

THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN ANTISEMITISM: GLOSSARY

Antisemitism Hatred, discrimination, fear, and prejudice against Jews as individuals or as a group. Antisemitism is based on age-old stereotypes and myths that can target Jews as a people, their religious practices, and/or their connection (real or perceived) to the State of Israel. Colloquially referred to as “the longest hatred.”

Aryan The term “Aryan” was used originally to identify peoples speaking the languages of Europe and India. 19th century racist writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain viewed the Teutons or Aryans as the superior European race. The Nazis adopted Chamberlain's ideas and characterized the Aryans as being white, tall, athletic, with blond hair and blue eyes

Assimilation Conforming or adjusting to the customs and attitudes of the majority group.

Black Death A pandemic of the bubonic plague which killed about a quarter of the population of Europe between 1347 and 1350. Not knowing the medical/scientific causes of the plague, many blamed the Jews, who lived in more isolated communities. Although Pope Clement V issued a papal bull or decree exonerating the Jews, many Jews were burned alive or hanged by enraged mobs.

Blood Libel “Blood Libel” refers to a centuries-old false allegation that Jews murder Christians – especially Christian children – to use their blood for ritual purposes, for example, as an ingredient in the baking of Passover matzah (unleavened bread). It is also sometimes called the “ritual murder charge.” Blood Libel dates back to the 12th century in England and has persisted despite having no factual basis and official repudiations by the Catholic Church and many secular authorities. Blood Libels have frequently inspired mob violence and pogroms, and have occasionally led to the decimation of entire Jewish communities.

Boycott A boycott is an act of voluntary and intentional abstention from using, buying, or dealing with a person, organization, or country as an expression of protest. On April 1, 1933, a boycott was organized by the Nazis against all Jewish businesses, because of Nazi prejudice against Jews.

Capitalism An economic system in which ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations.

Chamberlain, Houston Stewart (1855-1927) A British-born German philosopher and writer who in *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), presented his thesis that the history of a people or race is determined by its racial character and abilities which he believed are inherited. He viewed the Teutons or Aryans as the “superior” European race and that the Jews are fundamentally alien in spirit to the Aryans and should have no role in German history.

Communism An economic and social system envisioned by the 19th century German scholar Karl Marx. In theory, under communism, all means of production and distribution, are owned by the collective, rather than by individuals. In practice, a single authoritarian party controls both the economic and political systems. This system theoretically existed in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Crucifixion A method of killing by nailing or binding to a cross, normally by the hands and feet, which was widespread in the ancient world. Jesus is believed to have been killed in this manner by Roman authorities.

Crusades Nine wars waged by European Christian rulers between 1096 and 1291 to win the Holy Land from the Muslims. Jews, especially those living in area of modern-day Germany known as the Rhineland, became the victims of overzealous and impatient Crusaders.

Deicide charge (Latin. The murder of God) an accusation made against Jews throughout the centuries, blaming them for having murdered Jesus.

Discrimination The restrictive treatment of a person or group based on prejudiced assumptions of group characteristics

Dreyfus Affair In the aftermath of the military defeat of France at the hands of Prussia in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935), an assimilated Jewish captain in the French military, was convicted in 1894 of passing military secrets to Germany. Although he was eventually proven innocent (1906), he remained the victim of an elaborate cover-up to divert attention away from military corruption and to discredit the Third French Republic. The Dreyfus Affair revealed deep antisemitism in French society.

Ecclesia and Synagoga (Church and Synagogue) are a pair of figures personifying the Church (Christianity) and Synagogue (Judaism), found in medieval Christian art. They often appear sculpted as large figures on either side of a church or cathedral entry. The two female figures are usually young and attractive; Ecclesia is generally adorned with a crown, chalice and cross-topped staff, looking confidently forward. In contrast, Synagoga is blindfolded and drooping, carrying a broken lance (possibly an allusion to the Holy Lance that stabbed Christ) and the Tablets of the Law or Torah scrolls that may appear slipping from her hand. Thus Judaism is seen as an obsolete or flawed religion having been replaced by Christianity. This idea contributed to and reinforce religious prejudice against Jews.

The Enlightenment A European philosophical and cultural movement of the 17th and 18th centuries characterized by belief in the supreme power of human reason and concerned with the critical examination of previously accepted doctrines, especially those of the Church. Also known as the Age of Reason.

Eugenics The pseudo-science that believed that controlled breeding increase the occurrence of desirable characteristics. Developed largely by Francis Galton (1883) as a method of improving the human race, it fell into disfavor after the application of its doctrines by the Nazis who believed in the idea of Aryan supremacy and the idea of a master race.

Expulsion The act of forcing or driving out people from a city or country. Jews were subject to expulsions from Western Europe during the Middle Ages, with most expulsions resulting in the population moving eastward to the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania

Forced baptism The act of converting people to Christianity against their will. Jews and Moslems in medieval Spain were often forced to become Christians. Many, who secretly practiced their old religion, could be executed as heretics during the Inquisition.

Fourth Lateran Council One of many Church councils of the Middles Ages. This one was convened by Pope Innocent III in 1215. Among its decrees was the requirement that Jews wear special clothing to distinguish them from Christians.

French Revolution The French Revolution was a watershed event in modern European history that began in 1789 and ended in the late 1790s with the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte. Using many ideas of the Enlightenment, French citizens redesigned their country's political landscape, uprooting centuries-old

institutions such as absolute monarchy and feudalism. Although it failed to achieve all of its goals, partially due to the violence of the Reign of Terror, and ended in military dictatorship, the French Revolution played a critical role in shaping modern nations with power based on popular sovereignty or the will of the people, and not divine right. Revolutionary France enacted laws that first emancipated Jews in France, establishing them as equal citizens.

Genocide The deliberate and systematic destruction of a religious, racial, national, or cultural group. The term was coined by a Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin who fled Nazi controlled eastern Europe to the United States. He decided to create a name for the crime without a name. He came up with *genocide*, which he defined as the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group. He said he created the word by combining the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing).

Ghetto A section of a city, where Jews were required to live, often surrounded by walls and locked at night. The term originated in 1516 from the name of the medieval Jewish quarter in Venice, where the city's Jews were compelled to live. The Nazis revived the medieval ghetto in creating their compulsory "Jewish Quarter" (*Wohnbezirk*) in occupied cities throughout Europe.

Guild During the Middle Ages, an association of workers sharing the same interests, such as merchants or artisans, formed for mutual aid and protection and to maintain craft standards. Jews were not allowed to be members.

Heresy Heresy is any belief or theory that is strongly at variance with established beliefs or customs, in particular the accepted beliefs of a church or religious organization.

Herzl, Theodor (1860-1904) Jewish Austro-Hungarian journalist whose pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*), published in 1896, helped launch Zionism as a modern political movement aimed at establishing a Jewish homeland. Herzl was deeply affected by the trial of Alfred Dreyfus which took place when Herzl was the Paris correspondent for the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*.

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945) Born in Austria, Hitler settled in Germany in 1913. At the outbreak of World War I, he enlisted in the Bavarian Army, became a corporal and received the Iron Cross First Class for bravery. Returning to Munich after the war, he joined the newly formed German Workers Party, which was soon reorganized, under his leadership, as the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) or Nazi Party. While in prison, after the unsuccessful "Beer-Hall Putsch," in 1923, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*. Serving only 9 months of his sentence, Hitler quickly reentered German politics and soon outpolled his political rivals in national elections. In January 1933, he was named Reich Chancellor by the aging Paul von Hindenburg, whose death allowed Hitler and his Nazi party to assume control of Germany as Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Reich Chancellor), institute a totalitarian racist regime, trigger World War II with the invasion of Poland and launch the murder of six million Jews and five million others in what became known as the Holocaust.

Holocaust The state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of some six million European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Approximately five million other individuals and groups, including Slavs (chiefly ethnic Poles, Soviet citizens, and Soviet prisoners of war), the Roma and Sinti, the "incurably sick", political and religious dissenters, and gay men were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period. The word *Shoah*, originally a Biblical term meaning "widespread disaster," is the modern Hebrew equivalent of the Holocaust.

Inquisition A tribunal or court established in the Middle Ages by the Church in Rome designed to suppress heresy. The purpose of the Spanish Inquisition was to discover and punish converted Jews (and later Muslims)

who secretly practiced their old religion. However, all Spaniards began to fear its prying eyes. The death penalty was used more often than in the earlier Roman Inquisition. In 1492, by edict of monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, who initially were sympathetic to the Spanish Jews, were given the choice of exile or baptism. Almost all Jews chose to leave at this time.

Judensau A medieval illustration showing a sow suckling Jews instead of piglets and demonstrating both the uncleanness of the Jews and the Jewish connection to the devil. Jews were also often shown with horns, to further drive home that connection.

Luther, Martin (1483-1546) Luther was an ordained priest who founded a new Christian faith, Protestantism, in the 16th century. Luther disputed Church policy with respect to the sale of indulgences (a partial way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for a sin) and its deviation from the original teachings of the early Church fathers. He eventually broke with the Church. Once a supporter of the Jews, he became frustrated by their unwillingness to embrace his “new” reformed Christianity. As a result, Luther became one of the most intensely bitter antisemites in history. In his book, *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543) he described Jews as the anti-Christ, worse than devils. He preached that Jews were poisoners, ritual murderers, and that they should be expelled from Germany. His view was that all synagogues should be burned to the ground, and all Jewish books should be seized.

Marr, Wilhelm (1819-1904) A German journalist who felt threatened by the progress emancipated Jews had made in society, Marr coined the term “antisemitism” in the 1870s to describe his racially based opposition to Jews. He published a pamphlet titled *The Victory of Judaism over Germandom*, in which he expressed the view that all Jews, regardless of their religious beliefs, belonged to the “Semitic race,” which he saw as dangerous and alien. Marr founded the League of Antisemites in Berlin in 1879 to combat the perceived threat he imagined Jews posed. The group tried to turn antisemitism into a popular political movement. It had limited success. Although Marr's ideas were not immediately adopted by German nationalists, Marr was a major link in the evolving chain of German racism that erupted into genocide during the Nazi era.

Mein Kampf (“My Struggle”) This autobiographical book by Adolf Hitler was written while he was imprisoned in the Landsberg fortress after the failure of the “Beer-Hall Putsch” in 1923. In it, Hitler propounds his ideas, beliefs, and plans for the future of Germany. Everything, including his foreign policy, is permeated by his “racial ideology.” The Germans, belonging to the “superior” Aryan race, have a right to “living space” (*Lebensraum*) in the East, which is inhabited by the “inferior” Slavs. Throughout, he accuses Jews of being the source of all evil, equating them with Bolshevism and, at the same time, with international capitalism. Unfortunately, people who read the book (except for his admirers) at the time did not take it seriously, considering it the ravings of a maniac.

Middle Ages The historical period between the so-called Fall of Rome at the end of the 5th century and the start of the Renaissance in the 14th century. It is characterized by decentralized feudalism and the overarching power of the Christian Church.

Nostra Aetate In 1965, the Second Vatican Council repudiated the century-old “deicide charge” that blamed Jews for the death of Jesus. This Church declaration contained a condemnation of antisemitism and an acknowledgement of the enduring vitality of Judaism.

Nuremberg Laws Two anti-Jewish statutes enacted by the Nazis in September 1935 which took away the Jews’ civil rights. The first law, the Reich Citizenship Law, deprived German Jews of their citizenship and all pertinent, related rights. The second law, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, outlawed marriages of Jews and non-Jews, forbade Jews from employing German women of childbearing age, and

prohibited Jews from displaying the German flag. It also established "degrees of Jewishness" based on family lines. The Nuremberg Laws established definitions of Jewishness based on bloodlines which objectively broadened the definition of a Jew to include people with one Jewish grandparent. Many additional regulations were attached to the two main statutes, which provided the basis for removing Jews from all spheres of German political, social, and economic life

Pale of Settlement The area in part of the Russian Empire in which Russian Jews were allowed to live from 1791-1917. It included eastern Poland; all of Lithuania, Belarus and Moldova; much of Ukraine, and parts of western Russia.

Passover The Jewish festival commemorating the Biblical exodus, the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. During Passover, unleavened bread or matzah is eaten.

Pogrom Russian word meaning "to wreak havoc, to demolish violently." Historically, the term refers to an organized massacre by non-Jewish population on Jews in the Russian Empire, which were often sanctioned or condoned by the government, and which usually involved the destruction of property and injury or death. Pogroms reached their zenith during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, triggering widespread emigration from Russia.

Prejudice A negative or hostile attitude toward a person or group based on negative stereotypes. Prejudice can lead to discrimination. The word *prejudice* derives from the word pre-judge. We pre-judge when we have an opinion about an individual based on the group to which that he/she belongs. A prejudice can be based on real or imagined differences between groups. It can attach values to those differences in ways that benefit the dominant group at the expense of minorities. It is generalized to all members of a target group.

Protocols of the Elders of Zion A major piece of antisemitic propaganda, fabricated at the turn of the 20th century by members of the Russian Secret Police. It alleges to be the minutes of a meeting of Jewish leaders plotting for world domination by putting Christians against each other, corrupting Christian morals, and attempting to destroy the economic and political viability of the West. It gained great popularity after World War I and was translated into many languages, spurring antisemitism in France, Germany, and Great Britain. In the United States, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was published by industrialist Henry Ford. Long repudiated as an absurd and hateful lie, the book currently has been reprinted and is widely distributed by Neo-Nazis and a number of Arab states, who are committed to the destruction of the State of Israel. *Protocols* is entirely a work of fiction, intentionally written to blame Jews for a variety of society's ills.

Reformation The effort in the 16th century triggered by the actions and words of Martin Luther to reform teaching and practice of Western Christendom, resulting in the separation of the Protestant churches from the Roman Catholic Church.

Rothschild Family The Rothschild family is a wealthy Jewish family descending from Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744–1812) who established his banking business in the 1760s in Frankfurt in the German duchy of Hesse. Rothschild bequeathed his wealth to his five sons who established banks in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Vienna, and Naples. These banks provided capital for business and financing infrastructure projects, such as railways and the Suez Canal. During the 19th century, the Rothschild family possessed the largest private fortune in the world and was often the target of antisemitic articles and political cartoons.

Russian Revolution The Russian Revolution of 1917, occurring during World War I, marked the end of the Romanov dynasty and centuries of Russian imperial rule. During the early phase of the Revolution, the

moderates established a constitutional monarchy, but the unpopularity of Russia's continuing participation in World War I and the increasingly poor living conditions and lack of food, resulted in the radical Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, to seizure power and end the tradition of tsarist rule. Lenin pulled Russia out of World War I, and the radicals ultimately triumphed after a bloody civil war. The Bolsheviks would later become the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or Soviet Union.

Scapegoat A person or group who is blamed for the mistakes or failures of others, often promoted through the use of propaganda.

Social Darwinism In 1859, the British scientist Charles Darwin published a book called *The Origin of the Species* in which he said that all life on earth had evolved over millions of years. Social Darwinists misused Darwin's idea to claim that humans had evolved into distinct groups or races. They thought that white Europeans or the so-called "Aryan race" were "superior" to all other groups, and that Jews were a separate "inferior Semitic race". For those obsessed with the Jews, the idea of a Semitic race meant that Jews were born different from other people and could never become part of society. Today we know these ideas are untrue. Modern science shows that there is only one human race. Based on Social Darwinism, Nazis created a pseudo-scientific brand of racism which was most virulent when directed against the Jews, but others, particularly Slavs, were also targets.

socialism An economic system in which those who produce the goods and services own the means of production, share the profits, and make the decisions governing production and distribution of the goods and services.

Stereotype Preconceived or oversimplified generalizations about a group based on hearsay, opinions, and distorted, preconceived ideas.

Streicher, Julius (1885-1946) A Nazi politician, Streicher was a major promoter of antisemitism through his publication *Der Stürmer*, helped organize the April 1, 1933 boycott of Jewish businesses, and was a chief proponent of the Nuremberg Laws. He was one of the major Nazi figures to be tried by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. He was sentenced and executed on October 16, 1946.

Treaty of Versailles (1919) This treaty, written after Germany's military defeat in World War I was designed by members of the Allied powers (Great Britain, France, the United States) to keep Germany from being a future military threat in the period after the war. The "war guilt clause" forced the new German Weimar Republic to accept complete responsibility for initiating the war. Germany was held liable for all material damages and was not allowed to regain its economic superiority or to re-arm. The humiliated Germans referred to the treaty as a *Diktat* (something dictated). It was a contributing factor in the rise of Nazism in the 1920s.

Trotsky, Leon (1879-1940) Trotsky was a Bolshevik leader and head of the Red Army during the Russian Revolution. After Lenin's death in 1924, he competed with Josef Stalin for the leadership of the Soviet Union. He was assassinated while in exile in Mexico.

Usury Usury is the act of lending money at an interest rate that is considered unreasonably high or that is higher than the rate permitted by law. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam take a very strong stance against usury. Several passages in the Hebrew Bible condemn the practice of usury, especially when lending to less wealthy individuals. Hebrew Bible's condemnation of usury led to the Christian tradition against money lending. In the Middle Ages, since Jews were prohibited from owning land or being part of a guild, one of the

only professions available to Jews was moneylending which often led to resentment and heightened antisemitism.

Weimar Republic Name for the parliamentary democracy established in Germany from 1919–1933, following the collapse of imperial Germany and preceding Nazi rule. Many Germans held the Republic responsible for signing the humiliating Treaty of Versailles which placed total blame for causing World War I on Germany.