of convenience at all but a suitable match.²¹

So clever a man as Hjalmar Schacht could go along with the Nazi antisemitic program and reconcile it with the conservative principles. The Jews, he writes, were not slated for extermination in the Nazi platform, but they were to be accorded the status of protected foreigners "and were to be allowed to practice as doctors, work as teachers . . ." ²² He claims that Hitler assured him that the rights of the Jews would be protected.²³

This apparent blindness of an exceedingly intelligent person is explained by the antisemitic feeling of the typical conservative.

In the interests of the Jews themselves I have always felt that it was a mistake on their part to have striven so zealously to occupy

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our cultural key-positions. Culture is rooted in religion, and the religion of the Germans is Christianity. Any culture seeking to base itself purely on reason and knowledge must lose its soul.²⁴

This resentment of the Jews on the grounds of religion is easily shunted into the realm of culture, even of race, for the ancient argument between Judaism and Christianity was not so much a matter of ideas as it was the identity of the blessed and the accursed peoples. As we have seen, it generally took the form, "Who is the Chosen People, Israel after the flesh, or Israel after the spirit?" These overtones are clearly evident in the following sentence from the same author. "As far as racial feeling towards the Jews is concerned, I have always considered the Old Testament idea of the Jews as 'the Chosen People' highly distasteful and provocative."²⁵

How could the Semite Jews forget that not they but the German Christians, at least the bankers among them, were the Chosen People?

Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, may well have been the only great statesman to utilize antisemitism as a political weapon. Though he was personally free from anti-Jewish bias, he played the game of politics with Machiavellian cynicism, allowing antisemitic agitators a free hand in order to weaken the Liberals.

The powerful and proud statesman did not disdain to align himself and Conservatism with anti-Jewish rabble rousers in times when it was relatively easy to make economic and political compromises, and Conservative power was not seriously threatened.²⁶

But Bismarck later disavowed the antisemitic agitators and sought to disassociate his cause from their vulgar myths. In the same spirit, Chancellor Caprivi warned the Conservatives against flirting with the antisemites:

Religious antisemitism began to mix with racial antisemitism and what resulted was anticapitalist antisemitism."²⁷

This wise warning was to be ignored in the late twenties by the hard-pressed industrialists of the Ruhr, who, in their fear of socialism, decided to finance Hitler's rise to power.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was evident that the antisemitic myth appealed powerfully to the frustrated masses of France, Germany, and Austria. Which group would

seek to utilize this mania of the ignorant and the embittered? Now that the anti-Christian bias of Nazism is well known, it must appear strange that Catholic groups were among the first to make cynical use of the mass-delusion of anti-Jewish hatred. But throughout the nineteenth century, the Church was engaged in a desperate rear-guard action against the spirit of the French Revolution, confounding its liberalism with its atheism, attacking its program of "liberty, equality and fraternity," as well as its secularism. The emancipated Jew was the symbol of the new, secular society, a natural ally of the liberal world. Catholic intellectuals sought inspiration in the recurrent waves of romanticism even as Jewish leaders found support in the rising tide of rationalism. It was therefore understandable that some Catholic leaders would draw upon the massive, hate-filled, pseudo-religion of the lower classes, for help in combatting the liberals, the socialists, and the secularists. In Germany, Catholic leaders began a campaign against the Jews by way of countering Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*.

Whilst the liberal German press, partly led by the Jews, was assailing the Church, the besieged party, trying to find the weak spots in the lines of attack, made a sally in the direction of the Synagogue, where the troops commanded by the Jew Lasker were encamped

The Jew who was apparently to have been the gainer, thus runs the risk of being the victim in the warfare against Christianity. This incident proves that he does not invariably play a safe game when he insists, or takes part in, religious struggles.²⁸

Germania, organ of the Ultramontagne Center, put forward the slogan, "Make Front Against New Jerusalem" to counter the slogan of Bismarck and the Liberals, "Make Front Against Rome."

The eyes of the German nation are opened at last. It sees that the struggle for civilization is the struggle against the ascendancy of the Jewish spirit and Jewish wealth. In every political movement, it is the Jew who plays the most radical and revolutionary part, waging war to the death against all that has remained legitimate, historical and Christian in national life.²⁹

In the *Affaire Dreyfus* of France, the Jesuits maintained an embittered and determined antisemitic barrage, which was terminated only by a papal pronouncement. In his *Tage-Bucher*, Herzl noted the German Kaiser's remark that antisemitism was

bound to grow in France since the Catholic Church was behind it "and the Jesuits don't let anything go, once they begin it."³⁰ Many of the mobs of the anti-Dreyfussards were led by priests, who discovered that antisemitism afforded them a common language with the confused and embittered masses. "The Jesuit magazine, *Civiltà Cattolica*, was for decades the most outspokenly antisemitic and one of the most influential Catholic magazines in the world."

"It was the Jesuits who had always best represented, both in the written and spoken word, the antisemitic school of the Catholic clergy."³¹

Having been themselves victims at various times of European mobs along with Rosicrucians and Freemasons, some Jesuits considered it a clever "political concept" to build up the specter of "secret Judah" as a counterbalance to the ghost of "secret Rome." Yet the Catholic Church as a whole never endorsed the political program of the antisemites, though for decades it did little to restrain individual publications and Orders. The Assumptionist Order in France, noted for its antisemitic zeal, acted more or less on its own. In spite of the above quotation, there is little evidence to show that the Jesuit Order, as a unit, was involved in the antisemitic campaign, though individual Jesuits sought to outflank the front of the liberals by attacking the Jews. In any case, Pope Leo XIII finally stopped the antisemitic crusades of Catholic publications, condemning them publicly. "The close of the Dreyfus case marked the end of clerical antisemitism."³²

Some Protestant preachers in Prussia sought to emulate the example of the Catholic antisemites. The philosophy of a Christian state could be dramatized, they felt, by attacking the influence of Jews. Was not the inner unity of philosophy and structure postulated by the Socialists, with their materialistic interpretation of history? Should not the opposition to Socialism be similarly bi-frontal, affirming the rightness of the economic-political order along with the body of ideas with which it was historically associated? Hence, the ideal of a Christian State, of Christian Socialism, and of a Catholic Social Order. What more natural, in an age of rapid industrialization and urbanization, than to identify the Christian way of life with the nostalgic memories of the

good old days? The concept of a Judeo-Christian tradition was still remote and incomprehensible at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Adolf Stoecker, the Kaiser's court-chaplain, was the leading personality of organized antisemitism in Germany in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. A talented demagogue, he regarded it as his mission to introduce the Christian faith into the political struggle on the side of the Kaiser and the Conservative party. Jewish converts to Christianity were in his eyes as Christian as the rest of the nation. Repeatedly he argued that his campaign was essentially pro-Christian as well as anti-Jewish. "I have no use for a movement that is merely anti-Jewish and is not also motivated by a deep love for the Gospel."³³ He also asserted that his campaign was directed, not against Jews as such, but against the so called "Jewish spirit," which constitutes the satanic foil and shadowy background, for the "Christian spirit" in the imagination of the people. "I do not attack the Jews," he said, "but only frivolous, godless, usurious, fraudulent Jewry."³⁴

Yet, in actual practice, he preferred to attack the concrete Jews, rather than the abstract Jewish spirit, so as to tap the subterranean springs of mass-hatred and mythology. This defender of the Christian Spirit drew support from the emergent group of racial antisemites, who were as bitterly anti-Christian as they were anti-Jewish. The spell of the hate-symbol was more potent than the inner logic of faith. In spite of frequent exposures of the machinations and real purposes of the racists, fundamentalist Christian antisemites continued to lend support and prestige to those who represented the utter negation of the Christian faith. Hitler, following the example of Stoecker in nineteenth-century Germany and Luger in twentieth-century Austria, was able to pose as the savior of the Christian Spirit and the founder of the Christian State, drawing support from such churchmen as Otto Dibelius, long after the nihilistic, power-philosophy of German racism was thoroughly exposed. Seduced by narrow hates, Dibelius could allow himself to overlook the fact that to the racists, Christianity was "the child of Jewish religion and Platonism, born out of wedlock." The greatest crime of the Jews, in the eyes of racial antisemites, was their bestowal of Christianity and Christian "slave-morality" upon the Teutonic master-race. But so dis-

torting is the power of symbolism that some deluded Protestant pastors could work along with the racists in arousing popular hatred of the Jews.

Christian-conservative efforts to stake off the boundary lines of "legitimate" hatred of Jews and to decide on what was right and wrong in antisemitic agitation sometimes appear as plain insanity. A Protestant clergyman of the Stoecker school, reviewing a long list of antisemitic leaflets published by the racial school, wrote indignantly:

To be rejected are Numbers 1, 4-5, 13, 5, 7-20, 24, 28, 30, Number 32 especially 24. A conservative and Christian Social believer in the Bible cannot recommend literature of this kind. Nobility and the clergy may smile in the security of a good conscience when they are insinuatingly depicted as being antisemitic for selfish interests (as in Number 4); it might still be tolerated that the bad books of atheist antisemites are recommended (as in Number 5 and others) for very few will buy them; but that heathen religions are exalted at the expense of the Revelation of the Old Testament (Numbers 28, 30, 32); that the tales of the Old Testament are treated as legend; that Abraham (with all the Samaritans) is declared the servant of the devil (Numbers 20, 34); that the privileged position of the Jewish people, explicitly termed as undeserved in the Bible, is called "Jewish arrogance in the Bible" even before the rejection of Christ (Number 1); that Schopenhauer's judgment on "the miserable Jew religion" as revealed in Genesis and in all historical books of the Old Testament is approvingly quoted (Number 17) — all this must arouse the indignation of every Christian.³⁶

The association of clerical antisemites with racial antisemites may be understood, in part as the perversion resulting from a common hate-symbol and, in part, as the result of their resistance to a common enemy, the Socialists and the Liberals. Both Socialism and Liberalism presented their appeal to reason; their opponents felt that they had to resort to the narrow zealotries of mass-hate, which could be evoked by ancient symbols and myths.

Racial antisemitism is a reversion to primitive mythology, though it utilizes the modern perspectives of the Darwinian world. It is a contemporary version of the pagan religions of nature. In nature, the individual is of no account, only the species. Hence, man should apply explicitly the laws of the "survival of the fittest," with which nature implicitly operates. In nature's war of "all against all," the preservation of the race takes pre-

cedence over the preservation of the individual. Hence, a scale of values: All ethical principles and moral values are only surface projections of the underlying biological reality; they are to be used and abused in keeping with the needs of the race, without illusion, without moral restraints, without pity.

The anti-rational and anti-humanist mythology of racism poses a perpetual threat in every generation because it is so congenial to the mass-mind. Every issue appears to the simple-minded in the form of "Who are the right and good people?" instead of "What is right and good?" In the Medieval era, when heresies were the targets of hatred, the disputed dogmas were for the masses only symbols and banners of the "Good" vs. the "Bad." In the age of nationalism, this predisposition of the people was elevated to the highest rank of importance. What is nationalism if not the idolization of folk-feeling? The less sophisticated and the less cultivated this folk-feeling is, the more "authentic" it may be presumed to be. But in addition to folk-feeling, people also possess a native sense of fairness and a love of truth. When folk-feeling is pitted against the counsels of rationality, which force is likely to prevail? Obviously, the answer depends upon many factors, for a people does not lose its sanity in normal times and under normal conditions.

Racism as an all-embracing ideology cannot of itself become a decisive force in modern times, because rationality and common sense usually prevail. Like the cults which flourish in California from time to time, it can obtain the adherence of fanatical believers, but only in limited numbers. It can become a massive movement only when major forces or classes take it up and lend it the aura of their respectability. For a while, at the turn of the century, the situation of the Jews in Germany and France deteriorated steadily, as the disgruntled masses were manipulated by clerical politicians, demagogues and Conservatives for their diverse purposes. For a brief span, Ahlwardt, a conscienceless demagogue and precursor of Nazism, was even more successful than Stoecker in building a mass-following on the basis of antisemitism. His appeal was couched in the language and mythology of pure racism eschewing the sheltering symbolism of Christian mythology. For this reason his downfall was as quick as his rise. Without the support of the church, the army, the aristocracy, or the industrial plutocrats, he could not be taken seriously.

In the two decades preceding the First World War, the tide of antisemitism in Germany and France was at a low ebb. The Russian pogroms of 1904-1906 were deeply shocking to all sections of opinions in the West. Wrote August Bebel in 1906, "It is comforting to know that in Germany it will never have a chance to exert a decisive influence upon the life of the state and society."³⁰

Could the Jews of Western Europe, specifically the Jews of Germany, have done anything to keep the smoldering fires of antisemitism from bursting into a conflagration? In one sense, all historic events are determined, but in view of the potential of human reason to overcome the distortions of mythology, the point of this question is, could any educational effort undertaken by Jews have stemmed the Nazi tide?

It is clear that the Jews could not persuade the demagogues and their hangers-on, maddened by the scent of victory. It is also clear that there were many for whom the myths of Nazism had become an intoxicating faith, which demanded human sacrifices, like the devotees of Moloch, like the Roman mob at the circuses, like the Medieval populace at the autos-da-Fè, like the toothless cronies at the Paris guillotine.

But there were large sections of the German people, who were misguided and misled. They raised the lunatic fringe to power, through a series of misunderstandings. They confused their own mild, emotional antipathies with the ruthless nihilism of the Nazis. They imagined that Satan could only work on one side of the street; hence, the enemy of their enemy must be a friend, and an anti-communist must be a Conservative. The army leaders, the churches, the industrial magnates did not know the full extent of their treachery to humanity and faith, when they pulled the strings that brought Hitler to power. To this extent, an educational opportunity was missed, but we must remember that the German army, the landed aristocracy, and the churches were traditionally closed to Jews.

The large German working class was never won over by the Nazis, with the Social Democrats and Communists retaining the loyalty of the workers to the very end of the Weimar Republic.

The crucial link in the chain of events that lifted the Nazis to power was the disorientation of the middle class. This decisive

group in the national balance of power was normally liberal and emotionally stable, with excellent channels of communication to the non-German and Jewish worlds. During the nineteenth century, they had accepted the Jews as their partners in the building of a new, democratic, non-clerical society. They were slowly catching up emotionally with the liberal principles that they had accepted intellectually. They were beginning to accept the Jews as part of the German nation, different only in respect of religion, when the new racial mythology appeared on the horizon. This class of people, the vast majority of the German nation, long remained hesitant and unconvinced. Stoecker himself assured the first International Congress of Antisemites, held in 1882 at Dresden, that if the German people were given the choice between expelling the Jews and expelling the antisemites, they would certainly choose the latter course.³⁷

It was the frustration and bewilderment of this group that extinguished the light of humanism in Germany. Yet this group is normally more open to the flow of ideas than the rest of society. If non-Germanic influence from across the national borders could not stop this headlong rush to a mythical wonderland, the influence of German Jewry could hardly be expected to turn the trick. Numbering only one per cent of the population, their political power was negligible, even if their educational attainments were immense.

The Jewish spokesmen who set out to grasp the hands of their German brothers in the formation of a new nation were hampered by several factors. We have already mentioned the continuity of Western Jewish settlements with those of the East, where the alien ethnic character of Jewish life was quite obvious. The perennial persecutions to which the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe were subject served to project their character and their fate into the arena of international affairs. And the ethnic feelings of the Western Jews were stimulated and aroused by the plight of their brethren in the East. The organized efforts of French and German Jews to help their Eastern brethren, financially and politically, were dramatic expressions of Jewish solidarity, belying all formal declarations to the contrary. In the anti-semitic literature of the period, we find continual references to international Jewish philanthropy as proof of international Jewish unity.

In recent years, Jewish nationalists have been wont to assert the unity of Jewish fate the world over as a dogma. "One people, one destiny." This dogma is manifestly contradicted by the growth of American Jewry and the rise of the State of Israel at the very time when Central European Jewry was annihilated and Russian Jewry was paralyzed. Actually, it was the diversity of destiny in East and West during the nineteenth century that set the stage for the tragic pathos of European Jewry. There is a mutual drag of Jews upon one another, not an identity of destiny. Emancipation of Jews in Western Europe could not succeed in integrating the Jews completely into Western society, so long as the vast reservoir of Jewish population in the East was kept from westernization and emancipation by inner and outer forces. Moreover, the cynical policy of deliberately employing antisemitism as a means of rallying the masses behind the banner of political reaction was imported by the minions of the Czar from Germany and France. Improving upon the techniques of their Western teachers, the Russian anti-liberal forces set in motion the policy of encouraging pogroms against their Jewish citizens. In turn, these violent outbursts of popular hate drove the Jewish intellectuals of Russia back into a hastily reconstructed inner ghetto of Hebraic nationalism. And the impact of Russian-Jewish thought, reflecting the wretched realities of a besieged nation, served to reinforce the residual ethnic loyalties of the Western Jews.

Nevertheless, the intellectual leaders of Western Europe adhered steadfastly to the thesis that, following the Emancipation, the Jews were no longer a nation but a religious group. This thesis was championed alike by the neo-Orthodox and by the Reform-Conservative. If formal declarations could create situations, the status of the Jewish group as a religious denomination would have become fixed and unquestioned. But the impetus of the Jewish tradition made it difficult for Western Jews to ignore the national character of Jewish life altogether. The literary sources of Jewish authority and the historical patterns of Jewish ritual transmitted the impetus of ethnic loyalty. Reform Judaism even reinvigorated the racist trend in the tradition by asserting that the Jewish "race" was peculiarly gifted in the domain of religion: the chosen people has been charged with the "mission" of converting the world to monotheism. The average layman em-

phasized the ethnic character of Jewish loyalty by the very fact of his remaining within the fold, in spite of the sheer tenuousness of his convictions and his virtual neglect of religious observances. Similarly, the Christian tradition identified the Jews as an ethnic group, the descendants of "Israel after the flesh," not merely a band of adherents to the "Mosaic persuasion."

For this reason, the Christian liberals and socialists, eager to overcome the lingering venom of antisemitism, urged that the liberal Jews join the Christian world, without any reservations. They recognized that antisemitism represented a perpetual menace to the liberal institutions of Western Europe. They felt that Jews should help in the elimination of this poison by sacrificing the ethnic feelings that lurk inevitably below the surface of the Jewish faith. The non-fundamentalist Jews, the liberals maintained, should join whatever church prevails in their respective countries and thereby become part and parcel of European society. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu wrote in 1895:

The Talmud which out-Thoras the Thora, tends to make the Jews, by virtue of their anxiety for ceremonial cleanness, a sort of separate caste, like the castes of India.³⁸

Now in order that the Jews may become entirely nationalized in the countries where they live, Judaism must become denationalized. If the Jew would become a citizen like any other among us, he must first of all rid himself of this tribal spirit; and Talmudic ritualism is saturated with it.³⁹

Leroy-Beaulieu's program was not essentially different from that of classical Reform. But many liberals considered that not only national exclusiveness, but the slightest trace of religious particularism was an intolerable obstacle to the even pace of integration, in an age of rabid nationalist fanaticism.

Theodor Mommsen was a loyal defender of the Jews in Germany against the attacks of antisemitism. With great ardor and courage, he exposed the shoddy patrioteering of that prophet of German nationalism, the historian Treitschke, who was his colleague on the faculty of the Berlin University. The new antisemitism, he asserted, derives from the worship of the modern idol, the national state.

This is the essential kernel of the madness which has now gripped the masses and its prophet is rightly Herr von Treitschke. What does

it mean when he demands from the Israelites that they should become German? They are that now, as good as he or I.⁴⁰

Treitschke spoke of folk-feeling and described antisemitism as the natural reaction of Germanic folk-feeling against a foreign element. But, asks Mommsen, is it not the duty of intellectuals to give direction to folk-feeling instead of sanctioning its vulgar manifestations?

Whoever studies history knows that a nationality changes by slow and gradual degrees with many and diverse transitions.⁴¹

At the same time, Mommsen pleaded with Jewish leaders for their help in hastening the progress of their amalgamation with the German nation:

The blame for this [distance in feeling] rests indeed in part with the Jews. The word Christendom no longer signifies today precisely what it did in the past, but it is still the one word which embraces the character of the contemporary international civilization and in which millions upon millions discover their common unity in this world of many nations. To remain outside these limits and within the nation is possible but difficult and fraught with many dangers But it is a notorious fact that many Jews are not restrained by reasons of conviction from going over to the Christian fold, but by other feelings which I can comprehend but not approve. Also, the great number of specifically Jewish societies which exist here in Berlin, for instance, appear to me to be definitely evil, insofar as they are not purely religious. I would not join a society, which is constituted for the purpose of helping only people of Holstein, and, with all due respect to the achievements and strivings of these societies, I can only see in them the after-effects of the old status of a "protected Jewish community." If these after-effects are to disappear on one side, they must also disappear on the other side; on both sides, there is still much to be done. A price is demanded of all who would become part of a great nation; the people of Hanover, of Hesse and we of Schleswig-Holstein agreed to pay it, though we could well feel that a part of our inner being was thus sacrificed. We brought this offering for the sake of our common fatherland. The Jews, too, have no Moses to lead them back to the Promised Land; whether they sell pants or write books, it is their duty, insofar as they can do it without violating their conscience, to combat the peculiarity of their existence and to batter down all the fences between them and their fellow-citizens.⁴²

But even Mommsen could only hope to allay the kind of antisemitism that derives from nationalist fanaticism. He could not and did not hope to overcome the fury of the lunatic fringe,

which showed itself in Germany at the turn of the century in the howling mobs gathered by the agitator Ahlwardt. Asked to comment on the antisemitic outbursts of the street mobs, Mommsen replied:

You are mistaken if you assume that anything at all could be achieved by reason. In years past I thought so myself and kept protesting against the monstrous infamy that is antisemitism. But it is useless, completely useless. Whatever I or anybody else could say, are in the last analysis reasons, logical and ethical arguments to which no antisemite will listen. They listen only to their own hatred and envy, to the meanest instincts. There is no protection against the mob, be it the mob of the streets or of the parlors . . . One must patiently wait until the poison has consumed itself and lost its virulence.⁴³

The socialists generally believed that antisemitism was "the socialism of fools," the dumb, distorted hatred of the proletarians, the peasants, and the middle-class against the wrong target.

The decaying artisan fights against big industry and jobbers; the little retailer against the department stores; the deeply indebted farmer against the loan shark and trader, especially the cattle and grain dealer. By the decay of these economic groups their sons are driven into a profession instead of entering their fathers' business, with the result that the professions get more and more swamped. All these groups attack the Jews who appear to them as the real exponents of money and commercial capitalism and who, furthermore, are represented among the professions by numerous and efficient individuals. What better way could these groups figure out to make an end to their distress than to eliminate the Jews?⁴⁴

In the socialist view, antisemitism was one of the typical delusions of a frustrated and dying society. Only in a society based upon cooperation and mutual help will Jew-hatred disappear along with all other ills of our time.

Wrote Edouard Bernstein in 1894:

In view of the violent competition which today dominates all spheres of economic life, the Jews cannot choose any occupation without provoking the antisemites. The emancipation of the Jews happened at a time when bourgeois society still believed in its unlimited possibilities. It can only be completed in a new society.⁴⁵

The socialist argument appealed to many Jewish intellectuals, with the result that a disproportionately large number of Jews enrolled in socialist ranks. On the whole, however, the Jews re-

mained by and large associated with the Liberals, even if individual Jewish socialists were prominent and conspicuous.

The percentage of Jews as compared with non-Jews in the party [Socialist] can be seen at conferences and conventions. It is seldom that more than ten per cent of those present are Jews. Actually, the number of Jewish participants is even smaller.¹⁶

While this percentage is larger than the ratio of the Jewish to the general population, it does not indicate a preponderance of Jewish leadership. For the most part, the Jews of Germany adhered with remarkable steadfastness to the liberal thesis that Jew-hatred is a residue of medievalism which will be gradually dissipated by the spread of enlightenment. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Liberal view seemed to be powerfully supported by the course of events. In Germany, anti-semitism was steadily on the decline from the threshold of the twentieth century until after the disaster of the First World War.

Yet it was in a German-speaking country that the Jewish countermove to modern antisemitism was conceived and formulated. In accordance with the third Newtonian law in the realm of history, an equal and opposite movement among the Jews was to be expected from the persistent challenge of the biological anti-semites. Political Zionism, representing precisely this development, was born in the mind of two Austro-Hungarian Jews, Herzl and Nordau, and launched publicly in 1897 with the convening of the World Zionist Congress.

Austria was the meeting ground of the slumbering forces of biological nationalism that were destined to tear Europe apart in two bloody holocausts. The Pan-Germans and the Pan-Slavs clashed head on in Austria, each extending its *irredentist* claims into the heart of the other's lands. While these movements were largely romantic exercises in Germany and in Russia, they occasioned daily friction in the universities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Pan movements consisted of quasi-religious enthusiasts, who gathered at emotion-laden meetings to celebrate the modern myths of "blood and soil." After his victory in 1866, Bismarck refrained from pressing Austria too hard; he knew the Empire represented the one hope for stability in the center of Europe. But the fanatical force which Bismarck himself had released could not be held in check. The Pan movements were

impelled by a religious ardor that was ancient, primitive, and ruthless, drawing its inspiration from pagan religions of nature, which antedated the rise of the Judeo-Christian religions. To these neo-pagans, the Jew was not the prophet of a universal society, but the remnant of a pre-Christian, pre-humanist, pagan era of tribes and clans. It was the ethnic character of biblical Israel that they sensed and sought to imitate, the myth of self-glorification and self-sanctification as the "treasure-people," not the universal ideals and human values of the Hebraic tradition. The Pan-Germans assured all who would listen that only the Germans possessed "character"; Dostoevsky spoke of Russia as "the only Christian people on earth," "the Christopher among the nations." To the Pan-Germans and the Pan-Slavs, "it seemed that Jews were the one perfect example of a people in the tribal sense, their organization the model the pan-movements were striving to emulate, their survival and their supposed power the best proof of the correctness of racial theories."⁴⁷

In addition to the conflicting claims of the two racial mythologies, Austria was bedeviled by the Polish nationalists, striving to turn back the clock of history, by the Czech nationalists, by the Magyar claims to a share in the master-race adventures of Teutons and Slavs. And the Jews of the Hapsburg monarchy were still largely barricaded behind the high walls of the inner ghetto. In Germany, it was possible for an opponent of both antisemitism and philosemitism to say in 1892, "Side by side with a good many defects in modern Jewry it is perhaps its highest glory that there is today not one person of culture in Germany who is not linked in intimate relations of heart and intellect with one or more Jews."⁴⁸ But in Austria, the massed Hasidic communities in Galicia, Slovakia, and Hungary, zealously guarding their quaint attire and insulated pre-Medieval ways of life, were manifestly islands of an alien folk.

Thus all the pent-up demonic forces of Europe were concentrated and superheated in that unhappy land of many contrasts, the Dual Monarchy on the banks of the Danube.

It was by no means accidental that the two founders of political Zionism were not the normal leaders of Jewish communities, reflecting the abiding concerns of Jewish life, reacting to the pressures of daily life in accord with ancient tradition. Theodor Herzl

and Max Nordau were uprooted outsiders, alien alike to the tradition of the past and to the leadership of the contemporary Jewish communities. It was as rebels that they entered the arena of Jewish life; rebels against the constituted authorities, the established procedures, the hopes and aspirations of those who were rooted in the lands of their birth.

In its extremist formulation political Zionism agreed with resurgent antisemitism in the following propositions:

1. That the emancipation of the Jews in Europe was a mistake.
2. That the Jews can function in the lands of Europe only as a disruptive influence.
3. That all the Jews of the world were one "folk," in spite of their diverse political allegiances.
4. That the Jews, unlike the other peoples of Europe, were unique and unintegrable.
5. That antisemitism was the natural expression of the folk-feeling of the European nations, hence, ineradicable.

These propositions were the exact antithesis of the axioms upon which a century of Jewish life in the West was based. West of the Russian border, the Jews of Europe had lived for several generations in freedom, achieving magnificent records in science and philosophy, industry and business. The Jewish problem, insofar as it afforded a target for the purveyors of hatred and envy, existed precisely because of the extraordinary success of Jews in the realms of finance, industry, literature, the press, and the sciences. Taking Jewish life as a whole, from the French Revolution to the Zionist Congress (1897), the total effect of all the anti-semitic movements in Western Europe amounted to no more than a series of pin pricks. In their overwhelming majorities, the peoples of Western Europe welcomed the Jews with the antisemitic mobs being recruited out of the "fools and knaves," the motley rag-tag of the disaffected and the rejected. The aristocracy of birth and the aristocracy of intellect mingled freely and inter-married frequently with Jews. The liberals and the enlightened leadership of the Labor and Conservative elements could normally be relied upon to support any Jewish cause. Faced with the enmity of the mob and the criminality of self-seeking demagogues, Jewish authorities could well feel that the advance of enlightenment would overcome the lingering prejudices of the semi-literate masses. They diagnosed the occasional outbursts of

fanatical fury as the final desperate lunges of frustrated and embittered laggards doomed to oblivion. Furthermore, if perchance the Jewish leaders had accepted the theses of political Zionism, they would have undermined the position of their own staunch friends who fought by their side for a free society, in which all men and women are valued as individuals, regardless of creed or ethnic origin.

Herzl and Nordau thus met with the resolute opposition of the spiritual and lay leaders of all the Jewish communities in Western Europe, from Max Gudemann, Chief Rabbi of Vienna, to the Association of German Rabbis, from the leaders of Jewish philanthropies in America to Baron De Hirsch in Paris and Baron Rothschild in England. In Zionist literature, the German Rabbis who protested against the holding of the World Zionist Congress in Munich, the site originally chosen, are castigated collectively as *Protest-Rabbiner*. Yet the action of all these Jewish leaders was singularly unanimous. Representing an entrenched and prosperous community and being liberals in politics, they placed their trust in the continuous advance of the liberal world-view. While they could not foresee the catastrophes yet to come, they knew that the nations of Europe could not do without the vision of a universal and free society. Disasters aplenty there might be in the womb of the unknown, but whenever the nations finally shake themselves loose from the miasma of ethnic delusions and regained control of their destiny, they can not but return to the original goals of the emancipation. As it happened, the two decades between the convening of the Zionist Congress (1897) and the outbreak of the First World War were singularly happy years for the Jews of Western Europe. The dark shadows of hate receded steadily, and the liberal spirit seemed to advance with giant steps.

On the free side of the Russian border, Herzl and Nordau could only obtain the allegiance of uprooted students from the vast reservoir of Russian Jewry, of stray disillusioned intellectuals and disenchanting liberals, retreating into the shadows of an imaginary dreamland. Along with these refugees from antisemitism, there were gathered to the banner of Zionism the cultural Zionists of the Russian lands and a sprinkling of philanthropists from the Western countries, eager to help their poor brethren build a secure haven for themselves.

Though Herzl and Nordau represented the Jewish reaction to the sting of antisemitism, they evoked at the same time a renewed sense of pride in the hearts of the rebuffed and the rejected. It was the enemy who pushed them back into the ghetto, but on returning home they could feel that they had at last discovered their own souls. The disciples of Herzl and Nordau, as far as they may have wandered from the fold, could feel that they had become "authentic" Jews, as soon as they lifted the banner of Zion reborn. They could even bring themselves to villify the lay and spiritual leaders of Western Jewry as renegades to the national cause. For political Zionism does in fact represent one of the four basic versions of Judaism, deriving from the character of Jewish consciousness, which, we noted earlier is quadri-polar. It constitutes the reassertion of the supreme worth of the ethnic base of Judaism, with all other phases sinking to the level of the derivative and the subservient. It is one of the four fundamental categories into which a Jewish philosophy of life may normally fall, though as a matter of fact it arose as an equal and opposite reaction to the challenge of racial antisemitism.

The diary of Herzl affords us some penetrating insights into the mentality of resurgent Jewish nationalism, particularly in respect to the five points it shares with the racist antisemites: —

1. *The assertion that the emancipation was a failure.* In his letter to Bismarck, asking for an interview, Herzl argued that it was a catastrophic error to accord full rights to the Jews. Emancipation, in his view, should have been gradual with the condition of total assimilation being attached to the granting of full rights.⁴⁹

Total assimilation could only mean the final disappearance of the Jewish community. "The way to total assimilation," he wrote to the German Kaiser, "goes through the official church of the country."⁵⁰

Herzl rejected this path of total assimilation for himself not because of any lingering faith in Judaism, but on account of the inherent humiliation that attaches to such a specious change of identity. If the conversion of Jews to the "established church of the country" could have been carried out with any degree of dignity, he would have urged that policy. Thus at the age of 33, he

addressed a letter to Pope Leo XIII offering to "solve the Jewish question" by leading a mass-movement for the conversion of all Jews "with dignity."

Help me against the antisemites and I shall lead a big movement for a free and dignified conversion of Jews to Christianity.⁶¹

The element of "dignity" would be supplied by the leaders remaining Jews even while they led their children and followers to the baptismal font.

In general, the Diaries are filled with references to the loss of "Jewish honor." The notion that the Jews lack a sense of honor because they are collectively without political power was a commonplace in antisemitic literature.

This notion derived from the axioms of the German historians, following Ranke's lead who taught that a nation's power is an expression of its moral integrity. "A spiritual nature appears in force as such"; hence, a nation that is not geared for the exertion of force on the international arena is devoid of spiritual stature. "You can tell me of few important wars of which it cannot be proved that true moral energy won the victory." These sentiments were in the air at the end of the nineteenth century, and the Zionist movement could hardly be expected to escape their influence.⁶²

Hertzl was convinced that only by creating a state of their own could Jews regain honor. Rhapsodizing on his vision of a Jewish state, he foresaw the restoration of "Jewish honor unknown for 2,000 years."⁶³ Anticipating the emigration of Jews to their own state and their surrendering coveted positions and valued properties to Gentile natives who will gratefully "shake their hands," he added, "here, too, the beginning of Jewish honor."⁶⁴

That the Emancipation brought about a humiliating disintegration of the Jewish personality was the standard assumption of Zionist rhetoric. Some Russian-Jewish writers declaimed grandiloquently on the loss of the "national" character of the Jews, when the Emancipation released them from the ghettos and conferred upon them the status of citizens. The Western Jews were "slaves in freedom," Ahad Ha'am maintained, while the Jews of the Pale were "free men in slavery." The "inner slavery" theme was repeated in Zionist rhetoric for half-a-century, in complete disregard of the fact that, whenever Jews were given a choice, they preferred to live as free individuals in a free society, in the

Western manner, rejecting the opportunity to live as a closed corporation, in the medieval manner. In the latter case, they would retain intact their ethnic solidarity and their religious disciplines. While secular Zionists would have shuddered at the thought of submitting to the disciplined unity of the medieval religious community, they longed for the restoration of the medieval corporate society, but on an ethnic-cultural, secular basis.⁵⁵

2. *The notion that in the Diaspora, Jews could only function as a disruptive factor.* This conclusion would appear to be axiomatic to all believers in the racist "religion of nature." Since it was contrary to "nature" for Jews to live among other nations, they cannot but supply "officers and sergeants to the army of the revolution."

Herzl urged this argument with persistent vigor on the German Kaiser, the agents of the Russian Czar, and in all his conversations with Conservative statesmen.

In a letter to the German Kaiser, he wrote:

Our presently widespread movement leads everywhere a bitter battle against the revolutionary parties which rightly recognize it as an enemy.⁵⁶

In his letter to Countess Suttner, pleading for her help in arranging an audience with the Czar, he maintained that the Zionist cause robs the revolutionary parties of their appeal.

The despairing Jews would all become anarchists if Zionism did not draw them into its pathway.⁵⁷

Interesting in this connection is a letter of Prince Bernhard von Bulow, Chancellor of Germany, commenting on Herzl's interview with the Kaiser:

Dr. Herzl spoke of the participation of Jews in revolutionary movements, directing his remarks apparently to the Jews of Germany. I pointed out that poisonous plants may be found at the border of every vineyard . . . I had refuted Herzl's attack against Jewish emancipation; I expressed the view that the Emancipation in no way lowered human freedom and dignity; I cautioned against the creation of an attitude in Germany or in the world that would have far reaching consequences . . . I asserted that the German Jews as a whole have shown themselves to be politically firm supporters of security and order; I pointed out to Dr. Herzl the great dangers for German Jewry that are bound up with the attempt to open up the Jewish

question. The future will show whether I meant it for good or ill. I must openly declare that I am an opponent of Zionism.⁵⁸

3. *The unity of the Jewish people.* Well-known is the slogan of Herzl, *Die Juden sind ein Volk*, *ein Volk*, the Jews are a people, one people. The revolutionary impact of this phrase can be fully understood only in the light of the intellectual *mise en scene* in German Europe. The *Volk* was conceived as a natural, organic entity, which expresses its native genius in its quest for unity and political power. The assertion that the Jews were a *Volk* was intended to stress the biological as well as the political insularity of Jews. It was meant to deny that, short of total disappearance, Jews could become part of any European nation.

This denial was precisely the thesis of all antisemitic agitators. Whereas the liberals saw the Jewish citizens as individuals of Hebraic ancestry and Mosaic faith accepting political citizenship and spiritual association in a covenant of fraternity, the racial antisemites insisted that the quality of "peoplehood" (*Volkstum*) was blood-based. It can neither be alienated nor acquired.⁵⁹

Hermann Ahlwardt, notorious antisemitic agitator, expressed this "volkist" view in the German Reichstag, (1895):

A Jew who was born in Germany does not thereby become a German; he is still a Jew. Therefore, it is imperative that we realize that Jewish racial characteristics differ so greatly from ours that a common life of Jews and Germans under the same law is quite impossible because the Germans will perish.⁶⁰

The kind of unity which is postulated in Herzl's assertion of *ein Volk* was quite different in tone from the philanthropic sense of sympathy which Jews had always displayed toward persecuted brethren, as different as the International Red Cross is from the projected vision of a world government. The organization in 1860 of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* reflected the traditional pattern of mutual aid among Jews, without any nationalistic or political overtones. The Alliance established a network of Jewish schools throughout the Near East. It derived support from German, British, and American Jews. The Alliance mobilized the help of the rich Jewries of the West for the benefit of the backward communities in Asia and North Africa, without pretending to operate a Jewish super-government that would express the *ethos* of the Jewish "folk."

The *Alliance* schools aimed to integrate the Jews into the various lands of their birth; occasionally, they prepared their students for emigration to the new lands of opportunity across the Atlantic Ocean. Conceived in the spirit of the American and French Revolutions, the Western philanthropists assumed that the salvation of the Jews in the backward areas of the globe would come from the spread of European liberalism.

On the other hand, the reactionaries of Europe sought support for their intransigence in the myths of "blood and soil." While the liberals thought in terms of the citizen and the state, the reactionaries insisted on the reality of the "folk" and its divinely chosen "leader" (*Fuhrer*).

In the mental underworld of racist antisemitism, the myth of Jewish unity always loomed large and menacing, finding imaginative expression at last in the notorious forgeries, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Herzl credits his own grasp of the nature of the Jewish people to the stimulus provided by his reading of Eugen Dühring's infamous work, *Die Judenfrage als Frage des Rassencharacters*, which first appeared in 1881.⁶¹ For the pseudo-scientific racist, Christianity was a Jewish ruse, foisted upon the unsuspecting Nordic races. The "Semitic spirit" of Christianity was, according to these mystics of blood and race, utterly incompatible with the native lust, belligerency, and "honor" of the Nordics. In scattered passages, the philosopher Nietzsche, who despised the anti-semites, appeared to lend credence to the new myths of the racists. In view of the popularity of the racist views at the turn of the century; we can understand how a self-respecting Jew of the caliber of Herzl could be so fascinated by this mythological creed as to become oblivious to considerations of prudence or decency. In his negotiations with the statesmen of different countries, he presumed to bargain with the Jews of the world as if they were a unitary, political block that could be delivered for a price. We find him offering "the Jews" to England, arguing that "England will receive 10 million agents for its expansion and its influence."⁶² On the other hands, he pleaded with the Kaiser "that we need a Protectorate, the German would be for us the most preferred." In all earnestness he thought he could trade on the international market with Jewish loyalties the world over. Even when Barons

Rothschild and Hirsch rejected his plan, he was certain that he could speak for all "the poor Jews." "It is the cause of the poor Jews, not that of the rich."⁶³

4. *The uniqueness of the Jewish people.* Herzl himself did not subscribe to the antisemitic thesis that, of all the nationalities in Europe, the Jews alone were incapable of being integrated into their native lands. On the contrary, he and Nordau believed that two generations of freedom from the antisemitic menace would be sufficient to assimilate the Jews of Europe, so little did they esteem the religious loyalties of their people. In some of their addresses, they argued that the establishment of a Jewish state, would accelerate the pace of assimilation in the Diaspora by removing the intractable elements.

But the impact of the Zionist vision released a powerful tidal wave of Jewish romanticism. It signaled the shattering of the barriers of sham and pretense which dammed up long suppressed resentments. Political Zionism kindled the flame of dignity in the hearts of thousands of people, because it was embraced on the rebound from a hectic, headlong rush toward the oblivion of assimilation. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Jewish people were expected to become citizens of European society. There was certainly no disgrace in the opportunity to assume a new, supplementary personality, that of a modern European, even if the peculiar form of that civilization was French in France, German in Germany, Italian in Italy. The Jew could only rise to a higher level of self-fulfillment when he dedicated himself to the task of being a good European. Unhurt in his own being, the Jew could allow his religious heritage its due place in his life, in accordance with his convictions or his lack of any convictions. In the latter case, many a liberal embraced a Christian faith as "an entrance-ticket to European civilization."

But, as German nationalism became steadily more racist and biological, the efforts of Jewish intellectuals to become fully Germanic were doomed to receive frequent rebuffs from the newly belligerent Teutonic Aryans. Jews could never become sufficiently German or French to satisfy the nationalists. And the *mystique* of biological nationalism generated its own brand of witch-hunters, for whom every manifest Jewish virtue was proof of a sinister

ethnic vice. In their turn, many Jews took the unoffending Gentile liberals for granted and regarded the antisemitic demagogues as the spokesmen of all non-Jews.

Max Nordau, who in the years of childhood and adolescence received an excellent Orthodox upbringing, rebelled as a young adult against his heritage and plunged with all the fire of his soul into the task of molding himself into a new, Germanic image.

When I became fifteen years of age, I left the Jewish ways and Bible studies. Thenceforth, Judaism remained a mere memory, although a pleasant one. And from then on I felt that I was a German, and a German only."

He did not desert his faith, however, because of his love for his mother, "lest I embitter her life by leaving the religion of my ancestors, and lest I bring disgrace upon the memory of my revered father which I cherish in my heart . . . Thus I remained without any contact with Judaism from the sixteenth year of my life to my forties. In accordance with my views, opinions and feelings I considered myself a German national from head to toe."⁶⁴

As a "German," Nordau out-Teutoned the Teutons in their contempt for the Bible. "Its philosophy is childish and its morality, as expressed in the Old Testament's unforgiving vindictiveness of God, in the New in the parable of the laborer of the last hour, in the episodes of Magdalen and the adulteress, in Christ's attitude toward his mother, is revolting."⁶⁵

Nordau saw "degeneracy" everywhere, in the greatest geniuses, in whole nations and classes, and the decisive stigmata of "degeneracy" were for him all expressions of mysticism. What then could he think of a people, whose sole preoccupation has been religion, ever since they ascended the stage of history?

The return of intellectuals of Nordau's type to the Jewish community could only transpire by way of a psychical upheaval, comparable to religious conversion. For such, the Jewish people, apart from its faith and its religious tradition, suddenly took on a mystical glow. And mysticism, reflecting the inner life of man was no longer a symptom of degeneracy, but a mark of spiritual health, at least the ethnic kind of mysticism. The nation's invisible qualities and intangible virtues acquired a golden aura. Assimilation, or rather, the attitude of all who fail to see the truth of the new revelation, became the primary evil.

The vision of political Zionism was itself a saving reality, implying a new and radical existential commitment, bringing a sense of peace and authenticity apart from its practical significance as a solution of the Jewish question. The program of the Zionists, even if its goal appeared distant, was a public affirmation of integrity.

The seed of romantic nationalism in the writings of Herzl and Nordau was developed further by their intellectual successors. Martin Buber, in the first phase of his career, became editor of the Zionist organ, *Die Welt*, and the most eloquent spokesman in the West of Zionist romanticism. In a series of addresses to Jewish university students, he outlined the new *mystique* of resurgent folkism.

Now the folk is to him a community of people, who were, are and will be a community of dead, living and yet unborn, who together constitute a unity; and this is the unity which he perceives as the ground of his own "I," his "I" which is but a necessary link eternally determined to occupy a definite place in this great chain. What all the people in this great chain have created and will create, that he feels to be the work of his own inner life, what they have experienced and will experience, that he perceives to be his own inner fate. The past of his folk is his own personal memory, the future of his folk is his personal task. The way of his folk teaches him to understand his own self and to will his own self.⁶⁶

With this concept of German folkdom as his premise, Buber went on to maintain that the Jewish soul is uniquely disposed to sense truly the metaphysical duality of existence and to respond to the spirit of true religion. As a faithful disciple of the German Romantic movement, Buber claimed for the Jewish "folk" all the mystical signs of unique superiority that the diverse European romanticists have claimed as the peculiar possessions of their own respective national souls. The Jew is more "ear-man" than "eye-man"; living in "time," rather than in "space," concerned with the "Divine Ought" rather than with the "Human Is"; unifying the distraught world, not by his thought, nor by his creed, but by his deed. In their flush of enthusiasm, Jewish romantics used the phrases and slogans of the Teutonic prophets of "soil and blood."

The young Buber joined the folk-mystics in preaching the new religion of metaphysical ethnicism. "All religious creation, all genuine personal religion is a discovering and a taking up of an

ancient treasure, an unfolding and a liberating of the grown subterranean folk-religion."⁶⁷

Some German and French historians maintain that the German people are peculiarly liable to succumb to the beguiling doctrines of romanticism. However, it appears that romanticism is simply the offspring of hurt pride, the articulation of the mood of "return" in the dark speech of poetry and metaphysics. "When the German spirit follows its own path, it is the spirit of romanticism. Its classic ideal can only be realized with foreign assistance." This judgment of a German historian applies equally as well to Jewish and all other brands of folk-romanticism. The essence of romanticism is the endeavor to repudiate "foreign assistance," to attain the "pure" inner spirit of the nation. But so universal is the human constitution that even the retreat from the ordered and the rational in quest of the authentic, the ethnic soul, the creative, the subterranean folk-religion, is also common to all ethnic groups in the same culture.⁶⁸

Zionist folkism has penetrated the writings of Anglo-American Jewry, though the prevailing current of thought in these countries has always been liberal and humanitarian. Ludwig Lewisohn was by far the most eloquent spokesman of Zionist thought in America, and his many books are replete with scorn for all who hope for a Jewish future in the democratic countries of the Western world. His philosophy of Jewish life may well be characterized as "spite-Judaism." For he did not share in any of the principal beliefs of Judaism, nor was he raised in a Hebraic atmosphere. His Jewishness was compounded altogether of reactions against the rationalism of the West, on the one hand, and against the intolerance of the antisemites, on the other hand. And his readers were charmed by his rhetoric because they too were motivated by this twofold disillusionment.

Morris Rafael Cohen summarizes Lewisohn's fervid prose as follows:

It seems cruel to link such an ardent Zionist as Mr. Lewisohn with Hitler and Mussolini, even ideologically. But the fact is that he does agree with them not only in their dogmatic racial fatalism but also in one of the conclusions that they and others draw from it, and that is that the democratic liberal regime of emancipation and toleration has not only failed but cannot and indeed ought not to succeed. From the way Mr. Lewisohn writes, one would suppose that the emancipation of the Jews from the ghetto was a calamity second

only to the destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth. By implication he is committed to the view that one born a Jew cannot enter completely in English, French or German culture, not only because he will not be allowed to, but because it is contrary to fate or God's Will.⁶⁹

It is idle to pursue the paradoxes and perplexities of Zionist folkism. Suffice it to state that the enormities characteristic of the dark mood of wounded pride found their expression, at one time or another, in Zionist literature.

5. *The insistence on the naturalness and inevitability of antisemitism.* It was Treitschke, the influential super-nationalist, who first wrote of antisemitism as the "natural expression of folk-feeling." But even Treitschke was not a racist. He thought it natural for the Germans to resent the liberal and cosmopolitan spirit of the Jews in their midst, and he urged the Jews to become forthwith fervent Prussian nationalists. As German nationalism became steadily more racist, the concept of folk-feeling also became progressively more blood-based.

Herzl and Nordau⁷⁰ assumed that Jewishness was a racial quality.⁷¹ Accordingly, antisemitism was essentially neither a remnant of Medieval fanaticism nor an artificial device for the manipulation of the mob, but an expression of genuine folk-feeling. Herzl wrote in his diary of his "understanding" of antisemitism.⁷² "The antisemites were right. Let us not begrudge them this acknowledgment since we too shall be happy."⁷³ Throughout his brief, meteoric career, Herzl looked to the antisemites for moral and political support. "The antisemites will be our most dependable friends, the antisemitic countries our allies."⁷⁴

The mood and temper of political Zionism consisted of two elements, the denigration of Jewish life in the contemporary, post-emancipation world and the rhapsodic portrayal of the glory of Zion reborn. In order to demonstrate the first thesis, the Zionists tended to describe the liberal vision as illusory and the anti-liberal, maniacal ravings of the antisemites as the "natural" reaction of European peoples to the presence of Jews among them. Thus, strangely enough, Zionist literature offers a multitude of parallels to the antisemitic party-line. Ezekiel Kaufman has exposed the viciousness and fallaciousness of this brand of "antisemitism out of love" in the classic literature of Zionism. He point-

ed out the absurdity of the argument that it was a "moral sin" or a "national crime" for Jews to live as citizens of different countries. Jews were not, as A. D. Gordon put it, "parasites in material things, perhaps even more in spiritual things." Labor-Zionist ideologists, like I. H. Brenner, combined their hatred of religion, of capitalists, of the bourgeois mentality, and of the liberal worldview into one whipping boy — "the ghetto-Jew." "From the streets of Berdichev to those of Cracow and from the bazaars of Constantinople to the shopping centers of Buenos Aires, the same life of indolence, the same essentially immoral life." To the fanatical Zionist socialists, the Jew of history was "unproductive," profiting from the labors of others, hence, an "exploiter" and a "parasite." They lived "the life of dogs who flatter and serve their masters"; they were a "kind of inhuman humanity, called Jews, wounded dogs."⁷⁵

Amazing indeed are the lengths to which the pressure of propaganda will drive people. The explanation of this phenomenon is not to be sought in any personal idiosyncracies of individual writers but in the mood of rebellion which the political Zionist movement fostered. It was a rebellion against the tragedy of Jewish homelessness — a tragedy which was real. But this rebellion could not be achieved without the total pulverization of faith in a liberal, free world. In turn, faith in politics as in religions, is not merely a sober balancing of alternative possibilities; it is an impassioned affirmation of values, a radical reorientation of the total personality, a vision, a hope, and a philosophy of life. Hence, "the negation of the Diaspora" led to the repudiation, complete and inexorable, of two-thousand years of historic experience, negating not only the homelessness itself but also the values of Judaism, as they had been built up during the entire period of post-Maccabean history. If young Jews were to be inspired to forsake the advantages of living in Europe and America, they had to be taught to say "No" with all the fire of their souls to the manifold achievements of Jews in the Western world. This is why Zionist propaganda at times approached the insanities and inanities of racist antisemitism, with its denunciation of the "parasitism" of Jewish commercial enterprise, and the "sin of living in exile."

Jacob Klatzkin and Nahum Goldmann were the exponents of this mood in post-war, pre-Hitler Germany.

The national viewpoint taught us to understand the true nature of antisemitism, and this understanding widens the horizons of our national outlook

In the age of enlightenment antisemitism was included among the phenomena that are likely to disappear along with other forms of prejudice and iniquity. The antisemites, so the rule stated, were the laggard elements in the march of progress. Hence, our fate is dependent on the advance of human culture, and its victory is our victory

In the period of Zionism, we learned that antisemitism was a psychic-social phenomenon that derives from our existence as a nation within a nation. Hence, it cannot change, until we attain our national end. But if Zionism had fully understood its own implications, it would have arrived, not merely as a psycho-sociological explanation of this phenomenon, but also as a justification of it. It is right to protest against its crude expressions, but we are unjust to it and distort its nature so long as we do not recognize that essentially it is a defense of the integrity of a nation, in whose throat we are stuck, neither to be swallowed nor to be expelled

And when we are unjust to this phenomenon, we are unfair to our own people. If we do not admit the rightfulness of antisemitism, we deny the rightfulness of our own nationalism. If our people is deserving and willing to live its own national life, then it is an alien body thrust into the nations among whom it lives, an alien body that insists on its own distinctive identity, reducing the domain of their life. It is right, therefore, that they should fight against us for their national integrity

Know this, that it is a good sign for us that the nations of the world combat us. It is proof that our national image is not yet utterly blurred, our alienism is still felt. If the war against us should cease or be weakened, it would indicate that our image has become indistinct and our alienism softened. We shall not obtain equality of rights anywhere save at the price of an explicit or implied declaration that we are no longer a national body, but part of the body of the host-nation; or that we are willing to assimilate and become part of it

Instead of establishing societies for defense against the antisemites, who want to reduce our rights, we should establish societies for defense against our friends who desire to defend our rights.⁷⁶

To the Western Jew of our day, such writing must appear to be the product of a masochistic complex, but after the issuance of the Balfour Declaration and the defeat of Germany in the First World War, some Zionist writers were so confident of the building up of the homeland that they had no qualms concerning the tearing down of the existing Jewish communities. Klatzkin's Hebrew volume, from which the above quotations were

taken, was only a restatement of the opinions expressed in his earlier German work. He was closely associated with the highest leadership of the Zionist movement, and his work was eagerly quoted by the Nazi and proto-Nazi journals of the twenties. With deadly consistency, he advocated that Jewish communities in exile be undermined, as the one certain way of building up the homeland in Palestine.

Those who affirm both roads, the way of exile and the way of "the land," succeed only in dividing the national will in twain, weakening its owner. The more roads there are [for the life of the people] the more is the will confused and impotent . . .

Yes, if you will, and it is our sin that we have not willed strongly enough. Well did Jacob Cahan put it when he said, "Exile is not only a punishment, but also a sin deserving punishment."⁷⁷

Reflecting the antisemitic caricatures of the exilic Jew, Klatzkin describes him as a degenerate personality, marked by "crookedness, cunning, negative and destructive inclinations, quarrelsomeness, lachrymose sentimentality, bitterness, melancholy, duality and inner fragmentation, a torn, emasculated soul . . ." His indictment reads like a brief filed in a divorce trial. Yet Klatzkin had no intention of resigning from the despised Jewish community in exile. Though he married out of the faith, he thought of himself as a super-nationalistic Jew. He advocated a consistent and thorough policy of eroding the foundations of Jewish life in the lands of exile, but at the same time he urged that this ruthless process of demolition be carried out slowly and methodically, in order that "the homeland in Palestine be enabled to exploit fully all the financial and spiritual resources of the Jews in the Diaspora."⁷⁸ Disbelieving in the viability of the Jewish religion he scorned all versions of modern Judaism, but he urged the Jews in exile to cling to the ritualistic laws that interpose a barrier between Jews and Gentiles.⁷⁹ The more Jews become the targets of Gentile misunderstanding and hostility the better. He did not deem it criminal nor inhuman to lend a hand to those who would rob Jews of their rights, their livelihood, and their dignity. "When Moses came to redeem the children of Israel, their leaders said to him, 'You have made our odor evil in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, giving them a sword with which to kill us.' Nevertheless, Moses persisted in worsening the situation of the people, and he saved them."⁸⁰

Passages of this kind in Zionist literature reflect the pseudo-messianic complex in all its demonic realism, its mysterious fascination, appealing at once to the death instinct and to the myth of a new life.

In keeping with this policy of destroying in order to build, Klatzkin endorsed the charge of the antisemitic agitators; namely, that the assimilated Jews "pervert the culture of the nations and distort its image, conceal its depths and flatten out its meaning, remove from it the gravity and potency of tradition . . . scorning the national personality and choking it with their miserable cosmopolitanism."⁸¹

Klatzkin's works were generally representative of the bitter mood that descended upon the Jews of Central Europe during and after the First World War. Following the terrible ordeals of the war, the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution, and the bloody pogroms executed in the Ukraine by the White Russian armies, it seemed as if the final days of Armageddon had arrived. The exaltation of the Balfour Declaration lent fresh and powerful wings to the dream of Zion reborn. If there was indeed but one hope for the Jews of the world, Zionist leaders reasoned, why not hasten the liquidation of the Diaspora communities for the benefit of the homeland? Aren't these communities doomed anyhow, by the logic of nihilistic, racist nationalism?

The young Nahum Goldman, at this writing the official head of world Zionism, went even further than Klatzkin in endorsing the charges of the rabid antisemitic demagogues. In a lecture to students at the Heidelberg University, given in June, 1920, which was subsequently reprinted in both Zionist and antisemitic papers, he repeated the canard of the proto-Nazis, blaming the Jews for the German defeat of 1918 and the revolution that followed:

Judaism can have nothing in common with Germanism, if we go by the standards of race, history and culture, and the Germans have the right to prevent the Jews from intruding into the affairs of their folk . . .

The same demand I raise for the Jewish folk, as against the German. The tragedy of the situation consists in the fact that it is not yet possible to establish the rule whereby the Jews should be assisted to move toward their state in Palestine. The Jews are divided into two categories, those who admit that they belong to a race distinguished by a history thousands of years old and those who don't. The latter are open to the charge of dishonesty . . .

THE MEANING OF JEWISH HISTORY

It is true that the participation of Jews in subversive movements and in the overthrow of the German government in November, 1918, was extraordinarily strong. This is to be regretted since as a consequence of these activities, the Jewish people lost forces which could have been useful in its own folkist affairs.⁸²

This damaging charge could only be made by a Jew who had become habituated to the peculiar thought-processes of the German chauvinists. Actually, the so-called "stab in the back by the Socialists" was a myth of Hitlerite propaganda. It was the German army itself that assisted in the establishment of a German Republic, following the escape of Wilhelm II to Holland, and the generals took this step in the hope of securing better terms from the Allies.⁸³ But the Balfour Declaration, issued at a critical point during the war, made the Eastern Jews living in Germany feel that, as Jews, they had won the war though, as German residents or citizens, they had been on the losing side.

It is important to recall that the German Jews were intensely loyal to their country, attesting their loyalty by sacrifices of life and limb far beyond their proportion to the general population. Yet the native Jews of Germany were inevitably blamed for the chauvinistic belligerence of such East-European Jews as Klatzkin and Goldman. We encounter herein one of the sources of the Jewish tragedy, the wide disparity in acculturation among the different Jewish communities of the world and the resulting likelihood of Jewish leadership moving in two opposite directions at once, bringing down upon the heads of their people the disasters of both alternative pathways.

For two generations the official Jewish leaders of the Western countries had been combatting the Zionist thesis that they were aliens to the "folk" among whom they lived — and sincerely so. The native Jews of Germany were a marvelously creative, truly exemplary group, rooted in the classic culture of Germany at its best. No section of the population had produced as many prominent men, in all the diverse fields of culture, as did the German Jewish community. The roster of prominent Jews in Germany and Austria was also a goodly portion of the honor roll in the German-speaking world. And the great Jews, in the fields of science, art and literature, felt themselves to be German, in every fiber of their being. Hermann Cohen, the greatest philosopher

produced by German Jewry, believed that his Judaism and his Germanism converged and coincided. Walter Rathenau and Jacob Wassermann, in their autobiographies, searched their souls and found them to be inherently Germanic as well as essentially Judaic. Not only the men and women of genius but the Jewish population as a whole was culturally identified heart and soul with the noblest creations of German literature. Verses from Goethe and Schiller sprinkled their conversations and colored their thinking far more than quotations from Bible and Talmud. The more the nationalistic-antisemitic bigots raved and ranted, the more the Jews sought shelter in the ideal world of German culture. This homeland of the spirit welcomed and cheered them, for it was evolved at a time when Germany prided itself on being a "country of philosophers and poets," not a "land of people who thought with their blood" and "argued with their fists."

I Herzl and Nordau realized that the vast majority of the Jews of the West were deeply rooted in their native lands and had no desire to build for themselves a new homeland. They allowed too that their propaganda might be initially disturbing and even harmful to the assimilated Jews, but they insisted that, after an independent homeland is secured, the position of the assimilated Jews will be strengthened, since their refusal to move to Palestine will be proof of their having become truly nationals of their native lands. The Zionist program of emigration to the homeland is for "those who will not or cannot" integrate themselves in the lands of the Diaspora. People who plan to emigrate to other lands do not normally lose their rights in lands of their birth until they had actually become citizens of their adopted countries. Why then should those Jews who announce their intention to become part of the new homeland and who join the "parliament on the way" of the World Zionist Congress be treated differently from all other would-be emigrants?⁸⁴

This argument, we can easily see now, fails to take into account the first axiom of the Zionist philosophy; namely, the ethnic barrier between the Jews and their neighbors. Zionists are not simply individuals who declare their intention to migrate to another country; they proclaim this goal by virtue of an ethnic heritage, a historic experience, a religio-cultural faith that the entire Jewish community shares; hence, the proclamation of their credo is also an act of bearing witness, be it true or false, concerning

their non-Zionist brethren. Again, the Zionists, by the very nature of their philosophy, could not but pretend to speak in behalf of "the entire Jewish people," thereby involving all Jews in their declaration of intention. Furthermore, antisemitism is a phenomenon of the mass-mind, which prefers naive and primitive judgments concerning whole classes and ethnic groups to the abstract, subtle categories of the intellect. Operating on their own power, professional and pathological antisemites may hardly be expected to gain more than a pitiful minority for their basic axiom that the Jews, forming an alien ethnic minority of a peculiar kind, are either unable or unwilling to establish a covenant of fraternity with their host-nations. But this myth could only be confirmed, dramatized, and glorified by Zionist propaganda, even if the vision of Zion reborn was duly qualified by the diplomatic phrase, "designed for those who will not or cannot stay in their native land."

The Zionist movement gained its adherents chiefly in the Russian Pale of Settlement, where the Jews were indeed a massive ethnic group, separated from their neighbors by age-old habits of dress and speech as well as the high barriers of Orthodoxy. And the Russian Jews had established colonies in all the large metropolitan centers of the West. The Zionists of Germany, France, England, and America consisted almost entirely of recruits from the immigrant population and from the frustrated, embittered university students, deriving from Russian lands. It was only the limited, philanthropic program of Zionism which obtained the benevolent sponsorship of outstanding Western Jews, a sponsorship which appeared to give the movement as a whole international standing and prestige. To understand the qualified support of the Zionist program by those who were deeply rooted in the lands of their birth or the countries of their adoption, we have to take account of a trend of thought that was mingled with cultural Zionism and political Zionism. For want of a better word, we shall designate it as philanthropic Zionism.

To build the Homeland, not for oneself, but for "the others," be they the "poor, oppressed Jews of Russia," or the primitive, Oriental Jews, was a goal which allowed one to be perfectly patriotic in spirit, while laboring with utter devotion for some prac-

tical aspects of the Zionist cause. Such an attitude, eschewing personal involvement and reflecting the impulse of generosity, could well appeal to the prosperous Jewish communities that were accustomed to perennial campaigns for the relief of their suffering brethren in the East. "Zionism for others" was actually a form of "non-Zionist Zionism," and it was expressive of the philosophy of Jewish grandees long before Dr. Hayim Weizmann created the Jewish Agency for Palestine in 1927, on the basis of fifty per cent representation for the Zionists and fifty per cent for non-Zionist leaders of the Western countries.

Philanthropic Zionism appealed powerfully to Christians as well as to Jews. Sharing in the language and sentiment of the Bible, Christians could not be emotionally indifferent to the drama of the Holy Land and the Chosen People. Here is an opportunity in the full light of history to right an immemorial, historical wrong. Napoleon, in his romantic moments, could not resist this temptation. British imperialists, eager to justify their role as bearers of the white man's burden, were particularly susceptible to the fascination of the dream of Zion. In this sense, Churchill, an inveterate romantic, was entirely sincere, when he spoke of himself as a "veteran Zionist." Lord Balfour was similarly impelled and motivated by this romantic vision, even if the issuance of the Balfour Declaration was precipitated, not by romantic humanists, but by the hard-headed generals, eager to win the allegiance of the Jews of the Russian Pale against the Bolshevik regime that sought to withdraw from the war.

We have already noted the essential ambiguity of symbols and myths in any mass movement, with the ideal of the few acquiring mythical meaning and symbolic potency in the minds of their followers. Zionism could function as a mighty movement of rebirth precisely because its vision embraced realistic ideas along with the massive undertones of myth and symbolism. And it could mean radically opposite things to different people. The luminous goal of an ideal state could appeal to all Jews, after their diverse kinds, in the peculiar form that best suited their ideals and upbringing. Herzl himself envisioned the "old-new land," as an "aristocratic republic," combining the culture and the graces of the most advanced nations of Europe.⁸⁵ He designed a flag with seven golden stars, to symbolize the "seven-hour day," which was in his time the acme of aspiration for all workers.

Ahad Ha'am was horrified by so cosmopolitan a portrayal of the "Land of Israel." Caustically he asked, "What kind of Hebraic Homeland can it possibly be if it does not include the absolute dominance of the Hebrew language and of the 'Hebraic spirit?'" By the same token, the Orthodox Zionists of the Mizrachi insisted that the "Land of Israel" shall be governed by "the people of Israel" in accordance with the "Torah of Israel." In drawing the implications of this axiom, the Mizrachi people were willing to be lenient and easy-going; at least, they were more lenient than the people of the *Agudath Yisroel*, who reaffirmed the ancient hope for a personal Messiah, with the return of Elijah, the descent of the Holy Temple from the heavens, along with all the promised miracles of recompense and redemption. But even the *Agudath Yisroel* membership was compelled to acknowledge that the labor of rebuilding Zion was itself a Divine imperative. They could not deny the verses of the Torah extolling the *mizvah* of living in the Holy Land, the ordinances of the Talmud elaborating this theme, or the example of the great pietists in every age who sought to spend their last years in the Holy Land. While it was sinful to "force the hand of Providence" or to deny the role of the Messiah in the redemption of Israel, it was undoubtedly a supreme merit to live in the Holy Land, or, at least, to die in it, for those who are buried in the sacred soil will come to life as soon as the Messiah begins the labor of Resurrection, while the dead in other lands will have to roll through underground channels in order to get there.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the prayers of the pious in the "Land of Israel" ascend directly to heaven, while the holy words uttered in other lands have to run the gamut of the "unclean shells."⁸⁷ The dream of Zion, as we can see, was firmly anchored on the Orthodox side, in the subsoil of myth and fantasy.

At the same time, the socialists and the romantic anarchists envisioned the consummation of Zion, in accordance with the "sacred writings," either of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, or of Prince Kropotkin and Leo Tolstoy. For some doctrinaire Marxists, Zionism was only the local, Palestinian expression of the universal society of socialist states. For others, socialism was a fitting instrument for the rapid construction of the economy of the Homeland. The tension between these two groups eventually led to their separation into two contending groups.⁸⁸

Western Jewish leaders could continue in good conscience to

help build up a "publicly recognized and legally secure" haven of refuge for the driven and distressed Jews of the world, while they themselves took pride in their Western citizenship and identity. They shared in the many-splendored vision of fulfilling an ancient biblical prophecy and in the glory of righting a contemporary wrong, while they remained in spirit outside the political and emotional implications of the Zionist enterprise. They could even cooperate with fanatical "Negators of the Diaspora," in the fields of education, public relations, and philanthropy. For their vague benevolence, favoring "Zionism for others," was itself susceptible of many gradations; "the others" could be the unfortunate, impoverished Jews, who did not take the boat to America in time, or they could be the semi-mythical dwellers in Oriental ghettos and *mellahs*, or they could be "the Jewish people as a whole," or, in rare cases, they could be the children and grandchildren of their own communities. The ambiguity of Zionist symbolism, coupled with the ceaseless stimuli of daily reminders of the plight of Jewish people, made possible a nearly all-Jewish world-wide effort in behalf of the upbuilding of a Jewish Palestine.

The many-sided appeal of Zionism is best expressed in the famous statement by Solomon Schechter:

Zionism is an ideal, and as such is indefinable. It may appear to one as the rebirth of Jewish national consciousness, to another as religious revival, whilst to a third it may present itself as a path leading to the goal of Jewish culture; and to a fourth, it may take the form of the last and only solution of the Jewish problem . . .

To me personally, after long hesitation and careful watching, Zionism recommended itself as the great bulwark against assimilation . . . What I understand by assimilation is loss of identity . . .

It shall be a true and healthy life, with a policy of its own, a religion wholly its own, invigorated by sacred memories and sacred environments, and proving a tower of strength and of unity not only for the remnant gathered within the borders of the Holy Land, but also for those who shall, by choice or necessity, prefer what now constitutes the Galut . . .

. . . This may not be the Galut of the Jews, but it is the Galut of Judaism, or as certain mystics expressed it, the Galut of the Jewish soul, wasting away before our very eyes . . .

. . . The rebirth of Israel's national consciousness, and the revival of Israel's religion, or, to use a shorter term, the revival of Judaism, are inseparable . . .

THE MEANING OF JEWISH HISTORY

This statement, released in 1906, reflects the despair of Conservative Jewish leadership in the face of the mass-flight of Russian immigrants from Judaism. Schechter noted correctly the close affiliation of the emotional syndrome of romantic-mystical religion with the mystique of nationalism. Was he aware of the danger implicit in this similarity? Was it not possible that the new nationalistic river would draw the waters of Jewish loyalty away from the ancient stream of religion? Whether or not he was aware of this danger, he appeared to be confident that Jewish secularism was no real threat to Judaism.

We have seen that political Zionism was an "equal and opposite reaction" to European antisemitism, reflecting the romantic brand of nationalistic ideology with which modern Jew-hatred is associated. But if Zionism had been only such a reaction, it would not have recast the structure of Jewish life, and it would not have made possible the building of the Homeland. History is driven by compelling economic and social forces, but the forms which the new historic events assume are determined by sentiment and imagination.

On the one hand, we note that the outbursts of antisemitic fury and the ruthless pressure of unfriendly governments caused the waves of migration of European Jews into Palestine. The pogroms of the eighties in Russia, the later pogroms of 1904-1906, the Polish-Ukrainian massacres in 1919-1922, the subsequent policy of cold war by the Polish government against its Jewish citizens, the emergence of Hitlerism and its triumph in Germany, all these events led thousands of Jews to seek a new home in Palestine. So long as the gates of America were open, more Jews migrated there in many a single year than settled in Palestine from the opening of the World Zionist Congress (1897) to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration (1917). With the virtual closing of the gates of America to immigration from the lands of Central Europe, the tide of migration to Palestine began to increase. It reached massive proportions as a result of the rise of Hitlerism in the thirties. The agony of the Second World War and the Nazi extermination camps brought on the irresistible stream of illegal immigration to the Homeland in the last months of the Second World War and in the three following years, launching a series of events which culminated in the establish-

ment of the state of Israel. Every pulsation of antisemitic malice sent a wave of immigrants to the Homeland and the crescendo of cannibalistic fury in the extermination camps generated the massive energy which put the Jewish state "over the top."

But while the Jewish state could not have become a reality apart from the cumulative madness of antisemitism, it is important to note that hatred in itself would not have evoked the high vision and the whole-souled dedication of the hardy pioneers who carved out the foundations of the Jewish Homeland. Palestine was by no means a new frontier, in a natural, economic sense — a spacious, fertile area, beckoning to the surplus population of Europe. It was inhabited by a population about as large as the country could support, with its primitive methods of cultivation. Its soil was eroded, its agriculture marginal, its commerce non-existent. While the hungry Bedouins might conceivably long to settle in its scattered swamps and wastes, European city-dwellers could not possibly regard it as an area of potential settlement. Europeans could establish themselves as gentlemen farmers, making use of cheap, native labor to sustain their accustomed standard of living. Such settlements, corresponding to those of the French *colons* in North Africa and of the white Highlanders in Kenya, could absorb a relatively small number of families. Several Jewish villages of this type, notably Petah Tikva, Rehoboth, and Rishon Lezion, were founded before the end of the century. But the Jewish farmers of this category could not provide the massive base that large-scale immigration required.

The building of the Homeland was made possible by the emergence of a new heroic ideal, that of the *Halutz* (pioneer). The *Halutz* incorporated a philosophy of life that drew its inspiration from the totality of Jewish and European experience. Dressed in open blouse and short pants, with the delicate physique of a city-man, the near-sighted squint of a student, the dreamy stance of a poet and the calloused hands of a peasant, the ideal *Halutz* was at once a disciple of and a rebel against Jewish and general society, a monk sworn to poverty and a messianic precursor of a new way of life. Typically, an intellectual and a member of the European middle class, he rose in rebellion against the overvaluation of money and social status in bourgeois society. With the rage of an Orthodox Marxist, he scorned the entire economic structure of European Jewry as being "rotten bourgeois," sinful

and degrading. Since to a Marxist, all cultural values, including religion, reflected economic interests, the *Halutz* repudiated the two thousand years of experience, tradition, and faith that intervened between the destruction of the Jewish state and his own "return" to the soil. The life of the Jews in Europe was not only devoid of security and honor, it was sinful because it was founded on exploitation and, therefore, on false, corrupt, middle-class values. Like a monk, the *Halutz* gives up the pleasures of privacy and possession, achieving "inner freedom" by surrendering to a rigid communal control, doing penance for the sins of his ancestors and building a pure, holy life. His dream is to establish the base for a way of life that is perfectly proletarian, untainted by "middle-class hypocrisy," heralding the classless society of the apocalyptic future.

In these sentiments the *Halutz* reflected the Marxist mentality of European socialists. But unlike the pure Marxists, who remained in their lands of origin to battle for the new order, the *Halutz* was also a romantic, a lover of the idealized past of his own people and a visionary, dreaming of national rebirth. His romanticism drew inspiration from the so-called "agrarian myth" of both Europe and America. According to this persistent mythology, all corruption derives from the uprootedness, insecurity, and cupidity that are inseparable from urban existence. The men of the soil, on the other hand, live in harmony and intimacy with the inherent rhythm of nature. A profound sense of peace permeates their entire existence with health and vigor. Though they are generally inarticulate, a "pure" philosophy of life inhabits their inner self, while the city-dwellers with all their surface cleverness, pursue phantoms throughout their hectic existence.

This myth is universal in appeal, though in the Russian sphere of culture it was reinforced by the powerful influence of Tolstoy. The *Halutzim* in their communal settlements felt they had retreated from a corrupt and doomed society to reestablish their bonds with Mother Nature and thereby to be reborn afresh and in purity. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the *Halutzim* took pleasure in defying the sexual mores of the Jewish tradition and of Western society, which were, in their eyes, "bourgeois," hence "rotten."^{88a} For they had undertaken to "transvalue" the values of the old world, hence, the saintly was sinful and the sinful was saintly.

This new "religion of labor," as it came to be called, was powerfully aided by certain inherent tendencies in Jewish tradition as well as by the objective difficulties of Jewish life in the lands of Central Europe. From the nationalistic point of view, the *Haluz* was a selfless servant of the Jewish people. His sacrifices were not only liturgical lustrations of socialist sainthood, but also patriotic exercises. In addition, the Jewish tradition itself contained tendencies with which the *Haluz* could identify. Did not the Jew regard the days when he lived in the Holy Land, "under his vine and fig tree," as the golden epoch of his national existence? Were not the two thousand years of exile always regarded as the time of national affliction and distress? Did not the pious Jew pray penitently "and on account of our sins we were driven from our land?" In the halcyon days of the Bible, when the Hebrew language and the Hebrew land was still one with the Hebrew people, the Jewish festivals celebrated the rhythm of nature. And the city-dweller, living by his wits on the toil of others, was then scorned as the Canaanite, "who holds in his hands the scales of deceit." Even in the age of "decadence," from the socialist point of view, the Jewish tradition favored the Torah-scholar above the captain of commerce, disdaining the power of wealth, and paying homage to the proletariat, then largely intellectual.

The *Haluz* thus reflected a unique combination of influences. He was the pioneer of a new socialist world and the repentant bourgeois, atoning for the sins of his ancestors; he was the servant of resurgent national purpose, born of dire historical necessity; he was the scion of prophetic idealism, disdaining the "idols of the market-place" and giving modern form to the enterprise and vision of the ancient Essenes; he was breaking a fresh pathway for the return of the people of the Bible to a biblical way of life in the land of the Bible.

These diverse motives combined to evoke the Zionist hero-image of the *Haluz*. So powerful was the attraction of the new ideal that tens of thousands of young Jewish men and women did in fact embrace the communal life of *kibbuzim* and undertake to devote a lifetime of toil and travail to the redemption of the barren soil. The swamps of the valley of Jezreel were drained and the land made fertile by these communes of latter-day socialist saints, dedicated to the high purpose of national redemp-

tion. Evolving new patterns of life and new rituals of collective salvation, these *Haluzim* were signally successful, while all similar attempts to establish communal settlements in America and elsewhere failed. They managed to retain the enthusiasm of their members, to hold the loyalty of many of their children, and to elicit the willing financial support of the world-wide Zionist movement. While all utopian movements could direct their appeal to one or another interest or ideal, the *Haluzim* derived strength from many sources. They thrived because theirs was an all-embracing philosophy, compounded of the complex dialectic of Marxism and the exotic appeal of agrarian romanticism — a totalitarian faith offering a radical reevaluation of the whole range of Jewish experience and a dedication to the creation of the new man and the universal, classless society of the future. At the same time, the financial resources of a thoroughly bourgeois society were made available to the *Haluzim*, through the Jewish Agency, on an unprecedented scale of generosity. The Zionist-Socialist saints of the Jewish Homeland were supported for two generations by a world-wide fund-raising effort, paralleling the financial support that Diaspora Jewry has given for twenty-five centuries to the Orthodox "poor saints" in Jerusalem.

The tension between the universal and the national ideals in Labor Zionism produced a paradoxical attitude toward the Arab world, which could only eventuate in conflict and bitter hatred. On the one hand, the *Haluzim* were socialists, dedicated to the unity of all workers. As such, they might have been expected to make common cause with the poor peasants and the rising Arab proletariat. On the other hand, they thought of themselves as the forerunners of the Jewish people, determined to open up new opportunities for Jewish settlement. As such, they sought to preempt all opportunities for employment. The insistence of the Labor Zionist groups on building Jewish society from the ground up, implied the separation of Jewish and Arab societies by a vertical line. This approach led them to demand that only Jews be employed on projects sponsored by national Jewish causes, the so-called plank, *Avodah Ivrit*. Apart from all rationalizations, this separatist policy could only result ultimately in the displacement of one population group by the other. The minor riots between Jewish and Arab workers in the first decades of the twentieth

century on the issue of *Avodah Ivrit* presaged the bloody riots of the twenties and the insurrection of the thirties as well as the Civil War in 1947-1948 which culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel, and the panicky flight of the Arab refugees.

Unfriendly critics maintain that it was the aim of Zionists from the very beginning to displace the native population of Palestine by Jewish immigrants and to make Palestine "as Jewish as England is English." To be sure, the above quotation was uttered by Dr. Hayim Weizmann, and it certainly reflected the fond hope of the majority of Zionists. But this vision was dreamy and protean, conceived largely in cultural, rather than ethnic terms; *i.e.*, Weizmann and his followers believed that the New Hebraic culture would draw the Arabs into its vortex and make Palestine distinctively Jewish. From the days of Herzl, many Zionists believed that the return of Jews to Palestine would help in the awakening of the dormant East. The Jews are Semites, Asiatics, Easterners; in returning to their homeland they would be going home and they would be welcomed as liberators. Armed with the skills of the West they would awaken the slumbering energies of the Arab world and of the East generally.

These romantic illusions permeate much of classical Zionist literature, and they were sincerely meant even if they were utterly without foundation. In his picture of the "Old-New Land," Herzl wrote of the vigor to be brought by the Jews to the nations of the East.

Characteristic of the deeply felt, even if naive dreams of the early Zionists is the novella *Le-an?* by M. Z. Feierberg. It portrays the mental agony of a generation of Jews, who, with their loss of dogmatic faith, suddenly found themselves bereft of a sense of identity and a compelling ideal. In the emergence of the Zionist movement, the hero recaptures the meaning of his people's history and he rededicates himself to its rebirth.

I know that in the future the slumbering millions of the East will awaken and like the dried bones of Ezekiel's vision, will come to life. The young and vigorous nations will arise to found the new society . . . The resuscitated East will come to rule the world, following a Western revolution (Technology) as the West came to rule the East, following the Eastern Revolution (Christianity). . .

"And you, my brethren, in going East must remember always that you are Easterners from birth. While the entire West goes toward the East in order to inherit the legacy of the Orient, you are to go

there in order to revive the dead and to build the structure of the new society. The greatest enemy of Judaism is the West; therefore I feel that it is unnatural for the Oriental, Hebrew people to attempt to share with the Western nations in the spoils of the East. . . . Therefore, brothers, on your journey Eastward, don't go as enemies but as friends and faithful sons, endeavoring to revive it, not to inherit the dead. . . . If indeed the people of Israel have a mission let them bind up their Torah and their mission and carry them toward the Orient. . . not only to the Land of Israel, but to the entire East. . . ."

These pro-Semitic and pro-Oriental sentiments formed part of the Zionist ideal, but they were negated in practice by the nationalistic interests of the Jews and by the fact that the European Jews were European in fact and "Semitic-Oriental" only in myth and fancy. It is as Europeans, in dress, in ways of life, in cultural expressions and interests, that the Zionists made their impact upon the Near Eastern world. The Arabs were impressed and shocked by their democratic ideas, their scientific and technical know-how, their free ways in regard to family life, their rebellion against religion and tradition. To the Arabs, the Jews were the spearhead of Western civilization. And the national impetus of Zionism was focused on the emergence of a "new Jew" in his homeland, free from the vices of European "exile" and resplendent with all the virtues of "the time to come." Any association with the primitive, backward, superstitious Arabs could, in their view, only frustrate and nullify the achievement of their collective vision. They turned their back on European society and spurned assimilation as unworthy and humiliating. Should they then "assimilate" with the retarded inhabitants of the Near East and become a "Levantine" nation? The political Zionists were motivated by the realistic needs of the Jews, as they emerged out of the daily struggle. The religious Zionists thought of the Jewish people as standing over against all "the nations," with no distinction drawn between Semites and others. Ishmael, father of the Arabs, was "rejected," along with Esau, father of the Roman-Christian world, and only Jacob and his seed were "chosen." The cultural Zionists were guided by their collective self-image of a reborn people. The Zionist-Socialists were repelled by the social and cultural backwardness of Arab society. Only the left wing of the Zionist-Socialists sought to make common cause with

the Arabs, and their efforts were frustrated by the anti-Zionist policy of the Communist International.

With the rapid dissipation of pan-Semitic romanticism, the official leaders of the Zionist movement failed to evolve an imaginative attempt to win over the Arab world. Only the philanthropic Zionists of England and America could be expected to take seriously the task of establishing bonds of fraternity with the Arab population of Palestine. Dr. Judah L. Magnes, an American rabbi who became Chancellor of the Hebrew University, and Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Group, formed a small group of intellectuals, the *B'rith Sholom* society of Jews and Arabs. Dr. Magnes dreamed of a "bi-national" state, in which both ethnic groups would collaborate, pooling their diverse resources and cultures to produce a new model of interracial harmony.

The efforts of the *B'rith Sholom* group and later of the *Ihud* society were frustrated by the relentless march of events, which steadily diminished the domain of freedom and made a Jewish-Arab tragedy inevitable. While the pan-Semitic dream and the bi-national ideal remained sheer rhetoric, the daily ethnic rivalries for each acre of land, for each economic opportunity, produced a momentum of hate which could not be halted. The daily struggle for the building of the Jewish homeland contained its own inherent logic, requiring the creation of "living space" for additional Jews, and this logic took no account whatever of the growing needs of the indigenous population. That which was needed to make the Homeland possible invariably took precedence over the ideals which the Homeland was to make possible. Jewish-Arab collaboration in the creation of an exemplary culture, mingling the glories of East and West, formed part of the messianic aura of Zionism, one of the grand achievements that the Homeland was to launch. But the needs of the Homeland came first, and those needs generated bitter rivalries and bloody struggles, which made a mockery of all bi-national hopes. A nation identifies itself with its own Sabbath-like self-image, imagining that it is as noble as the ideals it professes, but it is its weekday posture of struggle and achievement that determines its destiny.

Another reason for the total helplessness of the bi-national

idealists was the desperate situation of the Jewish people in Europe, following the rise of the Nazis to power. As the pressure for immigration grew in intensity, Zionism ceased to be a romantic vision and became a bitter struggle for sheer survival. The grandiloquent rhetoric of a visionary utopia continued to adorn the literature of the movement, but, under the pressure of the Nazis, its character underwent a complete metamorphosis. Whether or not Jewish-Arab collaboration would have resulted if the Nazis had not launched their campaign of extermination, it is now idle to debate. Suffice it to note that the Zionist vision itself contained the two opposing attitudes toward the Arabs of Palestine — resolute withdrawal from their life and bitter struggle against them in order to obtain economic and political control of the land, on the one hand, and a desire to create a new culture, redounding to the benefit of the whole world and reconciling the East with the West, on the other. This tension was out of balance, since the former set of ideas generated a struggle which confirmed the existing antagonism between the two peoples, while the latter set of ideas was steadily denuded of relevance and reality.

Did the Zionist program and philosophy contribute decisively to the enormous catastrophe of the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis, by popularizing the judgment that the Jews were forever aliens in Europe? With the knowledge presently at our disposal, it is impossible to answer this question. It is certain that the participation of Jews in the Bolshevik Revolution and the leadership of Socialist and Liberal parties in Central Europe gave the antisemitic demagogues far more ammunition than any quotations from Zionist literature. The association of antisemitism with anti-communism was characteristic of the world-wide anti-Jewish propaganda, in the period between the two World Wars. But those were activities of Jewish individuals, not of an organized group claiming to give expression to the inherent impetus of the tradition. Zionism sought to deflect the revolutionary drive of the intellectual proletariat and it set up the image of the Jew as retreating from the Western world, in opposition to the antisemitic image of the Jew as the perpetual revolutionary, transforming Western society in accordance with his own nature.

Still, on the basis of the Newtonian law of action and reaction,

Zionist propaganda could not but reinforce the basic antisemitic assumption of the Jew as the eternal alien. In all the lands of Central Europe, the urchins in the street would taunt the Jew with the cry "Jews to Palestine." The Jews of Poland, constituting ten per cent of the population, were represented largely by Zionist leaders, who rejected and deplored the fifteen centuries of Jewish residence in European lands, and who did not share the hope of the rest of the population for a better life in the land of their birth. Feelings of fraternity are built up more by the intangibles of memory and hope, of faith and vision, than by the realities of the daily struggle for a living.

German and Central European antisemitism have not been studied in depth. We still do not know how much weight should be accorded to the nihilistic, racist mythology nor the extent to which the Nazi policy of Jewish extermination was either known or approved by the German population. The official Nazi platform called for the restriction of Jewish rights and for the reduction of Jews to second-class citizenship. Doubtless, the Nazis used antisemitism as a device of their aggressive politics; that is, as a means of securing allies throughout Central Europe, obtaining *quislings* in all countries, misleading the Slavic nations and the Western powers concerning their real intentions. But the utility of antisemitism as a political weapon depended upon its appeal to the large and uncommitted middle class, which is generally inclined to be fairly rational and emotionally stable. And this middle-class group was neutralized and paralyzed throughout Central Europe by the feeling that the Jews were aliens and would-be emigrants, on their own admission. In the tension between humanitarian liberalism and nihilistic ethnicism, the potency of the former ideal was partially negated by the professed aims of the Zionists, with the result that the fanatical nationalists had things all their own way. It will be recalled that at the time of the French Revolution, the opponents of Jewish Emancipation argued that Jews were Zionist-minded, awaiting a propitious time to emigrate toward Palestine. If Zionism, as a political movement, had prevailed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Jewish communities of the West would have been treated as enclaves of aliens. When after the First World War, the Central European countries were thrown open to the democratic ideals of the West, the Zionist orientation of the Jews in that part of

the world made it exceedingly difficult for the non-Jewish liberals in the newly established countries to overcome the combined resistance of their own ethnic zealots and religious fanatics. Why compel your own people to make room in the schools, the professions, and the marketplace, for those who dwell with you only temporarily, sharing neither your memories of the past nor your hopes for the future? As we have stressed, the sense of fraternity is far more a child of the imagination than it is a product of geographical propinquity.

We must distinguish carefully between antisemitism as a complex of mass feeling, and antisemitism as a ruthless program of exclusion from the economic and cultural life of the country. While the white population of America may not like to have Negroes as their neighbors, demonstrating their emotional repugnance in a thousand different ways, they still insist on opening the doors of opportunity to the Negro population, since only a fair and fraternal society is in accord with our vision of the future. But if the Negro population had founded their communal life on the basis of a "*back to Africa*" program, even sworn liberals would not exert themselves to fight for the economic opportunities of future aliens. As is well-known, Negro "Zionism" of the first decades of the nineteenth century resulted in the establishment of Liberia, but this effort to solve the Negro problem in America was given up before the Civil War. Booker T. Washington and all other responsible Negro leaders refused to countenance any "Zionist" solution of their difficult problem.

When Titus, son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian, returned victorious from the conquest of Jerusalem, the Greeks of Antiochia, Syria, petitioned him for permission to expel the Jews from their city. He denied their request on the ground that the Jews no longer had a homeland, it had been laid waste. By no means friendly to the Jews, Titus was motivated by that modicum of lawfulness and fairness inherent in the very nature of government. After the First World War, the would-be liberals of Central Europe did not feel any responsibility to integrate the Jews in their midst. After all, a Homeland "publicly secured and legally recognized," had been set aside for the Jews. As they saw it, all they could be expected to do was to temper the rigorous logic of the nihilistic nationalists with the spirit of humanity. Thrown on the defensive, the liberal opponents of antisemitism seemed

to be easy victims for the bewildering propaganda of the Nazis. Antisemitism could be employed by the Teutonic master-minds as an explosive weapon against the liberal world, since, in the lands of Central Europe, the Jews themselves had presumably agreed that they did not care to forge bonds of fraternity with their fellow-countrymen; they were on their way to their own homeland.

In the Nazi program of extermination, it is not the cruelty of the Nazi rulers that defies explanation, for Nazism and Fascism are nihilistic at their core. This is why they can attempt to suborn the institutions of religion and push their nefarious designs under the mask of a *concordat* with the church. However, the silence of the natural leaders of the people is the core of the problem. While in Germany itself, the passivity of the populace was aided by the sense of discipline in time of war, the acquiescence of the masses in Poland, Hungary, and Roumania was doubtless the consequence of the near-total absence of bonds of fraternity between the Jews and their neighbors. Thus, while 30,000 Dutch families received medals from their government after the war for sheltering Jewish refugees, and while thousands were saved in France, Belgium, Italy, and Denmark, there is no record of similar acts of mercy on the same scale in any province of Central or Eastern Europe. In the countries where Jews lived as "national minorities," they were effectively isolated from the general population and marked for slaughter with hardly a ripple of protest, while in the Western countries, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, Denmark and Norway, where Jews were distinguished by religion only, concerted efforts were made to save them from the insane fury of the Nazi murderers.

It was ethnic antisemitism that generated the ardor and desperation of political Zionism, which mobilized the energies and loyalties of Jewish people in the cause of national resurgence and inspired a world-wide movement in behalf of the building of the Homeland. As the horrors of the Nazi "final solution" were revealed after the war, the pitch of Jewish desperation reached unprecedented heights. The terrorist movements in Palestine against the British mandatory power were totally inconceivable before the war. Even veteran Jewish leaders were unable either to understand or to restrain the fury of the young terrorists, for

whom the whole of Jewish experience was summed up in the raising of a gun with the slogan, *rak Kach*, "Only thus!"

The struggle of the terrorists, the desperation of the concentration camp graduates, and the military know-how of the European partisans shattered Arab resistance so effectively that nearly their entire population fled in panic. It makes little difference how many ran away in cowardice, how many in cupidity, in conspiracy, or in fear. All bi-national idealism and pre-war universalism was dissipated in the fire of the Jewish-Arab civil war, abetted as it was by the self-seeking leaders of neighboring Arab states. The immediate self-interest of the newly-founded state of Israel had to take precedence over the long range ideals of serving all the people of the Middle East. Thus, while prior to the war of 1948 only the extremist Zionists of the Jabotinsky school argued in behalf of a compulsory resettlement of the Arab population in the neighboring lands, the state of Israel was suddenly confronted with the actual attainment of this unanticipated goal.

Several "ifs" come to mind, at this point. What would have happened if the United Nations had been strong enough to impose partition and security upon the country when the British Army left? What would have resulted if the leaders of the neighboring Arab countries had been more conciliatory after the partition of Palestine had been decided by the United Nations? What would have been the outcome if the Haganah and the Jewish Agency had been strong enough to defend the Arab population against the threats and attacks of the Irgun terrorists without precipitating a civil war within the Jewish population? All these "ifs" are now academic.

Suffice it to remember that the tension between diverse motivations generates a dynamic equilibrium, but without eliminating the contending forces. The potent heritage of prophetic idealism is still contained within the Zionist vision, even if its implications in regard to the Arab population were sadly frustrated. The vicious cycle of Arab intransigence and Israeli retaliation is kept awhirling by the momentum of the daily struggle, but the prophetic voices of self-criticism are not altogether silenced in Israel.

With its very right to exist being denied by the entire Arab world, the State of Israel cannot but put its own security above every other consideration. It must maintain the feverish pace of

immigration, even at the cost of liquidating entire communities of the Diaspora. Following the flight of the Arab population, Israeli delegates in Yemen, Iraq, North Africa, and southern Europe precipitated the mass-migration of Jewish people. Some of the communities were driven in part by hostile pressure, but most were drawn by the power of mass-suggestion, in which the religious symbols of mass-redemption were utilized. A continuous propaganda endeavor is even now maintained to induce a massive flight from the Eastern European countries now in the grip of Soviet power. The Jews of Poland, Roumania, and Hungary are being siphoned off, by a process in which individual choice is smothered by the compulsions of a mass-exodus. Many individuals from behind the Iron Curtain desire to cross over into the free world in the attempt to improve their earning power, or to escape repression, or for religious and cultural reasons. Once the rumor is broadcast that Jews are leaving, the scramble for the jobs and apartments that they leave behind generates social pressure which turns the migration of individuals into a mass-flight. In their turn, the governments of the Soviet countries, which prohibit emigration as a matter of principle, cannot permit the emigration of Jews without putting all the Jews in the Soviet world outside the law as second-rate citizens. On the other hand, the present leaders of the state of Israel are committed to the policy of mobilizing the clandestine emigration of Jews from the Moslem world and from the lands behind the Iron Curtain. They also spend a goodly portion of the funds they receive from the Jewish communities of the Western world in order to foster the emigration of Western Jews, though this effort is neither authorized nor approved by the Jews of the Western world.

This desperate drive for ethnic concentration may be considered as the cumulative after-effects of the pogroms in Eastern Europe and the concentration camps in the Nazi lands. As the momentum of these horrors abates and the State acquires a feeling of security, the other aspects of the Zionist vision may be expected to come to the fore. Even now, in America and throughout the free world, the Zionist philosophy is slowly receding, allowing the dynamic equilibrium of Judaism to reassert itself. At this writing it is too early to foretell the course of Jewish feeling either in Israel or in America. Having entered the realm of international politics, the State of Israel is involved in all the gyra-

tions of world diplomacy. In the lands of South America, Jewish communities are inevitably involved in the vast social forces of an essentially revolutionary situation, arising from the need of catapulting a rapidly growing population into the twentieth century. We cannot now tell whether this process will be carried out in a democratic way, or whether it will turn demonic. In the Anglo-American world, the Jewish communities will be pulled into opposite directions, by the example of ethnic resurgence in Israel and by the appeal and power of liberal religion, by local flare-ups of quasi-fascist feelings, and by the general trend toward a supernational Atlantic community. All that we can do is to expose the general meaning of the forces and ideals which determine Jewish destiny, revealing the area of freedom and the choices open to those who care to learn the lessons of history.

It may be still too early for us to assess objectively and fully the nature of the Nazi phenomenon. Yet it appears that the following conclusions may be drawn from the evidence submitted at the Nuremberg trials and from the information that has become available since then.

First, the German population as a whole did not protest or evince any revulsion during the War, when the news seeped out by degrees that the Jewish population of Nazi-occupied Europe was deliberately and systematically annihilated. While only thousands were involved in the various "actions," hundreds of thousands were implicated in operating the factories, manning the trains, handling the stolen property, and managing the civilian government of the occupied territories. The German army was usually physically present in close proximity to the so-called "actions," and able to restrain the S.S. mass-murderers.

In the immense reaches of Russia some thousands of S.S. executioners, helped by an international riffraff and also by amateur murderers from the Wehrmacht, exterminated Jews with complete freedom, "as if on a stage," while the Wehrmacht staff and the civil authorities turned their eyes the other way.⁸⁰

Some Wehrmacht officers occasionally protested that the extermination was not carried out in the "German way." For this reason, the gas chambers and the crematoria were designed to take the place of the direct mass-executions in the Ukraine and White Russia. But no German generals, with their vaunted cour-

age and honor, ever dared to protest the extermination policy itself. In contrast, the Italian generals defied their Duce, interposed all sorts of obstacles to the execution of the Nazi program and virtually served as a shield of protection for the Jews in their areas of occupation.

Although Mussolini had promised the German negotiators at least twice to rouse his generals out of their "stupid sentimental notions," the situation continued unchanged right up to the Italian debacle.⁶⁰

That it *was* possible for the German population to manifest its feelings even under the Nazi dictatorship is proved by the stoppage of Hitler's euthanasia program. On the very day when he launched the Second World War, Hitler signed the decree on the "suppression of lives unworthy to be lived," aimed at the killing of the sick, the feeble-minded, and the aged. This decree, which was never published, aroused the anxiety of the churches and the people generally, with the result that its implementation was postponed. Only 70,272 persons were "treated" from January 1940 to August 1941, though, according to Professor Kranz, at least one million Germans fell in the categories slated for elimination. The gas chambers, used for the asphyxiation of millions of Jews and non-Jews, were originally designed for the "treatment" of the sick and the aged. Yet the anxiety of the people and the protests of the churches were sufficient to call a halt to this outrage.

In the case of the extermination of Jews and the systematic "actions" against the Russian population, there was no popular protest.

This is the verdict of the German Supreme Court for the British Zone, of December 12, 1949:

If large groups had openly or secretly opposed the persecution of the Jews as, principally because of the efforts of the churches of the two denomination, they had opposed the murder of the mentally ill, the development of the terror would have been impossible in the long run, or at least it would have been retarded and made very difficult.⁶¹

This conclusion does not mean that all the German people either knew or approved of the Nazi intentions for the total annihilation of the Jews in Europe. Several thousand Jews were able to hide in Germany itself. Some churchmen and liberals voluntarily shared the fate of the Jews. The open and avowed pro-

gram of the Nazis called only for the isolation and degradation of the Jews. It may well be that even Hitler and his associates did not in the beginning dream of wiping all the Jews from the face of the earth. The impetus of hate drove them gradually to the conclusion that in "biological warfare" the "enemy" must be completely eliminated.

It is my opinion that when the doctrine that the Slavic race is inferior and the Jews not even human has been preached for years and decades, such a result is inevitable."²

Only by slow degrees did the German population learn of the colossal crimes of Auschwitz and Maidanek, and of the "actions" of their S.S. troops in the East. They were allowed to learn the truth in order that they might realize that it was impossible to end the war by compromise and conciliation. It is for this reason that General Jodl urged in the last months of the war that all allied prisoners be killed. Thus, Goebbels wrote in his diary (March 2, 1943):

We are so entangled in the Jewish question that henceforth it is impossible to retreat. All the better. A movement and a people that have burned their bridges behind them fight with a great deal more energy, experience shows it, than those who are able to retreat."

By the time the masses of the German people realized the colossal crimes committed in their behalf, they had become totally conditioned and brainwashed in regard to Jews, so powerful and pervasive is the power of mass-suggestion and so seductive is the drive of ethnic aggrandizement.

Second, the Nazis concentrated their fury against the Jew as the symbol and representative of non-German humanity. While in their world-wide propaganda, they employed the ambiguous terminology of "Aryan" and "non-Aryan," they actually meant Teutonic and non-Teutonic. Hermann Rauschning revealed that long before the war, Hitler confided to his intimate henchmen that his policy called for the "depopulation" of the Eastern provinces. Professor Abel was consulted by the Wehrmacht as an expert on the population of Russia. His recommendation called for the total annihilation of the Russians. This cold calculation of the academic Teutonomania was opposed by Professor Wetzl on purely utilitarian grounds, with no trace whatever of moral feeling.

A complete biological annihilation of the Russian substance is not in our interest, so long as we are not in a position to fill the void [thus created] with our own people.⁹³

On the other hand, we know that Hitler rejoiced in the opportunity to exterminate vast masses of the civilian population that anti-guerilla warfare in the East made possible. While the West knew only of Lidice, the Russian population witnessed thousands of Lidices, all deliberately designed to exterminate the Slavic population.

Wrote Reichs-Kommissar Lohse, "Burning men, women and children in barns does not seem to me a proper method for combating the partisans, even if we want to exterminate the population. The method is unworthy of the German cause and lowers our prestige considerably."⁹⁴

According to Himmler, the whole purpose of the war was to reduce the Slavic population by at least 30,000,000. And this purpose was largely carried out. In the case of the Polish population, the Nazi aim was to eliminate the intellectuals, so as to leave a population of dumb serfs. The Nazi Governor-General Frank in Poland stated, "The Fuhrer told me, 'What we have now recognized in Poland to be the elite must be liquidated; we must watch out for seeds that begin to sprout again, so as to stamp them out again in good time.'"⁹⁵

Actually, the Polish government estimates that 3,000,000 non-Jewish Poles were deliberately murdered. Similarly, the entire Gypsy population in Nazi-occupied Europe were "treated" in the gas-chambers. Estimates of their number vary between 200,000 and 1,000,000.

It follows that the Nazi concentration on the "Jewish enemy" was partly motivated by the needs of propaganda and partly by the "logic" of their own ethnic religion. The value of antisemitism for world-wide propaganda was obvious. But the Nazis did not merely use antisemitism; they were blinded by it, else the enormity of their crime would have been clear to them; they needed its mystique to provide justification for their massive crimes. People need the solace of purification as much as they need bread. Hence, the cold logic of collective selfishness must be surrounded by an aura of idealism, however specious. By continually whipping themselves into fury about "the Jewish men-

ace," they could behave as cannibals and still look upon themselves as defenders of Christian civilization. At the interrogation of the International Nuremberg Trials, the Nazi criminals again and again claimed that they were "idealists," defenders of the West and of Christianity. This claim was to them a psychic necessity as well as a legalistic pretext. Civilized Europeans could be made to act like brutes only under the cover of an ideology that claimed to be both scientific and venerable. Antisemitism with all its Medieval undertones and its Darwinian, pseudo-scientific overtones allowed them to hate and to kill with brutish unreason, under the banner of a *Weltanschauung*. They could paralyze all rational-moral criticism of the anti-human madness of Teutonism, by transposing the folk-myth of antisemitism into "scientific" terms and by appealing to the collective narcissism of the German people.

The diaries of Nazi mass-murderers reveal this tragi-comic search for an idealistic fig leaf. On the walls of the extermination camps, they inscribed idealistic slogans, like "Work makes you free," or "On the road to freedom there are four markers; work, justice, discipline and patriotism." In their own secret correspondence, which could not serve any propagandistic purposes, the Nazi hierarchy commended Rudolf Hoess, director of the Auschwitz Extermination Camp, as an "educator" with original ideas. In his own diary, this same Hoess contrasted the people he was "treating" with the Germans, who, he said, were not murderers, since "They loved animals." The aforementioned Governor-General Frank, in his message calling for the killing of all Poles that show any spark of intelligence, insisted on a procedure that would have the appearance of "legality."

We don't have to start dragging these elements into the Reich concentration camps, for then we would only have a lot of trouble and useless correspondence with the families. We will liquidate the business in the country itself. And we will do it in the simplest way. Gentlemen, we are not assassins . . . That is why a summary form of courtmartial must take place.

Here is a perfect illustration of the empty formality of a rigged courtmartial acquiring the character of a liturgical lustration. Yet even the toughest S.S. executioners needed such a mechanical surrogate for conscience.

Colonel Paul Blovel testified, "Our men taking part in the ex-

ecutions suffered more from nervous exhaustion than those who were to be shot."

General Otto Ohlendorff stated, "Many men suffered terribly, and had to be sent home for all sorts of reasons, either because their nervous systems were shattered or because they were not able to stand it morally."

The executioners were generally intoxicated. A characteristic note occurs in one report, "The action . . . was carried out of idealism, without using any Schnapps."⁶⁶

But no matter how thick the veneer of ideological cover needed by the mass-murderers, they retained communication with the mass of the German people. They were not isolated, as moral lepers, because the undercurrents of medieval bigotry and the primitive logic of ethnicism gave them an all-German base. When the Allies began to purge the Germans of their inhuman madness, the vast majority found it easy enough to be denazified, and sincerely so. The very forms of the procedure of denazification served as a quasi-religious rite of lustration. They had been sprinkled with "pure water," washed with the "blood of the lamb" and were now "clean."

Third, the Nazi program of global mass-murder to serve the interests of the German people teaches us important lessons concerning the meaning of ethnicism and religion, the two forces which have held our attention since the beginning of this study.

Ethnicism. The Nazi program, in all its ruthless brutality, is actually a logical development of the ethnicistic impulse. Normally, in all nationalistic movements, the concerns of collective selfishness are balanced and held in check by humanistic and religious ideals. Nationalism is not an elemental force but a blend, in diverse proportions, of opposing forces. Nazism resulted from the dessication of both humanism and religion among a minority of the German people. (This minority of hard-core Nazis never exceeded five per cent, according to many observers.)

But, as one of the two components of nationalism, nihilistic ethnicism was a powerful impetus in the mentality of all Germans. Hence, it was possible for the Nazis to find acceptance and a ready response among the masses of the people. They represented the dark underworld of primitive bestiality that slumbered in the hearts of all. Primitive aggression, we must remember, is

still not personal but collective. Men hunted in groups, as wolves still do. The fascination of ethnic mass-murder is so dangerous precisely because it is potentially so universal. It is by no means characteristic of the Germans only, but is an ineluctable component of the nationalistic mentality. To be sure, it is held in check by other ideals, liberal, humanist, socialist, or religious, but the hydra-headed monster is never utterly annihilated; under the surface of civilization, it lies in semi-somnolence, biding its time, waiting for the "shattering of the foundations" in the upper world, to emerge again in all its ferocity. Far from being a unitary ideal, nationalism is always a restless compromise between humanism and "sacred egotism." There can be no peace and rest for mankind until the mask of ideological respectability is completely taken away from it, and nationalism is separated into patriotism, on the one hand, and world citizenship, on the other.

Religion. The second lesson that emerges out of the Nazi nightmare is the ambivalent nature of religion. As we pointed out in the first part of this study, religion, like ethnicism, is a dynamic balance between two opposing impulses, the yearning to surrender to the Will of God and the desire to sanctify and to glorify all that is one's own. In the first orientation, religion is forward-looking, self-transcending, revolutionary, straining toward objective ideals. In the second orientation, religion is conservative, past- and ritual-centered, romantic, mystical, symbolic, magnifying and sanctifying all that is characteristic of the group and its tradition. At any one time, religion is actually a compromise between the two orientations, reflecting an uneasy balance between them. At times, the self-transcending phase of religion will be the dynamic core of popular faith, at other times, collective egotism will drape itself in the humanistic and even messianic mantle of monotheistic faith.

The success of the Nazis in neutralizing and virtually paralyzing the moral opposition of the churches, demonstrates that for most people the symbols of religion are more potent by far than its living substance. The facts are that the churches, Protestant and Catholic, protested vigorously against the euthanasia program of the Nazis, but only a few pastors and prelates protested against the deportations of Jews to extermination camps. Presum-

ably they knew as little and suspected as much about the destruction of the Jews as they knew and suspected about the fate of the sick and the elderly. The masses of the people looked to the churches for moral leadership against the bestialities of Nazism, but the Catholic church, which lost no opportunity to condemn Communism because of its materialistic philosophy, was not able to summon enough vision and courage to condemn the plain murders of the Nazis. In a report of the German Ambassador, Weizsacker, dated October 28, 1943, when all of Europe knew of the Nazi death-factories, we read:

Although under pressure from all sides, the Pope has not let himself be drawn into any demonstrative censure of the deportation of the Jews from Rome. Although he must expect that this attitude will be criticized by our enemies, and exploited by the Protestants of the Anglo-Saxon countries in their propaganda against Catholicism, he has done everything he could in this delicate matter not to strain relations with the German government.⁹⁷

Privately, the Pope and the prelates went out of their way to be helpful to the hunted Jewish refugees throughout Europe. But in the decisive areas of public opinion, they failed ignominiously to meet the test of the times. When we reflect that the slightest infringement by any government on the dogmatic teachings of the Catholic Church has never failed to elicit the most strenuous protests, we cannot but regard the silence of the Church in the face of systematic mass-murder of Jews, Gypsies, Russians, and Polish intelligentsia as proof of total moral paralysis. The silence of the Church in the first years of Hitlerism could have been regarded by would-be demagogues as a tacit endorsement of Nazi antisemitism. Indeed, this is how it was read by Father Coughlin in the United States and his numerous clerical associates.

Catholic priests in Western countries were frequently in the forefront of opposition to the Nazis. Many of them risked their lives in the effort to hide Jews in monasteries and convents. But the enlightened policies of Western Catholics reflected the liberalism of the West, not its sheer religious impulse. In Poland, the Catholic Church did not offer any resistance, either to the native variety of antisemitism or to the imported Nazi type, and the population, though submissive to clerical leadership collaborated for the most part with the Nazi "action" groups. It was

the Polish Socialists, anti-clerical even if not anti-Catholic, who offered the greatest help to the prisoners of the ghettos, not the Catholic population as a whole.

Far from resisting the Nazis with anywhere near the zeal they manifested in resisting the Communists for their materialistic dogmas, many religious leaders of Europe actually welcomed Nazism as a "spiritual" force, weaning young people away from Marxist materialism. There was actually a "religious revival" in the occupied countries at the very time when the most bestial man-hunts were set in motion. Very instructive is this message sent by Leon Berard, Vichy Ambassador, to his government, in September, 1941, regarding the anti-Jewish measures:

Never has anything been said to me in the Vatican which might suggest, on the part of the Holy See, criticism or disapproval of the legislation and ordinances in question.⁹⁸

If we study the reaction of religious leaders to the Nazi challenge, we find that they were torn between the appeal of the symbolism of religion and its moral-rational substance. Antisemitism was an undeniable part of the Medieval symbolic structure of the Church. Before the French Revolution and the rise of European liberalism, the Jew was denied access to the important offices of European society. For a century, the churches had been fighting for a Christian, and against a secular, society. The Nazi antisemitic program appeared to give them a Christian society, albeit in a purely restricted sense, insofar as the term Christian implied the rejection of Jews. The Nazis were also anti-Communist, sharing opposition to materialism with the Church, and anti-rationalist, sharing the mood of romanticism with the religionist. Faced with the choice between shared hatreds and shared loves, the leaders of the Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, were bewildered. The majority were beguiled by the shared hatred of the Jewish stereotype and of the materialist slogans into believing that they had much in common with the Nazis. The Nazi Nuremberg Laws of 1933 seemed to be identical with the legislation of the Church in the Middle Ages. The anti-liberal campaign of the Nazis seemed to accord perfectly with the anti-liberalism of the Church throughout the nineteenth century. If ever there was a direct antithesis of Jesus, teaching compassion, love, straining for the uttermost bounds of self-surrender, it was Adolf

Hitler, teaching ruthlessness, brutality, mass-murders. Yet those who claimed to follow the teachings of Jesus long thought of Hitler as an ally. Communism is humanistic in essence, but dictatorial in method and atheistic in ideology. Nazism was cannibalistic in essence, equally dictatorial in method, but romantic-mystical in ideology. It speaks volumes of the ethical insensitivity of religious leadership that the churches as a whole regarded Nazism as preferable to Communism. And the Catholic Church always waged a determined war against Communism, while it remained silent to the end in the face of the mass-murders of the Nazis.

Our point is that the excesses of Nazism were not peculiar to the Germans, but the tragic result of ethnicism, which is always potentially primitive and bestial. Similarly, it is not Catholicism or Protestantism that is to blame for embracing the arch-fiend of mankind as an ally against Communism. For religion, all religion, is compounded of the tension between symbolism and substance, between romantic self-sanctification and moral-rational self-transcendence. And the bewildered silence of the Churches in the face of Nazism is proof of the inner dichotomy in the very nature of organized religion. The Jew of Europe was the particular target of the nihilistic component of nationalism and of the perversion of religion. Within his soul, this double tension is peculiarly concentrated and intense. It becomes the special function of the Jew in modern society to strive for the transcendence of mythology and the sublimation of ethnicism into humanism, to fight for the moral-rational essence of faith as against its dark matrix of romantic-mystical rites and symbols. •

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

EPILOGUE

Two passages in the Talmud speak of would-be heirs of the prophets. In one passage we are told that "when the gift of prophecy was denied to prophets, it was given to fools." In the other, we are told that it was given "to the wise." Both versions reflect facets of the truth. The wise should deduce principles from the experience of the past, which enter into the making of the future, but if in the pride of reason, they imagine that they know the future they turn out to be fools. Says the Psalmist, "He who dwells in heaven laughs at them." God mocks all nations and their leaders. There is an irony in the affairs of men; all too frequently, nations achieve the exact opposite of the purposes which lure them on to a course of action.

Disavowing the role of prophets, we can only speak of directions of effort for contemporary Jewish leadership, as these directions are seen in the light of our past. We have found that the basic tensions in the soul of the Jew derive from the polarity on the national plane between ethnicism and humanism and from the polarity on the religious plane between the self-centered, closed faith of dogmatists and the open horizons of a living faith. These tensions apply to all cultures and to all nations, but they are peculiarly focused in the Jewish case, because the ethnic and the religious currents were never separated. The same historic associations, symbols and rites may nurture the springs of nationalism or the fountains of faith, or both. Outside lures and pressures were similarly ambivalent; at times, distorting and disfiguring the consciousness of Jewish people, at other times, refining and spiritualizing it. And the two opposite effects could be found within the same community.

The seamy sides of their own faith and of the religion of their neighbors as well as the impact of clashing ethnic ambitions ac-

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count for the dark, blood-soaked pages of Jewish history, while the ideal nisus in their own faith and in the culture of their neighbors provided the stimulus for the creative surges of both Judaism and humanism. The inner battles in the soul of the Jew and the outer struggles between him and his neighbors are intimately related.

As an integral part of the social scene, the Jewish community was prone to react to the stimuli of the external world in a direct and automatic way. Hostility and persecution would tend to arouse the feelings of ethnic exclusiveness, causing the Jewish community to become more self-enclosed and more fanatical. On the other hand, whenever enlightenment and tolerance prevailed, the Jews would react by lowering the barriers of the inner ghetto-walls, deepening the liberal-humanistic currents of their own tradition and contributing to the expansion of the religious and social horizons of their contemporaries.

But this general effect was frequently counteracted by the genius of single individuals. So a Halevi could proclaim the proud philosophy of Jewish romanticism, including the concepts of ethnic superiority, collective sanctity, and religious Zionism at a time when most Spanish Jews still lived in the afterglow of the Golden Age. And a Maimonides could give brilliant expression to the mood of humanistic rationalism at the very time when the Jews of the Mediterranean world were caught between the upper millstone of Christian Crusaders and the lower millstone of fanatical Moslem Almohades.

The Jewish community did more than react to the pulls and pressures of the outside world; else, assimilation would have dissolved Western Jewry altogether in the nineteenth century; during the long night of persecution, the Jewish spirit would have been crushed completely and petrified. Those who were truly great rose above the vicious cycle of action and reaction, hostility and withdrawal. They challenged the non-Jewish world as well as the Jewish masses to rise to a higher plane of life, where mundane problems appear in a new light. The prophets were the pre-eminent exponents of the genius of Judaism. In times of crisis, they refused to be panicked into ritualistic conformity and ethnic zealotry. On the contrary, they rejected the "normal" and the "natural" reaction of people under stress, insisting that the tragic impetus of history could be overcome only if people learned to

break the fatal chains of mass-faith and mass-reaction. Their firm adherence to the open dimensions of a spiritual faith, in spite of the general reversion of their contemporaries to myth and magic, and their vision of universal humanity in an age of national disaster remain a perennial inspiration for all ages and all peoples.

The example of the biblical prophets in refusing to follow the reactions of the mass-mind was followed by the great rabbis of the second century, by the philosophers of the Medieval era, and by the architects of liberal Judaism in the modern world. The authors of the Mishnah established a balanced faith, rejecting the apocalyptic visionaries, the reactionary Sadducees, the ethnic zealots, and the mystery-mongering Gnostics. In the tenth century, Saadia did more than provide a Jewish version of Moslem liberal theology (*Mutazila*). He gave the mood of philosophical faith new range and depth, though in his day the dead hand of orthodoxy had already gripped the Moslem academics. Abrabanel in the sixteenth century, with his "philosophy of love," Spinoza in the seventeenth century, with his "intellectual love of God," Mendelssohn in the eighteenth century, with his ideas of a rational-universal faith — these men were path-breakers, bringing the rational-moral elan of the Jewish tradition to the evolving society of man.

Those who, like Judah Abrabanel and Spinoza, labored in isolation could not elevate the community as a whole. Their example or their teaching could and did lead to the desertion of many intellectuals. It is the function of intellectuals to remain within the community, sharing its sentiments and symbols while transforming its heritage in keeping with their inner vision. If the gifted few retreat from the clamor and the bias of the populace, they leave the role of leadership to the "false prophets," who fortify the prejudices and nurture the zealotry of the people. Indeed, in the Diaspora, the abiding danger of Jewish life consists in the temptation of the "creative minority" to merge into the general society and to leave the reins of leadership to those who are insensitive to the moral-rational impetus in the tradition.

The architects of modern Judaism, Geiger, Holdheim, Lazarus, Montefiore and Schechter, reinstated the tension between the vision of the few and the blind momentum of the many, restoring that restless balance which characterized the Jewish faith in its

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noblest eras. In its Reform-Conservative formulation, Judaism threw open its windows to the fresh currents of thought in the wide world. It provided an inspiring example of the inner unity of faith and reason, a firm structure of values based upon an unfettered quest of truth. The spokesmen of Reform-Conservative Judaism rapidly forged to the forefront of liberal religious thought, providing prophetic leadership to the larger society of their contemporaries as well as to their own community.

But the role of the prophet never ends. In every generation the age-old tug of war between paganism and monotheism, between collective egotism and communal dedication, is reenacted.

In one generation, the prophetic personality fights for the substance of religion as against its shadow; in another he battles for all-human values as against the zealotries of ethnicism; in still another, he defends the intrinsic holiness of the individual and his freedom as against collective self-righteousness. The lines of battle will be drawn and redrawn, but always it will be the keen edge of the free personality facing the mob and its myths. Even in our day of mass-education, it remains true that the slowly changing myths of the populace are set over against the insights and ideals of the few. At times, the surface sophistication of the modern world is harder to overcome than the simple naivete of previous generations. In any case, the distance between the ideals of those who confront the realities of their day afresh and the myths of those who love to follow the rutted grooves of sentiment and habit constitutes the range of freedom in any society. Within the normal cycle of historic actions and reactions, there is little room for maneuver, and human beings react-en masse in virtually predictable fashion. But freedom exists to the extent to which the moral-rational elan leads statesmen to rise above the mentality of the jingoist, myth-enslaved masses and to act as if reason and good will could indeed be trusted. In society as in the life of the individual, rationality and freedom are two sides of the one coin. Since statesmen cannot venture far ahead of their constituents, the measure of freedom in any society is the degree to which prophetic personalities are able to command the allegiance of the community as a whole.

In our world today, tension and uncertainty characterize Jewish life everywhere. We may think of world Jewry as centering

mainly around the State of Israel and the Jews of America. The destiny of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain is for the present an enigma, because it depends almost entirely on events that they do not control. The anti-religious policy of the Soviet government is responsible for the sorry plight of Jewish life in that country but this policy may well change within the next decade. The attitude of the governing circles to the national culture of the Jews has fluctuated wildly in the past. If the tension between the two international blocks is markedly reduced, the Soviet attitude to all minority groups is likely to be liberalized. For the present, all speculation is futile.

Within the so-called free world, there are wide variations of cultural climate. There are the seething cauldrons of revolutionary forces in South America; there is unbearable racial tension in South Africa; there is frustration and bewilderment in the recently truncated French empire. But in all these areas the power and prestige of America is felt to some extent.

We may therefore think of world Jewry as constituting an ellipse, with an extended periphery drawn around two centers, Israel and America. This conception, first proposed by Solomon Rawidowitz, may well serve as the starting point of our discussion.

For all the communities of this global ellipse, the age-old tensions of Jewish awareness are relevant. It is as impossible for the Jews of Israel to think of themselves completely in secular terms, ignoring the burden of the all-Jewish tragedy and the import of ancestral faith, as it is for American Jewry to proclaim itself to be just another religious denomination. Inescapably, the past is reclaimed by every living generation, though in varying interpretations. And it is the function of the intellectuals in each community so to pattern the diverse elements of their tradition as to achieve a synthesis that is meaningful and elevating for the people of a particular time and place.

For the present, the temper of Israel appears to be markedly off balance and one-sided. This is true with respect to religious culture, as well as relations with its neighbors, and with the Jewries of the world.

The inner life of Israel is intellectually virile and artistically vibrant. Yet there is a deep gulf between the religious community

in Israel and the rest of the population. Israeli Orthodoxy is virtually isolated from the intellectual life of the country, living in a mental ghetto of its own.

While the science of archaeology is immensely popular in Israel, Orthodoxy continues to abide by its age-old beliefs in regard to Bible and the Oral Law, as if Schechter's old quip that "higher criticism" is really "higher antisemitism" were still true. Its magazines speak of a literary *Kultur-Kampf*, in which the Jewish religion is on the defensive. Involved in this long-delayed battle is the question whether the wholeness of the Jewish soul can be regained. The anti-religious circles are prone to reject the entire experience of Jewish life in the Diaspora. For them *Galuth*, or exile, was a sin, a dread ailment of the soul, a thing of shame. There is a vast and deep lacuna in their Jewish awareness, with eighteen centuries cut out and repudiated. Israeli teachers complain of the extreme difficulty of arousing the interest of students in the longest period of Jewish history, the centuries of travail and martyrdom from the burning of the Temple to the rise of the Zionist movements. If the Hebrew writers at the turn of the century could speak of a "rent" (*Kera*) in their soul, so could the youth of Israel today. The government schools in Israel were compelled to institute special courses in "Jewish consciousness" (*todaa Yehudith*), in order to prevent the total estrangement of young people from the historic awareness of their people.

Clearly the dichotomy between culture and religion in Israel is only a temporary phenomenon. In the long run a people is molded by its historic tradition. By degrees, the powerful religious impetus of the Jewish heritage will be articulated in fresh insights and new attitudes, bridging the abyss between rigid fundamentalism and an atheistic culture. The Orthodox Jews will be unable to resist secular influence in Israel with nearly the same zeal that they showed in combatting the secular culture of Russia and Poland. While in Central Europe their piety was reinforced by ethnocentric sentiments, in Israel they will have to deal with an indigenous secularism on its own merits. We may reasonably expect that the contempt for the *galuth*-Jew, deriving from Zionist literature, will gradually give way to a deeper appreciation of the humanistic values of Jewish life and literature in Europe.

The first signs of such a rapprochement are beginning to ap-

pear. A Reform synagogue, sponsored by American Jews, is already established. It is virtually certain that one or more Conservative synagogues will soon appear under American sponsorship. The great historians of the Hebrew University are sowing seeds for a native Israeli version of modern Judaism that are certain to take root in years to come. A reinvigorated faith is likely to merge once again with the national vision of the good life.

In Israel the self-image of the Jews will be painted predominantly in nationalistic colors, with the motif of religion being subordinated. Yet Israeli nationalism cannot become entirely secular because of the impact of tradition and the need of maintaining firm bonds of fellowship with the Jewish communities of the Diaspora that are organized under the banner of religion.

In Israel's relations to its neighbors, a similar schism of the soul is in evidence. On the one hand, Israel aims to be more than another little nation, stumbling under the feet of the Great Powers. In keeping with the messianic drive of the Jewish heritage, it seeks to become "a light to the nations." David Ben Gurion has voiced this hope many times in behalf of his government. There can be no doubt that his fervent messianism reflects the deep feeling of the people. The technical help which Israel is offering to the new nations of Africa and Asia is assuming impressive proportions. Many students from the Afro-Asian world are arriving to study in Israel's colleges and to learn its techniques in the building of new settlements and in the establishment of new industries. The pivotal geographic position of Israel makes it probable that its role as a dispenser of the science and skill of the West to the underdeveloped countries will become steadily more important.

On the other hand, Israel's relations with the Arab world have not improved in the past fourteen years. And the state cannot be at rest, either diplomatically or militarily or morally, until the Arabs have been won over. The problem of the Arab refugees is more than the permanent settlement of a certain number of people. A contest of rival national dreams is here involved, so that all Arabs must regard it as a point of honor to condemn Israel as their enemy. Physical hardships can be alleviated, social problems can be mitigated if they cannot be solved, but the so-called "honor" of a people is all the more intractable and irrational be-

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cause it is so intangible. Even if all the Arab refugees had been miraculously resettled, the memory of their "expulsion" would continue to fester in Arab hearts, growing into an anti-Israel mystique and an ideology of *irredentism*.

To be sure, Israel is not presently in danger of being attacked and overwhelmed by Arab armies. Nor is it likely to be so menaced within the foreseeable future. But the myth of Israel as the eternal enemy, which is now growing apace, is likely to become an international fact, every bit as dangerous as the antisemitic myths were in Christian lands. The Arab refugees provided the initial basis for the anti-Israel myth, but they are rapidly turning into living symbols of a mystical mass-hatred possessing a demonic life of its own.

In the course of time, the Arab lands may well acquire sufficient strength and unity to menace the physical existence of Israel. So shifting and uncertain are the forces of international diplomacy that no one will dare to foretell the distant future.

Certain it is that Israel's policy of massive retaliation and preemptive punishment can only aggravate the situation. Already Israel has been forced to engage in an arms race, involving jet-planes and military rockets. Such rivalry is likely to escalate to astronomical proportions. Nor can the growth of Israel's population possibly keep pace with the natural growth in Arab lands. Furthermore, we may expect that the process of emigration from Israel will be accelerated, as its eager and talented students go to find room for their intellectual gifts. It is the natural destiny of culturally advanced people to migrate to the outer growing edges of civilization. Peace Corps efforts cannot take the place of permanently settled experts.

The Arab problem must be faced as a moral task as well as an opportunity to win nations over to an acceptance of Israel as a partner. To keep up the old argument as to who was expelled, who was panicked, and who was misled by outside propaganda is a futile exercise, calculated to aggravate the Arab myth of Israel as the unvarying enemy. Contests involving the clash of rival national visions need not be insoluble. But the problem is one of reason and imagination; hence, of the range of freedom in the culture of a people.

If the tragic past of our people teaches us anything at all it is that man's most potent ideals cast dark and dangerous shadows.

Religion is man's acceptance of the Divine call; yet for more than two thousand years, we were harried, humiliated, and tortured by the fury of other peoples' faiths. And when religious fanaticism began to abate and it was no longer fashionable to burn heretics, romantic nationalism arose to scorn and brand us as aliens. The seamy side of religion and nationalism existed in our heritage as well; the dogmatism, exclusiveness, and self-centeredness of our tradition coming to the fore whenever we suffered from the same failures in the temper of our neighbors.

Now that a Jewish state is at last a reality, should we not seek to overcome the historic limitations of these ideals and rise to a new plane, above the "normal" politics of attack, retaliation, and the escalation of incidents into wars? At its highest levels, nationalism merges into humanism, and religion becomes the universal faith of mankind. The greatest men of all ages and faiths were those who, like the Hebrew prophets, rose above the vicious cycle of action and reaction, achieving an ethical "breakthrough" to the vision of a new world.

At this writing, we cannot foretell the course of Israel's development, nor can we outline a specific policy for immediate implementation. But this can be said with certainty, the moral health and the very life of Israel depend upon its finding ways to win over the Arabs. The task is not one of concluding pacts with the neighboring governments, but of achieving true *bonds of fraternity* with the Arab people. To this end, the Arabs within Israel's borders and those encamped on its periphery must be converted into a bridge of friendship between the two ancient peoples. By working for them and with them, smoldering hates can be transmuted into a new blaze of amity and unity.

Is this hope utopian? Not for people who remember that they are "sons of prophets"; not for a state which has been established in response to the aroused conscience of the civilized world; not for a community constituted by the bonds of a common faith and a common dedication to the deliverance of man from the chains of bias and mythology. It is far more realistic than to depend on an endlessly increasing arms race, steadily exacerbated by the rivalry of the Great Powers. If France and Germany could unite to form the foundation of a united Europe, how much more Israel and Arabs, since the hate which divides them is of yester-

day, while their common roots go back to the dawn of antiquity. A new vision of Jewish-Arab fraternity could probably be grafted on the great record of cooperation and friendly symbiosis attained by these two peoples in the ancient and medieval worlds.

It is not our task to prescribe the details of diplomatic negotiations. The underlying issue is the range of freedom within Israel; *i.e.*, the capacity of Israeli men of vision to rise above the normal pressures of diplomacy and military policy. Prophetic voices calling for a moral approach to the solution of the Arab problem are heard in Israel far more frequently than in the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. The *Ihud* continues to challenge the conscience of the Israeli, keeping alive the heritage of Judah L. Magnes and Henrietta Szold. The *Ha-Aretz*, a daily newspaper, allows room for occasional expressions of self-criticism. Even Ben Gurion sounds a prophetic note, from time to time.

The hard fact is that in Israel, Jews and Arabs must learn to live as brothers, achieving not merely a state of mutual accommodation but the deep sentiments of historic kinship and fraternity.

For many, many centuries Jewish people in Europe encountered little difficulty in making "deals" with the princes of the realm. But again and again they failed to win the hearts of the people among whom they lived. Some Jewish leaders even resented the necessity of cultivating such feelings, as if mass-feelings and folk-myths were somehow mandatory. But it is the function of intellectuals to interpret myths and to channelize sentiments; else, the blind passions of the past, driven by their own momentum and manipulated by demagogues, will engulf and extinguish the light of reason. In Israel, as through the rest of the world, the point has been reached where we cannot afford another failure.

In relation to the Jews of the world, the government of Israel is similarly caught between opposing aspirations. On the one hand, the Israeli government and people are naturally grateful to the Jews of the free world for their generous help. The Jewish communities of the English-speaking world brought to the young state of Israel the kind of sustained financial backing that governments normally derive only from their own people or from

other governments. The government and people of Israel, it appears, will be dependent on the generosity of Diaspora Jewry for a long time to come.

In its turn, the government and people of Israel have earned the gratitude of Diaspora Jewry, as well as its admiration. They have opened their gates wide to Jewish refugees from every part of the globe, taxing themselves to the bone for ambitious developmental programs. They have restored to Jewish people a sense of pride in collective achievement. They have transformed the public image of the Jew, rescuing it from the diverse myths of the past. A new sense of dignity, a new feeling of security, a new surge of pride — these are the real and priceless gifts of Israel to Diaspora Jewry.

Yet beneath these mutual exchanges of philanthropy and fraternity, immense pressure is being generated by the clash of ambivalent purposes and antagonistic interests. The dark shadow of history does not permit an easy and automatic resolution of differences. David Ben Gurion, as a pragmatic diplomat, may assure Jacob Blaustein, honorary president of the American Jewish Committee, that the government of Israel does not pretend to represent all Jews and that it does not intend to urge the mass-migration of Jews from the West. But this public promise did not prevent Mrs. Golda Meir, Foreign Secretary of Israel, from sending letters to the governments of the nations of the free world, protesting antisemitic incidents in their respective countries. Nor did the Ben Gurion-Blaustein "covenant" prevent Ben Gurion himself from proclaiming that it is the "duty" of religious Jews to emigrate to Israel. In the Eichmann Case, the State of Israel dramatically represented itself as the state of Jews, even if the implication was confounded by the usual double-talk of diplomats.

In the August, 1962, issue of *The Jewish Frontier*, Ben Gurion wrote,

We regard the State as the State of the whole Jewish people and we have made a law which is as far as I know, unique in the world.

This ambivalence can be resolved in a satisfactory way, only if the underlying historical forces are analyzed and evaluated.

First, then, there are the material interests of the State and its citizens. These interests require the maintenance of a high rate

of immigration. For several decades, the Israeli economy has been geared to the needs of a large and increasing body of newcomers. From the military point of view, the Israeli government is faced with the necessity of coping with the ever-growing armies of the surrounding Arab nations. Also, in order to counter the moral challenge of the uprooted refugees, encamped on the borders of Israel, it is necessary to fill every crevice of the land.

Each one of these material interests may be questioned. Cannot the orientation of an economy be reversed? Might not the general lessening of tensions be more desirable than the endless race of armies and populations? Does not the pace of immigration make many Arabs feel that the ultimate purpose of Israel is to occupy the entire Holy Land, within its historic or biblical boundaries?

Whether or not the massive effort of Israel to build up a vast flow of immigrants from the Diaspora is in keeping with the genuine, long-range interests of the country, there can be no doubt that such is the thinking of the contemporary governmental leaders. And their conception of the interests of Israel is likely to coincide with their interpretation of the Zionist ideal. For them, Zionism was not the building of a *homeland* for some few Jews, "those who cannot or will not live in other lands"; it was essentially the endeavor to solve the Jewish problem by "liquidating" the Diaspora, in Klatzkin's sense of the term. Their conviction that the Jews of the Diaspora are doomed was reinforced by the Nazi catastrophe. Since in their view, all, or nearly all, Jewish communities are destined for destruction, it is the part of wisdom to exploit them before they are liquidated, siphoning off their human and financial resources. In this view, it would not be amiss to accelerate the pace of history on occasion, if such a policy were beneficial for the State, which, in their own view, is the one permanent anchorage of the Jewish people. From their standpoint, those Diaspora communities destined to escape physical annihilation will gradually assimilate. Conceiving of Judaism as an ethnic civilization, they naturally construe as assimilation the deterioration of nationalistic loyalties, failure to use the Hebrew language and to identify with the state of Israel. A happy and prosperous American community which retained the religious loyalties of Judaism would, in their opinion, still be assimilated

if it were alien to the Hebraic culture of Israel and indifferent to its interests. To Herzl and Nordau, we recall, the great rabbis of Germany and Austria were assimilationists.

Manifestly, this mentality, with its perverse reading of Jewish history is extremely dangerous for the welfare and the future of Diaspora Jewry, while the actual interests of the State are not.

The problem of Israel's relation to Diaspora Jewry is primarily one of ideology; hence, the task of the intellectuals. The diplomats and the philanthropists dealing with the concrete details of specific tasks are not likely to be aware of the forces which govern their daily decisions. They are driven by sentiments, which they themselves have helped to whip up; they are advised and guided by executives who dare not resist such sentiments and whose genius consists in finding the crest of popular approval and then riding it.

Essentially, the basic issue is the ancient struggle between pseudo-messianism and genuine messianism, a tension which has characterized Jewish life for twenty-five centuries. Messianism is the belief that God will be the ultimate bringer of redemption, whether or not He employs a specific person as His agent. Since God is unknowable, all human instruments and forces making for redemption are to be regarded with reserve. No one can penetrate the uttermost bounds of His Will. As the God of all men, His Kingdom is universal, with the redemption of Israel forming part of the design for the salvation of mankind.

Pseudo-messianism is the demonic counterpart of the messianic ideal. The Redeemer is a concrete person, a specific plan or organization. It is here and now, certain and irresistible. Those who believe and are converted will be redeemed, while those who do not or cannot so believe are depraved and lost. If the Redeemer is already here, his new law transcends all previous principles. Similarly, redemption being concrete, it must begin with the people Israel, though it may be convenient on state occasions to reaffirm the pious slogans of redemption for all mankind.

Messianism and pseudo-messianism are, as we have seen, the two poles of Jewish awareness. They include the same elements, man and Providence, Israel and humanity, man's initiative and Divine Redemption; but while messianism appeals to faith, stresses man's ignorance, and upholds the vision of universal brotherhood, pseudo-messianism is certain of the identity of the Re-

deemer, stresses man's initiative, and the right to act in keeping with the new law which is "beyond good and evil," and focuses attention on the people Israel as the concrete manifestation of the messianic era.

It is within this historic context that the relation of Israel to the Jews of the world must be seen. When the leaders of Israel embrace all the communities of the Jewish Diaspora into the one category of *Galuth* (exile), to be at once liquidated and redeemed, they give way to the pseudo-messianic mystique in Zionism. A generalization so radical can be justified only in terms of a myth, articulated in the modern-sounding accents of an ideology. In the changing patterns of the human scene, we may expect that there will arise situations when some Jewish people might want to migrate to Israel. In the happiest years of the freest and most prosperous communities, there will be hundreds and even thousands who will want to make Israel their permanent home. But no individual or government should presume to play the role of God in disposing of the destinies of Jewish communities. Such presumption, however, cannot be ruled out as long as the mystique of pseudo-messianism is nurtured.

Jewish history reinforces the warning of depth-psychology and the lesson of contemporary experience, to the effect that the masses of humanity can be easily mobilized by myths which minister to the "pooled pride" of ethnic groups. No group has suffered more or longer from the momentum of myths than the Jewish people. Even now, antisemitism functions among the lunatic fringe, as a magical cure-all. The Nazis proved that so-called modern man is not immune to the poison of latter-day myths. But ghosts and demons cannot endure the light of day. It is the function of intellectuals to widen the range of freedom in Jewish history, by curbing the blind and sinister potential of the pseudo-messianic mentality.

The Jewish community in America is the major center of the Diaspora. Its moral prestige and political force are exerted wherever American power and influence extend. Its prospects too may be considered under three headings, its conception of its own being, its relation to its non-Jewish neighbors, and its bonds with the Jews of the world.

How is the Jewish community to look upon its own being?

While advertisers and public relations consultants may speak of a public image, we are concerned primarily with the collective self-image of American Jews, their idea of what the community ought to be and should become. Thus we come to the question which has become tiresome by endless repetition — are the Jews in America a race, a nation, or a religious community? This question is vital, not because sociological categories are important in themselves, but because the self-image of a group determines its policy, the direction in which its energies are likely to be oriented and sustained.

From the vantage point of our analysis, we recognize to begin with that racism at various times did play a vital role in Jewish self-awareness. It was the "children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," who were "chosen" in the first place. The prophets spoke of the "holy seed"; Ezra and Nehemiah insisted on guarding its "purity"; the Talmudic Sages spoke of the goal of survival in terms of "the seed of Abraham"; Halevi glorified the Jewish race as constituting a category of super-humanity; and so did a long line of Jewish thinkers down to our own day. But, the opposition to racism is also part of the tradition. So, in Scriptures, ethnicism is opposed by the emphasis on the great individual and by the Divine concern for all men. Ezra's decision, as we noted earlier, was contradicted in the Talmud; Maimonides envisioned the pathway leading to Divine perfection in all-human terms.

Modern science agrees with the rationalistic current in Judaism that racism masks and distorts the reality of individual variations and individual differences. This factual judgment is reinforced by moral considerations. Did not the Nazis provide a clear object lesson by the shattering impact of their race philosophy? With the seeds of the Nazi dragon still strewn upon the face of the globe it is reasonable to expect that even the ethnic romantics among us would not want to revive the racial myth for the sake of the dubious advantages it might bring to the cause of Jewish survival. On the other hand, as we have noted earlier, the reaction of the masses does not take place on the plane of reason at all. Feeling that it was vilified by the Nazi preachers of racial hate, the Jewish population generally is prone to react by intensifying its own racial pride and by listening eagerly to those who articulate "the voice of blood." The vicious cycle of action and reaction, by which the poisons of hate and pride con-

tinue to bedevil mankind, does not make an exception of the "holy seed." Hence, the racist dogma, somewhat disguised and refined, is likely to continue as a focus of dispute within the community.

If we assume sufficient sophistication among Jewish leaders to eliminate the self-image of the "holy seed," there remain the two classifications, nationality and religion. In our survey of the inner factors determining the range of freedom in Jewish history, we have noted that the Jewish mentality was pulled in four opposite directions by the two poles of nationalism and the two poles of religion. The ideologists of classical Reform and of the Council for Judaism who blandly assume that for two thousand years the Jews have been only a religious community fail to comprehend the complex totality of Jewish awareness. By the same token, the secular Zionists who interpret two millennia of Jewish faith and martyrdom as a transient expression of the ethnic "will to live" do violence to the canons of truth as well as to the most sacred sentiments of our people. The truth is more complex than either the religionists or the secularists would have it.

Does it then follow that the unities of history are self-perpetuating? By no means. The restless dynamism of Jewish history allows considerable room for intelligent adjustment, providing the polarities of both faith and nationalism are understood.

As we have seen, nationalism is composed of the pull toward a national vision of the good, on the one hand, and that toward ethnic self-love, fellow-feeling with the group, and collective self-glorification, on the other hand. In America, the national ideals of the various immigrants groups tend to merge into the vision of American society as a whole. Here, all ethnic groups and historic cultures are challenged to uncover the universal implications of their particular backgrounds, joining hands with the bearers of other cultures in the enhancement of American life. By virtue of its self-image as a "new world," a laboratory for the emergence of the great society of the future, America offers no opposition to the cultivation of ethnic loyalties; yet, these loyalties are effectively dissolved in the super-national atmosphere of American life, precisely because they are embraced in a wider unit. Here, the intense loyalties of ethnic groups are preserved only temporarily and by the more backward elements of the population. Slowly but surely, ethnicism expires; it is not

violently slain by the Angel of Death; like Moses in Jewish legendry, it succumbs to "the kiss of death" administered by the Lord Himself.

Manifestly, then, the Jewish community is free to mold its character and destiny by balancing historical forces against contemporary needs and ideals. It could define itself as a nationality and articulate its definition through the secular organizational apparatus of a nationality, but it would pay a terrific price. It would have to paralyze the idealistic pole of nationhood, which leads toward the dissolution of ethnic groups, and emphasize the instincts of tribalism which Jewish people loathe to see in American society generally. The Jewish community would have to reduce the dimensions of its own freedom within the emergent great society and confine itself to the status of a "colony" of the State of Israel. It would in fact condemn itself to intellectual sterility and cultural isolation. In addition, the Jewish group would come to be recognized as the one exception to the general rule, the one group resisting the vast movement of American society toward integration and unity. Such a development would appear to offer proof positive that the Jews are indeed a self-segregating people, refusing to join other men and women in one fraternal fellowship.

So grotesque is this vision and so out of keeping with the ideals operative in modern Jewish life that one could expect its certain rejection. As a matter of fact, all surveys of opinion among Jewish youth indicate that the vast majority regard themselves as being Jewish by virtue of faith. If unorganized individuals were the bearers of history, we could without hesitation dismiss the secularist-ethnic concept of the Jewish community, as being no longer relevant to the realities of life here. But the specter of ethnic insularity and eventual isolation is kept alive by organizational pressures which are quite formidable.

The impetus of local and overseas philanthropy is financially by far the most potent force in the community. This sociological force is inescapably ethnic in character, since in the decades of its organization and growth it was impossible to attain effective action on the plane of religious unity. Religiously the Jewish community was torn apart into the warring camps of Orthodoxy, Reform, and Conservatism, at the very time when outside pressures and the moral challenge of overseas needs called for

the formation of a united front. In many communities, the desire to avoid controversy dictated the virtual elimination of the spokesmen of religion from the councils of the federations and welfare funds. Though religious controversies are now largely institutionalized and muted, the historic pattern once established tends to perpetuate itself.

The ethnic stance of the organized Jewish philanthropic agencies is sustained in part by the remnants of the once strong Yiddish and Hebraist secularism. The vast majority of American Jews emigrated from the Russian Pale in the last decade of the nineteenth and in the first decade of the twentieth century. Many of the immigrants of this wave had broken away from the moorings of faith, under the influence of Marxist socialism and atheism. The Yiddish secularists were long more powerful in America than any other single group. By contrast, the Hebrew secularists were small in number, though far from negligible, owing to their being concentrated in the field of education. Though neither Yiddish nor Hebrew secularism is any longer intellectually respectable, the momentum of their ideologies is still felt, since it is incorporated in certain self-perpetuating organizations and institutions.

But the most important force threatening to nationalize and isolate the Jewish community is the impact of the Zionist movement. As we noted earlier, American Zionism was essentially philanthropic, aiming to bring non-American, homeless refugees into a secure haven of their own. Under the protection of the surface slogans of this unexceptionable program, the European ideology of the movement was gradually imported, fostered, and nurtured. Every movement seeks to acquire depth and scope and to attain the dignity of a philosophy. Hence, the classical literature of the movement was cultivated here, the works of Herzl and Pinsker, the writings of Nordau and Klatzkin.

These works, conceived in the spirit which denies the worth and future of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, are more influential than one would infer from the tiny number of their readers. For they provide the slogans and clichés which are used to whip up enthusiasm for the yearly campaigns in behalf of Zionist causes. They are the stock-in-trade of "house-broken" ideologists. The spectacle of Israel, struggling between the stifling embrace of Orthodox theocracy and the appeal of the modern

vision of a secular democracy, helps to dramatize the tug of war in the hearts of all Jews. As far as American Jews are concerned, the tension is between the concept of American nationhood, coupled with the religious heritage of Judaism, and the concept of Jewish nationhood tinged by religion and centered in the State of Israel. The problem of American Jews is how to overcome the impetus of their own vast and intricate organizational apparatus, which embodies outworn and irrelevant ideologies. In order that inner tensions be transmuted into creative and dynamic energy, the opportunity must be provided for the voices of self-criticism to be heard. In a healthy society, such criticism is an antidote against the creeping paralysis of enforced conformity. But self-criticism does not go well with campaign oratory nor with the pressures of vested interests.

Within the Jewish faith, rabbis are traditionally independent thinkers, dedicated to the truth as they see it. The relative independence of rabbis kept the Jewish faith from stagnation and fossilization in the past millennium. But, by virtue of their dependence upon congregations and their fears of offending national organizations, rabbis as a class are now hardly the effective critics they were only a generation ago. There is no organizational device in the community for the promotion of self-criticism; there is no means of keeping the thought of our intellectuals circulating within the various echelons of the community; and this is the gravest danger to Jewish life. On the other hand, the Jewish community is becoming steadily more college-educated. We may therefore expect that it will become steadily more disposed to listen to the voices of reason as against the voices of blood. At conferences of federations and welfare funds, the spotlight is directed with ever greater frequency to the cause of adult education. We can only hope that the religious leaders of the future will win and hold the allegiance of the rapidly growing intelligentsia, establishing a body of opinion that will curb the blind momentum of the past. Here again the range of freedom in Jewish life is the extent to which the true needs and genuine ideals of individuals prevail over the sheer impetus of fixed habits and long-established myths.

And the lesson of history? It assures us that our problem has been encountered many times before. The Prophets, spokesmen of the individuals' conscience, had to contend against the priests,

the guardians of the momentum of institutions and of folk-myths. The Pharisees had a long and difficult struggle against the entrenched Highpriests and against the fanatical zealots. Today's priests of the pseudo-religion of ethnicism are the "safe" propagandists and bureaucrats.

If Maimonides was not attacked in his lifetime by the zealous defenders of a fossilized tradition, his works were burned after his death, at the instigation of fanatics. Dynamic polarization is the mark of a living faith.

The inner tensions of American Jewish life are likely to be reflected in the relations between Jews and their neighbors. On the assumption that the ethnic and the fundamentalist isolationists will become a small fringe-group, this relationship is likely to become interesting and fruitful.

In the United States, the Jewish religion is not an exotic cult of quaint and outlandish people, but one of the major faiths of the land. In the cities and in the great universities, the exponents of Judaism are listened to with respect on all significant occasions. On the college campuses, at metropolitan assemblies of clergymen, and in the public press, the Jewish religion gets a fair hearing. A new mood is gradually arising, which might well effect a radical revision of the complex forces which traditionally have determined the fate of the Jew.

This new temper arises out of the recognition that different religions need not be mutually antagonistic. Trite as this observation may seem, we cannot ignore the historic fact that Christian education long provided the soil in which alone the dragon-seeds of mythological antisemitism could flourish. The aura of cosmic mystery with which the stereotype of the Jew as "Christ-killer" was enveloped made credible all the myths that were later grafted on this poison-drenched dogma. If the word "Christian" was almost automatically associated with the word "anti-Jewish," then, by the perversity of popular logic, all that was "anti-Jewish" could seek shelter under the aegis of the term "Christian." Throughout the past century, so-called "Christian" intellectuals and politicians sought inspiration in romantic literature and in the glorified Middle Ages. Protestant theologians were only a pace or two behind the Catholics in excoriating liberals and socialists as godless rationalists and in seeking to derive inspiration

from the Medieval Age of Faith. On the other hand, Jews sought aid and comfort in the works and the leadership of secularist politicians, liberals, and socialists.

Today it is fairly clear that the philosophies of violence are equally the enemies of all genuine faiths. Nazism, Fascism, and Communism, in their various combinations and permutations, are the neo-pagan faiths of our day. They vie with liberal religion for the hearts and minds of the next generation. No one who has studied the lessons of history can maintain that religion as such fosters the freedom of the individual. But our recent experience teaches us that liberal religion, maintaining a dynamic balance between faith and reason, does provide the only suitable soil for the flourishing of all humanistic values. A vibrant, non-dogmatic faith protects society from the new myths of an ill-digested science as well as from the old stereotypes of ethnic and religious traditions. Liberal religion, articulated in diverse traditions, is, as Walter Lippmann put it, the "public philosophy" of America and, in some sense, of the free world generally.

In this emergent context, the Jewish religion is not an alien thorn in the side of Christianity, but an integral part of the American religious scene. The body of ideas and sentiments generating the atmosphere of freedom is neither rationalistic, nor Catholic, nor Protestant, nor Jewish, but it is constituted by the juxtaposition of all of them. The Judeo-Christian tradition and the humanist-rationalist heritage of Hellenism form the dynamic field of tension that is Western culture.

The new temper of religious leaders is shown in the Ecumenical movement which has gathered momentum in the past few years. Even more clearly it is manifested in the conscious attempt of Catholic and Protestant educators to eliminate from their texts all scornful and invidious references to those who are outside the faith. A clear awareness on the part of Christian teachers of the role played by the popular canard, "the Jews killed our god," in generating the venom of mythological antisemitism, will go far toward eradicating this peculiar residue of medieval witchcraft.

With the lessons of history to caution us, we cannot expect that the course of events will move uniformly and irresistibly in the one direction of liberalism. Right now, it does appear as if the fantasies of ethnicism and the myths infecting religious tradi-

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tions are gradually being overcome. The movement toward the formation of a united Europe, impelled as it is by many forces, is likely to eventuate in a broad humanism, with world-wide consequences. Still, the opposing forces are not spent; they will be certain to assert themselves, to some degree, the moment the situation seems favorable.

It is the function of the Jewish community as a whole to assist in the genesis of the great and free society, in which diverse ethnic groups and religious traditions are equally welcome. If Jewish leaders were to succumb to the "normal" cycle of action and reaction, they would be numbered among the defenders of a rabid, embittered, aggressive ethnicism and a self-enclosed religious mentality. Who would blame them if, like the wife of Lot, they turned their faces toward the burning Sodom of the last generation and were changed into a pillar of salt? Some of our people doubtless reacted in this way; they may be expected to keep on rebuilding the subsoil for the dragon-seeds of mythological antisemitism. But the range of freedom in our life consists in the capacity to rise above the "normal" reactions to hostility and to reassert faith in the progressive liberation of mankind from the bloody Molochs of the past.

What of the relation of the Jews of America to Jewish communities the world over, including the Jews of Israel? On the official level, there is virtual agreement that all Jewish international organizations are limited to consultative functions. The Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform movements have worldwide affiliations; so, too, the World Jewish Congress, in spite of the majesty of its name. Various philanthropic organizations, like the *Ort*, the *Alliance Israelite*, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the United Palestine Appeal, maintain international contacts, in connection with their work, as does the B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee.

The position of the World Zionist Organization is more ambiguous. On the one hand, it is to all intents and purposes controlled by the government of Israel, owing to an intricate system of voting which was devised long before the State of Israel came into being. Technically, the various national organizations of the Zionist movement are branches of the one world organization, subject to the demands of Zionist discipline. In reality, the

World Zionist Organization is no more than a consultative body, like all the others. Only the skeleton of the old "parliament on the way" remains, and American Zionists do not hesitate to assert their independence.

Yet behind the facade of international organizations, the tensions of Jewish life are presently most confused. Within the Zionist camp, the real argument is between the Negators of the Diaspora, who operate on the assumption that only in Israel will there be a future for Jews and Judaism, and the Affirmers of the Diaspora, who maintain that the Jews are and will remain a world-wide chain of communities, drawing inspiration from one another. But the Deniers as well as the Affirmers have long worked side by side in the upbuilding of the Homeland and in the settlement of refugees. They fought together against the opponents of Zionism for two generations. Up to the establishment of the State of Israel, the issue between the Affirmers and the Deniers was largely academic. Now, that this difference is coming to the fore, the former unity of symbols and slogans blurs the real issue and confounds the mass-following of the Zionist movement.

The real issue must be seen against the historic tension within the heart of the Jew. Should he trust the people among whom he lives and treat antisemitic phenomena as remnants of the dying past? Or should he "understand the antisemites," as did Klatzkin, and work on the assumption that different peoples must hate one another and that all, or nearly all, Jews will have to emigrate to the land of Israel? The unparalleled disaster of Nazism, resulting in the extermination of six million Jews, made Deniers of the Diaspora out of many who had previously believed that they were firmly settled in the lands of Europe and America.

On a still deeper level, the issue between the Deniers and the Affirmers is the interpretation of nearly every phase of Jewish history. Our entire study of the meaning of Jewish history is intended to expose the diverse tensions and multiple factors in the long experience of our people. The temper of the Deniers is reflected in the one refrain which sums up their philosophy of Jewish history: "Other Jewish communities in the dispersion felt secure at one time; then they were overwhelmed by an avalanche of hate. There was Egypt, Babylonia, Spain, Germany, Poland. Where are they now?"

The Deniers are certainly right in pointing out that a potent element of danger inheres in the Jewish Diaspora situation, but they are wrong in inferring that the danger is either natural or inevitable. It is no more natural than the instincts of collective pride, collective envy, and the perverse sentiments of mass mythologies, which every society must overcome again and again. It is no more inevitable than a mass-psychosis, which grips a people as soon as the restraints of reason are shattered. What is sanity to society as a whole is life itself to the Jews in its midst.

In our world today, the sanity of all nations and governments is the condition for the continued existence of the human race. As Americans, we depend not indeed on the good will of the Russians but on the enlightened selfishness of their leaders, and vice versa. In the future, this interdependence is certain to grow. Society as a whole can ill afford the social myths which bedeviled the Jews — nationalist jingoism, religious fanaticism, or the various religio-political cults associated with antisemitism.

In any case, the tensions within Jewish life rule out any radical solution. Arnold J. Toynbee argues in the twelfth volume of his *Study* that the Jews of the Diaspora should give up all ethnic sentiments, define themselves as a universal faith, and seek to win the adherence of millions of Gentiles to its banner. In this way, Judaism would bring its full impact to bear upon contemporary society, and the Jewish community would no longer be the target of periodic flareups of jingoistic frenzy. Ezekiel Kaufman maintains the opposite thesis. In his great work, *Gole Venai-har*, he insists that ethnic differences inevitably lead to wars, formal or informal. Antisemitism is one of the forms of this struggle of nations for existence. Since the Jewish religion perpetuates the sense of Jewish ethnic distinctiveness, antisemitism is inescapable. Hence, the only solution is for Jews to emigrate to the land of Israel.

For all their vast erudition and brilliance, both Toynbee and Kaufman are certainly mistaken — and for the same reason. The Jewish community is constituted by forces which pull it in opposite directions. Hence, no radical solution can be accepted. Some Diaspora communities will be liquidated by a massive, organized exodus; some communities will shrink and wither through the siphoning away of their leadership; other communities will seek and find ever larger areas of integration with the general society.

In the Diaspora, Jewish life is founded on faith — faith in the capacity of people to overcome the lingering myths of ethnocentric arrogance and fundamentalist fanaticism. This faith is the basis of Western society in particular and the evolving great society in general. To retreat in fear from the common enterprise of building such a society is to court total frustration, since no spot on earth is free from the claims and counter-claims of rival power blocks.

The faith or the lack of faith of Jews in America will tend to prove itself. For faith is itself a historic force. If the Jewish people of America should heed the council of the Deniers, who are largely concentrated in the state of Israel, they will be likely so to direct their communal affairs as to help bring about the situation which they profess to fear. For Jewish people are not completely helpless when they face the tides of history. Their destiny depends very largely upon the intellectual and cultural forces in society, and they are very prominently represented in those social elements which determine the moral climate of an age. The predominant temper of American Jewry clearly and definitely rejects the counsels of despair of the Zionist Deniers of the Diaspora. The vast majority of American Zionists concurs in this faith. The Zionist philosophy of Brandeis was based, not on absence of faith in America or in the West, but on a firm trust in the liberal-democratic instincts of man. In his view, every human being should be entitled to at least two homelands, one in which he was born and one to which he desires to emigrate. If individual American Jews could determine their own destiny, the Deniers of the Diaspora would hardly deserve a hearing. But, we have seen that diverse Jewish communities are capable of affecting each other's character and fate. In theological language, they are "co-responsible for one another." The Deniers of the Diaspora by virtue of their control of the Jewish Agency and its funds, dispose of considerable power even in such countries as the United States and England. Hence, the question mark on the horizon of American Jewry.

The spell of a word is on occasion itself a historic factor. To the uncritical, the word is one with the reality. Thus, the terms Judaism and the Jewish people, suggest a unitary phenomenon. The Jews of Israel and of America share the fear that the tides

of history are carrying them in different directions. In Israel, the Jews are becoming a secular nationality, with the ancient faith as a subordinate reality, while in America, the Jews are becoming a religious denomination, with an ethnic underside. Leading thinkers in both communities are concerned lest the Jewish people fall apart into separate peoples. This fear inhibits them from advocating for the Jews in each area the kind of adjustment that their situation requires.

Let us now analyze this fear in the light of our review of Jewish history. We realize firstly that the impetus of the past is exceedingly powerful. The entire record of Jewish experience is proof of the immense sway exerted by the collective memory of a people. Both communities are likely to be history-minded — American Jewry by virtue of the unbreakable intimacy between the faith and the history of the people, Israeli Jewry by virtue of the need of deepening the national consciousness of the people. Both communities will cultivate the Hebrew language and its vast literature, the one for its religious associations and its employment in worship, the other for its daily needs. Both communities will continue to share in the joys and sorrows of living history, whenever and wherever it affects Jews.

Secondly, the diversity which results from the healthy response of people to different challenges is by all odds a sign of vitality. In the case of religion, Jews have come to accept diversity as a natural expression of modern Judaism. There is no reason to suppose that future generations of Jewish people will be shocked by the fact that in different areas of the world, Judaism has different meanings.

Thirdly, we have seen that Judaism is not a monolithic temper or a fossilized way of life, but a multi-faceted phenomenon, with opposing forces pulling in opposite directions. Its richness consisted precisely in its capacity to assume novel forms in changed circumstances, with one or another aspect of the dynamic equilibrium coming to predominate.

Fourthly, in the modern world, the concept of a family of peoples is beginning to attain acceptance. The European Community or the Atlantic Community will, when it is constituted, be a family of peoples, possessing many cultural elements in common. Similarly, on the religious plane the Ecumenical movement is likely to eventuate in a family of Christian faiths, sharing many

beliefs, rites and social concerns. A family of Jewish communities, differing in many ways and yet sharing certain historic, cultural and religious elements will be very much in keeping with the coming alignments on the international scene.

A family allows for the greatest diversification among its members. As the children grow up and get married, they become part of new families, even as they retain their filial sentiments. In times of crisis, a family draws together, and the afflicted member becomes the focus of an outpouring of affection and sympathy. Some members of the family are more attached to the ancestral home than others. Some are unable to maintain even slender ties of sympathy. Others may be equally perverse in the opposite direction, being so infatuated with filial sentiments as to be utterly incapable of forming new alliances and establishing families of their own.

How long does family unity endure? It depends on many factors, but chiefly on the appeal of the tradition which distinguished the ancestral home. So long as that tradition is cultivated and made part of the lives of successive generations, the family will be a living reality. Every son and daughter need only be concerned with his own relation to the spiritual treasure of the family — does he cherish it and live by its light? The unity of a widely scattered family is the product of the loyalty of its members to their common tradition.

What then is the meaning of Jewish history? It is a demonstration of the high potential of freedom in human affairs and a record of the melancholy consequences of the failure to utilize its opportunities. As society moves to ever larger associations, it encounters the tension between the ideal vision of nationalism and the narrow sentiments of ethnocentrism. As it advances toward the Divine, it confronts the tension between religion as a dynamic quest for reality and religion as a finished and fixed body of dead certainties. The Jews contributed mightily to the ideals of prophetic nationalism and of monotheistic faith. But they suffered most grievously wherever the balance of nationalism and religion in their own tradition and in the mentality of their neighbors shifted toward the poles of racism and fundamentalism. Insofar as Jews were frequent victims of external forces, their destiny reflected the recurrent breakdowns of free

thought and genuine religion in the countries where they lived. Freedom is the quality of a culture, not merely a social arrangement; it consists in the extent to which rational and ethical ideals restrain the passions of people and neutralize the momentum of popular myths.

In their inner life, the Jews had in the past similarly demonstrated both the failure to overcome the impetus of their history and the bold vision to overleap the vicious cycle of hate and suspicion. The noblest visions of a humanist faith are enshrined in Judaism along with the most dogmatic passions of self-assurance and self-exaltation. The most generous outreaching to a worldwide fellowship co-exists with the most desperate withdrawal behind the ramparts of intellectual, racial, and ritualistic ghetto-walls. These forces have always contended for the mastery of the Jewish soul. All of Western society has a stake in this struggle. And its end is not in sight.

NOTES

Chapter One

1. Jacques Maritain, *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question*, New York, 1939, pp. 25, 29.
2. Franz Rosenzweig, *Brlefe*, Berlin, 1935, p. 670.
3. Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of the New Testament Times*, New York, 1949, pp. 5, 6.
4. Leviticus 20:26; 18:3. Deuteronomy 33:28.
5. Numbers 14:12.
6. James Parkes, *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity*, London, 1960, pp. 9, 225, 279.

Chapter Two

1. Adolf Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. 1, "Excursus on The Third Race."
2. Bahya Ibn Pakuda, *Duties of the Heart*, Introduction.
3. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, New York, 1959.
4. Elijah de Vidash, *Reshith Hochmo*, Shaar Ahavah, Chapter 4.
5. B. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book V.
6. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 279C.
7. Harnack, the historian of the early Church, attributed the decline of Christianity to its encounter with Greek philosophy, resulting in the substitution of dogmas for living experience. R. Sohn considered institutionalism to be the cause of decline. Adolf Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*.
8. Leviticus 11: 44.
9. Lewis and Reinhold, *Roman Civilization*, Vol. II, p. 585.

Chapter Three

1. Esther 3:8.
2. III Maccabees 3: 4.
3. III Maccabees 3: 19.
4. III Maccabees 3: 23.
5. III Maccabees 7: 10-14.
6. Jeremiah 30: 11.
7. Yebamoth 48b.
8. Megillah 13a.
9. Gittin 57B.
10. Kiddushin 70a.
11. Sabbath 22b.
12. Standard Prayer Book and Haggadah.
13. See D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, page 168.
14. Zohar, Shelah Lecho. Saifer Hagilgulim, 7.
15. Yoma 28b.

Chapter Four

1. H. Frankford, *Before Philosophy* p. 245.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
3. Numbers 11:29.
4. Numbers 16: 3.
5. H. Frankford, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
6. Lamentations 1:1.
7. 2 Kings 18:3, 23:3.
8. 2 Kings 18:22, 25.
9. 2 Kings 19:17-19.
10. Henri Frankfort describes Egyptian religion as being essentially monophysite, with one substance being common to all the gods. At the same time, the image did act for and as the god whenever the worshiper addressed himself to the image. In that sense, the image was the god for all working purposes. (*Before Philosophy*, Penguin Books, p. 73.)

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11. Jeremiah 44:2. Kings 23:10.
 12. Malachi 1:11.
 13. Deuteronomy 4:19.
 14. Aboda Zaro 55a.
 15. Megillah 9b.
 16. Jeremiah 11:1.
 17. Judah Halevi, *The Kusari*.
 18. Jeremiah 44.
 19. Pritchard, *Near Eastern Texts*.
 20. Exodus 32:14.
 21. Amos 2:11.
 22. Genesis 17:1.
 23. Psalms 36:10.
 24. Psalms 111:10.
 25. Psalms 14:1.
 26. Psalms 81:18.
 27. Genesis 18:19.
 28. Amos 3:2.
 29. Isaiah 42: 6.
 30. Ezekiel 36: 21, 22.
 31. Isaiah 2:1-4.
 32. Airuvim 43b.
 33. Isaiah 61: 5-7.
 34. Leviticus 26: 3-7.
 35. Tosefta, Sanhedrin 13.
 36. Aboth di Rabenu Nathan, 15.
 37. Tanhuma, Lech, 20.
 38. Bereshith Rabba, 48.
 39. Ezekiel 11: 19, 18; 31.
 40. Isaiah 53: 4-5.
 41. Isaiah 60: 10-12.
 42. Hosea 6:6.
- Chapter Five
1. 2 Kings 29: 14.
 2. 2 Kings 25: 11-13.
 3. Jeremiah 52: 30.
 4. Gilbert Murray, *Stoic, Christian and Humanist*, Boston, 1950, p. 23.
 5. Isaiah 51:9. Psalms 89:11.
 6. Jeremiah 44:15-19.
 7. 2 Kings 17: 33, 34.
 8. Hullin 6a.
 9. Ezekiel 20.
 10. Isaiah 10: 5.
 11. Jeremiah 25.
 12. Pritchard, *Near Eastern Texts*.
 13. Ezekiel 20.
 14. Jeremiah 21: 12.
 15. Jeremiah 22: 3.
 16. Isaiah 49: 6.
 17. Ezra 9.
 18. Jeremiah 31: 35, 36.
 19. Jeremiah 33: 25.
 20. Isaiah 10: 21.
 21. Zechariah 3: 2.
 22. Isaiah 40: 17.
 23. Nehemiah 13: 1. Psalms 89: 6.
 24. F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, uber Klearchos, Basel, 1958.
 25. Isaiah 45.
 26. Particularly in Theophrastus and Clearchos. See Joshua Guttman, *Hasafuth Hayehudith Hahelenistith*, Jerusalem, 1958.
 27. Isaiah 56: 7.
 28. Isaiah 49: 23.
 29. Ezra 2: 59.
 30. Pritchard, *Near Eastern Texts*; Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Vol. I, p. 346.
 31. We cannot enter into a discussion of Toynebee's hypothesis that Zoroastrianism resulted from the impact of Hebraic prophecy upon Persian religion. See his *Reconsiderations*. On the other hand, many scholars maintained that the Persian religion was an important factor in the transformation of the "religion of Israel" into Judaism.
 32. Ezra 7: 25, 26.
 33. 2 Kings 17: 33, 34.
 34. Ezra 4: 1-3.
 35. Ezra 9: 2.
 36. Yadaim 4:4.
 37. Ezekiel Kaufman, *Golch Vant-har*, Tel Aviv, 1929, Vol. I, p. 237.
 38. Exodus 12: 38.
 39. Solomon Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State*, Philadelphia, 1962, p. 32.
 40. Baba Mezia 59b. Yebamoth 47b.
 41. Kethuboth 28b.
 42. Pesachim 62b.
 43. Kiddushin 78b.
 44. Yodaim 4: 4.
 45. Nehemiah 9: 1-3.
 46. Gedalia Alon, *Mehkarim Betoldoth Yisroel*, Tel Aviv, 1957, II volume.
 47. Nehemiah 10;
 48. Taanith, Mishnah, 4: 2. Solomon Zeitlin, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
 49. Ezekiel 44: 31.

50. Tosefta, Demai 2.
 51. Ezekiel Kaufman, *Toldoth Hoesmunah Hayisrealith*, Vol. 8, p. 378.
 52. Deuteronomy 18: 18.
 53. Baba Bathra 12a.
 54. Hullin 60a—"Many verses deserve to be burned; yet, they are of the essence of Torah."
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1. Yoma 69b.
 2. Solomon Zeitlin, "The Rise and Fall of the Judean State," Philadelphia, 1962, p. 32.
 3. Jeremiah 1: 18.
 4. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XII, 3; Wars, 2 XXI, 2.
 5. II Maccabees 7.
 6. Pesachim 66a.
 7. Sabbath 13b.
 8. Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, Book II, 17.
 9. Henri Frankfort, *Before Philosophy*, pp. 249, 250, 254. Aristotle, last page of *Metaphysics*.
 10. The quotations from Theophrastus, Clearchus, and Hipparchus are discussed in Joshua Guttman's *Hasafruth Hayehudith Hahellenistith*, Jerusalem, 1958, pp. 39-108.
 11. Aristobulus, Philo, Josephus, and others. This was also believed by the Church Fathers.
 12. Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, Book II, 17.
 13. H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*, II, p. 213.
 14. Aristeeas, 131; cf. 229.
 15. Gilbert Murray, *Stoic, Christian and Humanist*, p. 50.
 16. *Ethics of the Fathers*, II. 1.
 17. Book of Jubilees 3: 31, Kahana edition.
 18. First Book of Maccabees 1:11, Dropsie College Edition.
 19. Gedalia Alon, *Toldoth Hayehudim Beeretz Yisroel*, Tel Aviv, 1956, Vol. II, p. 237.
 20. I. Baer, *Yisroel Boamin*, Jerusalem, 1955.
 21. Cherkower, *Havehudim Vehayewanim batekefa hahellenistith*, p. 162.
 22. The First Book of Maccabees 2: 62, 63.
 23. First Book of Maccabees 2: 34-36.
 24. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XIV, Chapter IV, 2.
 25. Prof. I. Baer maintains that the Hasidim were essentially a mystic-philosophic society, aiming to attain "the spirit of holiness," through a regimen of ascetic disciplines. He retrojects the ideals of the Essenes and later pietists into this era. See I. Baer, *Yisroel Boamin*.
 26. Commentary to the First Book of Maccabees, p. 85.
 27. Shavuoth 39a.
 28. The First Book of Maccabees 2: 42-46.
 29. Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture — Fusion and Diffusion*, New York, 1959, pp. 170-182.
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1. Yehoshua Guttman, *Hasafruth Hayehudith Hahellenistith*, Jerusalem, 1958, p. 50.
 2. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, 8.
 3. *Hasafruth Hayehudith Hahellenistith*, p. 78.
 4. Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1: 175.
 5. Maccabees I 12; 20-23.
 6. Maccabees II, 5:9.
 7. *The Laws*, p. 716.
 8. *Hasafruth*; p. 217.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
 10. *Ibid.*, p. 226.
 11. *Phaedrus*, 244d.
 12. *Hasafruth*; p. 276.
 13. *Letter of Aristeeas*; pp. 127, 131, 132, 139, 142.
 14. *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 153.
 15. *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122.
 16. Prolegomena to *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, p. 42.
 17. Tosefeth to Megillath Taanith in Seder Olam Rabba, Venice, 1545, 24a.
 18. Masecheth Sofrim, 1: 8.
 19. II Maccabees, p. 1.
 20. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, V, p. 556.
 21. Menahot 13; 10.

22. III Maccabees 7: 10.
 23. de decal. 76 s22.
 24. Cherikower, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, Vol. I, p. 63.
 - 24a. Cherikower, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, p. 73.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
 26. Cherikower, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, p. 85.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
 28. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
 31. Gedalia Alon, *Toledoth*, p. 255.
 32. *Corpus*, p. 92.
 33. Gedalia Alon, *Toledoth Hayehudim be Eretz Yisroel, bitkufath Hamishnah Vehatalmud*, p. 264, pp. 202-264.
 34. Quoted by Mommsen from *Vita Saturnini*, 8, in *Romische Geschichte*, Vol. V, p. 585.
 35. F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 371.
 36. *Corpus*, p. 105.
 37. Krauss, *Studien zur Byzantischen-Judischen Geschichte*.
 38. Quoted in *Yisroel Bagolah*, Tel Aviv, 1926, Vol. I, p. 9.
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1. First Book of Maccabees 14: 41.
 2. Hilkhoth Avoda Zava, 10. Sifri, Shoftim, 202.
 3. Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, 1: 3.
 4. *Wars* II, 8: 14.
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 6. *Ibid.*, XIII, 10: 6.
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 8. *Ibid.*, XVIII, 1: 4.
 9. *Wars* II, 8: 14.
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 13. Millar Burrows, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," New York, 1955
 14. Jubilees 10, 11.
 15. *Ibid.*, 10: 30-35.
 16. *Ibid.*, 12: 25-28.
 17. *Ibid.*, 15: 25-29.
 18. *Ibid.*, 15: 32.
 19. *Ibid.*, 22: 16.
 20. *Ibid.*, 22: 22.
 21. *Ibid.*, 37: 20.
 22. Jubilees 3: 31.
 23. Solomon Zeitlin, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
 24. This is a disputed point among scholars, with some authors insisting that this antagonism developed after the destruction of Jerusalem.
 25. Sota, 22 b.
 26. Matthew 15: 1-20. Luke 12:1. Luke 18: 9-14.
 27. Avodah Zarah 20b. Mishnayoth Sotoh, in slightly different version. I. Baer interprets this formula as a parallel of *askesis* among the Greeks, *Yisroel Boamin*, p. 40.
 28. Pesachim 66a.
 29. Sanhedrin 106b.
 30. S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, New York, 1958, p. 58.
 31. Sifro, Behukotai 8.
 32. Jerusalem T. Peah 2, 6.
 33. Hagiga 8a.
 34. Baba Mezia 59b.
 35. Jerusalem T. Berochoth 1, 3.
 36. Berochoth 32b.
 37. Sukka, Mishna 4:9.
 38. Gedalia Alon, *Toldoth Hayehudim Beertz Yisroel*, Tel Aviv, 1957, Vol. II, pp. 1-16.
 39. Taanith, 3rd Chapter.
 40. Jerusalem Peah 1:5.
 41. b. Sabbath 17 B.
 42. Gedalia Alon, *Mehkarim Betoldoth Yisroel*, Tel Aviv, 1957; Vol. I, p. 122.
 43. Acts 10:28, American Authorized Version.
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 45. Jerusalem Sabbath 1:6.
 46. Vayikra Rabba 2.
 47. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, 4.
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 49. Yoma 23b.
 50. Shavuoth 39z. Sota 37a.
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52. Pesachim 54a. Yalkut Shimeoni, Isaiah, 469, 476, 499.
53. Sukka 52a.
54. Zephania 3:9. Maimonides, Hil-koth Melochim 11:4.
55. The First Book of Maccabees 5: 62.
56. Sanhedrin 90b.
57. First Book of Maccabees 3:18.
58. Pesachim 54a.
59. Discussing the sources, Prof. Harry A. Wolfson concludes, "Accordingly, the expression 'the name of the Messiah' means the person of the Messiah and not, as has been suggested, the mere ideal concept of a Messiah." (*The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, Cambridge, Mass., 1956, p. 158.)
60. Bereshith Rabba 2:5.
61. Daniel 7:14.
62. *Hazon Ezra*, Hebrew edition of A. Kahana, Chapter 11.
63. Enoch 1:9, 12-19.
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 68. Walter Hofer, "Revision of the German Concept of History" es-

- say included in Hans Kohn, *German History*, p. 199.
69. Morris Rafael Cohen, *Reflections of a Wandering Jew*, p. 122.
 70. The manysidedness and turbulence of Nordau's personality render it impossible to capture the trend of his thought. On the one hand, he writes of anti-semitism as a symptom of Teutonic degeneracy. On the other hand, he considers it incurable. He brands Napoleon's urging of intermarriage as a humiliating proposal, but he himself married out of the faith. He looks forward to human solidarity in an international society, but he does not envision that consummation as a solution of the Jewish problem. He condemned racism and the attempt to discover "national souls," but he wrote a whole volume on the "degeneracy" of some classes and entire peoples. He argues for the establishment of a Jewish state but doubts the capacity of Jews to make the necessary sacrifices. We are forced to conclude that Nordau's contribution consisted in his mordant criticism of alternative philosophies, not in a consistent philosophy of Jewish life. (Meir Ben Horin's attempt to build up a heroic image of Nordau does not change this conclusion.)
 71. Herzl, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
 72. *Ibid.*, p. 10
 73. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
 75. Ezekiel Kaufman, *Golch Ven-aiikhar*, Vol. IV, pp. 407-417. The same author has also written a separate essay on "the antisemitic canards in Zionist literature."
 76. Jacob Klatzkin, *Tchumim*, Berlin, 1925.
 77. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
 78. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
 79. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
 80. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
 81. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
 82. Quoted by Rabbi Hayim Bloch, *Mi Nothan Limeshisa Yaakov veyisroel Labozrim?* New York, 1957, pp. 26-27.
 83. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1960, Vol. 8, p. 870.
 84. Meir Ben Horin, *Max Nordau*, p. 196.
 85. Herzl, *op. cit.*, I, p. 426.
 86. Kethuboth, 112a.
 87. Moshe Hagiz, *Sefat Emet*, Jerusalem edition.
 88. Mapai and Mapam.
 - 88a. Joseph Klausner, *Darki Likrath Hageulah Vchatchiya*, Jerusalem, 1946, pp. 324-335.
 89. Leon Poliakov, *Harvest of Hate*, Philadelphia, 1954, p. 135.
 90. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
 91. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
 92. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
 93. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
 94. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
 95. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
 96. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
 97. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
 98. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

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