



# The Jew as Legitimation

*Jewish-Gentile Relations Beyond  
Antisemitism and Philosemitism*

*Edited by*  
David J. Wertheim



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*Editor*

David J. Wertheim

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction: The Jew as Legitimation, Jewish-Gentile Relations Beyond Antisemitism and Philosemitism

*David J. Wertheim*

On Monday night, January 5, 2015, not long after the sun set over Beverly Hills, the guitarist of the punk band Good Charlotte, Benji Madden, crushed a glass to celebrate his wedding with actress Cameron Diaz. More than 100 friends including superstars like Lionel Richie and Drew Barrymore cheered the ensuing “mazel tov!” It was the highpoint of a marriage ceremony that included the recitation of the seven blessings and the Jewish *yichud* ritual, in which the freshly married couple retired to a room, having demanded strict privacy—reportedly for 30 minutes.

In spite of all these Jewish customs, the wedding was not an actual Jewish wedding. Not only was there no rabbi involved and no *ketubah* signed, but neither the bride nor the groom were Jewish in any way. Both seem to have Christian backgrounds, and Madden was even brought up a Pentecostalist in the Church of God and has tattoos of Jesus and Mary on his arms and neck.<sup>1</sup> Apparently the couple merely believed that performing

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<sup>1</sup> After the wedding, rumors surfaced that there was some Jewish ancestry in Madden’s bloodline.

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Jewish customs that are part of a Jewish wedding would contribute value to their decision to give their relationship an official status.

In the Jewish world this raised some eyebrows. With other Hollywood stars including Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow taking a sudden interest in Judaism, *Haaretz* inferred “having a Jewish wedding—even if the couple isn’t Jewish—might be the next trend in Hollywood.” In *Tablet Magazine*, Rachel Shukert, who perceived an unprecedented place of Judaism in mainstream America, welcomed this latest fashion of the stars. If the trend should continue, “It’ll be proof,” she argued, “that we can let others in without diminishing ourselves; it’ll be proof that assimilation works.” But not all responses were so positive. In *Forward*, Elissa Strauss, beneath the headline “What’s So Wrong About Cameron Diaz’s Jewish Wedding?”, expressed her reservations about the watering down of Jewish ritual that the welcoming of non-Jewish Jewish weddings condones, arguing that “ritual shouldn’t just be about what makes us feel good,” and she rhetorically asked, “without a connection to a history to ground us, a community to challenge us, and a value system to guide us, how meaningful can such rituals be?”

Although the appropriation of Judaism in the wedding surprised many, the wish to make use of Judaism for non-Jewish purposes is not limited to Hollywood role models. We can find a similar mechanism at work in a wide variety of settings. Nor was it new: from a long-enduring era that ranges from early Christianity to the present day, Judaism and Jews served many different world-views including Catholicism, Protestantism, the Enlightenment, nationalism, and populism. In discussing different such cases, the articles in this volume aspire to demonstrate together how throughout history Jews served as the legitimization of non-Jewish ideas, values, decisions, and exploits. As in the case of the wedding of Diaz and Madden, these instances confronted Jews with questions and dilemmas concerning Jewish-non-Jewish relations. Tracing the social and ideological relevance Judaism obtained within non-Jewish circles, therefore sheds important new light on the nature of Jewish-Gentile interaction itself.

## ASSIMILATION

To understand the way the identification of the usage of the Jew as legitimization contributes to our understanding of Jewish-Gentile relations, and how it goes beyond antisemitism and philosemitism, it will be helpful to review the ways thinking about Jewish-Gentile relations developed. The history of Jewish–Gentile relations has mostly been written from the locus

of assimilation. This question of assimilation is as old as the diaspora and even older, but it gained particular impetus during the era of Jewish emancipation, when throughout Western Europe adjustment to the culture of the societies considering the granting of emancipation was generally considered the price for Jewish juridical equality. Once emancipation was a fact, some degree of assimilation seemed even more necessary to harvest its fruits. As a result, the question of assimilation determined the way that Jewish–non-Jewish relations were perceived. It did so not only for those who subscribed to this view but also—perhaps even more—for those who rejected assimilation. In advocating forms of Jewish separatism, Jewish nationalists, Zionists, and orthodox religious Jews regarded assimilation as a form of self-denial, as a danger to Jewish survival, and—in the light of an antisemitism that was everlasting in their eyes—a delusion. But by identifying assimilation (or the lack of it) as one of the major issues within the Jewish world, they too confirmed the vision that Jewish–non-Jewish relations should be understood in its light.

Understanding Jewish–Gentile relations only in terms of assimilation triggered (and/or resisted) by discrimination, persecution, and the promise of social mobility, however, has its limitations. One problem is the question why, in spite of all attempts at persecution and discrimination, and in spite of all the social and material benefits that could be gained, the Jews never completely assimilated and continued to exist as a distinctly recognizable people up until the present day. It has been difficult to account for this without taking recourse to divine providence. One way to do so was by making the case, already put forward by Spinoza,<sup>2</sup> that it was the very hatred of the nations that strengthened the sense of Jewish belonging. Although there may certainly be more than a grain of truth in this argument, it merely makes the point that discrimination and persecution need not result in a Jewish desire for assimilation. It does not explain why a powerful hostile non-Jewish environment failed to eliminate the Jewish people over the course of thousands of years. Conversely, it also does not explain why in quiet times Jews did not vanish through assimilation. In fact, Spinoza based his argument on his belief that Judaism would in fact vanish without persecution. Even though some scholars still think this will be the fate of Jewry in a non-hostile world,<sup>3</sup> many observers of Jewish history see another—opposite—picture.

<sup>2</sup> Benedictus de Spinoza, *Complete Works*, transl. Samuel Shirley, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianaoplis, 2002), 425.

<sup>3</sup> While this thesis may be found in many (mostly popular) varieties, it has found an academic defense in Bernard Wasserstein's *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe Since 1945*

Another way to deal with this question was by arguing that assimilation was never as all-encompassing as was often presumed. In his seminal article “The Blessings of Assimilation,” Gerson Cohen argued that it was assimilation itself that has accounted for Jewish survival, arguing that its ability to adapt to foreign cultures was the very thing that kept Judaism alive.<sup>4</sup> More recently, David Biale made a similar case in his impressive series *Cultures of the Jews*, which revolves around the supposition that Jewish cultures (he prefers to use the plural) have always obtained their particular composition in relationship with foreign cultures: “For every period of history,” he writes, “interaction with the non-Jewish majority has been critical in the formation of Jewish culture. Even those Jewish cultures thought to be the most insular adapted ideas and practices from their surroundings.”<sup>5</sup> Such ideas have heightened awareness that separatist Jewish movements owed the culture of their non-Jewish environment more than they cared to admit, while those whom they denounced as assimilationists often remained loyal to certain elements of Jewish culture, sometimes in new forms—privatized, reformed, or through secular Jewish organizational life.

The notion that Jewish–Gentile relations are determined through assimilation has further been put in perspective with the argument that Jewish culture not only adapted to non-Jewish culture but also contributed to it. This view also has roots in the era of emancipation, when both assimilationists and separatists stressed the familiar argument of the contribution Jews had made to the non-Jewish culture they lived in. The argument, repeated in many varieties, over and over again, was used to emphasize the inner value of the Jews as a people as well as its value to the societies the Jews lived in, but in more recent scholarship it appeared to do justice in more sophisticated ways to the complexity of Jewish–Gentile relations. Writing on nineteenth- and twentieth-century France, Maud Mandel has, for instance, argued—emphasizing the fact that cultures are not static—that Jews, instead of parting with identification as Jews, chose to create new forms of Jewish communal belonging and even often managed to transform their Judaism in such a way that they were not only in accordance with their host society’s culture, but participated in the forefront of its transformation.<sup>6</sup>

(Cambridge, 1996) and *On the Eve: The Jews of Europe before the Second World War* (New York, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Gerson D. Cohen, *The Blessing of Assimilation in Jewish History* (Boston, 1966).

<sup>5</sup> David Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York, 2002), x.

<sup>6</sup> Maud Mandel, “Assimilation and Cultural Exchange in Modern Jewish History,” in *Rethinking European Jewish History* (Oxford, 2009), 85.

Such theories betray important insights that Jewish–non-Jewish interaction does not need to be a one-way street. The Jewish minority need not only be influenced by the non-Jewish majority, but it can also contribute elements of its culture to the non-Jewish society in which it lives; the mix of adaptation from and contribution to foreign cultures could be ambivalent or entail more than the complementation of Jewishness and the foreign culture. As a result, “assimilation” as an analytical tool, with its all-encompassing reputation, has lost its popularity in favor of notions like integration, acculturation, accommodation, and dissimilation,<sup>7</sup> which do more justice to the reality that persistence of separatist elements is usually mixed with the adaptation of elements from foreign cultures. Postcolonial studies have added concepts such as mimicry, to indicate that the imitation of culture may differ from assimilation as it can be subversive or “resist” the “mimicked” culture, and hybridity, where a minority or colonized culture adapts by developing an ambiguous “hybrid” identity that can be represented both as belonging to the minority/colonized as to the majority/colonizing culture.

Although these additions to our understanding of Jewish–non-Jewish interaction may be insightful and a valuable explanatory tool for many historical settings, they nevertheless generally make two assumptions which limit their explanatory potential. The first assumption is that most of these notions of Jewish–non-Jewish interaction depart from the idea that Jewish–non-Jewish relations are defined by the degree to which Jewish culture desires to take from and/or contributes to non-Jewish culture, that it is basically a process of giving and taking, of who contributes what to whom (or a mix of both). However, the interaction may be more complex than that. The second aspect they share is that they look at Jewish–non-Jewish interaction mainly from the Jewish perspective. The non-Jewish host society’s role is reduced to either that of an overwhelming presence embedding Jewish culture, making the adaptation of non-Jewish customs simply irresistible, or a fearsome persecutor forcing Jews to change their behavior in accordance with its standards. Of course the latter two tie into the powerful (and on the whole certainly not inaccurate) notion that as the archetypal “other,” Jews in the diaspora basically lived in a hostile environment. But, as the articles in this volume will show, in many cases Gentile attitudes towards the Jew were much more complex and ambivalent than such readings.

<sup>7</sup>Menachem Mor, ed., *Jewish Assimilation, Acculturation, and Accommodation: Past Traditions, Current Issues, and Future Prospects* (Lanham, 1992); Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge, 2006), 256–76.

Scholars have not been unaware of this. The recent trend<sup>8</sup> in Jewish studies to take inspiration from postcolonial studies has not only further heightened awareness that it is difficult if not impossible to draw precise cultural boundaries between Jewish communities and their non-Jewish environment,<sup>9</sup> it has also unraveled the complicated manner in which both sides interact. For instance, one of the notions implicit in the study of orientalism that has been applied to the Jewish minority in different studies is the grasp that a “colonizing” culture may, rather than dominate a minority by demanding assimilation, dominate it by admiring it for its very exoticism. With this comes the awareness that certain types of Jewish behavior, like the internalization of certain stereotypes,<sup>10</sup> are just as much attempts to resist assimilation as they are attempts to conform to the exotic image a host or colonizing culture so savors.

### JEW AS LEGITIMATION

This collection of articles wants to contribute to such views, arguing that there is more to Jewish–non-Jewish interaction than giving and taking, assimilation and contribution, more also than merely a mix or middle way between them. It will look in particular at Jewish–non-Jewish relations from a more refined non-Jewish perspective: Gentiles did not always view the Jew as only a subversive foreign element. In the cases discussed in this volume, some of them quite central in major historical developments, the “Jew” played a much more positive role: As “other,” he or his religion or culture served as evidence for the truth of non-Jewish beliefs.<sup>11</sup> Jews

<sup>8</sup> Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews* (Waltham, 2005); Steven E. Aschheim, *The Modern Jewish Experience and the Entangled Web of Orientalism* (Amsterdam, 2010); Ulrike Brunotte, Anna-Dorothea Ludewig, and Axel Stähler, *Orientalism, Gender, and the Jews: Literary and Artistic Transformations of European National Discourses* (Berlin, 2015); Cheyette and Marcus, *Modernity, Culture, and “the Jew”* (Stanford, 1998); Judith Frishman et al., *Borders and Boundaries in and around Dutch Jewish History* (Amsterdam, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Kalmar and Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews*; Aschheim, *The Modern Jewish Experience*; Brunotte, Ludewig, and Stähler, *Orientalism, Gender, and the Jews*; Cheyette and Marcus, eds, *Modernity, Culture, and “the Jew”*; Frishman et al., *Borders and Boundaries*.

<sup>10</sup> We see this for example in Jewish humor, or in the phenomenon of self-orientalization: Homi K. Bhabha, “Joking Aside: the Idea of a Self-Critical Community,” in Cheyette and Marcus, eds, *Modernity, Culture, and “the Jew”*, xv–xx; Brunotte, Ludewig, and Stähler, *Orientalism, Gender, and the Jews*, 221.

<sup>11</sup> The concept of the Jew as Legitimation obviously also refers to Max Weber’s theories on legitimation as expressed in his ‘Die drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft’ *Preussische*

were not only a foreign element to be tolerated at best and persecuted at worst; paradoxically, they embodied a legitimization that was indispensable for some of non-Jewish society's core values, sometimes even for what made non-Jewish society non-Jewish. As a result, in such cases, the non-Jewish environment had an express interest against assimilation. It wanted to keep recognizable Jews, because it needed them. As such, the Jew as legitimization hampers rather than causes syncretism, prevents rather than furthers hybridization. There is an expressed interest within the non-Jewish cultures to keep the foreignness of the Jew intact, as without it, it would not work as legitimization.

This mechanism has its roots in early Christianity. Some sections in Paul's letter to the Romans already were understood in such a vein.<sup>12</sup> Christianity still in the process of separating from Judaism did not always want to acknowledge its Jewish debt. As Jan Willem van Henten shows in his article, the Maccabean Martyrs were models for Origen and other early Christian sources, but in ways that completely obfuscate their belonging to a Jewish tradition.

Nevertheless, the fact that Judaism legitimizes Christianity is so obvious that it may well be considered a cliché. As John Connolly writes in his article on the Second Vatican Council:

Depicting a Christian relation to the Jews that has lasted over many centuries as “the Jew as legitimization” is an understatement. Christianity grew out of Judaism and saw itself as the fulfillment of promises and predictions contained in the Hebrew Bible, which Christianity claimed as its own, as an Old Testament preceding a New Testament (...) Perhaps it’s in Christianity’s DNA. It’s everywhere.<sup>13</sup>

The significance of the Jew as legitimization for Christianity obtained its most important theological basis from Augustine of Hippo, who, as Jeremy Cohen shows in his article recapturing his vast research on Augustine's ideas on Judaism, set the stage for centuries of Christian thought by arguing that “they [the Jews] bear witness for us that we have not fabricated

*Jahrbücher* 187 (1922) 1–2. Legitimation through Judaism could be seen as a contribution to legal, traditional and charismatic legitimization, but it should be noted that where Weber discusses the legitimization of power, the examples in this book mostly discuss the legitimization of worldviews that legitimize power.

<sup>12</sup> In particular, Romans 11:28.

<sup>13</sup> see: p. 241.

the prophecies about Christ.”<sup>14</sup> This “witness theory” gave Jews a very precise and relevant role in Christian theology, legitimizing Christianity.

One way to look at the articles in this volume is as discussions of different transformations of Augustine’s conception of the Jew as legitimization throughout many different ages and in the service of different religions and ideologies. When the Protestant Reformation challenged Augustine’s authority, the mechanism of Jewish legitimization continued in its charge that Catholicism had lost its connection with the Jewish sources of Christianity. Protestants now posited the necessity of mastering Jewish sources for a true understanding of Christianity, which led to a strong current in Protestantism that took intense interest in Judaism. This interest took on many forms, some of which will be further investigated here in Andreas Kilcher’s article on the Christian Hebraism and Christian Kabbalah, Sina Rauschenbach’s contribution on the Christian interest in Menasseh ben Israel, and Jonathan Elukin’s discussion of the Christian reception of Josephus Flavius in the English Reformation. The Protestant interest in Judaism was certainly not limited to the beginning of the Reformation. More recent examples are the establishment of Nes Ammim, a Christian moshav settlement in Israel, recounted by Gert van Klinken, and the support for Israel among American Evangelicals examined by Yakov Ariel. Neither did Catholicism forget its Augustinian legacy. Although in certain eras, in particular from the late Middle Ages, the influence of Augustine’s witness theory seems to have waned, John Connelly shows how after the Holocaust, Catholicism reformulated its attitude towards Judaism, going so far as to refrain from advocating missionary activity aimed at Jews.

Judaism also played an important role in particular strands of Enlightenment thought. This could be seen as a secularization of the “witness theory”, whereby Judaism serves as legitimization of Enlightenment, liberalist, and nationalist thinking. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s famous attempts in plays like *Der Juden* and *Nathan der Weise* to de-demonize Judaism were not only the product of Enlightenment thought, they were also an argument for it. Jonathan Israel argues in his article that the plight of the Jews also informed the debate between radical and moderate Enlightenment, whereby radical Enlighteners like Christian Wilhelm Dohm, Heinrich Friedrich Diez, and Count Honoré Gabriel

<sup>14</sup> Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York, 2008), xvii; for an extensive investigation of Augustine’s witness theory, see also Kristine T. Utterback and Merrall Llewelyn Price, *Jews in Medieval Christendom: Slay Them Not* (Leiden, 2013).

Riqueti de Mirabeau referred to the Jews to further their vision of what the Enlightenment should entail. Certain strands of nationalist thought also justify themselves by championing Jewish causes. Jaap Cohen's article features the extreme case of German nationalists whose admiration of seventeenth-century Sephardic Jews served their degrading of Ashkenazic Jews. James Renton illustrates this in an article on British politics concerning the Middle East, and I do so also in an article on the recruitment of Jewish causes in service of contemporary populist-nationalist movements. In Dutch national identity, the Jews take a particularly strong place, and it receives particular emphasis in this volume, not only due to the contingency of the fact that it grew out of a conference in Amsterdam, but also because of particular aspects of Dutch culture like its Christian Hebraist tradition, its Calvinist coloring, the relative weakness of its nationalist antisemitic tradition, and the national pride it takes in those who resisted Nazism. Irene Zwiep's article discusses Hendrik Josephus Pos's almost completely non-Jewish volume of articles *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* (Antisemitism and Judaism) condemning antisemitism in defense not so much of the Jews as of Western civilization. Evelien Gans shows how within a particular trend of Dutch Holocaust historiography, "the myth of Jewish passivity" served as a pretext for Dutch passivity during the Holocaust. And in writing about the controversy surrounding the marriage of princess Beatrix with the German diplomat Claus von Amsberg, Bart Wallet demonstrates that in the second half of the twentieth century even the Dutch royal family believed it needed to profess its acknowledgment of the Jewish voice.

## PHILOSEMITISM

In many ways this volume bears affinity to a small but significant literature on the subject of philosemitism. In this literature, philosemitism is often presented as the counter image of antisemitism, and it is asserted that Jews were not only victims of negative stereotyping but also the beneficiaries of positive stereotyping.<sup>15</sup> While some authors in this volume indeed chose to employ—critically—the term philosemitism, and while the literature on

<sup>15</sup> Solomon Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile: The Philo-Semitic Aspect* (New York, 1980), 1; W. D. Rubinstein and Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840–1939* (New York, 1999), ix; Alan Edelstein, *An Unacknowledged Harmony, Philo-Semitism and the Survival of European Jewry* (Westport, 1982); Jonathan Sutcliffe Adam Karp, *Philosemitism in History* (New York, 2011), 3.

philosemitism is not always unaware of its “intricate ambivalence”<sup>16</sup> and utilitarian motives,<sup>17</sup> the present usage of a different notion “the Jew as legitimization” is intended to convey a different emphasis in a number of ways.

First of all, much literature on philosemitism focuses on the psychology of stereotyping.<sup>18</sup> This project, while not leaving it out, is more philosophical. It focuses not (only) on the fact that certain psychological mechanisms (e.g. scapegoating) tend to essentialize and stereotype minorities, be it positively or negatively, but also on the indispensable role that Judaism plays in the internal logic of certain value systems, as a confirmation and legitimization of their truths, that lies behind this psychology.

A second reason for avoiding the term philosemitism is that the attitudes that go together with the usage of the Jew as legitimization do not necessarily have to be positive. In fact, the cases discussed in this volume are not intended to convey the sense that in certain historical settings, when it comes to the Jews, Gentile attitudes were positive and in others were negative.<sup>19</sup> As Zygmunt Bauman has convincingly argued, antisemitism and philosemitism derive from the same root. Both understand the Jew as different, be it positively or negatively—an attitude described by him as allocentrism.<sup>20</sup> For Bauman, this allocentrism is a response to the ambiguity in what “the Jew” represents, as a powerful chosen people and at the same time a subversive fraud. Jews suffer from the fact that they do not fit into the order that seeks to make sense of the world. Bauman understands modern antisemitism as an effort to restore this order. In this volume, the focus is on an alternative way that order in the world may be restored: imagining the world in a way that Jews, by virtue of their very otherness, constitute its foundation. In describing the ways the “myth of Jewish passivity” served in Dutch Holocaust historiography to exonerate non-Jewish behavior, Evelien Gans discusses a particular kind of

<sup>16</sup> Karp, *Philosemitism in History*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile*, 2–3; Samuel Moyn, “Antisemitism, Philosemitism and the Rise of Holocaust Memory,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, no. 1 (2009), 8.

<sup>18</sup> Edelstein, *An Unacknowledged Harmony*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> The idea that antisemitism may exemplify the legitimizing force of Judaism is forcefully advocated by Slavoj Žižek, who infers from the sentence “We have to kill the Jew within us”, attributed to Hitler, that “Gentiles need the antisemitic figure of the ‘Jew’ in order to maintain their identity.” Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London, 2010), 135. An in-depth exploration of the way negative perception of Jews served a legitimizing purpose throughout Western history may be found in David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, “Allocentrism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern,” in *Modernity, Culture, and “the Jew”*, ed. Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus.

anti-Jewish stereotyping where such negative stereotypes are not a direct assault on Jews, but rather an instrumentalization of Jews (in which she does recognize “secondary antisemitism”) for the purpose of whitewashing non-Jewish memory. In discussing the significance of Israel and Jews for American Evangelicals, Yakov Ariel describes a case where a negative vision of the Jews (as erring in the divinity of Christ and as an obstacle in the end of times) paradoxically produced religious activity aimed at strong support for Jews, in particular for the Jewish state. What we see here is that the postponing of the (desired) complete assimilation of Jews to the end of times created space for a form of Christianity in actual time that could view support (rather than proselytizing) of Jews and Israel as a major way to profess its religiosity. In spite of their hopes for ultimate conversion, for as long as the end of times has not arrived, these Evangelical Christians too betray a need for non-assimilated (Zionist) Judaism.

### JEWISH RESPONSES

When a particular understanding of Judaism is quintessential for non-Jewish self-understanding, it adds much complexity to Jewish–non-Jewish relations. The most important consequence is that it places Jews in a distinctive position. Since Jewish existence was deemed necessary to establish truths of the societies in which they lived, Jews became valuable. Their dependence on their non-Jewish environment was balanced by their necessity as a legitimization of non-Jewish ideas. As a result, the usage of the Jew as legitimization also legitimized Judaism. This confronted Jews with the question whether they wanted to capitalize on their value, using it in return for protection or other benefits. The price they had to pay, however, was that they needed to conform to the particular perception non-Jews had of Jews, which could be very different from the way they wanted to perceive themselves. It is not difficult to comprehend Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn’s gratefulness to Bernard of Clairvaux for having admonished Christians—in anticipation of Jewish massacres with the Second Crusade and referring to Augustine’s witness theory—that “whosoever touches a Jew to take his life is like one who harms Jesus himself.”<sup>21</sup> But in other cases, a Jewish invocation or even adaptation of its non-Jewish image could be particularly controversial. This we see, for example, in cases where a non-Jewish split between “exceptional” and “ordinary” Jews was made, and benefits could

<sup>21</sup> Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Madison, 1977), 112.

be gained by performing the role of the “exceptional” Jew at the expense of the “ordinary” Jew. Hannah Arendt described this problem through her famous figure of the “parvenu,” who strove to conform to the non-Jewish society’s image of the exoticism for which it appreciated certain Jews, at the expense of the largest part of his or her brethren. The parvenu, she argues, being aware that since certain Jews had gained social acceptance “only because they were Jews, because of their foreign, exotic appeal,”<sup>22</sup> tried to conform to this image, and in doing so made a “tragic endeavor to conform through differentiation and distinction,”<sup>23</sup> while his even more famous counterpart, the pariah, condemned himself to being an outcast by refusing to do so. Hannah Arendt’s discussion focuses on nineteenth-century Germany, but she points out that the categories of the parvenu and pariah may well be generalized. The phenomenon of self-orientalization, where Jews behave in accordance with stereotypes of orientalization, which they believe to be appropriate for Jews, may be viewed in such light.<sup>24</sup> Jaap Cohen’s article could be considered a particularly controversial example: the attempt of Dutch Sephardic Jews to negotiate with the Nazis on the basis of German racist ideas, which assert the racial superiority of Sephardic Jews to Ashkenazic Jews. It was a desperate attempt to escape deportation, which led to strong condemnations by Jewish historians after the war. James Renton’s article on the way the British attempted to legitimize their war effort with Zionism shows that such negotiation could also be the result of a conscious non-Jewish strategy. The British hoped the Jews could thus be recruited to support their side in the Great War. Such bargaining, it should be noted, was very different from the well-described trade-off which was often set as a requirement of emancipation, in which Jews were expected to commit to a degree of assimilation in exchange for rights. Here Jews had, in contrast, to remain Jewish. It should, however, be added that they had to remain Jewish in a way that conformed to a non-Jewish understanding of what that was. In that sense, it was assimilation, (or perhaps hybridization) after all. Besides describing instances in which Jews served as legitimization, this dilemma and the ways Jews dealt with it are an important theme of this volume.

<sup>22</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new edition with added prefaces (San Diego, 1985), 57.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>24</sup> Anna-Dorothee Ludwig, “Between Orientalization and Self-Orientalization; Remarks on the Image of the ‘Beautiful Jewess’ in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century European Literature,” in *Orientalism, Gender, and the Jews: Literary and Artistic Transformations of European National Discourses*, ed. Ulrike Brunotte, Anna-Dorothea Ludewig, and Axel Stähler; Kalmar and Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews*, xix.

## THE JEW AS LEGITIMATION OF CHANGE

This volume discusses many examples of the Jew as legitimization, and many more can be found. This prompts the question how common the legitimizing role of the Jew in non-Jewish thinking in fact was. Although ideologies could very well be indifferent to Judaism, there are surely more than enough examples of the opposite, where rather than an interest in, fascination with, and instrumentalization of Judaism, immediate complete assimilation and/or disappearance of Judaism was desired and set as a goal. The examples are numerous and well known. We encounter this in the century before the 1492 expulsion of the Jews in Spain, in certain strands of Enlightenment thought, in the nineteenth-century debates about assimilation, and of course in National Socialism, to name just the most obvious. It is difficult and perhaps also not very rewarding to make an assessment of what occurred more, but an inventory of the cases discussed in this volume reveals one interesting fact. In many cases the usage of the Jew as legitimization served internal non-Jewish polemical purposes. Often Judaism served as an instrument to defend certain ideologies against other ideologies that were accused of not appreciating the value of Jews and Judaism. The Reformation's turn to Jewish sources is an obvious case in point. This occurred in the context of its debate with the Catholic Church, which Protestantism accused of having forgotten Christianity's original Jewish sources. But this happened not only in the Reformation. As Jonathan Israel describes in his chapter on Jewish emancipation in European revolutionary consciousness, Jews were also an argument in the battles the radical enlighteners fought against religion, religious authority, and the moderate (or religious) Enlightenment. Gert van Klinken shows how the history of the foundation of the Christian kibbutz Nes Ammim was marked (and fueled) by internal Protestant disputes on the degree to which Christianity should acknowledge the divine significance of Jewry. John Connolly even shows how a defense of the Jewish cause can be an instrument for internal Catholic debate, as it was with the Second Vatican Council, where the movement for a stronger recognition of the divine significance of Judaism became a wedge for a more humanist and pluralist Catholic Church. Finally, as illustrated in the last article in this volume, current support for Israel and rhetoric against (Muslim) antisemitism among (European) nationalist, populist political movements implies a critique of traditional political movements, accusing them of not seeing the urgency of such stands. We may conclude that in many cases, those wishing to develop new value systems found a helpful ally in references to Judaism.

This brings us to a final question, why we so often see new forms of non-Jewish thinking making use of Judaism to lay their foundations? I would like to suggest three explanations here. The first is particular to Judaism; the other two derive from the fact that Jews are a minority culture and thus point to the fact that other minority cultures may serve a similar legitimizing role as does Judaism.

1. *Cultural memory:* This first reason has to do with the fact that Christianity, which for so many centuries was—and in many places still is—the dominant culture, has molded Western cultural memory. What has often been said about modern antisemitism, that—although it may be different from premodern anti-Judaism—it feeds from centuries of Christian hostile attitudes towards Judaism, may also be said about the legitimizing force of Judaism. The fact that Christianity developed out of Judaism has made the notion that Judaism is in some way or another indispensable for Christianity an inherent part of Christian cultural memory. It has come there through the incorporation of the Old Testament into the Christian Bible and through writings of seminal figures such as Paul and Augustine. As a result, it has become part of Western cultural memory to perceive Jews and Judaism as harboring the key to hidden truths. The many renewed ways that Jews serve as legitimization derive much of their power and convincing force because they can draw on this perception, even in secularized forms. And with every new ideology legitimizing itself through Judaism, this memorial momentum grows stronger.
2. *The authority of the exotic:* To non-Jewish cultures, Judaism is different, foreign, the “other.” Like the place of Judaism in Western cultural memory, this alterity is often understood as an important factor in explaining the ubiquity of Jew-hatred. But here too there is another side to the coin: By definition, the “other” harbors the unknown. The encounter with any “other” therefore brings with it the promise of a revelation. As a result, the foreign always has a certain mystery about it that, besides arousing fear, also makes it attractive and suitable for the projection of all kinds of fantasies. It is this mechanism that drives, for instance, many forms of Orientalism. But its potential stretches further: since ideas cannot legitimize themselves without becoming redundant, legitimization works best if its source is foreign. Therefore, the mystery that is an intrinsic aspect of

“the other” also lends it authority. After all, to “the other,” its mystery is not a mystery. As such “the other” is well equipped to perform a legitimizing role. The recruitment of the Jew for legitimizing purposes should be seen in such light, as a way to appropriate this authority.

3. *Political dependency:* As a minority culture, Judaism has always, to some degree, been in a politically dependent position with regard to the majority cultures in which it existed. This too may have been a contributing factor in the origination of anti-Jewish stereotypes: it is a small step to regard those less powerful as less valued. At the same time, it brought with it an important advantage to the majority cultures for which it served as a legitimizing source: thanks to its dependency, it could be kept under control. After all, the legitimizing role of Judaism also created an opposite dependence, whereby the majority culture is—at least in a theoretical way—dependent on the minority culture for its legitimacy. Thanks to its political dependence, Judaism’s legitimizing “superiority” could nevertheless be kept in place. For a majority culture, it was therefore convenient to be legitimized by a minority culture.

Obviously this volume can contain only a limited number of cases exemplifying the Jew as legitimization. It was impossible within the scope to pay attention to all the particular eras within the long history of Jewish-Gentile relations. Therefore preference was given to eras of important change. Many subjects which may well betray forms of the usage of the Jew as legitimization remain to be looked at. The cover illustration, depicting the Legend of the Wandering Jew, is just one example. Others are Lessing’s interpretation of Jews to legitimize his Enlightened world-view, the legitimizing role Jews played for the Dreyfusards’ political agenda during the Dreyfus affair, the identification with the Israelites in Afro-American spirituals, the politics, often involving non-Jewish interests, behind certain revivals of Jewish culture in festivals, theatre, music, etc., the contemporary non-Jewish popularity of the Kabbalah, to name but a few. What also could not be explored due to lack of space, but certainly not lack of importance, is the way that other cultural minorities have served as legitimization for majority ideas: the “white man’s burden,” the practice of blackface minstrelsy, artistic fascination with “primitive” cultures, and the politicization of women’s and homosexual rights would be promising places for such further investigation.

## CHAPTER 2

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# The Maccabean Martyrs as Models in Early Christian Writings

*Jan Willem van Henten*

## INTRODUCTION

The “Maccabean martyrs” were a group of Jews who were tortured to death during the persecution by king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE), preceding the Maccabean Revolt in 168/7–164 BCE. In the context of its description of Antiochus IV’s persecution, the Second Book of Maccabees (late second century BCE) includes a report about the Maccabean martyrs (2 Macc 6:18–7:42). It relates how a ninety-year-old scribe called Eleazar and an anonymous mother<sup>1</sup> with seven sons refused to participate in a kind of ritual meal during which they were forced to eat a piece of pork (2 Macc 6:18, 6:21, 7:1, 7:42). The martyrs refused to do this because they would rather die than violate God’s laws, which are at the same time the ancestral laws of the Jews (2 Macc 6:28, 7:2, 7:9, 7:11, 7:23, 7:30, 7:37). Second Maccabees creates a constant opposition between Jews and non-Jews by highlighting the fact that the martyrs remained faithful to the Jewish practices in their conflict with Antiochus IV. The martyrs exemplify the Jewish way of life, and their glorious deeds

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<sup>1</sup>The mother is sometimes called Hannah in Jewish tradition.

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and statements indicate the special character of the Jewish people. They are exemplary figures for fellow Jews (2 Macc 6:28, 6:31) and serve them as well as outsiders as ideal representatives of the Jewish nation. Second Maccabees also implies that the martyrs and Judas Maccabaeus fought for the same cause and that the martyrdoms were a decisive step towards the restoration of an independent Jewish state.<sup>2</sup> The Fourth Book of Maccabees (date debated) is in its entirety devoted to the Maccabean martyrs. It is a philosophical treatise on the autonomy of devout reason that is underpinned by a eulogy of the Maccabean martyrs. By repeating an embellished version of the torture scenes from Second Maccabees (esp. 2 Macc 3:1–7:42) and praising the martyrs in line with epideictic rhetoric, the anonymous author of Fourth Maccabees demonstrates that the book's philosophical argument is right.

Both Second and Fourth Maccabees have been very popular within Christianity. The martyrdoms were incorporated in Christian *martyrologia* and often depicted in art, in illustrated bibles, as well as independently.<sup>3</sup> As such they constitute an important example of the ways early Christianity negotiated its relationship with Judaism, asserting its independence while simultaneously finding a source of legitimization in Jewish traditions. This contribution will focus on the earliest period of the Christian reception of the Maccabean martyrdoms. I will discuss important trends in the early Christian reinterpretations of the martyrdoms and subsequently focus on Origen's extensive use of the martyrs to underpin his incitation of fellow Christians to die as martyrs in his *Exhortatio ad martyrium*.

### TRENDS IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN RECEPTION OF THE MARTYRS

The Christian reception of the martyrdoms starts with the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. There we already find allusions to the Maccabean Martyrs. Chapter 11 alludes a few times in its list of witnesses of trust (*pistis*) to 2 Maccabees 6:18–7:42. Here (Hebrews 11:32–38) the author

<sup>2</sup> Further discussion: J. W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, J. Dunbabin, "The Maccabees as Exemplars in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. K. Walsh and D. Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 31–41; D. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs* (New York and Basingstoke: 2009); *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith: Old-Testament Faith-Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective*, ed. G. Signori (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

catalogues a series of anonymous models of trust, arguing that his community can find encouragement in them. The author discusses several well-known prophets and other heroes who suffered or even died because of their trust and in this context also alludes to the Maccabean martyrs, writing “Women received their dead [sons] by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.” (Hebr 11:35). Hebrews 11:36 (“Others suffered mocking and flogging …”) may allude a second time to the story of 2 Maccabees 7. The allusions to Second Maccabees in Hebrews may not be obvious at first glance, but at the level of the Greek text, the similarities are very close if not unique.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the first allusion probably combines Eleazar’s martyrdom with that of the mother and her seven sons, paraphrasing both, starting with the mother and focusing upon the resurrection of the martyrs. The second allusion highlights the scourging and mocking of the martyrs.<sup>5</sup>

As brief as they are, these allusions already show three peculiarities of the Christian reinterpretation of the Maccabean martyrs: (1) the context of the martyrdoms and the Jewish identity of the martyrs have become irrelevant; (2) the martyrs function as models of endurance in connection with an ideal attitude or virtue that the author wants to inculcate, in this case trust (*pistis*); and (3) the reinterpretation of the martyrdoms in Hebrews 11 focuses not only on the suffering of the heroes but also on their reward, which is interpreted as their resurrection at the end of times (Hebr 11:35)—an element that is absent in Second Maccabees.

The Christian reception of the Maccabean martyrdoms remains scattered for most of the second century CE. There may be one or two other allusions in the New Testament and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, but these are far from certain.<sup>6</sup> As several scholars have argued, it is more

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., the noun *anastasis* “resurrection” in 2 Macc 7:9, 14 and Hebr 11:35; the verb *tumpanizō* “torture (in a drum)” in Hebr 11:35 strongly reminds one of the execution of Eleazar, who was beaten to death in or on a huge drum (*tumpanon*, 2 Macc 6:19, 28). The vocabulary referring to mocking (*empaigmos/empaizō*) and scourging (*mastingx/mastigoō*) in Hebr 11:36 also occurs in 2 Macc 7 (7:1, 7:7).

<sup>5</sup> Details in Van Henten, “The Reception of Daniel 3 and 6 and the Maccabean Martyrdoms in Hebrews 11:33–38,” in *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer*, ed. J. Dijkstra et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 359–77. Translations of passages from the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and 2 and 4 Maccabees are from NRSV.

<sup>6</sup> Mark 15:20, 31 and parallels may allude to the mocking of the Maccabean brothers in 2 Macc 7:7, 10 (note the rare verb *empaizō* in these passages and cf. *empaigmos* in 2 Macc 7:10). See also Van Henten, “Zum Einfluß jüdischer Martyrien auf die Literatur des frühen Christentums (2: Die Apostolischen Väter),” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*,

probable that the *Martyrdom of Lyon and Vienne* (177 CE), transmitted by Eusebius in his *History of the Church*, alludes to the Maccabean martyrdoms.<sup>7</sup> This anonymous text describes several attempts by the Roman authorities to break the martyrs' spirit by horrible tortures (5.1.7–56). The main heroes include the slave woman Blandina and the local bishop Pothinus. Striking verbal parallels render it plausible that the author of this martyrdom was familiar with Second and/or Fourth Maccabees.<sup>8</sup> Bishop Pothinus was “over ninety years of age,” which detail may imply that he surpassed the bravery of the ninety-year-old Eleazar from Second and Fourth Maccabees (5.1.29).<sup>9</sup> The Maccabean mother may have been a model for Blandina, who encourages her fellow martyrs to remain steadfast and dies last, as the Maccabean mother does. She lacks physical strength (cf. 4 Macc 15:5), but Blandina nevertheless endures a series of extreme tortures. Both women are presented as exemplary mothers but in very different ways. The Maccabean mother is a hero because she disregarded her deep maternal love for her sons and supported the higher cause of faithfulness to the God of the Jews (2 Macc 7:20, 27; 4 Macc 14:11–17:1).<sup>10</sup> She exemplifies the attitude of Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice his own son (4 Macc 15:28, 16:20) and is called a “mother of the nation” (4 Macc 15:29) by way of analogy to the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac. Blandina instead functions as a spiritual mother (*Mart. Lugd.*

ed. W. Haase and H. Temporini (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–1997), II, 27, no. 1 (1993), 700–23.

<sup>7</sup>O. Perler, “Das vierte Makkabäerbuch, Ignatius von Antiochien und die ältesten Martyrerberichte,” *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 25 (1949): 47–72; W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 18–19; M.-L. Guillaumin, “Une jeune fille qui s’appelait Blandine,” in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal J. Daniélou*, ed. J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 93–98; V. Sixer, *Morts. Martyrs. Reliques. En Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles. Les témoignages de Tertullien, Cyprien, et Augustin à la lumière de l’archéologie africaine* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 260.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. *Mart. Lugd.* 1.44 with 4 Macc 17:7; *Mart. Lugd.* 1.38, 56 (*tēganizō/tēganon*) with 2 Macc 7:3, 7:5 and 4 Macc 8:13, 12:10; *Mart. Lugd.* 2.2 (*kautēria*) with 4 Macc 15:22; *Mart. Lugd.* 1.63 (hope of being resurrected) with 2 Macc 7:14; also *Mart. Lugd.* 1.45 with 2 Macc 7:23, 7:29 and 4 Macc 18:23; *Mart. Lugd.* 1.36 (athletic metaphor) with 4 Macc 17:11–16.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. 2 Macc 6:18–31 and 4 Macc 5–7.

<sup>10</sup>J. W. Van Henten, “The *Passio Perpetuae* and Jewish Martyrdom: The Motif of Motherly Love,” in *Perpetua’s Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, ed. J. N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 118–33.

5.1.41), and she is perhaps connected with the symbolism of the Church as a virgin-mother who rejoices in the martyrdoms because they inspire others to confess Jesus Christ (5.1.45–46). Interestingly, the Maccabean mother says of herself that she has become a holy virgin (4 Macc 18:7). But in the larger context of Fourth Maccabees, this remark may be understood in a metaphorical way, implying that the mother managed to remain uncorrupted by unlawful Gentile practices and bearing no relationship at all to the later Christian concept of the virgin-mother.

It is important to note that if the author of the *Martyrdom of Lyons and Vienne* does allude to the Maccabean martyrdoms, he kept those references implicit. There is no reference to the context of the Maccabean martyrdoms, and neither are there other markers of their Jewish identity. If the author indeed incorporated Jewish martyrdom traditions, he obviously made them subordinate to his praise of the Christian martyrs. This would fit the trend that can be observed in several North-African martyrdoms, which date from before 310 CE and where we encounter for the first time explicit references to the Maccabean martyrs. The *Passion of Montanus and Lucius* compares the mother of the martyr Flavianus with the mother of the Maccabean martyrs.<sup>11</sup> She is called a “Maccabean mother” (*Machabaeica mater*, *Pas. Mont.* 16.4) as well as a “daughter of Abraham” (*Abrahae filia*, 16.3). These titles construct an analogy between the mothers and focus on their ideal attitude of being prepared to sacrifice a child for a higher cause. The text highlights that the number of sons—the Maccabean mother had seven—did not play a role: “no matter the number of her sons, for in like manner she too [i.e., the mother of Flavian] offered all her love to her Lord in this her only one” (trans. Musurillo).<sup>12</sup> The same motif is found in the conclusion of the *Passion of Marian and James*, where the mother of Marian rejoices after her son’s martyrdom and compares herself with the Maccabean mother.<sup>13</sup>

From the end of the second century CE onward, we find more elaborate passages that include explicit references to the Maccabean martyrs in the

<sup>11</sup> The date of the martyrdoms according to tradition is spring 259 CE, H. A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), xxxv–xxxvi with references.

<sup>12</sup> *Pas. Mont.* 16.5: *nihil enim interest de numero filiorum, cum perinde et haec in unico pignore totos affectus suos domino manciparit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Pas. Mar.* 13: “When this was all over, Marian’s mother, now sure of her son once his passion was finished, rejoiced like the mother of the Maccabees (*Machabaico gaudio*), congratulating not only Marian but also herself that she had borne such a son” (trans. Musurillo).

context of sermons and homilies as well as panegyric discourses. Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, for example, composed homilies that pay tribute to the Maccabean martyrs (*MPG* 35.912–33, 50.616–28).<sup>14</sup> Origen (ca. 185–254 CE), an extremely learned and prolific Christian author who wrote many biblical commentaries and was also an expert in textual criticism of the Bible, extensively builds on the Maccabean martyrdoms in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* of 235 CE. He quotes sections from 2 Maccabees 6:18–7:42, which allows us to study his reinterpretation of the Maccabean martyrdoms in detail by comparing his text with Second and Fourth Maccabees. The second section of my contribution will therefore concern Origen's *Exhortation*.

### THE MACCABEAN MARTYRS AS MODELS IN ORIGEN<sup>15</sup>

For Origen, martyrdom was the ultimate realization of Christian commitment. His father died a martyr's death when Origen was about seventeen years old (ca. 203 CE), which motivated him for the rest of his life to bring credit to the "testimony" of his father.<sup>16</sup> In 234 CE, Origen moved from Alexandria to Caesarea Maritima (Israel/Palestine), where he wrote most of his works and consulted rabbinic scholars on a regular basis in his effort to make himself familiar with Jewish sources. Origen's explanation of biblical writings (Hebrew Bible as well as New Testament) and ascetic interpretation of Christianity remained highly influential despite the fact that he was charged with heresy for some of his views.

When the Roman emperor Maximinus Thrax (235–238 CE) was persecuting Christian leaders, Origen wrote his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* in Caesarea (235 CE).<sup>17</sup> The primary addressees were two of the local Christian leaders, Ambrose and Prototectus. Ambrose was a wealthy married man from Alexandria, who supported Origen's school with money (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23.2), and Prototectus was a local priest.<sup>18</sup> In

<sup>14</sup> R. Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées: de l'histoire juive au culte chrétien: Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> This section is a shortened and revised version of J. W. Van Henten, "The Christianization of the Maccabean Martyrs: the Case of Origen," in *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Ancient Christianity: Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter*, ed. J. Leemans (BETL 241; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 333–52.

<sup>16</sup> J. W. Trigg, *Origen* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.28.

<sup>18</sup> P. Hartmann, "Origène et la théologie du martyre d'après le PROTREPTIKOS de 235," *ETL* 34 (1958): 773–824 (774–75).

the *Exhortation*, Origen goes at length to exhort them and other fellow Christians to submit themselves to martyrdom, the highest form of Christian life in his opinion.<sup>19</sup> He propagates a strict view of martyrdom, implying that Christians should refuse to deny Christianity during trial and refuse to swear by the “good fortune” (*fortuna*) of the emperor (*Exh.* 6–7) at all cost, and thus “bear their cross” like Christ did (12). The structure of Origen’s *Exhortation* is fairly loose.<sup>20</sup> It amounts to a somewhat haphazard collection of exhortations and warnings. The section on the Maccabean martyrs (*Exh.* 22–27) reminds one of early Christian homilies concerning martyrs.<sup>21</sup> The introduction (*Exh.* 1–5) sets the tone with a quotation of Isaiah 28:9–11,<sup>22</sup> emphasizing that the readers should accept the tribulation (*thlipsis*) that will come upon them. If they do that, they will receive hope (*elpis*), which refers to the posthumous vindication of the martyrs, as it does in Second Maccabees.<sup>23</sup> Tribulation and hope are the catchwords which keep returning in this work.<sup>24</sup>

A section in the middle (*Exh.* 22–27) focuses on the Maccabean martyrs. Origen is clearly familiar with a collection of Maccabean books (*Exh.* 23).<sup>25</sup> Origen’s line of thought and allusions to Fourth Maccabees

<sup>19</sup> Hartmann, “Origène”; P. Bright, “Origenian Understanding of Martyrdom and its Biblical Framework,” in *Origen of Alexandria: His Work and His Legacy*, ed. C. Kannengiesser and W. Petersen (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 180–99.

<sup>20</sup> P. Koetschau, *Origenes Werke I, Die Schrift vom Martyrium. Buch I–IV gegen Celsus* (GCS; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1899), xii–xiv; O’Meara, *Exhortation*, 12; J. E. L. Oulton and H. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 389; Hartmann, “Origène,” 782–83.

<sup>21</sup> Origen follows conventions of the *logos protreptikos* (hortative speech) as well as Christian homilies, J. J. O’Meara, *Origen, Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom: Translated and Annotated* (Westminster-London: The Newman Press, 1954), 10; Hartmann, “Origène,” 780–81. In general: J. Leemans, W. Mayer, P. Allen and B. G. A. M. Dehandschutter, “*Let Us Die That We May Live?*: Greek Homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria (c. AD 350–AD 450) (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Quote according to the Septuagint version. M. Mitchell, “Christian Martyrdom and the ‘Dialect of the Holy Scriptures’: The Literal, the Allegorical, the Martyrological,” *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009): 177–206, takes the quotation of Isa 28 as a *captatio benevolentiae* of the recipients, because they were beyond need of baby food (198).

<sup>23</sup> 2 Macc 7:14; Van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 174 n211. Cf. 2 Cor 4:17; Rom 5:3–5; Tit 2:13; Mitchell, “Christian Martyrdom,” 199–201.

<sup>24</sup> *Thlipsis* (*Exh.* 1–2, 41, 42, 44, 49) and *elpis* (1–2, 7, 18, 25, 27, 41).

<sup>25</sup> In the introduction to the story of the seven brothers (2 Macc 7), he notes that their death was described in the “(Books of the) Maccabees” (*en tois Makkabaikois anagraphentes*, *Exh.* 23).

make it probable that this book was part of this collection, even though there are no quotations from this work.<sup>26</sup> Origen does offer extensive quotations from the story of the Maccabean martyrdoms in Second Maccabees (2 Macc 6:18–7:42), which in his eyes is part of Scripture (*hē graphē*), i.e. the Christian Bible.<sup>27</sup>

In this section, Origen highlights the voluntary aspect of Eleazar's martyrdom, asking his readership<sup>28</sup> “Who could more justifiably be praised for his death than he who of his own free choice chooses to die for the sake of religion?” (*tis de an houtōs eulogōs epainoito tethnēkōs hōs ho autoproairetōs ton thanaton huper eusebeias anadexamenos? Exh. 22*).<sup>29</sup> He then continues with a paraphrase and a partial quotation from 2 Macc 6:19,<sup>30</sup> the verse that describes Eleazar's choice to be executed rather than violating the Jewish dietary laws, echoing *authairetōs* “of one's own accord” (2 Macc 6:19) with his phrase *autoproairetōs* “of one's own free choice”.<sup>31</sup> Origen also quotes 2 Macc 6:23–28 almost entirely, again making slight adaptations. This he does to highlight Eleazar's motivation for not accepting the offer by the king's representatives to pretend to eat pork (2 Macc 6:24–28). This long quotation is followed by Eleazar's second statement rendered in 2 Macc 6:30, just before dying, which is also almost fully quoted: “*To the Lord who has holy knowledge it is known that, though I could have been freed from death, I am enduring cruel bodily pains by scourging, and I suffer this gladly for fear for him.*” Origen directly links these words to his intended audience by introducing them with the words: “I beseech

<sup>26</sup> D. A. DeSilva, “An Example of How to Die Nobly for Religion: The Influence of 4 Maccabees on Origen’s *Exhortatio ad Martyrium*,” *JECL* 17 (2009): 337–55 (343).

<sup>27</sup> In the concluding chapter about the mother he writes: “I think that these passages, which I have summarized from Scripture (*epitemomenos apo tēs graphēs*), provide most valuable material for our purpose” (*Exh. 27*), R. A. Greer, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, First Principles. Book IV, Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, Homily XXVII on Numbers. Translation and Introduction* (London: SPCK, 1979), 56; DeSilva, “Example,” 353.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Exh. 24, 25, 27*. Also 4 Macc 1:10.

<sup>29</sup> Translations from the Exhortation derive from Oulton-Chadwick (footnote 20), with my italics of the quotations from 2 Maccabees. See also the reference to Eleazar's death at the end of *Exh. 22*.

<sup>30</sup> Further discussion of Origen's use of Scripture in D. Bertrand, “Typologie des références à la Bible dans le Discours sur la prière,” in *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible/Origen and the Bible*, ed. G. Dorival and A. le Boulluec (BETL 118; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 229–41.

<sup>31</sup> The elaborate paraphrase of the king's attempt to persuade at least the youngest brother from 2 Macc 7 also emphasizes the determination of the martyrs with a double reference to their resolution (*proairesis*, *Exh. 26*). Cf. also the addition of *hekousiōs* (“voluntarily”) to the quotation from Macc 7:18 (*Exh. 25*).

you, when you are at the gates of death, or rather of freedom, ... to say this: ..." (*Exh.* 22). This passage once again emphasizes the voluntary aspect of Eleazar's death. Eleazar could clearly have avoided his martyrdom.<sup>32</sup> The combination of quotations and comments clearly implies that Origen understands Eleazar as a model for Christian martyrs.<sup>33</sup>

Origen's rendering of the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons (2 Macc 7) is more selective. The quotations from this chapter are shorter than those from 6:18–31, and Origen leaves out portions of his source text. Nevertheless, the Maccabean martyrs are invoked here too as Christian models. Origen associates the death of the mother and her sons with *eusebeia* ("religion," "proper worship," *Exh.* 23), which is a central concept in Fourth Maccabees.<sup>34</sup> In line with Fourth Maccabees, Origen interprets this virtue as the willingness to endure sufferings unto death in order to remain faithful to God.<sup>35</sup> The quotations from 2 Maccabees 7 often concern only a few words, but there can be no doubt that these are certain references because Origen follows the text of 2 Maccabees verse by verse.<sup>36</sup> Once again, Origen uses the martyrs' statements as an encouragement to his intended readers. He ends Chap. 23 by writing: "If we were in such a situation we might well repeat the words they [the Maccabean mother and her sons] said to each other which read as follows: '*The Lord God beholds us and in reality is having compassion on us.*'" The last words are a direct quotation from 2 Maccabees 7:6, which associate the situation of Origen's audience with that of the Maccabean martyrs and hint at God's compassion with the readers in a situation of extreme suffering.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 100. Cf. Hebr 11:35.

<sup>33</sup> The model function of the martyrs is also apparent from the Greek words *hypodeigma* (*Exh.* 22) and *paradeigma* (*Exh.* 23).

<sup>34</sup> This matches what Origen writes in his introduction about the Christians: "They intend to die for proper worship's sake rather than live on godlessly" (*Exh.* 5; transl. adapted), W. Metcalfe, "Origen's Exhortation to Martyrdom and 4 Maccabees," *JTS* 22 (1921): 268–69; DeSilva, "Example," 345.

<sup>35</sup> DeSilva, "Example," 345. Cf. Mitchell, "Christian Martyrdom," 202, who argues that *eusebeia* means "pious submission to a violent death in face of persecution" in the *Exhortation*.

<sup>36</sup> Origen quotes the statements in 2 Macc 7:2, 7:9, 7:12, 7:14, 7:18, 7:30, but he also adapts them. Longer quotations concern the individual statements by the seven brothers, although the statements given in 2 Macc 7:16–17 and 7:19 are only paraphrased.

<sup>37</sup> The point of 2 Macc 7:6 (including a quote from Deut 32:6) is that God's compassion only concerns those members of his people who remain faithful to him and the Jewish laws, Van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 110–11.

Chapter 27 focuses on the fact that the mother had to watch her sons being slaughtered in a single day. To that purpose, Origen briefly quotes and paraphrases 2 Maccabees 7:20; like the author of Fourth Maccabees, he highlights the mother's unbelievable capability of making the love for her children subordinate to the love of God.<sup>38</sup> Whether or not inspired by Fourth Maccabees, the *Exhortation* and other early Christian writings share the trend to elaborate and embellish the praise for the mother because she was able to overcome her maternal love for her children for a higher cause.<sup>39</sup>

We saw that Origen's reinterpretation of the Maccabean martyrdoms in *Exhortation* 22–27 is based on the version in Second Maccabees and that several details imply he also used Fourth Maccabees. But it is instructive also to look at what Origen highlights and what he leaves out. When we ask what it is he highlights, we see that he emphasizes that martyrdom results from a free choice of the heroes (e.g. *Exh.* 26) and that he has a preference for the martyrs' statements, because he quotes most of them, albeit sometimes with adaptations.<sup>40</sup> His vocabulary further implies that martyrdom is presented from the perspective of dying for proper worship (*eusebeia*),<sup>41</sup> endurance (*hupomonē*, see above), and love of God.<sup>42</sup>

What Origen leaves out follows a consistent pattern: He is neither interested in the biographical details of the martyrs nor in the setting of the martyrdoms. He omits the information about the ritual meal in which the martyrs were forced to participate, as well as the offer to Eleazar to pretend to eat pork (2 Macc 6:20–22). He ignores the specific manner

<sup>38</sup> “It enables us to see how proper worship and love for God (*eusebeia kai to pros theon philtrom*) in face of the most painful agonies and the severest torments are far more powerful than any other bond of affection.” (*Exh.* 27; transl. adapted). Cf. 4 Macc 14:13–15:32. See also the image of fire in connection with motherly love (*Exh.* 27; 4 Macc 16:3–4) and the feelings of the mother in her “innmost parts” (*ta splanchna*, *Exh.* 27; 4 Macc 14:13, 15:23, 15:29), Hartmann, “Origène,” 796; DeSilva, “Example,” 348–49. John Chrysostom elaborates the motif of maternal love and fire, presenting the mother’s martyrdom as a triumph of spiritual fire over actual fire (*Homily 2, PG* 50 625.32–46).

<sup>39</sup> Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 70–72, 91–94, 99, 227–33, 242–46, 253–56.

<sup>40</sup> 2 Macc 6:24–28, 6:30, 7:2, 7:9, 7:12 (with adaptations), 7:14 (with adaptations), 7:18 (with adaptations), 7:30 with adaptations.

<sup>41</sup> *Exh.* 5 (three times), 22, 23 (four times), 25, 27 (twice), 29, 42, 47.

<sup>42</sup> *Exh.* 2–3 (*agapasthai ton theon*), 25 (*dia tēn pros ton theon agapēn*), 27 (*to pros theon philtrom*). Cf. *Exh.* 7, 10–11, 37–8. See J. den Boeft and J. N. Bremmer, “Notiunculae Martyrologiae IV,” *VigChr* 45 (1991): 105–22 (121 n33); Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 98–99; cf. D. Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

of the execution of Eleazar, who was beaten to death in or on a kind of drum.<sup>43</sup> Likewise he omits the reason for the execution of the seven brothers and the details about the execution of all brothers except the first one. Origen does refer to the Law in connection with the martyrs' motivation, but he ignores other references to Jewish culture and identity, which are so important in Second Maccabees and Fourth Maccabees. He ignores the references to the ancestral language of the martyrs, to give just one example of such Jewish identity markers.<sup>44</sup>

By emphasizing certain elements from the Maccabean Books, omitting others, and even making additions, Origen builds on Fourth Maccabees and reinterprets the Maccabean martyrdoms as deaths for the proper worship of God (*eusebeia*).<sup>45</sup> For Origen, proper worship not only focuses upon God but it also takes place in contact with or through the mediation of Jesus Christ.<sup>46</sup> Certain passages about martyrdom for the sake of proper worship make sense when we consider them from this perspective. Origen's paraphrase of the martyrdom of the third brother (*Exh.* 25) introduces a motive for martyrdom that does not occur in Second Maccabees. I give the relevant passage in full, with the text of Second Maccabees in italics:

*The third also, counted his sufferings as nothing* (2 Macc 7:12) and for his love to God (*dia tēn pros ton theon agapēn*) trampling upon them, *when told to put out his tongue, did so forthwith and valiantly stretched out his hands* (2 Macc 7:10), saying: “*Because of God’s laws I leave these behind me, but I hope to regain from God* (2 Macc 7:11) in the rewards he grants to those who have fought for their religion.”

This cluster of quotations from 2 Maccabees 7:10–12 shows several adaptations and expansions. Second Maccabees indirectly refers to God as Heaven, but Origen explicitly refers to God. He is vaguer about the posthumous life of the martyrs than is the author of 2 Maccabees 7, who

<sup>43</sup> Origen leaves out 2 Macc 6:29, 6:30 (partly), as well as the last parts of 6:23, 6:28.

<sup>44</sup> 2 Macc 7:8, 7:21, 7:27; 4 Macc 12:7, 16:15. J. W. Van Henten, “The Ancestral Language of the Jews in 2 Maccabees,” in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, ed. W. Horbury (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 53–68.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. *Exh.* 22–23, 27. In 4 Macc 5:24 the martyr Eleazar defines *eusebeia* as “worship with proper reverence of the only living God”. Origen’s articulation of *eusebeia* differs from what we find in Fourth Maccabees, but he shares with Fourth Maccabees the focus upon the public enactment of *eusebeia* (*Exh.* 42; 4 Macc 17:11–17).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Exh.* 42: *dia tēn eis theon en Christōi eusebeian*; also 47.

points to the recreation of the martyrs' bodies.<sup>47</sup> Origen adds the motif of the love of God (see also above), which is important, because it links up with his introduction to his writing.<sup>48</sup> In *Exh.* 2–3, Origen connects the motif of the love of God with the theme of a spiritual communion with God that is not dependent on the body: “I think that they love God with all their soul (*holēi de psuchēi nomizō agapasthai ton theon*) who with a great desire to be in union with God withdraw and separate their soul not only from the earthly body but also from everything material” (*Exh.* 3). Origen’s goal envisaged for Christians seems to be an afterlife close to God and in unity with Jesus Christ; martyrdom is the best way to reach this goal. This implies that one’s earthly life should be a life in anticipation of the post-mortem existence near God, and it calls for the readiness to confess God even if that would cost one’s life. This attitude will render the believer a superior knowledge even while still on earth—knowledge which is not only intellectual but also spiritual and which will give access to the full secrets of God after the fate of martyrdom (*Exh.* 13).<sup>49</sup>

A striking reinterpretation of the Maccabean martyrdoms concerns the brutal scalping of one of the brothers. Origen associates the scalping of the first brother in an intriguing way with circumcision: “And he [i.e. the first of the seven brothers] endured the scalping in the Scythian way (*ton periskuthismon*; transl. adapted) as others undergo the circumcision appointed by God’s law, believing that even in this way he was fulfilling the intention of the covenant of God.” (*Exh.* 23). Scalping was a Scythian punishment for defeated enemies, and the Scythians were famous for their cruelty.<sup>50</sup> Origen’s association of the Scythian way of scalping (*periskuthizō*; also 2 Macc 7:4) with circumcision (*peritomē*) may have been triggered by the assumption of some similarity of practice, i.e. the all-round taking away of human skin, note the *peri-* in both words. However, there may also be a theological motivation for this association. Origen’s text suggests that there is an analogy between martyrdom and baptism, implying that martyrdom is a second baptism, by blood. Baptism then would be the equivalent of circumcision as the new way to get access to the covenant, as

<sup>47</sup> Van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 172–82.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Exh.* 7, 10–11, 37–38.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Exh.* 4 and 6. Hartmann, “Origène,” 784 with n6, 792–96, 803, 820. Cf. W. Völker, *Das Volkomenheitsideal des Origenes* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1931); J. Lebreton, “La source et le caractère de la mystique d’Origène,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949): 55–62.

<sup>50</sup> Herodotus 4.64–65. See also 2 Macc 4:47.

circumcision does for the Jews.<sup>51</sup> Origen even seems to indicate “scalping,” i.e. martyrdom, as an alternative way of circumcision, which implies that he relativizes the actual circumcision of Jewish boys. For the Jewish readers of Second Maccabees it must have been self-evident that the martyred young man had been circumcised on his eighth day (Lev 12:3; Luke 1:59). Origen, however, mentions this sign of “the old covenant” in passing, but instead of considering it an identity marker of Jewishness, he reinterprets it by associating it with martyrdom. This is typical of Origen’s reinterpretation of the Maccabean martyrdoms, which implies time and again that the markers of Jewish identity and Jewish practices are left out in the reinterpretation. Origen was, perhaps, inspired by Paul’s emphasis on the believer’s attitude towards God in his reference to the circumcision of the heart (Rom 2:28–29) or by Luke’s reference to Jesus’s circumcision (Luke 2:21), which he may have seen as anticipation of the crucifixion.<sup>52</sup> In any case, the reference to circumcision in *Exhortation* 23 about the scalping of the first Maccabean brother fits a general pattern of de-Judaizing the Maccabean martyrs in order to make them appropriate forerunners of the Christian martyrs.

As one would expect in a protreptic discourse, Origen uses the Maccabean martyrs to strengthen his encouragement of Ambrose and Prototectus to embrace martyrdom. A formula at the beginning and end of the section forms an *inclusio*, which emphasizes the usefulness of the Maccabean stories.<sup>53</sup> This purpose is also explicit in several passages within the section. As we saw before, Origen invokes his intended readers to say similar words to those of Eleazar in 2 Maccabees 6:30 (*Exh.* 22, above).<sup>54</sup> He also hints at the exemplary function of the Maccabean martyrs by calling them a model (*paradeigma*, *Exh.* 23, above). Origen’s argument about the imitation of martyrdom does not emanate only from his references to the Maccabean Books. In *Exhortation* 33 he calls for the imitation of Daniel’s companions by his actualization of this biblical story: “Even now Nebuchadnezzar is saying the very same words to us, the true Hebrews, whose home is in the next world. But we, that we may experience the heavenly dew which quenches all fire in us and refreshes our mind

<sup>51</sup> Oulton & Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, 408 n13.

<sup>52</sup> As suggested to me by Shaye J. D. Cohen (Cambridge, Mass.).

<sup>53</sup> In *Exh.* 22 Origen introduces the section with: “This text is also useful for our present theme ...” (*kai touto de pros ta prokeimena esti ch̄ēsimon*). The conclusion of the section in *Exh.* 27 points again to usefulness (*tauta ch̄ēsimōtata pros to prokeimenon*).

<sup>54</sup> Similarly the seven brothers in 4 Macc 9:10.

... let us imitate those holy men.”<sup>55</sup> Origen explicitly transposes the court tale about Daniel’s companions to his contemporary reality of Maximinus Thrax’s persecution. Similarly, he applies the choice of the Maccabean martyrdoms to himself and his intended audience. Thus, the primary function of the Maccabean martyrs is their significance as examples for Christian martyrs *in spe*.

Origen’s usage of the Maccabean Martyrs, the issues he emphasizes, his omissions, and his additions obviously present the martyrs as models from a Christian perspective. Two biblical quotations round off the section about the martyrs (*Exh.* 27) and highlight Jesus’s support of the martyrs. Origen quotes Psalm 117:14 LXX: “The Lord is my strength and my song [*humnēsis*]”, whereby the context indicates that Jesus is the Lord. The second passage combines Philippians 4:13 and 1 Timothy 1:12: “I can do all things through Christ Jesus our Lord who strengthens me.”<sup>56</sup> In the context of the *Exhortation* the quotations focus upon Jesus Christ as the one who supports and strengthens the martyrs in their situation of extreme suffering. The fact that this motif is found in several other Christian documents about martyrdom, including the *Martyrdom of Lyon and Vienne*,<sup>57</sup> shows once again that the Maccabean martyrs are consistently presented as models for Christian martyrs and that they have become heavily Christianized themselves.

## CONCLUSION

My survey of the earliest Christian reception of the Maccabean martyrs results in a few scattered passages with only implicit allusions to the martyrdoms, as well as explicit allusions and quotations, which become more frequent from the end of the second century CE onward. That the ethnic and cultural-religious identities of the Maccabean heroes are being ignored in the passages with implicit references is what one would expect. The Letter to the Hebrews anonymized and pluralized the Maccabean martyrs in order to suggest that many other heroes performed similar deeds. However, the explicit references to the martyrs also imply that the

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Exh.* 35 and 4 Macc 13:9.

<sup>56</sup> The quotations are linked through the words *ischus/ischnō* (“strength”/“strengthen”). The first quotation also forms an inclusion with the introductory quotation in *Exh.* 22 through the words *epeīnesa* and *humnēsis*.

<sup>57</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.1.22–24, 27–28, 56. Cf. *Pas. Perp.* 4.6; Origen, *Exh.* 4: the Spirit of Christ lives in Christians and incites them to trust God.

original context of the martyrdoms and the Jewish identity of the martyrs are either ignored or reinterpreted as a springboard for the articulation of Christian views. The martyrs function as models of endurance in connection with an ideal Christian attitude. Origen's reinterpretation presents the martyrs' motives in an entirely different perspective: they die for proper worship (*eusebeia*) and the love of God (*to pros theon philtron*, *Exh.* 27), both interpreted from a Christian perspective.<sup>58</sup> Origen leaves out factual information about the martyrs and omits almost all references to their Jewish identity. The association of circumcision in *Exhortation* 23 with the scalping of the first Maccabean brother reinterprets circumcision as an anticipation of martyrdom and also relativizes circumcision as a Jewish identity marker. Origen's consistent de-Judaization of the Maccabean martyrs was necessary to make them proper models for Christian martyrs. Origen does not tell us why he gave so much space to the Maccabean martyrs instead of Christian martyrs. The content and the drama of the Maccabean martyrdoms no doubt served his cause very well. One could think of a polemic purpose as explanation for his extensive quotes from Second Maccabees, but there is no indication whatsoever that Origen polemicizes against Jewish opponents or fellow Christians who were sympathetic to Jewish religious practices in the *Exhortation*. A pragmatic reason seems, therefore, to remain as the decisive factor: Origen had detailed written accounts about the Maccabean martyrdoms at his disposal, which were well known in Christian circles, as the textual evidence shows. At the same time, one may wonder whether such evidence was already available about Christian martyrs. Of course, there must have been oral traditions and scattered textual references about Christian martyrs like Origen's father Leonides, but an elaborate Christian martyrdom account may still have been unavailable to Origen.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, although Origen does not say this explicitly, one may assume that the importance of the Maccabean martyrdoms is enhanced by the fact that their earliest version in Second Maccabees was part of what Origen considers Scripture (*hē graphē*, above), Christian Scripture, of course.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Exh.* 5, 12, 18, 29.

<sup>59</sup> The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* has often been considered to be Christianity's oldest martyrdom account, but several authors have argued that this writing dates from the third century CE; see most recently C. R. Moss, "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 539–74.

However this may be, the reluctance to reveal the Jewish origin of the Maccabean Martyrs shows a particular case of the Jew as legitimation at play. It differs from later examples discussed in this volume—not in the last place Augustine’s witness theory—because the uneasiness about the Jewish origins of Christian views these early Christian references to the Maccabean Martyrs may express is in those cases overcome by very conscious and explicit references to Jews and Judaism. There the Jew openly plays the role of the “other” and can thus explicitly be used as legitimation for different denominations of Christianity or of particular ideologies. The very different masking of the Jewish identity of the Maccabean Martyrs encountered in the sources discussed in this essay may still reflect a lack of self-confidence within Christianity regarding its “mother religion”, which could be emblematic for its early constitutive age, during which the explicit usage of the Jew as legitimation may still have been considered to be counter-productive.

## CHAPTER 3

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# Alterity and Self-Legitimation: The Jew as Other in Classical and Medieval Christianity

*Jeremy Cohen*

To set the stage for some of the ensuing studies in this volume, this brief essay will reflect on the Augustinian doctrine of Jewish witness and its historical legacy. It will review and expand upon the findings published in earlier studies—especially in my *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (1999)<sup>1</sup>—and react to selected developments that have since transpired in scholarly research. I shall first summarize the singular contribution of Augustine to classical Christian *Adversus Judaeos*

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY, 1982); “Slay Them Not”: Augustine and the Jews in Modern Scholarship,” *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998): 78–92; *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, 1999); “Augustine’s Doctrine of Jewish Witness Revisited,” *Journal of Religion* 89 (2009): 564–78.

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doctrine: the essential elements of his witness doctrine, the instructive and intriguing metaphors that he and later churchmen used to elucidate that doctrine, the novelty of the doctrine when compared to the teachings of Paul and earlier church fathers, and, by way of example, the legacy of the doctrine as expressed visually in a late ninth-century ivory representation of the crucifixion. I shall then illustrate how reverberations of the Augustinian doctrine extended beyond Christians of later centuries into Jewish sources as well. Finally, I shall relate selectively to the work of other investigators who have contributed to this discussion since I finished writing my book nearly 20 years ago.

### THE JEW AS WITNESS

Notwithstanding the Jews' rejection of Jesus and his new covenant of grace, Augustine explained that God had preserved them and their practice of the old law in order to authenticate Christian truth. As he explained in his commentary on the Psalms,

the Jews survive still, and for a special purpose: so that they may carry our books, to their own confusion. When we want to prove to the pagans that Christ's coming was prophesied, we produce these scriptures.... Pagans obstinately opposed to the faith might have alleged that we Christians had composed them, fabricating prophecies to buttress the gospel we preach. They might have thought that we were trying to pass off our message by pretending that it had been foreshadowed in prophecy. But we can convince them of their error by pointing out that all those scriptures which long ago spoke of Christ are the property of the Jews. Yes, the Jews recognize these very writings. We take books from our enemies to confute other enemies! In what sort of disgrace do the Jews find themselves? A Jew carries the book that is the foundation of faith for a Christian. Jews act as book-bearers for us, like the slaves who are accustomed to walk behind their masters carrying their books, so that while the slaves sink under the weight, the masters make great strides through reading.<sup>2</sup>

Especially in the wake of the sacking of now Christian Rome by the Germanic Visigoths in 410, spokesmen for the church found themselves increasingly vulnerable to pagan accusations that Christians had fabricated

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 56.9, trans. Maria Boulding, in *Expositions of the Psalms 51–72*, The Works of Saint Augustine 3, 17 (Hyde Park, NY, 2001), 110.

a new religion which, owing to its innovative, novel doctrines, was patently false. Yet Jews and Judaism had had a place on the map of the Greco-Roman world as long as anyone could remember, and Augustine now advanced the unprecedented claim that God has preserved them, though worthy of elimination, precisely in order to testify to the truth of Christianity. For their biblical books, when interpreted spiritually and properly—and not in the superficial, material fashion characteristic of the Jews themselves—validated all that was important in Christian belief.

Augustine found support and clarification for his stance in his original interpretation of Psalm 59:11–12—“my God will let me look in triumph on my enemies, slay them not, lest my people forget; make them totter by your power, and bring them down”—as encapsulating divine instructions for the treatment of the Jews in a properly ordered Christian society. Although they and their religion surely deserved to perish in the wake of their rejection and betrayal of Jesus,

it was made to happen that they would not be eradicated so as to have their sect completely cease to exist. But it was dispersed throughout the world, so that, carrying the prophecies of grace bestowed upon us in order to convince the infidels more effectively, it would benefit us everywhere. And this very point which I am stating, accept it, inasmuch as it had been prophesied: “Slay them not,” he said, “lest at any time they forget your law; scatter them in your might.” Therefore they have not been killed in this sense, namely, that they have not forgotten those things which used to be read and heard among them. For if they were to forget the holy scriptures entirely (even though they do not now understand them), they would be undone in the Jewish rite itself, because, if they would know nothing of the law and the prophets, the Jews could be of no benefit.<sup>3</sup>

Augustine understood that God’s injunction to “slay them not” applied not only to the physical slaughter of the Jews but also to the eradication of their rite and their Scriptures, their literal observance of the Law of Moses. Making the Jews “totter by your power” and bringing them down entailed their dispersion and subjugation throughout Christendom in the service of the church. God had preserved the Jews and Judaism for a purpose, and their elimination would impede the realization of his plans for the history and salvation of humankind.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *De fide rerum invisibilium* 6.9, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 46:16.

Augustine thereby prescribed a particular task for the Jews in his Christian world, and the metaphors that he used to elaborate this role are themselves instructive. As we have seen, the Jews served as witnesses, testifying to the biblical roots of Christianity. They served Christians as desktops (*scriniaria*), as librarians (*librarii*), and as enslaved book-bearers (*capsarii*), facilitating Christian access to and understanding of Hebrew Scripture, even though they themselves remained impervious to its Christological truth. They resembled signposts or milestones along the road to salvation, indicating the extent to which the New Testament had fulfilled the promise of the Old, advancing upon it even as it remained true to its legacy. Most instructively, Augustine wrote that the Jews facilitate Christian self-definition and self-understanding by contrast. They “appear with regard to the Holy Scripture that they carry much as the face of a blind man appears in a mirror; by others it is seen, but by himself it is not seen.”<sup>4</sup> The Jews had remained fixed “in useless antiquity”; like fossils in a museum of natural history, they demonstrated to their viewers just how much Christians had advanced upon them.<sup>5</sup>

Several additional comments are in order: Augustine’s understanding of Jews and Judaism derived not from anthropological field work conducted among Jews in North Africa—of whom there were, evidently, no sizeable concentrations in his day—but from his Christian hermeneutic for reading the Bible and the need to adduce testimonies from the Old Testament to validate Christian doctrine. Augustine’s Jew was constructed, not encountered or observed, over the course of his career. He was a *hermeneutical Jew*, as I have explained at length elsewhere: a Jew constructed for the sake of presenting and legitimating Christian doctrine to Christians, prospective Christians, and pagans, *but not primarily to Jews*. Owing to the need for the Jews and their service to the church, Augustine’s instruction concerning Jews and Judaism included no *missionary imperative*, but it did include a *polemical imperative*. Augustine surely looked forward to the ultimate conversion of the Jews at the end of days. For the time being, however, the church needed them in order to legitimate its own doctrinal claims in polemical discourse against them.

When these [biblical testimonies] are recited to the Jews, they despise the Gospel and the apostle; they do not hear what we say because they do not

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 56.9, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *Tractatus adversus Iudeos* 6.8, *Patrologia Latina* 42:56.

understand what they read.... Therefore, testimonies should be taken from the holy scriptures, whose authority is very great among them, too; if they refuse to be restored by the benefit which they offer, they can be convicted by their blatant truth.<sup>6</sup>

In order to allow for this, Christendom needed to subjugate, degrade, disperse—and preserve the Jews and their religion.

Augustine's hermeneutical Jews arose from within the matrix of his biblical exegesis, his understanding of terrestrial history, and his appreciation of human sexuality—as well as the particular situation of the church in his own day. As the Middle Ages unfolded and these ideas and circumstances gave way to others, constructions of the hermeneutical Jew developed and changed. Yet the core of the Augustinian legacy remained largely intact. As an authority, Augustine was second to almost no one among medieval Catholic theologians, and one could not easily disagree with him openly. Even when the church began to attack and then persecute the Talmud and contemporary rabbinic Judaism during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, seemingly contravening the intent of Augustine's "slay them not" proscription, his doctrine of Jewish witness that legitimated Christianity through the contrast with biblical Judaism was never disavowed. Granted that the encounter with Islam, scholastic rationalism, and rabbinic literature itself all militated against the inclination of the church to tolerate Jewish difference. But the church did not repudiate the Augustinian doctrine of Jewish witness; rather, it perceived contemporary rabbinic Jews as having forsaken their biblical heritage and therefore, as Augustine himself had warned, no longer qualifying for the preservation that Augustine had prescribed!

Especially if one recalls that religious iconography functioned as a textbook for the illiterate, an ivory tablet from late ninth-century Metz exemplifies how the legitimating role of the Jews and Judaism as elaborated by Augustine took shape in medieval Christian expression (Fig. 3.1).

One art historian has summarized the scene portrayed here as follows:

A large cross stands in the middle of the composition with the two female figures below it. Other events in the passion of Christ are depicted with additional allegorical figures on several tiers. While Ecclesia performs her sacred duty, Synagoga, leaning on her banner, turns away and prepares to

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 1.2, cols. 51–52.



**Fig. 3.1** Ecclesia and Synagoga beneath the cross. Ivory, ninth-century Metz.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London. No. 250.1867

leave—yet her gaze remains fixed on the crucified Christ. Mary and John are larger than the two women and flank the central group. On the tier below stands the captain Longinus with lance raised; opposite him is the soldier Stephaton with his reed and sponge soaked in vinegar. Tombs open and discharge their dead. ... Angels and men, the dead and the living... assemble as witnesses in the hour of Christ's death. Synagoga alone seems to be unwilling to recognize the man on the cross as the Savior. She stands apart: in the presence of all creation she is dispossessed of her venerable and historic mission as bearer of God's word. Her authority devolves on Ecclesia, who is collecting the precious blood of the Savior in a jug.<sup>7</sup>

What then is the role of Synagoga, who represents the Jews and personifies the religion of the Old Testament in this scene? Why does she appear here, at this critical moment in salvation history, when the artist and his patron had little or no interaction with Jews and Judaism in their daily lives? Synagoga, we note, has turned her back on the crucified Jesus. She prepares to move offstage, but, as she exits, she looks back over her shoulder at Jesus and—reminiscent of the wife of the biblical Lot who looked back as *she* made her way offstage and was thereby petrified—is rendered immovable, fixed in her stance and her gaze, forever motionless.

The three-tiered vertical structure of this representation of the crucifixion (heaven, earth, hell) depicts this all-important split second in history, the moment of Christ's agonizing death, that divides before from after, old from new, death through the Mosaic law from life through the grace of God. Synagoga and Ecclesia, for their part—and Ecclesia could hardly do so by herself—add a horizontal dynamic to the scene. Transforming the effect of the work from that of a still photo to that of a video clip, as it were, they frame that all-important moment in a single historical continuum, demonstrating where the new covenant of grace came from, what it fulfilled and replaced, and where it headed. Synagoga in this ivory *is* Augustine's hermeneutical Jew. Situated under Jesus's left (*sinister*) arm, she has ceded her privileged, elect status to Holy Mother Church, to Ecclesia, who personifies the New Testament and the community of faithful in Christ. Though “stationary in useless antiquity,” she remains, and, like Lot’s wife, stands visible to all, for she testifies to the roots of the new covenant in the old and to the direction in which the divine plan for

<sup>7</sup>Wolfgang S. Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages: Two Symbols in Art and Literature*, trans. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald (New York, 1970), 4.

human salvation unfolded. Paralyzed, disfavored, and in many other medieval representations blinded, *Synagoga* exemplifies the function of Jewry and Judaism in a properly ordered Christian society.

### REVERBERATIONS IN JEWISH SOURCES

Medieval Jews themselves appreciated that ecclesiastical doctrine mandated their presence in Christendom. The twelfth-century German-Jewish jurist and chronicler Ephraim of Bonn recounted how Bernard of Clairvaux—who, true to his Augustinian heritage, had likened the Jews to “living letters of the law”—prevented the massacre of Jews in the Rhineland when the Second Crusade incited anti-Jewish hostility in 1146. Writing in his *Book of Remembrance*, Ephraim noted that Bernard did so because of the Augustinian mandate grounded in Psalm 59:

The Lord heard our outcry, and he turned to us and had mercy upon us. In his great mercy and grace, He sent a decent priest, one honored and respected by all the clergy in France, named Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux ... [who said] “It is good that you go against the Ishmaelites. But whosoever touches a Jew to take his life, is like one who harms Jesus himself ... for in the Book of Psalms it is written of them: “Slay them not, lest my people forget.”<sup>8</sup>

Several generations later, the ecclesiastical condemnation of the Talmud threatened to undermine the theoretical foundation for a guaranteed Jewish presence in Christendom. Pope Gregory IX initiated the attack in the late 1230s, and between 1239 and 1242 the Talmud was confiscated from the Jews of northern France, put on trial, “convicted” of heresy, and publicly burned in Paris. When Pope Innocent IV undertook to implement similar measures in 1244, French Jewish leaders dispatched an embassy to the pope to protest these new developments in the church’s Jewish policy. And in 1247 Innocent wrote to King Louis IX that the Jewish supplicants (who surely did not arrive at the papal curia empty-handed) raised a serious theological issue in their appeal:

The Jewish masters of your Kingdom recently asserted before us and our brothers, that, without that book which in Hebrew is called “Talmut,” they

<sup>8</sup> Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, trans. Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders* (Madison, WI, 1977), 122.

cannot understand the Bible and their other statutes and laws in accordance with their faith. We, then, bound as we are by the divine command to tolerate them in their law, thought fit to have the answer given them that we do not want to deprive them of their books if as a result we should be depriving them of their law.<sup>9</sup>

The Jews reminded Pope Innocent of his obligation to preserve and protect both Jewry and Judaism, and he acknowledged the rectitude of their argument. Ironic as it may appear, the Jews gave him a lesson in Augustinian teaching!

No less interesting, one finds suggestions of a comparable doctrine in rabbinic tradition itself. In the Judaism of the Talmud, Jacob Neusner has noted, the rabbinic sage was esteemed as if he were a living Torah scroll<sup>10</sup>—centuries before Bernard of Clairvaux's comparison of the Jews to living letters of the law. The Talmud compared the death of a sage to the burning of a Torah scroll, and even a sage whose memory had lapsed through no fault of his own embodied the sanctity of the holy ark, which encases the written word of God.<sup>11</sup> In a similar vein, in a letter congratulating him upon his marriage, well-wishers of the twelfth-century Moses Maimonides addressed him as “the ark of our covenant”.<sup>12</sup> In the world of Ashkenazic Jewry, Haym Soloveitchik has suggested, “the Franco-German community in its state of intense religiosity saw the word of God as being, as it were, incarnated in two forms: first, in the canonized literature ...; second, in the life of its people.”<sup>13</sup> Maimonides even accorded Christians and Muslims a function much like that which Augustine had allocated the Jews in God's plan for human history:

Even Jesus the Christian, who thought he was the Messiah ... was the subject of a prophecy in the Book of Daniel (11:14): “... also the renegades of

<sup>9</sup>Solomon Grayzel, ed., *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, rev. ed. (New York, 1966), 275.

<sup>10</sup>Jacob Neusner, *The Incarnation of God: The Character of Divinity in Formative Judaism* (1988; repr. Atlanta, 1992), 202ff.; Neusner, “Is the God of Judaism Incarnate?”, *Religious Studies* 24 (1988): 213–38.

<sup>11</sup>Palestinian Talmud, *Mo'ed Katan* 3.1, 3.7, cols. 81b, 81d.

<sup>12</sup>Mordechai Akiva Friedman, “Two Maimonidean Letters” [in Hebrew], in *Me'ah She'arim: Studies in Medieval Jewish Spiritual Life in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, ed. E. Fleischer et al. (Jerusalem, 2001), 191–221.

<sup>13</sup>Haym Soloveitchik, “Religious Law and Social Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 12 (1987): 212.

your people will exalt themselves to fulfill the vision—but they will stumble.” Could there be a greater stumbling block than this [Jesus] ....? All these activities of Jesus the Christian, and the Ishmaelite who came after him, are all for the purpose of paving the way for the true King Messiah, and preparing the entire world to worship God together, as is written (Zefaniah 3:9): “For then I will convert the nations to a pure language, that they may all call in the name of God and serve Him together.”<sup>14</sup>

Just as Augustine identified the Jews with God’s enemies in Psalm 59, so did Maimonides find reference to Jesus and Christianity in Daniel 11. Each saw the role of the religious others as facilitated by their dispersion among the nations of the world and the religious belief that he shared with them: the truth of Hebrew Scripture for Augustine, worship of God himself for Maimonides. One should hardly conclude that Augustine found inspiration for his Christian doctrine of Jewish witness in rabbinic sources. Yet in a broader sense, we can appreciate how thoroughly the tenets of one religion remained intertwined with those of the other, and how the language of ambivalence permeates perceptions and constructions of the other on either side of the religious divide.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT

Since I presented my reading of the Augustinian hermeneutical Jew and his subsequent career in medieval Christianity, various investigators have aired a range of suggestions, reservations, and criticisms. Some have differed with my understanding of how the idea crystallized for Augustine—Paula Fredriksen advancing the full expression of the doctrine of Jewish witnesses to an earlier stage in Augustine’s life,<sup>15</sup> Franklin Harkins mitigating the extent of his unfamiliarity with contemporary Jews.<sup>16</sup> Some have stressed the beneficence toward the Jews in Augustine’s doctrine, perhaps according more weight to the “Slay them not” and less to the “bring them down” dimensions of Augustinian Jewish policy than I might have deemed

<sup>14</sup> Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, *Hilkhot Melakhim* 11.4, [http://www.jcrelations.net/From\\_Maimonides.2399.0.html?page=11](http://www.jcrelations.net/From_Maimonides.2399.0.html?page=11) (accessed 30 April 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Franklin T. Harkins, “Nuancing Augustine’s Hermeneutical Jew: Allegory and Actual Jews in the Bishop’s Sermons,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 36 (2005): 41–64.

appropriate.<sup>17</sup> Others have taken issue with my analysis of subsequent Christian theologians and their stance with regard to the Jews, as in the case of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>18</sup> Still others have modified the chronological schema wherein I discerned fundamental change in Christian perceptions of Jews and Judaism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—some finding earlier instances of increased hostility,<sup>19</sup> others finding continuity with the Augustinian legacy even after the thirteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

Some of these suggestions and criticisms strike me as more compelling than others. Yet without entering into lengthy discussion or debate, I would offer the following observations. First, the Augustinian take on the Jews and Judaism has had profound impact on their construction in Western discourse, so much so, as Jill Robbins has noted, that even “the figuration proper to the Judaic must be read within an oppositional structure” deriving from patristic hermeneutic.<sup>21</sup> Second, the Augustinian schema did not find acceptance everywhere without exception, and one should assess the relationship between proverbial forest and trees without losing sight of either. Attitudes toward the Jews in Christendom have always been complicated, fluid, rife with ambivalence, and fluctuating in response to diverse tensions. Deborah Goodwin thus noted in her recent postcolonialist assessment of twelfth-century Christian Hebraism: “Hebraists embodied the tensions and opportunities that were symptomatic of strategies central to the formation of Christian identity. They stood at the nexus between an evolving expression of Christian identity and the Jews who

<sup>17</sup> For example: Jonathan M. Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2007); Robin J. E. Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge, 2009); Yosi Israeli, “Hebraism, the Literal Sense and the People of Israel in Pablo de Santa María’s *Additiones et Scrutinium Scripturarum*,” Ph.D. dissertation, Tel Aviv University (2014).

<sup>18</sup> For example: John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1995); Henk Schoot and Pim Valkenberg, “Thomas Aquinas and Judaism,” *Modern Theology* 20 (2004): 51–70; Fainche Ryan, “‘Salvation Is from the Jews’ (Jn 4:22): Aquinas, God, and the People of God,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 5 (2010): 1–14.

<sup>19</sup> For example: Michael Frassetto, “Augustine’s Doctrine of Witness and Attitudes toward the Jews in the Eleventh Century,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007): 287–304.

<sup>20</sup> For example: Jennifer A. Harris, “Enduring Covenant in the Christian Middle Ages,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44 (2009): 563–86.

<sup>21</sup> Jill Robbins, *Prodigal Son/Elder Brother: Interpretation and Alterity in Augustine, Petrarch, Kafka, and Levinas* (Chicago, 1991), esp. p. 19.

were essential not only as its foils, but as its collaborators.”<sup>22</sup> Third, and most important, I believe that the hermeneutical Jew has largely found acceptance in current historical appreciation of Christian attitudes toward the Jews, criticisms and reservations notwithstanding. One can follow the colorful and virtually uninterrupted presence of the constructed Jew in Christian self-legitimation, from its origins of Christianity until our own day. At the earliest end of this continuum, one encounters the Apostle Paul defining Christian identity in contrast with the nature of Judaism; as he wrote the Galatians (4:22–28):

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.... Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

On the eve of our own generation, the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church similarly, albeit in terms more benign, explained the foundational importance of the Jews for a Christian worldview:

The Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God’s saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham’s sons according to faith—are included in the same Patriarch’s call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people’s exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Deborah L. Goodwin, “‘Nothing in Our Histories’: A Postcolonial Perspective on Twelfth-Century Christian Hebraism,” *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 35–65.

<sup>23</sup> *Nostra aetate*, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html) (accessed 30 April 2015).

Over the course of two millennia of Christian history, Augustinian doctrine added the unprecedented understanding of “slay them not” and its ramifications. It steered normative Christianity on a course that avoided the extremes of what it deemed a literalist-materialist Judaic reading of the Hebrew Bible and a Marcionite dualism that also understood Hebrew Scripture literally but ascribed it not to God but to a malicious demigurge. Cherishing and affirming their biblical and Jewish heritage while rejecting the Judaic interpretation of Scripture, Catholic and Protestant churches fortified their claim that the promises of biblical prophecy pertain to believers in Christ who have superseded the Jews as the elect people of Israel. A Jewish presence in Christendom facilitated that strategy. Thus did the late medieval liturgy for papal coronations formalize the ritual of the Jews presenting the new pontiff with a Torah scroll, and the pope responding: “The holy law, O Jews, being what was given by almighty God through the hands of Moses to your ancestors, we praise and venerate. But your observance and vain interpretation we damn and reject.”<sup>24</sup> Like Synagoga at the foot of the cross, Jews and Judaism had a place in the Christian order of things and a role to fill. When I taught Jewish history at a Protestant theological seminary in the midwestern United States in the 1980s and 1990s, my colleagues habitually reaffirmed the satisfaction they derived from my presence at their seminary; for they now had, in their words, “a Jew in their midst.”

<sup>24</sup> See the citation in Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 167.

# The Theological Dialectics of Christian Hebraism and Kabbalah in Early Modernity

*Andreas B. Kilcher*

The view of Judaism in early modern Christianity was highly contradictory. It moved between two poles: hostility towards Jews on the one hand and philosemitic curiosity and interest on the other. In both cases, the matter at hand was *legitimation*, or more precisely the legitimation of Christianity through Judaism. On the one hand, Judaism became the object of *negative legitimation*, where Christianity asserted itself on the basis of the rejection of Judaism, using theological arguments to dispute and contest Judaism while censoring, discarding, and burning its books. On the other hand, however, Judaism became the object of *positive legitimation*, where the validation of Christianity was not accompanied by a rejection of Judaism; rather it went hand in hand with efforts to integrate Judaism. Philological and scientific arguments were used to explore and study Judaism, and its books were translated, published, and advocated.

In what follows, I would like to focus on forms of *positive legitimation* of Judaism. My intention in doing so is not to mask the conflicts; in fact quite the opposite, as these existed all the same, albeit in a subtler form. My aim in investigating forms of positive legitimation of Judaism in early modern Christianity is to demonstrate its specific ambivalence. In fact, the

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positive legitimation of Judaism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by no means constituted a purely humanistic-philanthropic gesture. The appreciation of Judaism was also accompanied by an enormous amount of restriction and tied to specific interests and tendencies, all of which were equally conducive to the appropriation of Judaism by Christianity. Judaism was therefore appreciated in the Early Modern Age not for its own sake, but in the context of specific theological interests.

I would like to demonstrate this in the following by drawing upon two closely related and striking examples of Early Modernity: *Christian Kabbalah* (i.e. the interest by Christian theologians and scholars specifically in Kabbalistic texts)<sup>1</sup> and *Christian Hebraism* (i.e. the interest by Christian theologians and scholars in Hebrew and Oriental Languages as well as in a wider range of antique Jewish texts like Bible and Talmud).<sup>2</sup> These are two interconnected, yet different paradigms of the varying degrees of positive treatment of Judaism in the Early Modern Age. They became possible under the new theological and scientific conditions of the Renaissance and humanism and had a defining impact in the late Baroque during the period of conflicts between religions and denominations following the Thirty Years' War. Christian Kabbalah and Christian Hebraism both gave rise to a very selective view of Judaism; they both carved out a limited segment of Judaism and bestowed it with certain legitimating functions in the conflict between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. There was, however, a subtle, also theological difference as well: The kabbalah—in its interpretation by Christian Kabbalists—had a more *retrospective* function in this context, in that it addressed a common origin of Judaism and Christianity. Christian Hebraism and what may be called (however with further explanation) “philo-Semitism,” conversely, exercised a *prospective* function by focusing on a common end.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The term “Christian Kabbalah” (*kabbala christiana*) was first used by Heinrich Khunrath around 1600. For the use of the term as a historiographical category cf. Joseph Blau: *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance*, (New York, 1944); François Secret: *Les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance*. Nouvelle éd. mise à jour et augmentée (Milan, 1985); Joseph Dan (ed): *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and their Christian Interpreters* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).

<sup>2</sup>The term “Christain Hebraists” was first used by the Wissenschaft des Judentums in the nineteenth century. Cf. Moritz Steinschneider: *Christliche Hebraisten. Nachrichten über mehr als 400 Gelehrte, welche über nachbibl. Hebräisch geschrieben haben*, in: *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie 1896–1901* (Reprint, Hildesheim, 1973). Cf. Stephen Burnett: *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500–1660)*, (Leiden, 2012).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Irene A. Diekmann, Elke-Vera Kotowski (ed.), *Geliebter Feind—Gehasster Freund. Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart*; Festschrift zum 65.

To clarify matters somewhat, the kabbalah's most prominent role was, in view of the Christian Kabbalists, in its interpretation as an original theology, a *prisca theologia* from which Judaism and Christianity were equally derived. This historical-theological construction was, however characterized by a precarious ambivalence, in the way that the kabbalah was used to acknowledge a certain part of Judaism in terms of its theological importance for Christianity. At the same time, however, the kabbalah became an instrument for Christianity for appropriating Judaism. Jewish kabbalah was understood as an esoteric form of Christianity and viewed as proof for the argument that the hidden meaning of Judaism should be read in a Christian sense. The kabbalah thus became a humanistic instrument for the legitimization of Christianity.

Primarily in the seventeenth century, a specific Christian theological paradigm that has been called “*philosemitism*”<sup>4</sup> and may be subsumed under the more pragmatic notion of *Christian Hebraism*<sup>5</sup> succeeded in establishing itself as a specific theological stance on Judaism and had a much broader perception of what qualifies as Judaism. Not only did it acknowledge the kabbalah; it also recognized rabbinic Judaism and the Talmud, which had still been burned in the sixteenth century. Under the premises of a philosemitic turn, in Christian Hebraism, Judaism became the object of academic research during the Baroque era—a period in which the Talmud, instead of being burned, was studied by Christian scholars in Orientalist professorships. Nevertheless, even this interest in Judaism was by no means purely motivated by humanistic scientific factors. Instead, it

Geburtstag von Julius H. Schoeps (Berlin, 2009); Georg Braungart, Philipp Theisohn (ed.), *Philosemitismus: Rhetorik, Poetik, Diskursgeschichte* (Paderborn, 2016).

<sup>4</sup>In contrast to “kabbalah,” the term “philosemitism” is not a historical one. It came up only in the late nineteenth century and denominated an ambivalent and controversial attitude towards the Jews: anti-antisemitic and defensive of the Jews on the one hand, nevertheless possessive and appropriative on the other hand. The term “philosemitism” was furthermore introduced by Hans-Joachim Schoeps to describe a specific Christian interest in the Jews in early modernity: *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Tübingen, 1952). The use of the term in this paper is very limited; I try to substitute it by the more neutral but nevertheless also non-historical notion of “Christian Hebraism.” For the history of the term “philosemitism,” see Wolfram Kinzig, “Philosemitismus,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 105 (1994), part I: *Zur Geschichte des Begriffs*, 202–28, part II: *Zur historiographischen Verwendung des Begriffs*, 361–83.

<sup>5</sup>For the scope of this field, see Stephen Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500–1660): Authors, Books, and the Transmission of Jewish Learning* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

brought to light a theological ambivalence in the legitimization. This was because Christian Hebraism, too, subjected Judaism to examination from a Christian theological perspective. Or more precisely, it was viewed within the context of salvation, whereby the aim was the more or less aggressive conversion of the Jews. This phenomenon can be understood as an *eschatological legitimization of Christianity through Judaism*.

In what follows, I would like to take a closer look at these two types of positive legitimization of Judaism, drawing upon two interrelated examples from the seventeenth century. Many authors, such as Johannes Buxtorf, John Lightfoot, Johann Rittangel, and Theodor Hackspan were involved in Christian Hebraism, and many authors like Thomas Browne, Heinrich Khunrath, and Athanasius Kircher were working on the Christian Kabbalah. I have chosen here, to compare the different nuances between Christian Kabbalah and Christian Hebraism when it came to the way they instrumented Judaism, by focusing on one particular Christian Kabbalist and one particular Christian Hebraist, whose lives intersected in many ways: Christian Knorr von Rosenroth and Johann Christoph Wagenseil. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, who worked on kabbalistic projects together with his friend Franziscus Mercurius van Helmont and the Count Palatine, Christian August, in Sulzbach near Nuremberg for many years, focusing on the translation, commentary, and publication of the book *Zohar*. Johann Christoph Wagenseil was an Orientalist at the Altdorf University and a typical representative of Christian Hebraism near Nuremberg and thus a close neighbor of Knorr von Rosenroth. It is worth noting that the paths of these two outstanding scholars of Judaism did not cross for the first time in the Nuremberg area, but most likely already around 1666 when they were both residing in Amsterdam.

### CHRISTIAN KNORR VON ROSENROTH

While the Talmud was still contested as an anti-Christian book in the sixteenth century and found its rare advocate among the humanists in Johannes Reuchlin, the literature of the kabbalah was viewed with the greatest respect. From Pico della Mirandola in Italy around 1480 up to Christian Knorr von Rosenroth in Germany around 1680, the kabbalah was considered by Christian Hebraists of the most varied denominations—including humanists, Benedictine monks, Lutherans, and Jesuits—to be extremely informative and compatible, theologically speaking. This transference of the kabbalah beyond the borders of religions and confessions

not only created a kind of a third space between Judaism and Christianity, blurring old and new differences; it was at the same time accompanied by a fundamental reinterpretation of Judaism.

This is demonstrated by the philological work of the Christian kabbalists. In fact, it was by no means clear exactly what was established under the Latin term *cabbala* around 1500. The extensive transcultural project of translation that was presented by the philological dimension of Christian Kabbalah saw the most heterogeneous parts of kabbalistic literature being brought together to make a new, hybrid whole. This is demonstrated by works such as Pico's *Conclusiones* (1482), whereby the kabbalah, as an ancient Jewish element, is integrated into a complex web of primordial traditions, to which ancient Greek, ancient Egyptian, and ancient Persian tokens also pertain. Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata* (1677/1686) has a similar function,<sup>6</sup> with him constructing a hybrid new "kabbalah" from the most varied of sources, including Gikatilla, Moses Cordoveros, Menachem Recanati, Soharic texts, and Lurianic writings. Here, elements of the kabbalah were decontextualized and recontextualized and the *cabbala* turned into a code that was loaded with the most varied of meanings and could be used to represent the most varied of theological, philosophical, and scientific ideas.

From a historical perspective, this *philology* was largely speculative and corresponds to a specific *theology* of the kabbalah, which is the first indicator of how Christian Kabbalah was turned into an instrument of legitimation. This is systematized by the term *cabala christiana*, which has been employed only since around 1600.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the tendency had already been evident in Pico's *scientia cabballistica* and Reuchlin's *ars cabballistica*. When assessing the "seventy cabalist books," the mythical source of all kabbalistic knowledge (in reality, Pico had a selection of kabbalistic scriptures at hand which had been translated for him by the convert Flavius Mithridates), Pico realized: "I saw in them [...] not so much the Mosaic as the Christian religion. There was to be found the mystery of the

<sup>6</sup> See Andreas Kilcher, "Lexikographische Konstruktion der Kabbala. Die Loci communes cabbalistici der Kabbala denudata," *Morgen-Glantz. Zeitschrift der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 7 (1997): 67–125.

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Khunrath, for instance, applies the term in his work. See, for instance, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae solius verae, christiano-kabalisticum, divino-magicum nec non physico-chymicum [...]*, (Hamburg, 1595). He also uses the term "Christian Kabbalah" in his piece *Vom Hylealischen, das ist/ Pri-materialischen Catholischen oder allgemeinen Chaos, der Naturgemäßen Alchymiae und Alchemisten* (Magdeburg, 1597).

Trinity, the Incarnation of the word, the divinity of the Messiah.”<sup>8</sup> This is the gaze of the humanist into the earliest period of the Christian religion. He believed that he detected in the scriptures of the kabbalah that the Christian religion was predisposed in the esoteric layers of Judaism, but that at the same time, the Jewish religion had always been Christian in its metaphysical dimension. Christian Kabbalah thus appears as a sort of interpretive competition using the tools of the kabbalah, while simultaneously opposing the contents of Jewish interpretation of the scripture. The exegetic processes of the kabbalah were meant to prove that, in terms of their esoteric layer of meaning, the Jewish scriptures should be read as Christian. According to Pico, their most secret meaning, their *sensus cabalisticus*, was “the mystery of Christianity.”

Now a significant extension of this idea comes in the form of Knorr von Rosenroth’s Christian-kabbalistic project on the *Zohar*. Having studied theology, philosophy, medicine, and languages, Knorr embarked on an educational trip to the Netherlands, France, and England between 1663 and 1666. This trip, in particular his period in Amsterdam, where he stayed in 1665/66, brought him into contact with the kabbalah.<sup>9</sup> It can be assumed that he studied kabbalistic texts here with a number of Jewish and Christian scholars, including the Marranos Thomas de Pinedo and Isaac de Rocamora, as well as Meir Stern, who was later to become the Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam. This was also when he began collecting the manuscripts he would later compile in the *Kabbala Denudata* (1677–84)—texts from the corpus of the book of *Zohar* and its interpretation in Lurianic Kabbalah. It was also during this time in Amsterdam that Knorr encountered the messianic movement of Sabbateanism, which was accepted also with enthusiasm in the circles of Christian-Millenarianism in Amsterdam with which Knorr socialized.<sup>10</sup> He was probably in contact with the most

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, 63.

<sup>9</sup> See Guillaume van Gemert, “Christian Knorr von Rosenroth in Amsterdam. Die Kabbala Denudata und der niederländische Kontext,” *Die Kabbala Denudata. Text und Kontext*, Akten der 15. Tagung der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft, edited in cooperation with Philipp Theisohn v. Andreas B. Kilcher, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006) (=Morgen-Glantz. *Zeitschrift der Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft*, edited on behalf of the Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft by Andreas B. Kilcher, no. 16, 2006), 111–34.

<sup>10</sup> Also on this subject, see Richard Popkin, “Jewish Messianism and Christian Milleniarism,” *Culture and Politics*, ed. P. Zagorin (Berkeley, 1980); Popkin, “Christian Jews and Jewish Christians in the 17th Century,” *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews*, ed. Richard Popkin (Dordrecht, 1994), 57–72.

important Christian Sabbatean, Petrus Serrarius (1600–69), who spread the news of the new Messiah in Holland and England.<sup>11</sup> My theory is that Knorr's massive interest in the *Zohar* ought to be understood from the Sabbateanist perspective, for here the *Zohar* was viewed as a holy book with an esoteric subtext that contained a messianic theology and predicted the coming of the Messiah Sabbatai Zevi.

Similarly, Knorr understood the *Zohar* as a primordial, apostolic, early Christian utopia of a simultaneously Jewish and Christian ancient knowledge which forms the foundation of—and thus inextricably links—all of the denominations and religions. With this great mission in mind, Knorr and his friends set about the ultimately messianic task of restoring the book of *Zohar*. The second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata*, which includes Latin translations from the *Zohar*, was systematically entitled *Liber Sohar restitutus*. The full title reads: “The *Zohar* restored; [...] a work for all investigators of the original age and the noblest doctrines of the Hebrew people, as well as the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, written in that fine parlance cultivated in the time of Christ and the Apostles [...].” The term *restitutio* has a messianic dimension, as Knorr emphasizes in *Lexikon cabballisticum*, where it appears as a translation of the central messianic category of the *Zohar* and Lurianic Kabbalah, namely that of *tikkun*.<sup>12</sup> *Restitutio* thus has two meanings: On the one hand it refers to the philological restitution of the *Zohar* as the material bringer of news of an ancient knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, by restoring the physical corpus, the way is paved for the *restitutio doctrinae*,<sup>14</sup> conveying or “unveiling” the kabbalah to reveal the “transcendental, metaphysical, and theological teachings of the Hebrews” as the common origin of Judaism and Christianity.

<sup>11</sup> There is, however, no evidence for Milada Blekastad's theory that Knorr actually lived with Serrarius for a few months “in order to learn the teachings of the real Jewish Kabbalah” (Blekastad, *Comenius. Versuch eines Umrisses von Leben, Werk und Schicksal des Jan. Amos Comenius* [Oslo, 1969], 639). For criticism, see Ernestine van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600–1669) en zijn wereld* (Leiden, 1987), 289, 709.

<sup>12</sup> *Kabbala Denudata*, Tomus I, 1, 732. See also Andreas Kilcher, “Tikkun,” *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, vol. 10 (Basel, 1999), 1221–23.

<sup>13</sup> It is no coincidence that Knorr lists the different texts of the zoharian library in his important preface to the second volume. See *Kabbala Denudata*, Tomus II, 8ff. In terms of the technique of the book, we can identify an analogical form of the *Kabbala Denudata* with the *Zohar*—both are library-like compilations of texts.

<sup>14</sup> See *Kabbala Denudata*, Tomus II, Praefatio ad Lectorum, 7.

Knorr makes explicit reference to this program of the restoration of a primordial tradition equally underlying Judaism and the Christian denominations in programmatic texts like letters and the preface to the *Kabbala Denudata*.<sup>15</sup> It also becomes apparent here that the project has a historical index in the Thirty Years' War.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Christian August, who had assumed office in Sulzbach in 1649 immediately after the war, made great efforts to ensure denominational tolerance among the different Christian groups, as well as between the Christians and Jews. The *Zohar* project formed a theological basis for the policy of tolerance: contrary to the differences between denominations, the *Zohar* proved to be a mythical "urtext"—a founding text which equally connected the Jews and the Christian denominations. As a document from the Jewish-Christian era, the *restoration* of the *Zohar* was intended to establish a new harmony between the religions. This is the theological-political and indeed also the eschatological expectation that the Sulzbach kabbalists had of the *Zohar*. Knorr explicitly makes this point in a letter to Henry More:

I assumed that the great division of the Christian religion has no other reason than the difference of philological terms and metaphysical principles among the Christians [...]; therefore I assumed that I had to search after that old philosophy which flowered at the time of Christ among his disciples and which stems from the oldest sources of the holy oracle. When I was about to search after this old doctrine of God and other spiritual and theological issues, I came across that oldest book of the Jews, the Book of Splendour. Even though I questioned the age of this book in view of its division into chapters, I was aware that the chapters themselves and the teachings, which seem to be fragments rather, were very old and contained the oldest teachings and theses.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, "Vorrede an den Leser," transl. Erna Handschur, comments by Rosmarie Zeller, *Die Kabbala Denudata* (see note 6), 17–54.

<sup>16</sup> See for instance Allison Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah* (Leiden, 1999), 108 ff.; Guillaume van Gemert, "Endzeitdenken und Chiliasmus in den Niederlanden zu Knorrs Zeiten und die Beziehungen zu Deutschland," *Morgen-Glantz. Zeitschrift der Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 10 (2000): 156–79; Herbert Narbuntowicz, "Reformorthodoxe, spiritualistische, chiliastische und utopische Entwürfe einer menschlichen Gemeinschaft als Reaktion auf den Dreißigjährigen Krieg" (diss., Freiburg, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> *Kabbala Denudata*, Tomus I, Excerpta ex Epistola quadam Compilatoris, 3. English translation taken from Kilcher, "Philology as Kabbalah," *Kabbalah and Modernity: Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations*, ed. Boaz Huss, Marco Pasi, and Kocku Von Stuckrad (Leiden, 2010), 17–18.

The kabbalah, which was conveyed in fragments in the *Zohar*, seemed to Knorr to be the best way “to bind the divided churches to a Christian unity.”<sup>18</sup> This is the theological-political mission of the *Zohar* project, which was carried out in cooperation between various scholars and the politician Christian August.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, in publishing, translating, and writing a commentary for the *Zohar*, they believed they were reestablishing the metaphysical order of the world—as *tikkun ha-olam*. In doing so, they were continuing the messianic mission of the *Zohar* by reinstituting this charter of a primordial harmony between the denominations. Prehistory and final history were thus united in a philological undertaking that afforded the kabbalah the highest level of authority.

### JOHANN CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL

Johann Christoph Wagenseil developed an alternative form of Christian Hebraic studies distinct from Christian Kabbalah. His interests did not lie with the kabbalah; instead he turned his attention to rabbinic Judaism with its major works such as the *Midrash* and the *Talmud*. To begin with, one of the unusual things about Wagenseil’s intellectual profile was the fact that he also became acquainted with Judaism through contact with Jewish life.<sup>20</sup> Wagenseil in fact went on to become one of the most important Christian Hebraists of his time, and not only owing to his studies in Orientalism at the University of Altdorf. Also crucial to his extraordinary knowledge of Judaism was his direct contact with Jewish communities and scholars, which he gained during a thirteen-year trip throughout Europe between 1654 and 1667. It began with five years as a private tutor in Vienna and Bratislava, where he established initial contacts with the Jewish communities, became friends with Jewish scholars, learned Hebrew, and studied the Talmud.<sup>21</sup> He continued his Orientalist studies in Strasbourg

<sup>18</sup> *Kabbala Denudata*, Tomus I, Amico Responso, 75. See also Kilcher, “Philology as Kabbalah,” 18.

<sup>19</sup> See Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah*, 108 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock: Religions- und geistesgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Tübingen, 1952).

<sup>21</sup> See Bernard D. Weinryb, “Historisches und Kulturhistorisches aus Wagenseils hebräischem Briefwechsel,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 83, no. 1 (1939): 325–41; “An hebreisch-jidische Korespondenz zwischen Profesor Wagenseil un Jidn (Zuschteier zu der jidischer Kultur-Geschichte in 17ten Jorhundert),” *Gedank und*

(from 1659 onwards) and Italy (from 1661 onwards), where he met the Hebraist Giulio Bartolocci in Rome and lived with the Hebrew professor Giovanni Battista Jona, a convert from Galilee (previously known as Jehuda ben Jizchok Jona), who himself also translated the New Testament into Hebrew for missionary purposes in 1668, studied Arabic and Syrian, and came into contact with the Jewish community. Passing through Paris, he again moved in Christian Hebraist circles before reaching Spain and Morocco in 1665. Here, the Hebrew-speaking European scholar was given Hebrew manuscripts in the Jewish community of Ceuta as a thank-you for his reports on the Moroccan Jews in Europe. These manuscripts included the book *Chissuk Emuna* by Isaak ben Abraham Troki, which he later published.

In April 1666, we finally find Wagenseil in the Netherlands, which had long since been his destination. As with Knorr, his period of residence in Amsterdam in mid-1666 was particularly significant, given that the city was a center of Sabbateanism at this time, as previously mentioned; Wagenseil addressed this subject in his pedagogical work *Pera librorum juvenilium* (1695).<sup>22</sup> With Sabbateanism making its mark on Amsterdam, Knorr von Rosenroth and Wagenseil also stocked up on Judaica, whereby Knorr acquired scriptures from Lurianic Kabbalah and Wagenseil primarily collected rabbinic and Yiddish literature. His suppliers were adherents of the Sabbatean movement who sold their households, including their libraries, with the intention of returning to the Holy Land with the dawn of the Messianic period.

Upon leaving Amsterdam in 1667, Wagenseil returned to Nuremberg, where he initially accepted a position as a professor of ecclesiastical law and constitutional law before additionally assuming the chair for Oriental languages in 1674. This was a prominent professorship which had been previously occupied by Daniel Schwendter and his teacher Theodor Hackspan, two important Christian Hebraists of the seventeenth century. In fact, one of the reasons that Wagenseil started working on the Talmud was because of Hackspan, whose “constant wish” it was, according to Wagenseil, “to see the Talmud of the Jews in its entirety just once / because in the past, finding the text was no simple feat.”<sup>23</sup> Unlike Hackspan,

*Leben* 2 (1944): 109–19. A list of Wagenseil’s letters can be found in Peter Blastenbrei, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil und seine Stellung zum Judentum* (Erlangen, 2004), 102–18.

<sup>22</sup> Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Pera librorum juvenilium: qua, ingenuos, viamque ad eruditio-* *nem et bonam mentem affectantes adolescentes*, vol. 2 (*Ad orbis notitiam necessaria*) (Altdorf, 1695), 122–30.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 29.

Wagenseil made this wish a reality by setting to work on the Talmud and presenting a Latin translation of the Mishnah tractate *Sota* (1674).<sup>24</sup>

Succeeding his teacher Hackspan, Wagenseil also addressed the polemic literature with which the Talmud was faced, dealing with the Christian polemic against the Talmud on the one hand and the Jewish defense of the Talmud on the other. Under the title *Tela ignea satanae* (1681), Wagenseil published a Latin translation of the “most secret scriptures of the Jews / against Christianity and the Christian religion.”<sup>25</sup> While these texts triggered an antisemitic polemic from the Christian perspective—even from Hackspan, for instance—Wagenseil was concerned with isolating these texts, which he viewed as problematic, from the Talmud, of which he was a defendant. A fundamental ambivalence in terms of Wagenseil’s perception of Judaism is revealed by the publication of these texts: despite his philological impartiality, his defense of the Jews moved within a theological horizon of expectations which ultimately aimed at the conversion of the Jews.<sup>26</sup> This ambivalence of Wagenseil’s undertaking is also confirmed by his work on the Jewish languages, in particular his work on the Yiddish language. He was the first Christian scholar to show an interest in this subject, and he authored his Yiddish–German dictionary *Belehrung der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart* (1699) not only for the sake of philology, but also in order to provide an instrument for the missionaries to the Jews.

<sup>24</sup> Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Sota. Hoc est.: Liber Mischnicus Uxore Adulterii Suspecta Una cum Libri En Jacob Excerptis Gemarae Versione Latina, & Commentario perpetuo* (Altdorf, 1674).

<sup>25</sup> Wagenseil, *Hoffnung der Erlösung Israelis* (Nürnberg, 1707), 30.

<sup>26</sup> The question has been raised numerous times in research. See particularly the dispute between Allison Coudert and Peter Blasenbrei. While Coudert accepts that Wagenseil endeavored to negate the prejudices against Jews and emphasizes that he openly demonstrated sympathy for the persecuted people, she also subjects him to the following criticism: “Wagenseil sympathisiert mit den Juden, solange er deren Bekehrung für möglich hält.” (Wagenseil sympathizes with the Jews to the extent that he deems their conversion possible.) (Allison Coudert, *Morgen-Glantz* 1992, 123). This proposition of “Wagenseil the anti-Semite,” however, has been dismissed in recent research, for instance as emphatically expressed by Peter Blasenbrei: “Allison Couderts These [ist] bei weitem überspitzt [...] und dieser Form gänzlich unhaltbar.” (Allison Coudert’s argument [is] extremely exaggerated [...] and completely untenable in this form.) (Blasenbrei, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil* [see note 18], 96). See also Hartmut Bobzin, “Judenfeind oder Judenfreund? Der Altdorfer Gelehrte Johann Christoph Wagenseil,” *Jüdisches Leben in Franken*, ed. Gunnar Och and Hartmut Bobzin (Würzburg, 2002), 33–51.

Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that Wagenseil's view of Judaism differs considerably from the Christian theological perspective of his predecessors in Christian Hebraic studies. Whereas his teacher Hackspan had adopted a scientific approach in order to separate the Jews from Christianity as the "Other," using theological reasoning, Wagenseil's opposite strategy was to incorporate the Jews into a common plan of salvation. Wagenseil distanced himself from the polemic-theological tendency of the Semitic philology of the University of Altdorf by taking Hebraic studies not only in a scientific-philological direction, but also in a new theological direction, which I will call here "philo-Semitic"—also being aware of the problems and ambivalence of this notion.<sup>27</sup>

The first step was to provide scientific information, as it were, about Judaism by disseminating knowledge about it in terms of its historical as well as contemporary religious practices. With this emancipation *avant la lettre*, Wagenseil intended to defend the Jews in a social and indeed a legal sense, by advocating improved social integration and a better legal situation. It was not the social demarcation of borders between Judaism and Christianity for which Wagenseil aimed; rather his objective was to create a connection between the two, which also earned him respect from the Jewish side.

The scientific and social elements guiding this informative enterprise were however set against a theological background which sustained a fundamental ambivalence towards Judaism. This ambivalence was to be found precisely in the legitimating momentum underpinning Wagenseil's scientific commitment to Judaism. Indeed, his work followed a Christological and even Christianizing order, the ultimate aim of which was the conversion of the Jews. This theological dialectic is reinforced in Wagenseil's later work; it is particularly evident in his book *Hoffnung der Erlösung Israelis oder Klarer Beweß der annoch bevorstehenden, und, wie es scheinet, allgemach-herannahenden grossen Juden-Bekebrung* (1705), which was published posthumously. Here, it becomes clear that Wagenseil's grand-scale investigation of Judaism, which encompassed aspects of philology, linguistics, literature, library work, and law, was intercalated in a latent context of salvation history. Nevertheless, Wagenseil's work differs considerably from that of his predecessors in the field of Christian Hebraic studies in this respect, too. Whereas for "semitists" such as Theodor Hackspan, the Jews were regarded as outside the Christian plan

<sup>27</sup> See footnote no. 1.

of salvation and as opponents of Christianity, Wagenseil believed them to be part of the Christian plan of salvation.<sup>28</sup> It is this belief that provides the crucial legitimating momentum of philosemitic Christian Hebraism and accounts for its whole theological dialectic.

This eschatological missionary theology is also revealed in a comparison of equivalent positions in Wagenseil's surroundings. To begin with, he shared this view with pietistic theology, namely that of Philipp Jacob Spener, with whom Wagenseil was in exchange regarding his own project of proselytism of the Jews and who himself consequently taught Hebrew, studied the Talmud, and carried out missionary work in the Frankfurt ghetto as of 1666, pursuing philosemitic aims in doing so.<sup>29</sup> Not without reason, an appendix of his major pietistic work *Pia Desideria: Oder Herzliches Verlangen/ Nach Gottgefälliger Besserung der wahren Evangelischen Kirchen* (1680) lists *Lehrer/ so die künftige bekehrung der Juden in ihren Schrifften behaupten:* (teachers who announce the future conversion of the Jews in their writings) from the Early Fathers of the Church to modern times, which he states as beginning with Luther and ending at his present time.<sup>30</sup> The pietistic theologian thus suggests that the conversion of the Jews in particular has been an integral part of the Christian plan of salvation since Luther. It is primarily this eschatological legitimization of Christianity through Judaism that guides Wagenseil's philosemitic theology and prohibits anti-Judaism: "It is not with insults, inveighs, contempt, and force that the Jew should be persuaded to recognize the true Messiah and abandon the Jewish unbelief," instead this should occur solely through "the example of our Savior, who is meek and lowly in heart."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See Martin Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung. Die Stellung der deutschen evangelischen Theologie zum Judentum im 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1988); Friedrich Dickmann, "Das Judenmissionsprogramm Johann Christoph Wagenseils," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 16 (1974): 75–92.

<sup>29</sup> See Blaistenbrei, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil* (see note 18), 78ff.

<sup>30</sup> See also Spener, *Daß unser Herr Jesus der wahre Messias oder Christus seie: zu Erweckung der unglaublichen Juden dargethan* (Frankfurt a.M., 1701). The Christian mission to the Jews was an integral component of Pietism up until Zinzendorf. On this subject, see also Christoph Rymatzki, *Johann Heinrich Callenberg's Institutum Judaicum und dessen Freundeskreis (1728–1736)* (Tübingen, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Belehrung der Jüdisch-Teutschen Red- und Schreibart* (Königsberg, 1699), F2b.

It is worthy of note that Wagenseil coincides precisely with the Christian kabbalists in his environment—i.e. Knorr von Rosenroth and his collaborators—by advocating this salvation-historical legitimization of Judaism. Using the kabbalah, they in fact pursued an analogous aim, as is demonstrated by Knorr von Rosenroth and van Helmont's work *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae* (1684), a book that Wagenseil also included in his library. If it is indeed the case that this book also focuses on the conversion of the Jews, it does so using the resources of the kabbalah, as demonstrated by the subheading: *Id est. Syncatabasis hebraizans, sive brevis applicatio doctrinae Hebraeorum cabbalisticae ad dogmata novi foederis pro formanda hypothesi ad conversionem Iudeorum proficua.* This is shown in the dialogue between a “kabbalist” and a “Christian philosopher,” which begins by emphasizing the need for the conversion of the Jews. Based on the argument that the kabbalah hails from the apostolic era and represents an esoteric form of early Christianity at the core of Judaism, the kabbalah becomes a gateway for Christianity into Judaism for its Christian interpreters in the Early Modern era. Or more precisely, it becomes a form of evidence used to support the argument that Christianity has always been at the core of Judaism. In this respect, not only the Appendix of the *Kabbala Denudata*, the *Adumbratio*, but the whole project of restoring the book of *Zohar* with the *Kabbala Denudata* amounted to a millenarian restoration of the primordial apostolic unity of Judaism and Christianity, driven by the intention to bring about salvation.<sup>32</sup>

Proceeding from this assumption, Wagenseil's position in *Hoffnung der Erlösung Israels* (A Hope for the Redemption of Israel) refers to a broader context: the millenarian and messianic missionary theologies in which redemption in Christianity is closely linked to Jewish Messianism and the conversion of the Jews. An excellent example of this comes from the Amsterdam context of Jewish and Christian Sabbateanism, which was significant for both Knorr and Wagenseil.<sup>33</sup> Wagenseil had personal contact

<sup>32</sup> See Kilcher, “Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik: Knorrs Bibliothek und die Bedeutung des Sohar,” in *Christliche Kabbala*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Sigmaringen, 2003), 211–23.

<sup>33</sup> See Petrus Serrarius, *The Last Letters, to the London-Merchants and Faithful Ministers Concerning the Further Proceedings of the Conversion and Restauration of the Jews [...], Worthy of Observation by All Good Christians* (London, 1665). Also see John Dury, Henry Jessey, and Petrus Serrarius, *An Information Concerning the Present State of the Jewish Nation in Europe and Judea Wherein the Footsteps of Providence Preparing a Way for Their Conversion to Christ, and for Their Deliverance from Captivity Are Discovered* (London, 1658). See also

with both Jewish and Christian millenarians here, for instance developing a close friendship with the Prague Rabbi Beer Perlhefter, an adherent of Sabbateanism who had been schooled in the kabbalah. He taught Wagenseil Hebrew and Jewish literature in 1674 and lived with him for a few months, reestablishing contact with Wagenseil in 1681 after working as a Sabbatean theologian in Modena and having meanwhile become a troubled adherent of the self-proclaimed Messiah from the city of Eisenstadt, Mordechai ben Chaim.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, Wagenseil was also acquainted with Christian millenarians such as Johann Wilhelm Petersen, who was also a friend of Spener. Together with his wife Johanna Eleonora von Merlau, Petersen developed a devout commitment to Millenarianism as part of Pietism, a movement in which the eschatological conversion of the Jews played a central role.<sup>35</sup> Last but not least, this was also the case for the millenarian philosemitism practiced by the Quakers, whom Wagenseil and Knorr von Rosenroth encountered in England in 1666.<sup>36</sup>

Against this backdrop of a philosemitic missionary theology which entails the eschatological legitimization of the Jews, it comes as no surprise

Ernestine Gesine Everdine van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius en zijn wereld* (Leiden, 1987); van der Wall, “The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600–1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists,” *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. van den Berg and E. G. E. van der Wall (Leiden, 1988), 73–94; Guillaume van Gemert, “Christian Knorr von Rosenroth und Petrus Serrarius: die Apokalypsekommentare im Deutungszusammenhang,” *Morgen-Glantz* 11 (2001): 205–27.

<sup>34</sup> According to Perlhefter, Sabbatai Zevi was just the predecessor to the true Messiah, whom he recognized in Mordechai von Eisenstadt. See Nathanael Riemer, “Zwischen christlichen Hebraisten und Sabbatianern—der Lebensweg von R. Beer und Bila Perlhefter,” *Aschkenas. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 14 (2004): 163–201; Avraham Elqajam, “Lidato ha-schnia schel ha-Maschiach. Giluim chadaschim le-R. Beer Perlhefter,” *Kabbala* 1, no. 1 (1996): 85–166.

<sup>35</sup> See Blaistenbrei, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil* (see note 18), 79ff. See also Markus Matthias, *Johann Wilhelm und Johanna Eleonora Petersen: Eine Biographie bis zur Amtsenthebung Petersens im Jahre 1692* (Göttingen, 1993), 139ff. Wagenseil also cites the pontifical missionary Giovanni Maria Vincentius, *Il Messia Venuto* (1659), according to whom the Jews “se pacificamente conversano, e vivono fra noi.” Wagenseil, *Pera librorum juveniliuum* (see note 19), vol. 2, 129.

<sup>36</sup> See Blaistenbrei, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil* (see note 18), 96. Also see D. S. Katz, “Quakers and Jews,” in *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. van den Berg and E. G. E. van der Wall (Leiden 1988), 187ff. For the importance of the Quakers (also) for the Sulzbacher circle, see “Juden, Quäker, Pietisten: die Irenik des Sulzbacher Kreises (1651–1708),” *Union—Konversion—Toleranz* (Mainz, 2000), 119–38.

that Wagenseil not only implemented his philology of Judaism in a practical, scientific, social, and legal sense; he also established it on the basis of a millenarian theology. For Wagenseil, the conversion of the Jews became a messianic project, with the intention of uniting Jews and Christians in a common millenarian future. His project served the “redemption” of the Jews and, at the same time, was the condition for the “Coming Kingdom of Christ.”<sup>37</sup> Here we can see the whole theological dialectic of his legitimating inclusion of Judaism, whereby Judaism was to be appropriated and turned towards Christianity for a common future in the deepest of friendship.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> See Blastenbrei, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil* (see note 18), 79ff.

<sup>38</sup> Wagenseil thus concludes his chapter on the Jews: “Quo sic quamprimum veniat illa dies, qua, ablato velamento, quod vultui eorum [=Judeorum] impendet,clare videant complementum legis & concordi pietate nobiscum adorent Dominum & Salvatorem nostrum Jesvum Christvm, qui est. Deus super omnia benedictus in secula.” Wagenseil, *Pera librorum juvenilium* (see note 19), vol. 2, 163.

## CHAPTER 5

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# Christian Readings of Menasseh ben Israel: Translation and Retranslation in the Early Modern World

*Sina Rauschenbach*

In the Age of Religious Strife, scholars of all denominations referred to *hebraica veritas* to testify to hidden remnants of *their* truth in the Hebrew Bible, rabbinical sources, and Jewish philosophical writings.<sup>1</sup> Christian claims for *hebraica veritas* were of course older than the Reformation and the post-Reformation era. Dating back to Jerome's Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible, they first arose in Late Antiquity, were revived in the Middle Ages, and flourished in the new missionary strategies of the Dominican and Franciscan orders in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> In Renaissance

<sup>1</sup> See Stephen G. Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500–1600): Authors, Books, and the Transmission of Jewish Learning* (Leiden, 2012). Also see Allison Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson, eds., *Hebraica veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia, 2004), and Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge MA, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, 1982), and Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley, 1989).

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Italy, they played a key role in the context of Neoplatonism and the rise of Christian Kabbalah.<sup>3</sup> However, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *hebraica veritas* was elevated to a new dimension and meaning.<sup>4</sup> Having mainly served as a missionary tool in the centuries before the Reformation, it now turned into a weapon of Christians against Christians. Following a strange but common order of priority, Lutherans referred to Jews to fight Calvinists, Calvinists to fight Catholics, Catholics to fight Lutherans and Calvinists, and Anti-Trinitarians to fight Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics.<sup>5</sup> “The Jew,” ever since Augustine a living witness to God’s punishment and His eschatological promises, suddenly turned into the guardian of Christian truth and a legitimization for Christian dogmas and teachings.

Needless to say, frequent uses of Jewish sources only rarely provoked changes in Christian attitudes toward the Jews. Instead, Christian Hebraists continued to condemn Judaism and attempted to convert their Jewish interlocutors. Even worse, they quickly used their Hebrew language skills and knowledge of the sources to deny the Jews the authority over their own texts and traditions.<sup>6</sup> Understandably enough, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rabbis were often cautious if not reluctant to cooperate. Even though several Jews tended to see Lutheranism and Calvinism as purged and hence “more Jewish” versions of Christianity,<sup>7</sup> everybody knew that exchanging knowledge with Christians was playing with fire,

<sup>3</sup>For one important contribution among others, see Moshe Idel, “The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance,” in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David B. Ruderman (New York, 1992), 105–69. For the history of Christian Kabbalah from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, see Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte der christlichen Kabbala*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 2012–2013).

<sup>4</sup>Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens OH, 1983).

<sup>5</sup>For an example, see the Christian uses of Josef Albo’s *Sefer ha-iqqarim*, analyzed in the third part of my *Josef Albo: Jüdische Philosophie und christliche Kontroverstheologie in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Leiden, 2002).

<sup>6</sup>David Ruderman, “Introduction,” in *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy*, ed. David Ruderman and Giuseppe Veltri (Philadelphia, 2004), 13.

<sup>7</sup>Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington IN, 1997), 68–75. For a more detailed analysis, see Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, *The Reformation in Contemporary Jewish Eyes* (Jerusalem, 1970).

because it not only threatened the status of Jewish communities,<sup>8</sup> but also provided Christians with new weapons against Judaism and the Jews.<sup>9</sup>

However, Jewish reactions were not completely uniform, and there were also scholars who actively participated in the Christian search for Jewish knowledge. Most of those scholars figured as language tutors and teachers for Christian Hebraists, but a few of them also started publishing Latin or vernacular books for non-Jewish audiences.<sup>10</sup> Important examples were Italian rabbis or physicians such as Obadiah Sforno in the fifteenth, Azariah de Rossi, David dei Pomis and Leone Ebreo in the sixteenth, or Leone Modena and Simone Luzzatto in the seventeenth centuries. In the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands, rabbis such as Saul Levi Morteira, Moses Raphael de Aguilar and Isaac Aboab are equally supposed to have been in close exchange with Christian colleagues.<sup>11</sup> But the most active and renowned rabbi in the Christian world was surely Menasseh ben Israel,<sup>12</sup> followed by Isaac Orobio de Castro in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>13</sup> Menasseh not only became

<sup>8</sup>The acceptance of Jewish communities in Christian societies was generally based on the condition that the Jews accepted certain religious truths and that they renounced discussion of religious topics with Christians. For an example, see Hugo Grotius's recommendations for the States of Holland in his *Remonstrantie nopende de ordre dije in de Landen van Hollandt ende Westvrieslandt dijent gestelt op de Joden*, ed. J. Meijer (Amsterdam, 1949), 116–21.

<sup>9</sup>One of the earliest examples was the aforementioned Christian use of Cabala to prove the Trinity and the mysteries of the Christian Messiah. For a recent study of Jewish response to Christian Kabbalah, see Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton NJ, 2011), 149–70.

<sup>10</sup>For recent studies on some of the aforementioned scholars, see Ruderman and Veltri, eds., *Jewish Intellectuals and Giuseppe Veltri, Renaissance Philosophy in Jewish Garb: Foundations and Challenges in Judaism on the Eve of Modernity* (Leiden, 2009). For dei Pomis and Modena, also see Alessandro Guetta, “Ebraismo come natione e come religione universale: Forme del pensiero ebraico in Italia tra ’500 e ’700,” *Italia* 19 (2009): 23–42.

<sup>11</sup>Aaron L. Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (Cambridge MA, 1984), 107, 110 n25.

<sup>12</sup>The classical monograph on Menasseh is still Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh Ben Israel: Rabbi, Printer and Diplomat* (Philadelphia, 1934). For more recent studies see Lionel Irah, *L'Aigle d'Amsterdam: Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657)* (Paris, 2001), Yosef Kaplan, Henry Méchoulan, and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Menasseh ben Israel and his World* (Leiden, 1989) and Sina Rauschenbach, *Judentum für Christen: Vermittlung und Selbstbehauptung Menasseh ben Israels in den gelehrten Debatten des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2012). For a detailed bibliography, see Jacob H. Copenhagen, *Menasseh ben Israel, Manuel Dias Soeiro (1604–1657): A Bibliography* (Jerusalem, 1990).

<sup>13</sup>Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro* (Oxford, 1989).

friends with a great number of Christian scholars. He also used his press to print many of his books in a Latin version for a Christian public.<sup>14</sup>

In the following, I will summarize how Menasseh tried to respond to and even capitalize on the early modern Christian quest for *hebraica veritas*,<sup>15</sup> and how Christian scholars responded to Menasseh.<sup>16</sup> In the first part, I will briefly introduce the reader to Menasseh ben Israel and his strategies of translation—and I here refer to translation as a cultural and reader-orientated transfer of Jewish knowledge into the Christian world.<sup>17</sup> In the second part, I will use Menasseh's *De termino vitae* and *De fragilitate humana*<sup>18</sup> to mention and to go into greater detail regarding some of the retranslations Menasseh's translations provoked. In the third part, I will refer to Christoph Arnold and others to give further examples concerning Christian readings of Menasseh and Menasseh's books. I will end my essay with a summary and a conclusion about mediators such as Menasseh and the ambivalence of "the Jew as legitimation" in seventeenth-century Christian Hebraist circles.

<sup>14</sup> For Menasseh's Amsterdam printing house, see Leo Fuks and Rena Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands (1585–1815): Historical Evaluation and Descriptive Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1984), I, 99–135.

<sup>15</sup> In fact, Menasseh himself referred to *hebraica veritas* and acted as a spokesman for it. See his *De creatione problemata XXX* (Amsterdam, 1635), Epistola dedicatoria, #6r, his *De la resurreccion de los muertos libros III* (Amsterdam, 1636), I, ch. III, 14, and his *De resurrección mortuorum libri III* (Amsterdam, 1636), I, ch. III, 25.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see my *Judentum für Christen*. For an English summary, see my "Mediating Jewish Knowledge: Menasseh ben Israel and the Christian Republica Litteraria," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 102:4 (2012): 661–88.

<sup>17</sup> The main feature of the aforementioned cultural, reader-oriented concept of translation is that it has to be distinguished from concepts of translation based on equivalence. For theoretical foundations, see the *Skopostheorie* of Katharina Reiß and Hans J. Vermeer, as well as Gideon Toury's "Descriptive Translation Studies."

<sup>18</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *De termino vitae libri III* (Amsterdam, 1639); id., *De la fragilidad humana, y inclinacion del hombre al peccado* (Amsterdam, 1642); id., *Dissertatio de fragilitate humana ex lapsu Adami* (Amsterdam, 1642). For a French translation and a critical edition of Menasseh's *De la fragilidad / De fragilitate*, see Menasseh ben Israel, *De la fragilité humaine et de l'inclination de l'homme au péché*, ed. and transl. Henry Méchoulan (Paris, 1996).

## TRANSLATION

Since the Spanish conquest of Antwerp in 1585 and the massive flight of merchants and intellectuals from the Spanish Netherlands into the Northern United Provinces, Amsterdam experienced an unprecedented economic rise. Within a few years, the town became a metropolis and the most important center of trade in Europe.<sup>19</sup> Essential to this rise was the willingness of the Amsterdam bourgeoisie to resist warnings and propaganda from Calvinist theologians, and to allow those who had been fiercely persecuted in other parts of Europe to settle and to participate in trade. This was not only true for Anabaptists, Millenarians and libertine thinkers, but also for Jews. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the first Sephardic congregation was established in Amsterdam.<sup>20</sup> A mere fifty years later, the Jewish community constituted one percent of Amsterdam's general population, and had developed complex structures of organization and administration. Culturally and mentally, Amsterdam Sephardim were hugely influenced by their Iberian origins. They spoke Portuguese and wrote in Spanish, they studied Spanish literature of the *Siglo de Oro*, and they adopted world views and ideals that were typically found among contemporary Spanish and Portuguese elites.

Due to their intimate knowledge of Christianity and their high percentage of "New Jews,"<sup>21</sup> Amsterdam Sephardim were under permanent pressure to control congregational members and to force religious behavior into the frames of "authentic Judaism." However, the very same knowledge made Amsterdam Sephardim important mediators between Jewish and Christian, Dutch and Iberian worlds, and Menasseh ben Israel was obviously among those who applied this knowledge in a highly intelligent

<sup>19</sup> For a recent description, see Willem Frijhoff and Maarten Prak, eds., *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam: Centrum van de Wereld, 1578–1650* (Amsterdam, 2004). Also see Henry Méchoulan, *Amsterdam au temps de Spinoza: Argent et liberté* (Paris, 1990), and id., ed., *Amsterdam XVIIe siècle: Marchands et philosophes. Les bénéfices de la tolérance* (Paris, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> For some of the most important monographs on Sephardim in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, Rena Fuks-Mansfeld, *De Sefardim in Amsterdam tot 1795: Aspecten van een Joodse Minderheid in een Hollandse Stad* (Hilversum, 1989) and Daniel Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam* (London, 2000). For some of the most important essays, see Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden, 2000). For a more general survey, see Johan C.H. Blom, Rena G. Fuks-Mansfeld and Ivo Schöffer, eds., *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Yosef Kaplan, "Wayward New Christians and Stubborn New Jews: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity," *Jewish History* 8:1–2 (1994): 27–41.

and strategic way. Born as Manoel Dias Soeiro into a family of *conversos* and secret judaizers in 1604, Menasseh ben Israel had left Portugal or France (there is no certainty about his place of birth) at an early age. His family had been persecuted by the Portuguese Inquisition. Finally, they had fled to Amsterdam to live openly as Jews. Menasseh quickly acclimatized to his new environment and began a prosperous career. At the age of 18, he succeeded his teacher Isaac Uziel as a rabbi of the *Neve Shalom* Community, founded in 1608. However, his professional promotion soon came to a certain standstill. Either because of his contacts with the Christian world, as mentioned by some of his contemporaries, or because of weak points in his halakhic knowledge, Menasseh was never considered for the positions he expected and always suffered from economic problems. As a reaction, he turned early to Christian scholars and dedicated himself to build up his reputation as a Jewish spokesperson in the Christian *Respublica litteraria*. His effort met with an unforeseen success: Step by step, Menasseh turned into one of the most well-known Jewish scholars and correspondents in Christian circles. This was also possible because Menasseh quickly began to publish several of his books in both Spanish and Latin, adapting his Spanish texts to Iberian *converso* and mercantile readers whereas his Latin texts were clearly meant to fit Christian scholarly interests and needs. As I have shown in my book, Menasseh's strategies of translation encompassed aspects of form, style and content.<sup>22</sup>

With regard to form, several of Menasseh's books not only bear titles known from earlier Christian treatises of philosophy or law, their structures also resemble those of reference works of medieval scholastic theology. One important example is Menasseh's *Conciliador/Conciliator*. Interestingly enough, Menasseh not only referred to his book as the "sum of our theology" (*suma de nuestra theologia*),<sup>23</sup> reminding his readers of Thomas Aquinas's most important *Summa theologiae*. He also organized the *Conciliador/Conciliator* in a scholastic manner, dividing his chapters into "questions" (*quaestiones*) and "conciliations" (*conciliaciones/conciliaciones*).<sup>24</sup> As for Menasseh's title, it is highly probable that earlier Christian *Conciliatores* such as Pietro d'Abano's *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et medicorum in primis* (Venice, 1420; ms. around 1300), and

<sup>22</sup> Rauschenbach, *Judentum für Christen*.

<sup>23</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Conciliador*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1632–1651), III, Al Lector, without page numbers, and id., *De la fragilidad humana*, Al Lector, a3r.

<sup>24</sup> A Jewish model for Menasseh's *Conciliador* was Immanuel Aboab's *Nomologia o Discursos legales* (Amsterdam, 1629) which followed scholastic structures, too.

Jean Mercier's *Conciliator sive Ars conciliandorum, quae in jure contraria videntur* (Bourges, 1587) served as references. Parallels between Menasseh and Abano seem to be even more obvious if we take into consideration that Abano also authored a philosophical work entitled *Problemata*, which might have served Menasseh as a model for his *De creatione problemata XXX*. Finally, it is striking that Menasseh, in the second and third volumes of his *Conciliador*, also declared himself to be the author of a *Bibliotheca rabbinica* and of a compendium of Jewish *Loci communes*,<sup>25</sup> reminding his readers of Johann Buxtorf's and Philipp Melanchthon's famous predecessors.

As for style, Menasseh published most of his books in two versions, one in Spanish and one in Latin, and he adapted each version to the expression and expectation of potential readers. Consequently, Menasseh's Latin books were much more formal and scholarly than their Spanish counterparts. Again, the *Conciliador* provides a good example to illustrate this point. In his introduction to the translation created by Dionysius Vossius, Menasseh gave a perfect idea of what would later characterize many of his Latin books.<sup>26</sup> First, he stressed that he had expanded his sources from 2500 to 3000.<sup>27</sup> Second, he changed some of his arguments and replaced references to experience by references to Aristotelian logic and authority.<sup>28</sup> Third, he deleted comments affirming Jewish self-awareness and pride which could easily be interpreted as offensive and anti-Christian.<sup>29</sup> Generally, Menasseh positioned both his Spanish *Conciliador* and his Latin *Conciliator* in a context of non-Jewish interest in Jewish learning and a special cross-border curiosity.<sup>30</sup> But the Spanish *Conciliador* was primarily

<sup>25</sup> Ben Israel, *Conciliador*, II, Al Lector, \*\*4r.

<sup>26</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Conciliator, sive De convenientia locorum S. Scripturae, quae pugnare inter se videntur* (Frankfurt a.M. [Amsterdam], 1633), Lectori S., \*2r-\*2v. Even though the Latin translation of the *Conciliador* was Vossius's, there is every reason to assume that Menasseh highly contributed and fully approved of it. For details about Menasseh's and Vossius's Latin *Conciliator*, see my *Judentum für Christen*, 72–76. For the general question of Menasseh's knowledge of languages and the Latin translations of his works, see *ibid.*, 6 n7 and n8.

<sup>27</sup> Ben Israel, *Conciliador*, I (Amsterdam, 1632), Al Lector, (a)3v; Ben Israel, *Conciliator*, Lectori S., \*2v.

<sup>28</sup> Ben Israel, *Conciliador*, I, Al Lector, (a)2r–(a)2v; Ben Israel, *Conciliator*, Lectori S., \*2r.

<sup>29</sup> For an example, see Menasseh's somehow triumphant conclusion in his *Conciliador*, I, Al Lector, (a)3r, that the wisdom of the Jews, forever prevailing over the knowledge of non-Jews, was a source of honor and a sign of their Divine inspiration. In the Latin translation, the phrase is missing.

<sup>30</sup> Rauschenbach, *Judentum für Christen*, 65–69.

addressed to merchants and lay readers with a *converso* background,<sup>31</sup> whereas the Latin *Conciliator* aimed at Christian scholars with an interest in Christian apologetics.<sup>32</sup> Hence, the different orientations and the differences in style of the two books are hardly surprising.

With regard to content, Menasseh not only avoided subjects directly linked to centuries of Jewish-Christian controversies, and on the contrary, he emphasized consistencies between Jewish and Christian thinkers.<sup>33</sup> He even *added* new consistencies by translating Jewish positions into a common subset of Jewish-Christian knowledge which he conceived of as an Abrahamite space, which contained basic teachings that Judaism and Christianity shared.<sup>34</sup> In 1635, Menasseh had already asked the Christian dedicatee of *De creatione problemata*, David de Willem, to read his book with a lenient attitude, never forgetting “that I just follow the holy teachings of the Abrahamites” (*sola Abrahamitarum me sacra sequi*).<sup>35</sup> Shortly afterwards, in *De resurrectione mortuorum*, he wrote to Joachim de Wicquefort:

You are such a pious person that you will not be offended if I also add the one teaching we share in common. In fact, everybody who worships the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob eagerly strives for his resurrection. Your justice and humanity, too, are such that you know to distinguish between the duties of a friendship mutually binding human beings together and profession of a different religion. Hence, even if we do not agree in everything, what is the hindrance to understand some things in a broader context, to show God our common knowledge and to wish everybody well who himself wishes nobody ill?<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Menasseh’s reference to conditions of buying and selling in *Conciliator*, I, Al Lector, (a)2r.

<sup>32</sup> Vossius, “Interpres Lectori,” in Ben Israel, *Conciliator*, without page numbers. According to Vossius, the Latin translation even aimed at anti-Jewish polemics. For a complete quotation of Vossius’s introduction which is only available in some copies of the *Conciliator*, see Rauschenbach, *Judentum für Christen*, 76 n101, 72 n88, and 75 n99. For further comments, see *ibid.*, 72–76.

<sup>33</sup> For one of many examples, see Ben Israel, *De termino vitae*, Epistola dedicatoria, a2r–a3r.

<sup>34</sup> Menasseh’s Abrahamite theology was of course an echo of the rabbinic model of the Noahite Laws. However, the community of Abrahamites was less universal than the community of Noahites because it excluded people such as Uriel da Costa whom—following Menasseh—Jews and Christians were supposed to fight together. See my *Judentum für Christen*, 107–14. Theoretically, any Abrahamite theology should of course include elements of Islam, too, but for Menasseh, exchange with Muslim theologians was of no interest.

<sup>35</sup> Ben Israel, *De creatione*, Epistola Dedicatoria, #3r.

<sup>36</sup> Ben Israel, *De resurrectione*, D. Joachimo Wickefortio, a3r–a3v. This and the following translations are mine.

In the common space of an Abrahamite theology, Jewish and Christian scholars could easily share and exchange their knowledge. Outside that space, nothing would change and everybody would remain as loyal to his respective religion as ever. One of the few Christians to follow Menasseh's model was Caspar Barlaeus. In his well-known epigram to *De creatione problemata*, Barlaeus invited Menasseh to meet him as an "Abrahamite" (*Abramides*) while he himself would assume the role of a "Christianite" (*Christiades*).<sup>37</sup> But the fierce reactions Barlaeus's epigram provoked show that there was little understanding for Menasseh's Abrahamite model in the seventeenth century.<sup>38</sup> And Menasseh's efforts to translate Jewish questions into Abrahamite terms quickly fell prey to retranslations and to Christian anti-Jewish polemics. Two important examples are Menasseh's *De termino vitae* and *De la fragilidad humana/De fragilitate humana*, published in 1639 and 1642 at Menasseh's Amsterdam printing house.

### *DE TERMINO VITAE AND DE FRAGILITATE HUMANA*

Menasseh's *De termino vitae* and his *De fragilitate humana* were written in the context of the controversies about Predestination, Original Sin and Divine grace which divided the Dutch Calvinists and led to civil war-like conditions in the early seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands. Those controversies first originated in a scholarly debate between two Leiden theologians, James Arminius<sup>39</sup> and Francis Gomarus.<sup>40</sup> As against Gomarus who defended a more "traditional" Calvinist interpretation of Predestination stating that Divine choice was unconditional and eternal,

<sup>37</sup> Caspar Barlaeus, "Epigramma, in Problemata Clarissimi viri Manassis Ben-Israel, De creatione," in Ben Israel, *De creatione*, without page numbers.

<sup>38</sup> See Frans F. Blok, "Caspar Barlaeus en de Joden: De geschiedenis van een epigram," *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis*, n.s., 57 (1977): 179–209, and n.s. 58 (1977): 85–108.

<sup>39</sup> For Arminius, see Keith Stanglin, *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace* (Oxford, 2012). For an overview of research on Arminius, see id., "Arminius and Arminianism: An Overview of Current Research," in *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe: Jacobus Arminius (1559/60–1609)*, eds. Th. Marius van Leeuwen et al. (Leiden, 2009), 3–24. For Arminius's theology, see Richard Muller, *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacobus Arminius* (Grand Rapids, 1991), and Keith Stanglin, *Arminius on the Assurance of Salvation: The Context, Roots, and Shape of the Leiden Debate, 1603–1609* (Leiden, 2007). For a recent translation and edition of the most important sources, see James Arminius, *Arminius Speaks: Essential Writings on Predestination, Free Will, and the Nature of God*, ed. John D. Wagner (Eugene, OR 2011).

<sup>40</sup> For Gomarus, see Gerrit P. van Itterzon, *Franciscus Gomarus* (Den Haag, 1930).

Arminius taught that Predestination and Divine choice were influenced by Divine knowledge, and that this knowledge included knowledge about human decisions in the future whether to embrace or not to embrace faith. Hence, to a certain degree, human beings not only depended on Divine choice but also on their own free will. After Arminius's death, Arminius's followers summarized and publicly defended their position in a so-called *Remonstrantie*.<sup>41</sup> Due to this *Remonstrantie*, Arminians came to be known as Remonstrants even though scholars have stressed that the theologies of later Remonstrants differed from Arminius's earlier approaches.<sup>42</sup> The respective followers of Gomarus would be known as Counter-Remonstrants. In an international synod convoked in the Dutch city of Dordt in 1618–1619, the case was publicly decided in favor of the Counter-Remonstrant party. Remonstrant theologians were forced to renounce their position or to leave the country. Famous Remonstrant leaders were imprisoned and judged. Only after the death of Maurits of Nassau in 1625 did the tension decrease and Remonstrant theologians returned to the Netherlands. However, Remonstrant teachings continued to be subjected to censorship,<sup>43</sup> and Remonstrant theologians were suspected of being “Pelagians” and hence endangering not only Dutch Calvinism but also western Christianity as a whole.<sup>44</sup>

Menasseh's *De termino vitae* was written as a reply to Johannes Beverovicius (Johan van Beverwijck), physician of Dordt, who had approached several scholars—among them Menasseh—to inquire if the duration of human life was fixed or if human beings were able to change it.<sup>45</sup> This question was obviously linked to the aforementioned debate between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants: If human beings were able to influence the terms of their lives, then God's choice was conditional and

<sup>41</sup> See <http://www.remonstranten.org/archief/historisch/hisremonstrantie.htm> [9 May 2016].

<sup>42</sup> G. J. Hoenderdaal, “Arminius en Episcopius,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 60.2 (1980): 203–235, here 203.

<sup>43</sup> For a recent survey over censorship in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, see Wiep van Bunge, *Spinoza Past and Present: Essays on Spinoza, Spinozism and Spinoza Scholarship* (Leiden, 2012), ch. 9, 137–156.

<sup>44</sup> Pelagius was a fourth-century Christian heretic who was condemned at the Council of Carthage for opposing the heritability of Original Sin and representing a strong interpretation of human free will. For the revival of debates about Pelagianism in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, see Rauschenbach, *Judentum für Christen*, 144–148.

<sup>45</sup> For a recent discussion of Beverovicius's book, see J. Martin Bac, *Perfect Will Theology: Divine Agency in Reformed Scholasticism as against Suárez, Episcopius, Descartes, and Spinoza* (Leiden, 2010), 157–210.

Remonstrant theologians were right. If they were not, Predestination was unconditional and Counter-Remonstrants won the battle. Given that the subject was highly delicate, Beverovicus had pretended to redeliberate an antique controversy between Stoics and Epicureans. However, everybody in the Dutch Republic was aware of the reference of Beverovicus's question to present day discussions, and Simon Episcopius (Simon Bischop) was the one to make the connection explicit when he stated with regard to Stoicism:

It is also clear that not few *theologians* embraced that view and that they nowadays defend it bitterly, first and foremost those who think that they are the arbiters of Calvinist Predestination and interpret it in the same sense in which it has been sanctified in the Netherlands by the authority of a Synod in your city [i.e. Dordt].<sup>46</sup>

As we know from his correspondence, Menasseh was as conscious as Episcopius about the explosive nature of the topic.<sup>47</sup> However, when he finally published *De termino vitae* in 1639, he not only *answered* Beverovicus's question confirming that "the Jews" were of course of the opinion that human beings could influence the duration of their lives. He also *translated* it into the question as to how to reconcile Divine omniscience and human free will. Finally, Menasseh discussed a problem which posed a similar difficulty to *all* monotheistic religions, but which was not as exclusively Christian or—to be more precise—Calvinist as Predestination.

With regard to *De fragilitate humana* the same applies. This time Menasseh was asked to summarize "the Jewish position" on Original Sin and Divine Grace. His Christian interlocutor was Gerbrand Anslo, a linen dealer who was also one of Menasseh's pupils. But there was of course no Jewish position on either subject. How then could he summarize something that did not exist? Again, Menasseh's answer was a fine translation of Christian dogma into Abrahamite theology: Even though he decided to keep the notion of Adam's fall (*lapsus Adami*) in the title of his Latin

<sup>46</sup> Simon Episcopius to Johannes Beverovicus, in *Epistolica quaestio de termino vitae*, ed. Johannes Beverovicus (Dordt, 1634), 110–11. For Beverovicus and Episcopius, see Bac, *Perfect Will Theology*, 157–76.

<sup>47</sup> See his letter to Beverovicus, dated 25 November 1639. Menasseh's letter is quoted and translated in Henry Méchoulan, "Le problème du Latin chez Menasseh ben Israel et quelques implications religieuses et politiques à propos d'une lettre inédite à Beverovicus," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 14:1 (1980): 5.

book, Menasseh did not, in fact, discuss Original Sin, but the tendency of human beings to sin.<sup>48</sup> As for Divine Grace, Menasseh opted for translating it into *auxilium*, and afterwards explained that there were only two types of *auxilium* which the Hebrews accepted:

[...] the first one meaning that God supports a person who has undertaken a good and pious deed and that He offers His hand so that that person can finish what he has begun. [...] The other type of *auxilium* comes true when God provides a person who is willing to do a good deed with the opportunity [to do so].<sup>49</sup>

*Auxilium* as understood by Menasseh was not only closer to Jewish thought in general. It was also more familiar to Amsterdam Jews and former *conversos*, because it had long been a point of discussion in Catholic Iberian circles and continued to be controversial in the seventeenth-century Spanish Netherlands.<sup>50</sup> It was probably due to that connection that Menasseh was especially eager not to leave any room for misunderstandings. His chapter on Divine Grace and *auxilium* in *De fragilitate* was indeed one of the few chapters in all of Menasseh's books in which the Dutch rabbi clearly pointed at fundamental *differences* between Jewish and non-Jewish discussions, stating that "the Hebrews differ from others when they touch upon that material [...] concerning grace and *auxilium*."<sup>51</sup> Even though Jews could contribute to discussions in the Christian scholarly world, Amsterdam Sephardim had to know that their understanding of *auxilium* did not have anything to do with Christian Grace.

<sup>48</sup> In the title of Menasseh's Spanish *De la fragilidad*, there was no mention of Adam's fall. For the full titles of the two books, see note 18.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Israel, *De fragilitate humana*, II, ch. XIV, 116, 120.

<sup>50</sup> Central to the Iberian discussions were Luis de Molina's *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum divinae gratiae donis* (Coimbra, 1588) and the controversies between Jesuits and Dominicans in the aftermath of Molina's publication. In the seventeenth century, those controversies continued between Jesuits and Jansenists in the Southern Netherlands and in France. However, there was also an important connection with the Dutch debates between the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants, and some Dutch Reformed theologians even used the Catholic debates to comment on the situation of the Dutch church. For a famous example, see Melchior Leydekker, *De historia Jansenismi libri IV* (Utrecht, 1695). For further details, see my "Gemeinsame Gegner. Zur integrativen Wirkung von Polemik in christlichen Kontroversen der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Religion als Prozess: Kulturwissenschaftliche Wege der Religionsforschung*, eds. Thomas Kirsch, Rudolf Schlögl and Dorothea Weltecke (Paderborn, 2015), 159–71.

<sup>51</sup> Ben Israel, *De fragilitate humana*, II, ch. XIV, 116.

But despite the rhetoric, there *were* of course parallels between Menasseh's position and that of the Remonstrants, and it was only logical that Christians read *De fragilitate* as what it was: a Jewish contribution to the aforementioned Dutch Reformed debate. As a consequence, Counter-Remonstrants such as the Utrecht and Leiden theologian Johannes Hoornbeek dedicated large chapters of their books to refuting Menasseh's explication of *auxilium*.<sup>52</sup> Others such as the Breda theologian Antonius Hulsius directly accused Menasseh of affiliations with the Remonstrants, stating that "Menasseh ben Isr. tries so much to please the Arminians [i.e. the Remonstrants] that, in his *De fragilitate*, he even accepts the grace that serves to support human beings in their deeds."<sup>53</sup> As Hulsius believed that the Remonstrants were themselves closely connected to Anabaptists, Jesuits or other "semi-Pelagian sects" of seventeenth-century Europe,<sup>54</sup> the Breda theologian not only refuted Menasseh. He also placed him in the center of further Christian controversies, and more and more called into question Menasseh's religious integrity and identity.

Finally, Hulsius and Hoornbeek went as far as to use Menasseh for their proofs that "the Jews," too, believed in Christian dogmata and that it was much easier for them to convert than one would generally think. Most important here is Menasseh's description and explication of the weakness of human beings and their aforementioned tendency to sin. Hoornbeek first paraphrased Menasseh in great detail and afterwards concluded:

I do not see any difference—or just a slight one—from what we [Christians] believe: the corruption of the soul and of its two faculties; the moral corruption, with a tendency to sin, which is nothing else but sin itself; the natural tendency that is, natural or original sin, coming out of the crime of our first fathers and its contagion. Both aspects contain the essential features of Original Sin in the way the Christians use to explain it, and even the words [Menasseh uses] are the same.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Johannes Hoornbeek, *Teshuvat Yehuda sive Pro convincendis et convertendis Judaeis libri octo* (Leiden, 1655), VII, ch. II, 476–93.

<sup>53</sup> Antonius Hulsius, *Riv Yahwe im Yehuda sive Theologiae judaicae pars prima de Messia* (Breda, 1653), Praefatio authoris ad Christianum Lectorem, +++++v.

<sup>54</sup> Hulsius, *Theologiae judaicae*, Praefatio authoris ad Christianum Lectorem, ++2v. For Pelagianism, see note 44.

<sup>55</sup> Hoornbeek, *Pro convincendis*, IV, ch. II, 350.

For both Hoornbeek and Hulsius, it was evident that Menasseh promoted Original Sin among the Jews and that Jewish acceptance of Original Sin was a first step toward conversion.<sup>56</sup>

Neither Hoornbeek nor Hulsius ever came to appreciate Menasseh's efforts to mediate, let alone his project of an Abrahamite theology. Instead, Hoornbeek's whole book was designed as a refutation of Menasseh's works and a continuation of the report written by the Leiden Theological Faculty twenty years earlier to prevent Menasseh's employment at the newly founded Amsterdam Athenaeum.<sup>57</sup> But when Hoornbeek and Hulsius *needed* Menasseh, neither of them shied away from turning the rabbi into an important authority and a Jewish witness against other Jews and their "errors." Menasseh had translated Jewish teachings into teachings that were close to Christianity to make them available for Christian discussions, and to open the way for Jewish scholars to enter Christian scholarly circles. Now, his translations were indeed used by Christians, but instead of leaving them in the somehow "neutral" Abrahamite space, they were retranslated, incorporated into Christianity and finally used in anti-Jewish polemics.

### RETRANSLATION

Menasseh's *De termino vitae* and *De fragilitate humana* were no exceptions. Like Hoornbeek and Hulsius, other Christian theologians too refused to accept Menasseh's efforts at translation. But the same theologians did not hesitate to quote Menasseh when his arguments proved to be useful for them. Some even went as far as to ask Menasseh for a "Jewish" statement and afterwards refuted him, making use of *other* Jewish witnesses *against* Menasseh, when his position did not correspond to what they expected.

Such was the case of Christoph Arnold, a Nuremberg theologian who should be mentioned as a further example. In 1650, Arnold inquired about Menasseh's position with regard to the authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*.<sup>58</sup> The *Testimonium* was a highly disputed passage in Flavius

<sup>56</sup> For an example concerning Hulsius's use of Menasseh with regard to Original Sin, see his *Theologiae judaicae*, 460–61.

<sup>57</sup> Hoornbeek, *Pro convincendis*, \*2r–\*2v. In a similar vein, Hoornbeek also listed Menasseh among other Jews having authored books "for the confirmation of their infidelity and their errors" (*pro confirmatione infidelitatis atque errorum suorum*). See *ibid.*, Prolegomena, 10.

<sup>58</sup> For further details concerning Arnold and Menasseh, see my *Judentum für Christen*, 161–65. Also see Mireille Hadas-Lebel, "Une lettre en français de Menasseh ben Israel à

Josephus's *Antiquitates*, referring to the Crucifixion of Jesus and his supposedly Divine mission as the Messiah.<sup>59</sup> Arnold was especially interested in the relationship between Josephus and the author of *Josippon*, who was long time believed to be Josephus as well,<sup>60</sup> but who in *Josippon* did not mention Jesus, even though he reported the same events as Josephus. According to Arnold, it was only possible to explain why references to something as important as the Crucifixion of Jesus should exist in the writings of Josephus, but not in *Josippon*, if one could prove that Josephus and the author of *Josippon* were *not* one and the same person and that Josephus—contrary to the author of *Josippon*—did in fact abandon Judaism and convert to Christianity.<sup>61</sup> If the contrary was true and Josephus and the author of *Josippon* were identical, one would conversely have to conclude that the *Testimonium* was apocryphal. But this is what Arnold did not want to believe. Menasseh, who was well aware of Arnold's interest, not only refused to give most of his arguments in written form, he also insisted on the identity of Josephus and the author of *Josippon*, on the loyalty of Josephus as a Jew and on the apocryphal nature of the *Testimonium*.<sup>62</sup> But Menasseh's answer did not prove to be useful for Arnold. Hence, the theologian finally turned away from him and referred to Menasseh's famous relative, Isaac Abravanel, to play them off against each other. According to Arnold, Abravanel was a perfect source to prove that Josephus “about whom you [i.e. Menasseh] say that he did not vacillate, did *not* firmly adhere to the truth and—worse than anything—that he even despised the word of God.”<sup>63</sup>

propos du *Testimonium Flavianum*,” *Revue des études juives* 149 (1990): 125–28, and Herman Prins Salomon, “Menasseh ben Israel, Saul Levi Mortera et le *Testimonium Flavianum*,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 25:1 (1991): 31–42. For a study of the controversy about the authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*, which has still not been resolved, see Alice Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus: The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times* (New York, 2003).

<sup>59</sup> For the *Testimonium*, see Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Books XVIII–XIX, transl. Louis H. Feldman (Cambridge MA, 1996 [1965]), XVIII, ch. 3, 48/49–50/51.

<sup>60</sup> L. H. Feldman, “Josephus (CE 37–ca. 100),” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, II: The Early Roman Period, ed. William Horbury, W. D. Davis, John Sturdy (Cambridge, 2001 [1999]), 918.

<sup>61</sup> Arnold to Menasseh, in *XXX Epistolae philologicae et historicae de Flavii Josephi Testimonio, quod Jesu Christo tribuit lib. XIIIX. Antiq. cap. IV.* (Nürnberg, 1661), ed. Christoph Arnold, XIII, 169–76.

<sup>62</sup> Menasseh to Arnold, in *XXX Epistolae philologicae*, 163–65. For a facsimile and a transcription of Menasseh's letter, see Salomon, “Menasseh ben Israel,” 32–34.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold to Menasseh, in *XXX Epistolae philologicae*, 174.

Arnold was surely not well disposed towards Judaism and the Jews, but it should be added that even scholars such as Gerardus Vossius, Pierre Daniel Huet, or Samuel Sorbière, who *did* listen to Menasseh, were ambivalent in their judgments. On the one hand, all of them had respectful and friendly relationships with the Amsterdam rabbi. On the other hand, they hesitated to treat him as a “normal” Jew and instead interpreted Menasseh’s mediation as a sign for imminent conversion. Whereas Sorbière wondered why a man such as Menasseh would keep to the Jewish law and follow Jewish dietary rules,<sup>64</sup> Huet stressed that Menasseh would not have been as far from the “Christian truth” as he finally was, if Christians had only adequately tried to convince him.<sup>65</sup> Vossius, too, distinguished between Menasseh and “the other Jews,” and he eagerly reported on the rabbi’s good will for Christians<sup>66</sup> and his special merits for Christianity.<sup>67</sup>

Only few scholars accepted Menasseh as an intermediary between Judaism and Christianity *and* a loyal Jew, and the ones who did so were themselves often accused of “Judaizing” tendencies. The last scholar who should be mentioned in this context is Hugo Grotius. Grotius corresponded with Menasseh in the 1630s about difficult exegetical questions. Afterwards, he incorporated Menasseh’s arguments into his *Commentary on the Old Testament*.<sup>68</sup> But contrary to what others did, Grotius neither distorted nor misused Menasseh’s words. Not surprisingly, Grotius was himself attacked by theologians when it came to explain *his* religious positions, and one accusation leveled against him was “that he had not even abhorred from the errors of the Jews” (*ab ipsis Judaeorum erroribus abhorruisse*).<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Samuel Sorbière, *Sorberiana, ou Bon mots, rencontres agréables, pensées judicieuses, et observations curieuses* (Amsterdam, 1694), Menasses-Ben Israel, 124–25.

<sup>65</sup> Pierre Daniel Huet, *Commentarius de rebus ad eum pertinentibus* (Den Haag, 1718), 133–34.

<sup>66</sup> Vossius to Simon van Beaumont (14 November 1632) in *Gerardi Joan. Vossii et clarorum virorum ad eum epistolae*, ed. Paulus Colomesius (London, 1690), no. 185, 208.

<sup>67</sup> Vossius and Barlaeus to Cornelius van der Myle (7 September 1633), in *Epistolae celebrum virorum, nempe H. Grotii, G. J. Vossii, A. Schotti, J. Woverii, D. Heinsii, D. Gevartii, I. F. Gronovii, G. Patini, N. Heinsii, aliorumque antehac ineditae*, ed. Jan Brandt (Amsterdam, 1715), no. XXXVII, 125–26.

<sup>68</sup> See my *Judentum für Christen*, 119–22. For one example of Grotius’s correspondence with Menasseh and his use of Menasseh’s information, see Menasseh to Grotius (25 December 1638), in Grotius, *Briefwisseling*, ed. Philippus Christianus Molhuysen and Bernardus Lambertus Meulenbroek (Den Haag, 1928 ff.), IX, no. 3900, 774–76, and Hugo Grotius, *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum (=Opera omnia theologica 1)* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1972 [Amsterdam, 1679]), Ad Deuteronomium, Caput XVII, 88–91.

<sup>69</sup> Gottlieb Spizel, *In felix literatus, labyrinthis et miseriis suis cura posteriori creptus, et ad supremae salutis domicilium deductus* (Augsburg, 1680), 637.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Christian struggles in the aftermath of the Reformation led to new interest in Jewish knowledge. In their search for “original truth” and “pure Christianity,” theologians quickly became aware of the potential of *hebræica veritas*. “The Jew,” until then an object of God’s wrath and Christian missionary zeal, suddenly turned into a source of knowledge and a legitimation for competing Christian claims to truth.

As for Jewish-Christian relationships, the need for “the Jew as a legitimation” led to new levels of Jewish-Christian exchange. Rabbis who were willing to cooperate could quickly make their way into Christian circles. They could become renowned as Jewish addressees for Christian problems, and ultimately even use their influence to renegotiate social or political conditions of Jewish life in Europe. In a world where Christian denominations still had to fight to establish themselves, Jews and Christians could easily end up as allies. But their alliances were of course highly precarious, and new levels of exchange were not necessarily connected to new qualities. Jewish knowledge always had to be translated into Christianity to be useful for Christians, and only those who were willing to contribute to translations and to assume the risk of Christian retranslations were welcomed as speakers. “The Jew” Christians needed for their argumentation was neither a living Jew nor an eminent Jewish authority. He was either a convert or a composite of Jewish voices meeting Christian conditions. Jews or Jewish voices resisting Christian manipulation generally figured as “non representative” and were quickly contradicted.

Interestingly, we can here observe attitudes on the part of Christians toward their Jewish contemporaries similar to those that scholars of colonial history have observed with regard to early encounters between European and non-European cultures. To understand “the other,” “the other” had to *lose* his otherness and to be assimilated.<sup>70</sup> If it was impossible to assimilate him, there was no way of understanding. Jewish mediators

<sup>70</sup> For a famous example, see Tzvetan Todorov’s statement that “difference is corrupted into inequality, equality into identity. These are the two great figures of the relation to the other that delimit the other’s inevitable space.” (*The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York, 1992 [Paris, 1982]), 146). Even though it is commonly accepted that European colonizing differed in different contexts and it has been suggested that Christian perspectives on Jews followed more the Asian scheme of “Orientalism” than the American one, Christian reactions on Menasseh are not as clear as one might expect. For the question of “Orientalism” and Jewish ethnographies, see Yaacov Deutsch, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 2012), 4–6.

such as Menasseh were expected to convert. If they continued to live as Jews, they were either perceived as “exotic planets,”<sup>71</sup> or they ended up as “the others” par excellence and turned into projection surfaces for centuries-old Christian anti-Jewish prejudice and hatred.<sup>72</sup>

The comparison between colonial history and Jewish history becomes even clearer if we take a short glance at the genre of Jewish ethnography. Early modern Jewish ethnographies not only often figured among all kinds of other ethnographies, but they also displayed similar foreignizing practices.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, as much as auto-ethnography was a phenomenon of the Enlightenment and did not play an important role before the eighteenth century,<sup>74</sup> earlier Jewish voices were rare in the description of Jewish religious practice. Instead, and similar to the case of theology, Jewish ethnographies were mainly authored by converts. Jews such as Leone Modena, who finally interfered and reclaimed Jewish authority over the description of Jewish religious practice,<sup>75</sup> were as rare as Menasseh, and they faced similar anxieties and problems.

Jewish responses to the Christian need for “the Jew as legitimization” were necessarily ambivalent. But the case of Menasseh shows that one has to be careful not to overestimate the advantages or disadvantages. Today, Menasseh is first and foremost celebrated for his negotiations with Oliver Cromwell and his achievements for the Jews in England.<sup>76</sup> But people tend to forget that the rabbi did in fact play a dangerous game, and that he rarely controlled the developments he initiated. Contemporaries were obviously more aware of the ambivalence of Menasseh’s Christian contacts

<sup>71</sup> Johann Mochinger to Menasseh ben Israel (11 January 1651), in Paul Felgenhauer, *Bonum nuncium Israeli: Quod offertur populo Israel & Iudea in hisce temporibus novissimis de Messiah* (Amsterdam, 1655), 98–99. Literally, Mochinger compares Menasseh to “a very rare group of stars” (*sidus aliquod rarius*).

<sup>72</sup> For a particularly ugly example, see the description of Menasseh in [Marie-Madeleine de la Fayette], *Mémoires de Hollande* (Paris, 1678).

<sup>73</sup> Deutsch, *Judaism in Christian Eyes*.

<sup>74</sup> For the term “auto-ethnography,” see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), 7–9.

<sup>75</sup> Mark R. Cohen, “Leone da Modena’s Riti: A Seventeenth-Century Plea for Social Toleration of the Jews,” in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David B. Ruderman (New York, 1992), 429–73.

<sup>76</sup> David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford, 1982), and, following Katz, Lionel Ifrah, *Sion et Albion: Juifs et puritains attendent le Messie* (Paris, 2006).

and exchanges.<sup>77</sup> However *they* did not live to see the final outcome of Menasseh's political campaign, which would have been inconceivable without his earlier scholarly mediation. In the end, there is neither black nor white with regard to the difficult problem of "the Jew as legitimization." There are experiences to be weighed up and conclusions to be drawn.

As for Menasseh, it is evident that *his* final conclusion was to take his distance. After 1650, no more of his works were translated into Latin. In his famous *Vindiciae Judaeorum*, published one year before his death in 1657, only few traces of Menasseh's earlier exchanges with Christian scholars remained, one of them being Menasseh's bitter complaints about Hoornbeek and his anti-Jewish agitation in *Pro convincendis*.<sup>78</sup> It is due to those complaints that we know about Menasseh being aware of Hoornbeek's misuse of his books. Interestingly, however, Menasseh not only complained about Hoornbeek, he also used Hoornbeek and his anti-Jewish agitation to refute English ritual murder accusations. According to Menasseh, Hoornbeek would have been the first to adopt and spread ritual murder accusations had those accusations had a kernel of truth. The fact that Hoornbeek kept silent about them was a proof that they were in fact without justification.<sup>79</sup> It is obvious that Menasseh finally turned the tables and now quoted Hoornbeek as an anti-Jewish Christian witness and a Christian legitimization against anti-Jewish Christian claims. This could be taken as an irony of fate and a brilliant response and retranslation of the Jewish translator. But unfortunately, things were too serious to be ironical, and power relations were never equal.

<sup>77</sup> For the criticism Menasseh met in his own community, see my *Judentum für Christen*, 246–54.

<sup>78</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Vindiciae Judaeorum*, ch. I, 8, in *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell: Being a Reprint of the Pamphlets Published by Menasseh ben Israel to Promote the Re-Admission of the Jews to England 1649–1656*, ed. Lucien Wolf (London, 1901), 114.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

## Ideology and Social Change: Jewish Emancipation in European Revolutionary Consciousness (1780–1800)

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Viewed from an ideological perspective, what historians broadly refer to as the “emancipation of the Jews” by the French Revolution was not just a highly contested and momentous historical shift in society and culture but, given the context of traditional European religious attitudes and ingrained Judaeophobia, also an immensely transformative, challenging, and complex procedure. In the face of longstanding dominant religious norms, doctrines, intolerance, and discrimination, it required a tremendous intellectual, publicizing, and social effort to overcome the obstacles opposing its progress. There was arguably no other way that Jewish emancipation in the late eighteenth century could have come about except as an integral and central strand, an indispensable component, of the European—and especially the French—revolutionary consciousness itself.

This means that we need to move forthrightly away from the still modish but unhelpful and mostly rather simplistic kind of social and cultural history that seeks to identify long-term shifts in popular attitudes. Daniel Roche’s invoking a “gradual increase of religious toleration toward

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Protestants and Jews, which the royal authorities supported,”<sup>1</sup> conveys a far too vague, simplistic, and optimistic view of the French Enlightenment as a social process. In reality, Jewish emancipation can hardly be derived from shifts in popular notions, social forces, social practice, freemasonry, or from gradual social change in Europe. All this is at best peripheral, barely perceptible, and dubious. The real motor was the infiltration of the radical tendency with its capacity to attack, discredit, and subvert longstanding popular assumptions, to forge small but highly motivated intellectual elites eager to confront, challenge, and scorn the clergy’s and especially the common people’s ways of thinking and to mobilize and focus effectively otherwise very vague and longstanding minority social resentments and pressures.

In Berlin and the Rhineland, Alsace-Lorraine, Avignon and Carpentras, and—if to a lesser degree—in Bordeaux and Bayonne, the local populace generally remained hostile to all suggestion of Jewish emancipation.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, we must consider carefully the defiant revolutionary impulses capable of mobilizing support for Jewish emancipation and politically confronting and overcoming in a relatively short time the vocal, organized resistance as well as massive social inertia opposing this transformation. During the years of unimpeded press freedom (1789–1793) in France, the counterrevolutionary press resisting the sweeping social changes the French National Assembly sought to introduce were perfectly justified in one relevant particular—their insistence that ordinary people by and large opposed Jewish emancipation.<sup>3</sup> This is true for France, Germany, Italy, Britain, the Dutch Republic, and the Dutch New World colonies alike. In August 1796, the special commission set up by the Batavian Republic’s *Nationale Vergadering* to consider the issue of Jewish rights pressed for full Jewish emancipation, firmly blaming the centuries-old oppression of the Jews on religious prejudice and the ecclesiastical authorities. But in paving the way for the Jewish emancipation decree of 2 September 1796, the Dutch *Nationale Vergadering* found itself opposed

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Roche, *France in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge MA, 1998), 364.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1968), 350–53, 366; M. Calmann, *The Carrière of Carpentras* (Oxford, 1984), 229–38, 249; Nigel Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France 1780–1804* (Basingstoke, 2000), 72–80.

<sup>3</sup> Ouzi Elyada, “La rhétorique antijuive dans la presse contre-révolutionnaire 1789–1792,” in *L’Antisémitisme éclairé. Inclusion et exclusion depuis l’Époque des Lumières jusqu’à l’affaire Dreyfus*, ed. I. Y. Zinguer and S. W. Bloom (Leiden, 2003), 143–46.

not just by majority Dutch sentiment but also by a considerable part of what then passed for an “enlightened” opinion, including in Amsterdam.<sup>4</sup>

The call not just to tolerate the Jews on a broader basis than before, but to actually reorganize and reform Jewish existence and integrate it within that of the rest of society, on the grounds of their equal right to happiness, existence, and prosperity, and then beyond this, to bestow full equality and civil rights on the Jews, to redirect their education via the secularizing and soon openly republican state, and the desire to recruit the Jews in support of the Revolution was an essential, intensively publicly proclaimed element of the Revolution. This is true not just of the French Revolution’s early stages (1789–1792) but also of the post-Thermidor expansion of the Revolution into the Rhineland and Italy. The emancipation of the Jews in Italy and also beyond Italy in Malta, the Greek Ionian Islands, and Egypt, occurred in the years 1796–1800 in the wake of the setting up of revolutionary republics by the French Revolution, under the auspices of Napoleon in particular (who at this time outwardly comported himself as an ardent republican).

This transatlantic summons to emancipate the Jews and bestow on them equal rights naturally had an electrifying effect throughout the Jewish world of that time, especially among the small “enlightened” intellectual elite such as the socially already emancipated Jewish enlighteners of Berlin, Paris, and Amsterdam who criticized and rejected rabbinic authority and community leadership. The same applies to the tiny intellectual fringe among the Sephardic communities in the Dutch New World colonies. Almost the first thing David de Ishac Cohen Nassy (1747–1806)—physician, historian, and leading light of the Paramaribo Jewish community—did on returning to Surinam from Philadelphia in 1796 was to compose an early draft of his *Lettre-politico-théologico-morale sur les Juifs* (1798).<sup>5</sup> The new Batavian Republic set up following the French invasion of 1795 had officially embraced the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, and these

<sup>4</sup> J. Michman, “De emancipatie van de Joden in Nederland,” *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 96 (1981): 78–82; M. Stikkelorum, “De joodse gelijkberechtiging en de ‘verlichte’ praktijk. De Maatschappij tot Nut van ’t Algemeen onder de loep 1796–1798,” in *Een veelzijdige verstandhouding. Religie en Verlichting in Nederland 1650–1850*, ed. Ernestine van der Wall and Leo Wessels (Nijmegen, 2007), 358–73; Mart Rutjes, *Door Gelijkheid gegrepen. Democratie, burgerschap en staat in Nederland 1795–1801* (Nijmegen, 2012), 132–39.

<sup>5</sup> [David de Ishac Cohen Nassy], *Lettre-politico-théologico-morale sur les Juifs* (Paramaribo, 1798), préface, lx.

were now being officially espoused in Surinam and other Dutch colonies. Yet despite Nassy's hopes, the new Dutch constitution of 1795 failed to render Dutch Jews "citoyens actifs," or *active burgers* as this new category were called in the Netherlands, on the same basis as other Dutch citizens. Dutch Jews did not achieve formal equality. Under the constitution Dutch Jews remained a discriminated against, second-class minority, until the September 1796 emancipation decree and the more radical Dutch constitution of 1798 were adopted. This targeted and broadly popular discrimination against the Jews of Holland and the Dutch West Indies was something Nassy found hypocritical, shocking, and totally unacceptable.<sup>6</sup>

Nassy composed the *Lettre-politico-théologico-morale sur les Juifs* in French but subsequently also had it translated into Dutch at Paramaribo, prior to its publication in Surinam as a bilingual text, the French appearing on the left-hand pages, the Dutch on the right. He dedicated his appeal to Juriaen François de Friderici (1751–1812), governor-general of Surinam (1792–1802), a reforming governor who is urged, in the dedication, to join such eminent enlighteners as Muratori, Dohm, and Mirabeau in promoting and defending Jewish rights.<sup>7</sup> Nassy was a long-standing admirer of the leading German spokesman for Jewish emancipation, Christian Wilhelm Dohm (1751–1820), whose text on the Jews he had read years before in its French version and was especially indebted for his political argument to Dohm and Mirabeau. Drafted with particular reference to the Dutch and Dutch colonial context, this publication appeared in 1798. Although today still relatively little known to historiography owing to its rarity, it remains one of the most important pleas for Jewish equality and emancipation of the later Enlightenment.

As has often been remarked, the impulse as well as rhetoric and logic behind this revolutionary initiative infusing a small but prominent and highly motivated intellectual fringe derived principally from the European Enlightenment, a point about which, broadly, there is general consensus and from which, indeed, it is impossible to dissent. Nevertheless, at the same time, influenced especially by the writings of Leon Poliakov and Arthur Hertzberg, historians found themselves obliged to insist on the ambivalent, double-sided attitude of the Enlightenment towards Jews and

<sup>6</sup>[Nassy], *Lettre-politico-théologico-morale*, préface, xlivi–xliv.

<sup>7</sup>[Nassy], *Lettre-politico-théologico-morale*, dedication, vi–vii; further on in the text, Nassy lists those enlighteners who had defended the Jews as equals as Muratori, Dohm, Bernouilli, Mirabaud [Mirabeau], Cloots, and the Abbé Grégoire; *ibid.*, 8.

Jewishness. Hertzberg's contention that "modern, secular anti-Semitism was fashioned not as a reaction to the Enlightenment and the Revolution, but within the Enlightenment and Revolution themselves" is undeniable at least in part.<sup>8</sup> Voltaire's hostility to the Jews and Judaism is plainly evident even if sometimes exaggerated. The ubiquitous, intense, and growing opposition, often on the part of well-known German as well as Dutch, French, and colonial enlighteners of the age, to the proposals of Moses Mendelssohn's friend Christian Wilhelm von Dohm (1751–1820), backed by Heinrich Friedrich Diez and others, for the civil improvement of the Jews in Germany, publicized in his pamphlet *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (1781), is equally irrefutable.<sup>9</sup> Conspicuous among the "enlightened" German opponents of Jewish emancipation was the internationally renowned orientalist Johan David Michaelis (1717–1791), a key figure among those developing a new, specifically moderate Enlightenment form of partly racial classification and antisemitism and who expressly "rejected Jewish emancipation."

If Michaelis justified his opposition to Jewish emancipation in large part in terms of the observances of the Jewish religion which, he contended, of itself ensured Jewish separateness and a distinct "national" character, he supplemented this stance with references to what he regarded as the Jews' unprepossessing "innate character." Noting that the Jews were more likely to be involved in crime than were "the Germans" from whom, in his mind, they were quite distinct, he used a range of arguments and even deployed some of the phrases he encountered in Dohm's brochure to reinforce his thesis that the Jews were of innately lower moral caliber than Christian peoples generally.<sup>10</sup> What he considered the Jews' moral degradation and unwillingness to participate in the norms, activities, and duties of the rest of society he attributed in large part to the unalterable racial character of the Jewish people as such as well as to their religious organization and traditions.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hertzberg, *French Enlightenment and the Jews*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Gerda Heinrich, "Die Debatte um 'bürgerliche Verbesserung' der Juden 1781–1786," in *Apell an das Publikum. Die öffentliche Debatte in der deutschen Aufklärung 1687–1796*, ed. Ursula Goldenbaum, 2 vols. (Berlin, 2004), 2:813–95 (820–24).

<sup>10</sup> Dominique Bourrel, "La Judéophobie savant dans l'Allemagne des Lumières: Johann David Michaelis" in Zinguer and Bloom, *L'Antisémitisme éclairé*, 130, 135; Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (London, 1973), 40–44, 465–67.

<sup>11</sup> David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780–1840* (New York, 1987), 28; Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 40–44, 465–67.

These examples and many others help explain why, when we speak of the ideological legitimization through and adoption of the Jews in the service of the French Revolution and the Rhenish and Aachen revolutions of 1792–1793—and subsequently also the Dutch Batavian and Italian revolutions from 1796—we need to relate this Europe-wide phenomenon not to the Enlightenment generally, as historians in the past tended to do, even if somewhat incoherently and hesitantly but rather to one particular strand within the Enlightenment. Once our attention is firmly directed to the radical tendency as distinct from the Enlightenment in general, we can avoid the disconcerting and disempowering ambiguity and difficulty that must accompany every undifferentiated attempt to explain how the Enlightenment as a tendency generated and shaped Jewish emancipation. When the Enlightenment is treated as a broad bundle, in Anthony Pagden's manner, as an undifferentiated hesitantly “cosmopolitan” movement,<sup>12</sup> for example, we remove all prospect of correctly understanding the ideological basis of Jewish emancipation in the 1790s.

In short, Jewish emancipation in the years 1780–1800 cannot be understood except as a part of the general attack on religion and religious authority, targeting not just conservative attitudes but also the mainstream “moderate Enlightenment” including what is nowadays termed the “Religious Enlightenment.” Differentiating between the moderate and radical Enlightenment to clarify our understanding of the movement for Jewish emancipation offers a classic instance of the usefulness and universal significance of the category “Radical Enlightenment” in the humanities, a category in which I include such fervent Christian revolutionary democrats as Henri Grégoire and Adrien Lamourette, even though these enlighteners never succeeded in forging a politically as distinct from morally viable synthesis of Christian values and revolutionary ideals, as they strove to do.

It becomes clear how and why the cause of the Jews was taken up consistently, energetically, forthrightly, and militantly by certain individuals and groups in the face of considerable enlightened as well as conservative opposition only when we divide the Enlightenment into its two main competing currents. The problem in interpretation stemming from the publications of Poliakov and Hertzberg arises chiefly from historians' failure to alert readers sufficiently to the fact that active support for the cause of the Jews among non-Jews was virtually exclusively confined to those who

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment and why it still matters* (Oxford, 2013), vii–ix.

became known in the German context as the *Revolutionsfreunde*—those comparatively few who proved eager, active, and articulate supporters of the human rights ideals of the French Revolution. This is because those who championed the Jewish cause viewed the thoroughgoing transformation and improvement of the Jews as part of the same process as the emancipation of the rest of mankind and were to be found exclusively among those who were passionate advocates of a sweeping, uncompromising form of *Aufklärung* which envisaged the Revolution as the true and necessary work of “philosophy,” as the true fulfilment of the Enlightenment’s goals.<sup>13</sup> Among enlighteners this was decidedly a minority.

Most enlighteners disapproved and sought to discredit this more comprehensive Enlightenment tendency. Collaboration between Mirabeau and his Berlin friends including Dohm and the Jewish enlighteners around Mendelsohn, Marcus Herz, and David Friedländer, for example, led to those calling for Jewish emancipation and sharing in Mirabeau’s critique of Frederick the Great’s monarchy being disparaged by their “enlightened” as well as their conservative detractors as the Berlin “*Aufklärungssynagogue*.<sup>14</sup> Most reformers, including the enlightened despots and many of the French revolutionaries, shared in the powerful anti-Jewish prejudices dominant in eighteenth-century Europe. In the mid-1780s, Frederick the Great (reigned: 1740–86) emphasized Mirabeau and his collaborators (one of whom was Mendelsohn’s friend, Dohm) in the key radical work criticizing Frederick’s reformism in Prussia, *De la monarchie prussienne sous Frédéric le Grand* (6 vols., “Londres,” 1788); Frederick had adopted a distinctly hostile attitude toward Judaism and the Jews and imposed fresh restrictions on them. While granting residence rights to a small, wealthy Jewish elite, the king had imposed strict work and residence restrictions on the majority of the resident Jewish population and severely limited Jewish immigration into his capitals at Berlin and Königsberg and into Prussia generally. Mirabeau had arrived in Berlin in January 1786 and stayed for most of a year until January 1787, on a mission for the French court. Greatly esteeming his 1781 pamphlet, it was during this time that he got to know Dohm well and collaborated with him in a number of ways. Indeed, Dohm became Mirabeau’s most

<sup>13</sup> Anne Cottebrune, *Mythe et réalité du “Jacobinisme allemande”*: Des “amis de la Révolution” face à l’épreuve de la réalité révolutionnaire (Lille, 2001), 131.

<sup>14</sup> *Berlinische Monatschrift*, ed. J. E. Biester and F. Gedike, vol. 15 (January–June 1790), 370.

important adviser not only on German issues generally but also the Jewish question more specifically.<sup>15</sup> Mirabeau had already earlier become interested in this issue during his visits to Holland in 1776 and to London in 1784. Not least, the collaborative project, the six-volume *De la monarchie prussienne* (which appeared solely under Mirabeau's name), contains, among much else, an important discussion about the status and place of the Jews in the Prussian monarchy.

If centuries of “Christian oppression” (as they termed it) had cut the Jews off from most kinds of economic activity, Frederick's policies, according to Dohm and Mirabeau, rather than easing or tackling this, simply further aggravated a chronic social problem, intensifying the injustice and repression afflicting them and exacerbating the growing scourge of Jewish vagrancy, poverty, and criminality now affecting the whole of central Europe and the Netherlands.<sup>16</sup> In this respect, Frederick's prejudices exactly corresponded, in their view, to those of the great majority of the Christian population. While the small Berlin Jewish community were already conspicuously *affranchis* (emancipated), commented *De la monarchie prussienne* in 1787, remarkably few non-Jews in Prussia, only “le très-petit nombre d'avocats de la cause des Juifs” as Mirabeau expressed it, alluding to Dohm, Diez, and the others—displayed the slightest disposition and willingness to speak or write in favor of Jewish emancipation.<sup>17</sup> The truth is that men like Mirabeau, Dohm, and the orientalist Heinrich Friedrich Diez (1751–1817), a Halle-trained younger protégé of Dohm's), who were inclined publicly to blame and denounce Christian tradition and ideas for the injustice and longevity of the oppression, represented only a tiny, highly unrepresentative *philosophique* fringe. Diez, a passionate bibliophile and expert in Turcology, Persian, and Zoroastrianism, author of a favorable biography of Spinoza, which was warmly praised by the

<sup>15</sup> Heinrich, “Die Debatte um ‘bürgerliche Verbesserung’,” 884; J. Friedrich Battenberg, “Die Französische Revolution und die Emanzipation der Juden im Elsass und Lothringen,” *Oberrheinische Studien* 9 (1991), 258; Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution and Human Rights 1750–1790* (Oxford, 2011), 274–78.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit, oder Beiträge zur Geschichte vom letzten Viertel des achtzehnten und vom Anfang des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (1778 bis 1806)*, 4 vols. (Lemgo-Hannover, 1814), 4:484–87; M. Roudaut, “Ambiguités et limites de la tolérance radicale de l'*Aufklärung*. Autour du débat sur ‘l'amélioration civile des juifs’,” in *Lumières radicales, radicalisme des Lumières*, ed. Jean Mondot and C. Larrère (*Lumières* 13; Rouen, 2009), 117–34 (121–23).

<sup>17</sup> Gabriel-Honoré, comte de Mirabeau, *De la monarchie prussienne sous Frédéric le Grand*, 6 vols. (“Londres,” 1788), 5:46, 55–58.

materialist journalist Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin (1739–1792) but which some enlighteners deemed distinctly shocking, remains today an unduly neglected but remarkable and important enlightener, among whose publications featured the first major plea for comprehensive freedom of thought and expression in central Europe, his today little-noticed *Apologie der Duldung und Pressefreiheit* (1781).

Like Bahrdt's better-known but hardly more significant *Über Pressefreiheit und deren Gränzen* (1787), Diez's argument for freedom of the press was largely inspired by Spinoza. It was "philosophy," according to Diez, that had undermined traditional prejudice and antisemitic bias and, equally, "philosophy" that provided the basis for a new age of toleration. Diez believed morality had no true foundation in revelation or nature but rather was man-made and justifiable only on the basis of what benefits society. Diez, in other words, was a classic representative of the Radical Enlightenment's package-logic, of how philosophical monism, championing the cause of the Jews and comprehensive religious toleration, proclaiming freedom of expression and the press, hostility to Christianity, and anticolonialism came to be all tightly bracketed together. Among his subsequent achievements was his translating Deleyre's *Tableau de l'Europe* (1774) and publishing his German version of this incisive summary of Raynal's anticolonial *Histoire des deux Indes*, an attack on despotism, religious prejudice, and colonialism unprecedented in its forthrightness, at Dessau, in 1783.<sup>18</sup> He also edited subsequent editions of Dohm's booklet. Diez publicly championed but at the same time criticized Dohm's text, radicalizing Dohm's position further by eliminating all hint of compromise with residual restrictions on Jewish activity which Dohm appeared willing to massage or accommodate. Diez simply refused to make any compromise whatever with theology or tradition; the only religion palatable to him was that of pure reason. But while Diez was more forthright and willing to shock than his patron, the cautious Dohm too should be classed as a radical.<sup>19</sup>

Like Dohm and Diez, whose views on the Jewish question he helped propagate in French, Mirabeau laid the main responsibility for the social problem—the degradation, vagrancy, criminality, and numerous other

<sup>18</sup> Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, 188, 433, 633, 701.

<sup>19</sup> Heinrich, "Die Debatte um 'bürgerliche Verbesserung,'" 828, 877–78; Roudaut is disinclined to include Dohm among the radical enlighteners, but more amenable to including Diez, see Roudaut, "Ambiguités et limites," 124–25.

perceived defects of Jewish society—squarely on the oppressive conditions Frederick and other rulers had imposed on central European Jewry. “Comment la corruption morale ne serait-elle pas très-grande,” demanded Mirabeau rhetorically, “chez un people auquel on ne laisse pour occupation unique que les professions les plus capables de dépraver toute morale?”<sup>20</sup> Mirabeau did not mean that the entire Jewish population was innately “depraved” or that there was anything inherent in the Jewish character that generated depravity. Rather, he took it for granted that the great bulk of German and European Jewry had been degraded by unjust conditions and circumstances: “car les hommes éclairés que la colonie des juifs de Berlin compte en assez grand nombre, grâce aux soins du respectable Mendelssohn, et à l’égalité de la justice distributive dans les états du roi de Prusse; ces hommes n’ont pas encore eu de temps de transmettre leurs principes au peuple.” Like Dohm, Diez, and another radical proponent of the Jewish cause, Anacharsis Cloots (1755–1794), Mirabeau was distinctly unimpressed by the great bulk of Jewish society of his time. But he admired Berlin Jewry and especially Moses Mendelssohn and placed considerable reliance on the latter’s efforts and the prospect of the *Aufklärung* fundamentally transforming Jewish life and leading to their social “improvement”: “Eh! Quel plus heureux prognostic de leur amendement, que tant de changements utiles dans leur colonie de Berlin par le seul exemple de Mendelssohn!”<sup>21</sup>

Pleading the cause of Jewish emancipation, whether in France, Germany, Holland, or Italy, in the late eighteenth century, consequently, was an altogether exceptional phenomenon and was not at all characteristic of the Enlightenment broadly, let alone of European society more generally. What it typified was not Pagden’s cosmopolitanism of the general Enlightenment, or any shifts in social practice but rather the democratizing and fiercely antireligious, as well as antimonarchical and antiaristocratic republican minority tendency within the Enlightenment and from 1788 onwards within the French and later wider European Revolution. Obviously, the link between advocating Jewish emancipation and rejection of all religious authority as such was not just coincidental or contingent

<sup>20</sup> Mirabeau, *De la monarchie prussienne*, 5:55; Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2003), 98–100; Jonathan Carp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe, 1638–1848* (Cambridge, 2008), 248.

<sup>21</sup> Mirabeau, *De la monarchie prussienne*, 5:46, 55, 57.

but rather inherent and fundamental. It was inseparably linked in the radical mentality to the complete erasure of meaningful religious distinctions and obliteration of religious authority across the board. “Qu’ils soient d’ailleurs Juifs, Chrétiens, idolâtres, Déistes ou Athées,” affirmed Diderot’s and d’Holbach’s closest adherent, Jacques André Naigeon (1738–1810), in his address to the National assembly of 1790, “peu importe. Les vrais fidèles, les vrais saints sont les bons citoyens.”<sup>22</sup> In their entry about him in their *Dictionnaire des Athées*, Sylvain Maréchal and Jérôme Lalande recorded Mirabeau’s dictum that “la pratique du bien moral est la seule religion obligatoire à laquelle l’homme puisse être contraint avec justice.”<sup>23</sup> Dohm, already a relatively high-ranking Prussian official in 1781, had to conceal his deism and anti-Christian sentiments behind an official mask; however, there can be little doubt that it was his personal estrangement from Christianity in general which he frankly expressed in private, as well as his rejection of the traditional values and outlook of his age, that lay behind his commitment to emancipate the Jews. In short, no valid conclusion about the ideological basis of the call for Jewish emancipation prior to and during the French Revolution, or about employing the Jewish case, or the figure of the Jew, as philosophical legitimization in the late eighteenth century, can be drawn without proceeding from this fundamental distinction between moderate and radical Enlightenment.

Here Montesquieu, whom the atheist Naigeon ranked together with Buffon and Helvétius among those who minced their words out of fear of theology and the theologians,<sup>24</sup> can perhaps be considered a hybrid or in-between case. Like most enlighteners, he disparaged rabbinic learning and Judaism as a religion, but equally disliked Christianity and saw no reason for the Jews to convert to another faith. He showed some willingness to include the Jews more broadly in society but did not demand their full integration. It seems reasonable and fair to infer that this was because Montesquieu did not seek the integration of the larger part of society generally into political life and also because his relativism and style of naturalism precluded any possibility of sweeping change based on universal principles. In other words, the moderate Enlightenment tendency

<sup>22</sup> Jacques-André Naigeon, *Adresse à l’Assemblée nationale sur la liberté des opinions, sur celle de la presse, etc.* (Paris, 1790), 53.

<sup>23</sup> Sylvain Maréchal, *Dictionnaire des Athées*, ed. Jean-Pierre Jackson (Paris, 2008), 200.

<sup>24</sup> Naigeon, *Adresse*, 100.

in Montesquieu counterbalanced or outweighed the radical tendency, and Montesquieu failed clearly to point the way to a general Jewish emancipation.<sup>25</sup>

Consistency, clarity, and rigor here could derive only from the democratic, underground, sweepingly oppositional premises of the radical tendency against which Voltaire and Frederick the Great attempted to mobilize the mainstream Enlightenment. Dohm illustrates this in two ways, first by his hostility to all religious authority and, second, his privately declared republicanism. This induced him to become deeply critical not just of Frederick the Great's Jewish policy but many aspects of his rule. Frederick's school policy, for example, which made no attempt to "enlighten" the masses, and the regime he imposed on the Prussian universities similarly met with Dohm's pervasive if behind-the-scenes disapproval.<sup>26</sup> Dohm's preoccupation with citizens' political rights was later reflected in his important diplomatic role in Aachen and in Liège during the revolutions there (1789–1792) while serving as Prussian envoy entrusted with mediating between the warring parties. Dohm assured the philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, in 1781, at a time when he was most preoccupied with the Jewish question and when most radical enlighteners were still hopeful that "enlightened despotism" would produce major advances and improvements, that he did not consider that his "echt republikanischen Grundsätze" conflicted with his loyalty to the Prussian state, at least as it functioned in its reforming mode under Frederick the Great; rather, he believed Frederick's Prussia represented the best kind of monarchy available in his day providing a tolerant and relatively flexible framework within which someone like himself, detached from Christianity and at heart opposed to all monarchy, could usefully function.<sup>27</sup> Only occasionally did Dohm confide to those to whom he was close, such as his friend, the later Mainz revolutionary leader, Georg Christian Wedekind (1761–1831), that privately he was antagonistic to the Christian faith.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Allan Arkush, "Montesquieu: a Precursor of Jewish Emancipation?", in Zinguer and Bloom, *L'Antisémitisme éclairé*, 55–58.

<sup>26</sup> Dohm, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 4:446–52.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Weber, *Georg Christian Gottlieb Wedekind (1761–1831). Werdegang und Schicksal eines Arztes im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Französische Revolution* (Stuttgart, 1988), 65–67; see also Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, 270–78, 363.

<sup>28</sup> Weber, *Georg Christian Gottlieb Wedekind*, 67.

In his *On the Civic Improvement of the Jews* (1781), Dohm could not do otherwise than express himself with considerable caution and prudence. Nevertheless, when he declared the unsatisfactory condition and political status of contemporary Jewry to be essentially the result of historical circumstances and especially the “inhuman and unpolitical prejudices of the darkest centuries,” the result of “fanatical religious hatred that is unworthy of the Enlightenment of our times and that should have long since been eradicated by such Enlightenment,” few readers could have been in much doubt as to what he meant and what he was suggesting.<sup>29</sup> Much the same can be said for Mirabeau, who made a point of promoting both Dohm’s and Mendelssohn’s reputations in French.<sup>30</sup> Mirabeau’s *Sur Moses Mendelsohn, sur la réforme politique des Juifs, et en particulier sur la révolution tentée en leur faveur en 1753 dans la Grande Bretagne* published in 1787 supposedly in “Londres” but actually in Berlin or Amsterdam, can indeed be described as a “soberly written plea for racial tolerance” and “one of the best pieces he ever wrote”; it demonstrates that Mirabeau came to view the Jewish question throughout Europe as part of a wider problem of emancipation, which had to be achieved against the same traditions, prejudices, and tyranny that obstructed basic human rights also in all manner of other contexts.<sup>31</sup>

The idea that there was a need for what Mirabeau termed “la réforme politique des Juifs” was propagated locally in Alsace-Lorraine, one of the principal hotbeds of Christian-Jewish antagonism at the time, by a prize competition announced by the Société Royale des Sciences et des Arts of Metz, in 1787. The question the Metz Academy posed to the public was whether it was possible to render the Jews “happier and more useful in France.” There was a considerable response, and three texts were “crowned” winners by the academy, all urging comprehensive Jewish emancipation and integration. These were by the Jewish savant Zalkind Hourwitz (1738–1812), a Polish Jew employed from 1789 on the staff of the Bibliothèque du Roi (from 1792 the Bibliothèque Nationale), the Abbé Grégoire, and Claude-Antoine Thierry, an *avocat* of the *parlement* of Nancy.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven, CO., 2002), 28.

<sup>30</sup> Patrick Girard, *La Révolution française et les juifs* (Paris, 1989) 62, 96.

<sup>31</sup> B. Luttrell, *Mirabeau* (Hemel Hempstead, 1990), 81.

<sup>32</sup> Girard, *La Révolution française*, 74–91; Roland Mortier, *Anarcharis Cloots ou l’utopie foudroyée* (n. p., 1995), 67–69; Robert Badinter, *Libres et égaux: L’Emancipation des Juifs (1789–1791)* (Paris, 1989), 72–74.

By 1787, the “revolution” in educated French minds regarding the Jews had already occurred, argued Thierry, a lawyer of Protestant background. The agent performing this useful work, he contended, was “la philosophie.” “Philosophy” had transformed the situation essentially by scorning and discrediting all theological arguments discriminating against the Jews. Although in his opinion Mirabeau was the *philosophe* to whom most credit was due for bringing about this transformation in educated opinion, Thierry claimed to have reached the same conclusions himself independently. He stands out not just for urging Jewish emancipation unreservedly, but insisting, like Mirabeau, Dohm, Diez, and Cloots, that the entire responsibility and guilt for oppressing the Jews of Europe since the first Christian centuries lay with the churches and, no less, with the common people in their ignorance.<sup>33</sup> It is true that he regarded Jewish society in France as highly defective and corrupt but it was no worse in his eyes than the rest of society, the whole of which, in his opinion, was in urgent need of being reformed and transformed.<sup>34</sup> His tone reveals Thierry to be fully conscious of the uncompromisingly revolutionary character of what he was saying and how difficult it was for the majority of society to accept such a message. Continually assailing religious authority and prejudice, Thierry maintained that successful Jewish emancipation and integration required shaving off beards and an end to separate Jewish dress and education based on rabbinic sway and Jewish institutional autonomy. It required the state to introduce a secularizing, universal education enabling Christian and Jewish children to mingle together, equally imbibe enlightenment, morality, and civic values and surmount the obstacles formed by the prejudices of centuries jointly.<sup>35</sup> Such a concept implied precisely the kind of religiously neutral, secular enlightened state that Dohm, Diez, and Mirabeau had in mind.

The Revolution first deliberated the question of Jewish emancipation in December 1789. A few weeks earlier, on 24 September, the assembly had formally admitted Protestants to full citizenship. In the initial debate on 23 December, however, Grégoire, Mirabeau, and other leaders

<sup>33</sup> M. Thierry, *Dissertation sur cette question: “Est-il des moyens de rendre les Juifs plus heureux et plus utiles en France?”* (Paris, 1788), 29, 37–38.

<sup>34</sup> Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews*, 83–86.

<sup>35</sup> Thierry, *Dissertation*, 79–82; Girard, *La Révolution française*, 80–81, 84; Siep Stuurman, *De Uitvinding van de mensheid. Korte wereldgeschiedenis van het denken over gelijkheid en cultuurverschil* (Amsterdam, 2009), 331.

of the democratic Left advocating the same equality for the Jews were defeated by 408 to 403 votes. The majority opposing Jewish rights was led by a combination of monarchists, moderates, and churchmen, prominent among whom was Anne Louis Henri de La Fare (1752–1829). De La Fare, “a vicious anti-Semite of the medieval kind,” according to Hertzberg, was the same bishop of Nancy who headed the unsuccessful attempt of the Sixth Bureau to emasculate the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen by diluting the equality of rights and freedom of expression that Mirabeau, Sieyes, Brissot, and the Left were striving for. As Keith Michael Baker, David Bell, and Dan Edelstein have all emphasized, albeit in a rather confused manner, the Sixth Bureau intervened in the human rights debate as a conservative thrust designed to block the efforts of Mirabeau and Sieyes.<sup>36</sup> De La Fare, if distinctly less “medieval” than Hertzberg suggested, was a confirmed monarchist and opponent of revolutionary principles (as well as of Jewish rights) who was to become an émigré in January 1791 and to be rewarded under the Restoration for his unremitting opposition to revolutionary principles (by being made Cardinal-Archbishop of Sens).<sup>37</sup>

De La Fare admitted that the Jews had performed services to the state, in Lorraine and his diocese of Nancy, but objected not only that their religious laws separated them from the rest of society but also that the people of his diocese detested them, “les a en horreur.” A decree that bestowed on the Jews the rights of citizenship “pourrait allumer un grand incendie.”<sup>38</sup> Whilst chairing the Sixth Bureau of the National assembly whose “minimalist” draft of the Declaration of Rights had served as a basis for the final phase of the Assembly’s debate over the Rights of Man and the Citizen, de La Fare’s concern was similarly to minimize the scope of human rights, curtail freedom of speech, and preclude the freedom to criticize the clergy and Church. The Sixth Bureau’s minimalist draft for the Declaration of the Rights of Man was not the basis of the final

<sup>36</sup> For the significance of the historiographical controversy over the Sixth Bureau’s role in the *Rights of Man* debate, and what I termed the “Baker-Bell-Edelstein error,” see *H-France Forum* vol. 9, Issue 1 (Winter 2013), no. 5, section replying to Baker.

<sup>37</sup> Elisabeth Badinter and Robert Badinter, *Condorcet. Un intellectuel en politique* (Paris, 1988), 289–90; Hertzberg, *French Enlightenment and the Jews*, 297; Badinter, *Libres et égaux*, 141–42, 152–53.

<sup>38</sup> Badinter, *Libres et égaux*, 141.

Declaration.<sup>39</sup> Hence, opposing Jewish rights in December 1789 was directly linked to the earlier failed attempt of de La Fare and monarchist allies like Maury and Mounier to emasculate human rights generally, in August 1789. The fight for Jewish rights was immediately renewed in January 1790, however, with the help of the radical faction in the Paris city government led at that point by Brissot and Condorcet.

Plainly, it was not the Revolution broadly conceived, nor even the National Assembly as such, any more than it was the people that introduced the idea of integrating Jews fully into society and allowing them to live where they wanted, free of restriction. (Under *ancien régime* French law, Jewish residence was legally confined to Alsace-Lorraine, Avignon, Bordeaux, and Bayonne.) Rather, this proposal was introduced and first powerfully publicized during the years immediately before the Revolution, most vigorously by Mirabeau, Brissot, and Cloots, who all likewise condemned Christian anti-Jewish prejudice prior to 1789. The ardent republican cosmopolitan and universalist Anacharsis Cloots contended exactly like Mirabeau, Dohm, Diez, and Thierry that overconcentration on trade and business in Jewish society and culture, and the high level of Jewish criminality, were the consequence not of innate characteristics or inherent moral depravity but of historical circumstances stretching back millennia. Cloots traced the origin of Christian discrimination against Jews back to the anti-Jewish edicts of the late Roman emperors following in the wake of Constantine the Great. Previously, the Jews had enjoyed equality and been full “citizens” of the Roman Empire in no way legally subject to discrimination. Had Constantine embraced Judaism instead of Christianity, contended Cloots, Judaism would be more general in the world and Christianity would now languish as scorned and degraded as Judaism was. However, if Christianity was the agent chiefly responsible for the distorted character of Jewish society, a much worse affront to humanity, held Cloots, was how Christianity had perverted and distorted society in general.<sup>40</sup> A Dutch-born Prussian former baron resident in Paris and by 1791 one of the most renowned revolutionary journalists, Cloots’s uncompromising rejection of Christianity was much more absolute and aggressive even than that of Dohm, Diez, or Mirabeau. Scorned by Robespierre and guillotined

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from the Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 78–85.

<sup>40</sup> [Anacharsis Cloots], *Lettre sur les Juifs à un ecclésiastique de mes amis* (“Berlin,” 1783), 45–46, 53–54, 56.

by the Montagne in March 1794, he figured among the principal initiators and sponsors of the de-Christianization campaign of 1793–1794.

Another leading champion of Jewish emancipation in 1789 was the passionate revolutionary journalist and democrat Antoine-Joseph Gorsas (1752–1793), a former tutor who loved books and the irreligious Enlightenment and reviled despotism, Robespierre, priests, and aristocracy—and was likewise to be guillotined by the Montagne. Characteristic of this unrepresentative fringe, he also disdained what he considered the ignorance and prejudiced outlook of the ordinary person. As editor of the *Courrier de Paris* he was among the first major pro-Revolution journalists in Paris to take up, support, and diffuse the Abbé Grégoire's historic proposal laid before the National Assembly in Paris on 1 September 1789, five days after the crucial vote that passed the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, to accord the Jews the rights of “*citoyens actifs*.<sup>41</sup> Witness to many ugly street scenes, Gorsas recorded firsthand and unsparingly the common people's seething hatred of the Jews and hostility to Jewish emancipation and not least their politically dangerous tendency to irrationality and brutal violence.<sup>42</sup>

A period of serious disorder and attacks on noble chateaux in various parts of France began in July 1789. But from mid- and late July the spreading unrest in Alsace and Lorraine assumed an emphatically antisemitic as well as antiaristocratic character, and serious anti-Jewish disturbances erupted in early August. Owing to this ugly development, the difference between the French Revolution considered as a social force emanating from the people, and the Revolution envisaged by “philosophy,” and the related contrast between popular antisemitism and the question of the Jews as conceived by revolutionary ideology, impressed itself on Gorsas's mind increasingly. During October 1789, his paper, among the most attentive to the confused flurry of events across France, vehemently deplored the unreasoning “hatred of the people,” particularly high-lighting the pillaging of Jewish homes in Lixheim, some 50 miles east of Nancy, in Lorraine, and 19 villages in Alsace, as well as the dire potential threat the local

<sup>41</sup> Badinter, *Libres et égaux*, 121,140; Ouzi Elyada, “La Presse parisienne de droite et la question juive sous la Révolution française,” in *Les Juifs en France au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. B. Blumenkrantz (Paris, 1994), 223–38 (223).

<sup>42</sup> Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rétat, *Naissance du journal révolutionnaire, 1789* (Lyon, 1989), 169–71.

peasantry's unrelenting bigotry and Catholic traditionalism posed equally to the Revolution as well as to the Jews.

Alsace-Lorraine was to prove the key early test case. With a substantial Ashkenazic population and seething with antisemitic resentment in Nancy and Metz as well as the countryside, as de La Fare stressed, the immediate result of the Revolution and the 1791 decree of full emancipation was a visibly still greater role of the Jews in local commerce, retailing, and peddling. This provided an opportunity both for counterrevolutionaries insisting the emancipation decree had had only negative effects and for revolutionary antisemitic spokesmen opposed to full civic rights for Jews, like Jean-François Rewbell (1747–1807), the Colmar lawyer and Estates-General deputy who became a Director after Thermidor, claiming Jews were resistant to revolutionary values and goals and thought only about trade, profits, and making money. Rewbell became a leading if notoriously opportunist and unprincipled Montagnard. Both groups of opponents exploited the opportunity. The actual effect of the Revolution in Alsace-Lorraine, in other words, was further to aggravate the existing Jewish problem, further inflame antisemitism, and marginalize democratic republican universalism as an emancipating force.<sup>43</sup> It was the ingrained ignorance and credulity of the ordinary person, admonished Gorsas as early as October 1789, not the people as such that direly threatened the Revolution (as well as the Jews). He called on the National Assembly to take special measures to protect them: "great danger surrounded in particular the Jews in Lorraine and Alsace."<sup>44</sup>

Various scholars, including Adam Sutcliffe, have rightly identified the 1780s as a crucial threshold when serious minds began "seriously to contemplate the transformation of Jewish status." But the explanation offered in terms of a change in the Enlightenment's way of conceiving of history as progress and something fundamentally mutable rather than stationary and fixed,<sup>45</sup> seems to me insufficient to account for so remarkable and exceptional a phenomenon as the Jewish emancipation movement of the 1780s and 1790s and its specific characteristics. For one thing, such an explanation fails to account for why full Jewish integration without

<sup>43</sup> Badinter, *Libres et égaux*, 123–27; Battenberg, "Französische Revolution und die Emanzipation," 251–53.

<sup>44</sup> Antoine-Joseph Gorsas, *Le Courrier de Paris dans les 83 départements* (later entitled just *Le Courrier des LXXXIII départements*) (Journal: 1790–1791) 1, no. 86 (1 Oct. 1789), 1, 19, 22; Badinter, *Libres et égaux*, 109–10, 115.

<sup>45</sup> Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), 251.

conversion to Christianity remained emphatically a minority and antipopulist position. Secondly, it fails to explain why those proposing Jewish integration were mostly unmitigated adversaries of traditional religious authority as such and not only that but of the existing order generally (which many or most enlighteners were not). This radical intellectual framework, I would suggest, generally holds true for all the main proponents of Jewish emancipation in the revolutionary context, even including the Abbé Grégoire, Adrien Lamourette,<sup>46</sup> and Claude Fauchet, who all became important revolutionary leaders in France during the years 1789–1791 even though they were fervent Christians. These impressive figures believed that comprehensive emancipation and Catholicism could be reconciled, that theology and “la philosophie” could fuse and be made compatible, that veritable Christian values would emerge strengthened from a drastic reform of the Church (including the loss of its property) and curtailing of the episcopate. Here, they were probably mistaken at least in the context of their time; the resistance of most of the episcopate and clergy, as well as the papacy was simply too strong. But in any case, these Christian revolutionaries did not doubt that the Revolution was necessary, that the social and moral order needed to be transformed and that humanity itself needed emancipating, with the emancipation of the Jews as an inherent part of this wider process. Thus Grégoire stressed the equality of all mankind, including the Jews, on the same basis as his secular-minded fellow radicals and, like them, attributed the degraded state of Jewish society to centuries of oppression.<sup>47</sup>

The papacy and the vast majority of the clergy opposed the views of Grégoire, Fauchet, and Lamourette, who as committed Christians became increasingly isolated within the Revolution. Given the relevant facts, and the inadequacies of the argument based on a supposed change in attitudes and in society, the thesis that Jewish emancipation was essentially a Radical Enlightenment project, inherent and essential within this framework of ideas but generally opposed outside such circles by practically everyone, enlighteners and traditionalists alike, emerges as the strongest and only truly convincing argument as to how Jewish emancipation came about.

<sup>46</sup> On Lamourette’s support of Jewish equality, see David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment. Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton, 2008), 284–85.

<sup>47</sup> Stuurman, *Uitvinding van de mensheid*, 330–31; Sorkin, *Religious Enlightenment*, 50.

## Post-Biblical Jewish History Through Christian Eyes: Josephus and the Miracle of Jewish History in English Protestantism

*Jonathan Elukin*

Christians have always invoked Judaism as a means of self-legitimation. One aspect of the Jewish experience rarely exploited in this fashion was the history of the Jews after the destruction of the second Temple. This period acquired a particular importance to Christians after the English Reformation. The destruction of the Temple by the Romans and the dispersion of the Jews held great meaning for English Protestants, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Inspired by the dramatic accounts of Jerusalem's destruction that they found in Josephus's works, Protestants paid increasing attention to how Jews lived in the centuries after the fall of the Temple. Ultimately, they saw the survival of the Jews in exile as miraculous. The preservation of the Jews, however, was a miracle that confirmed the truth of Christianity but did not ask believers in a post-Enlightenment world to accept violations of the laws of nature. By drawing the attention of their readers to the drama of Jewish survival for its religious meaning to Christians, gentile scholars and historians may have also encouraged Christians to consider that the post-Temple history of the Jews was worthy of study in its own right.

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Various factors in medieval culture had marginalized the significance of post-Temple Jewish history. To be sure, Augustine, who largely set the tone for attitudes toward the Jews in medieval culture, believed the Jews had an important role in a Christian world. God had punished them by destroying Jerusalem and damning them to wander the earth. However, in doing so, God had provided living witnesses to the antiquity and authenticity of Scripture and thus Christianity.<sup>1</sup> In Augustine's vision, however, the actual experience of the Jews in exile was not important. It only mattered that they should survive. His indifference to the lived experience of the Jews was compounded by his particularly restrained vision of the end of time. The apocalypse, in Augustine's view, described events beyond historical time. If, as some Christians thought, the Jews were to be involved in the onset of the millennium, their role—like that of any other human being—would take place beyond the normal boundaries of human time. At some point, the Jews would be gathered in, but what mattered about their present condition was their function as witnesses to the legitimacy of Christianity.

Other factors contributed to the lack of medieval and to some extent, early modern interest in contemporary Jewish history among Christians. When Christians thought about Jewish life after the destruction of Jerusalem, they believed the religion had decayed into pointless ritual. Rabbis might offer expertise in Hebrew and the literal meaning of Scripture but the caricature of Jewish legalism, carnality, and criminality helped to stifle any curiosity about the experience of Jews after the destruction of the Temple. As the more elaborate fantasies about alleged Jewish crimes, such as the various blood libels, developed after the twelfth century, it would have been even harder for Christian scholars to appreciate contemporary Judaism or medieval Jews.

Even if Christians could have overcome their prejudices about Jews, the historiographical culture of the Middle Ages worked against seeing the Jews as a people with their own history. Most history writing in medieval Europe was local, growing out of an interest in a monastery or in the actions of a particular king or in a military event.<sup>2</sup> The Jews were obviously marginal to the central themes of these works. The Jews had no political structures, religious institutions, or military traditions in

<sup>1</sup> See Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> John Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (Vintage, 2009), 168–258.

their own communities; their experiences fell outside the parameters of most Christian historical writing. Nor did the Jews themselves have a well-developed historical literature that might have provoked responses from Christians.<sup>3</sup>

Obstacles to integrating Jews into normative historiography existed in the more nuanced historical culture of the Renaissance. Where kings and monasteries had provided structure to medieval historical writing, the history of cities, such as Florence, became a central theme for many Renaissance writers. This topic, too, left little room for the Jews. For humanist authors interested in warfare, contemporary culture, contests among rulers, and the connection to the worlds of Rome and Greece, Jewish history since the destruction of the Temple simply did not fit into any of the usual categories of history writing as it evolved in the Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> Humanist intellectuals who were attracted to Judaism more often focused on kabbalistic texts as sources of esoteric Christian truths.

Protestants were more likely to *see* Jews clearly as a people with a real history in time and place. They were profoundly devoted to reading Scripture for the literal truth of the Hebrew Bible (as opposed to the allegorical readings of the Catholics). Moreover, Protestants identified profoundly with the Israelites. This more sympathetic perception of Jewish history took time to develop. Luther first saw the Jews in a positive light because of their intimate connection with Jesus. His approbation turned to disdain, suspicion, and hatred when they refused to embrace reformed Christianity. In Luther's later thought, the Jews became existential threats like the Turks and Catholics.<sup>5</sup> The Jews were part of the events marking the onset of the apocalyptic struggle against the devil and his allies. Other leaders of the early Reformation more or less shared Luther's attitudes toward Jewish history, if not always toward the Jews themselves. Even those Protestants who were more disposed to think of the Jews with greater compassion or to see them as a resource for understanding

<sup>3</sup> Yosef Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (University of Washington Press, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Burrow, *History of Histories*, 259–82.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, “Luther and the Jews,” in *Jews, Judaism and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Dean Phillip Bell and Stephen G. Burnett (Brill, 2006), 69–104.

Scripture still saw the historical significance of the Jews as terminated by the destruction of Jerusalem and their dispersion.<sup>6</sup>

The Reformation's embrace of Scripture and Protestant identification with the Israelites ultimately did open up new ways for Christians to see Jewish history. The historical culture of early modern Europe also helped to make post-Temple Jews more legitimate or acceptable subjects for study. The scholarly efforts of Renaissance humanists to recover an accurate text of the Bible, or to reveal Christian truths hidden in Jewish mystical traditions had created space for Jewish culture to enter mainstream scholarship. Both Protestants and Catholics mined the Jewish past looking for precedents or authorities for their respective practices. The encyclopedic, universal, and antiquarian instincts of Reformation and post-Reformation intellectuals certainly contributed to a widening of vision that could more easily encompass the Jews.<sup>7</sup>

The historical and theological culture of the English Protestantism, which will be the focus of this essay, capitalized on these changes and marked a break with previous attitudes towards post-Temple Jewish history. History itself came to play an increasingly vital role in the way English Protestants sought to proclaim the legitimacy of their church. Events of the past offered a way to guarantee the legitimacy of the Reformed church without having to rely on miracles, which were too closely associated with Catholic traditions.<sup>8</sup> For English Protestants, ultimately, history was really the record of God's actions in the past. Scripture provided the original blueprint for God's intervention in history.<sup>9</sup> It contained accounts of how God redeemed the Israelites and prepared the way for Jesus. They could see similar proof of God's hand in their own day in the rise of Reformed monarchs in England and the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

The future of the Jews became a crucial issue as well for English Protestants. Instead of an Augustinian idea of the apocalypse coalescing

<sup>6</sup>See Timothy J. Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon and the Jews: A Reappraisal," in Bell and Burnett, 105–36; R. Gerald Hobbs, "Bucer, the Jews, and Judaism," in Bell and Burnett, 137–70; Hans-Martin Kirn, "Ulrich Zwingli, the Jews, and Judaism," in Bell and Burnett, 171–96; Achim Detmers, "Calvin, the Jews, and Judaism," in Bell and Burnett, 197–218.

<sup>7</sup>Donald R. Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (Yale, 1998), 152–61, 188–216.

<sup>8</sup>Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (Yale, 2006), 21–50; Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>9</sup>Avihu Zakai, "Reformation, History, and Eschatology in English Protestantism," *History and Theory* 26 (1987), 300–318.

beyond human time, the devout saw the imminent perfection of society as a precursor to the millennium. Human beings were instrumental in preparing the world for the end time. Part of that preparation began to focus on the Jews, since biblical prophecies predicted that God would not abandon them in the end. They would accept Christ and return to Palestine as a necessary preparation for the perfection of society.<sup>10</sup> The fate of the Jews was thus part of Protestant efforts to forge a redeemed society. This belief would animate later Protestant attempts at conversion and support for the Jews to return to Palestine. Just as interest in documenting God's punishment of the Jews focused attention on the destruction of Jerusalem, and by extension the historical experience of the Jews, this new theological mindset about the Jews' continuing role in redemption led Protestants to pay more attention to the fate of the Jews after the destruction of the Temple.

As English Protestants began to think in these new ways about history, the manifestation of God in history, and the future importance of the Jews, they made Josephus and his narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem a fundamental point of reference. Josephus already had served as an important authority for Catholics trying to understand the language of the Bible. Josephus's account of Jewish history reinforced the authority of the contested books of the Maccabees. It was in those works that Catholics had found precedents and inspiration for prayers for the dead and for martyrdom. Moreover, Josephus even mentioned Jesus himself, even if the crucial passage in the *Jewish War* attracted recurring criticism. For English Protestants, on the other hand, Josephus's account of the destruction of Jerusalem provided a vivid narrative of how God had punished the Chosen People, thus fulfilling Scriptural prophecies of their rejection. The destruction of Jerusalem and the punishment of the Jews helped explain the historical ascendancy of the Catholic Church. Just as the Romans acted on God's behalf in punishing the Jews, the Catholic Church must have survived because God wanted to punish Christians (who were by nature Protestants) for their sins.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Zakai, "Poetics of History and the Destiny of Israel: The Role of the Jews in English Apocalyptic Thought during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 5 (1996), 319.

<sup>11</sup> Erin E. Kelly, "Jewish History, Catholic Argument: Thomas Lodge's 'Works of Josephus' as a Catholic Text," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34 (2003), 997–998 and 1000–1004. It is important to note that Josephus had been used as a source for a more secular understanding of history as early as the seventeenth century as a challenge to the dominant providentialist paradigm. See Vanita Neelakanta, "Reading Providence out of History: The Destruction

By bringing Josephus into the heart of their theological and historical culture, English Protestants sparked a slow change in the perception of Jewish history that continued to evolve in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> The vivid detail of Josephus's work exposed Christian readers to the lived experience of individual Jews. Josephus's "total" history of the Jews at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem helped to prepare some Christians to care about the Jews who lived after the fall of the Temple. Christian scholars framed that interest in Jewish history as a metaphorical and literal "continuation" of Josephus. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a French Huguenot historian, who is now remembered for writing the first sympathetic treatment of Jewish history by a gentile, created the first and most significant continuation of Josephus as a trope for exploring subsequent Jewish history. Jacques Basnage's *Histoire des Juifs* was translated into English in 1708 and became the basis, often unacknowledged, for various works that contained continuations of Josephus and other histories of the Jews.<sup>13</sup> The structure and approach of his book shaped later presentations of Jewish history in the Anglo-Protestant tradition.

of Jerusalem in William Heminge's 'The Jews' Tragedy,'" *Studies in Philology* 111 (2014), 83–109. For a new survey, see Beatrice Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge, 2015), which I discovered after this article was finished.

<sup>12</sup>[author anon.], *The History, Fall, and miserable ruin of the Jews with the Sacking, Burning, and Destroying of Jerusalem, and the Death of Three Hundred Thousand Jews that fell by Famine and War, shewn by many Texts in Scripture as an infallible Token of God's Judgment and Wrath against those Stiff-Necked People for the Death of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, which happen'd about Thirty Years before* (1720); Robert Millar, *The history of the Jews, from the death of Herod the great, to the final destruction of their city, Temple, and nation: containing, the cause and rise of that war; the number of the killed and prisoners taken in it, and during the siege of Jerusalem; the grievous famine, and great necessity the Jews were reduced to during the siege, with the alarming signs and prodigies that appear in the air before the commencement of the war. By all which, it will plainly appear, that the predictions of our Lord, and the desolation spoken of by Daniel; the threatenings of the law of Moses, and the vengeance they imprecated upon themselves, when at crucifying our Saviour, were all signally accomplished. By Mr. R. Millar, late Minister of Pastey ...* (1782).

<sup>13</sup> *The History of the Jews, from Jesus Christ to the Present Time: Containing their Antiquities, their Religion, their Rites, The Dispersion of the Ten Tribes in the East, and the Persecutions this Nation has suffer'd in the West. Being a Supplement and Continuation of the History of Josephus.* Written in French by Mr. Basnage. Translated into English by Tho. Taylor. See Jonathan Elukin, "Jacques Basnage and the History of the Jews: Anti-Catholic Polemic and Historical Allegory in the Republic of Letters," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992): 603–30, which includes an extensive bibliography of scholarship on Basnage. The idea of Josephus as a continuation of the Bible was present as early as the sixteenth century when sections of Josephus were printed as appendices to Latin Bibles. See Kelly, "Jewish History," 997–998.

Very soon after the English translation of Basnage appeared, several important editions of Josephus's collected works were published, containing so-called "continuations" of Josephus. These were essentially adaptations of Basnage's review of post-Temple Jewish history. The most elaborate edition of this new combination of texts inspired by Basnage is that by George Henry Maynard, which appeared in 1792.<sup>14</sup> Maynard, who has left virtually no trace in the usual biographical reference sources, essentially plagiarized several chapters from Basnage.<sup>15</sup> Other less elegant editions of Josephus, with continuations also largely plagiarized from the English translation of Basnage, quickly followed Maynard's edition.<sup>16</sup> The continuations of

<sup>14</sup> George Henry Maynard, transl. and ed., *The whole genuine and complete works of Flavius Josephus, the learned and authentic Jewish historian and celebrated warrior ... Works. English 1792 translated from the original in the Greek language and diligently revised ... ;to which is added various useful indexes; also a continuation of the history of the Jews, from Josephus down to the present time ... by George Henry Maynard; illustrated with marginal references and notes by the Rev. Edward Kimpson ... , London: printed for C. Cooke ... and sold by the booksellers of Bath [and 29 other towns] and by all other booksellers in England, Scotland, and Ireland [ca. 1800].*

<sup>15</sup> Maynard, in fact, went out of his way to claim that his work was original: "To complete the work, we have annexed a Supplement, collected from authentic Manuscripts, bringing down the Jewish history to the present times, which, being an attempt entirely new, we flatter ourselves, will stamp an additional value upon our undertaking, and make it in every respect worthy of the patronage of a judicious and candid public." (translator's preface). Basnage: "...yet it offers to the Public View an Object worthy of admiration; and the greatest Prodigy imaginable, in the preservation of the Jewish Nation in the midst of all the Calamities they have run through for Seventeen Hundred Years." (VI,i,465) And here is Maynard: "There is not a circumstance amongst the various events of revolving time more worthy of admiration than the preservation of the people of the Jews, in the midst of all the calamities they have undergone for the space of upwards of 1700 years." (I, i, 549) The entire text follows Basnage with only minor changes in language.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Bradshaw, ed., *The Whole Genuine and Complete Works of Flavius Josephus, the learned and authentic Jewish Historian and Celebrated warrior. Containing New and Elegant Edition of his whole works ... and the Writings of Contemporary Authors of different Nations; tending to prove the Authenticity of these Works, to which is added, to render this edition as complete as possible, A Continuation of the History of the Jews, from the Death of Josephus to the Present Time, including a Period of more than 1700 years, containing an account of their Dispersion into the Various Parts of Europe.* One book acknowledged Basnage as well as other sources. Crull, *The Jewish History, as well as ecclesiastical as civil, from the creation of the world, to this present time. Being an abridgment of Sr. Roger L'Estrange's Josephus. With a continuation form the most authentic records, the Imperial laws, the Decrees of council, the Mishnah, the Thalmud, Maimonides, Benjamin de Tudela, Leo de Modena, Selden, Spencer, Monsieur Basnage, &c. 1708.*

Josephus likely inspired other surveys of Jewish history that also appeared in the eighteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

With Josephus as an accepted starting point, Christian writers enlarged the theological meaning of the dispersion of the Jews. Instead of merely cataloguing evidence of their dispersion and sufferings, the continuations of Josephus and the separate narratives of Jewish history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emphasized the seemingly miraculous *survival* of the Jews as a separate people. That the Jews survived as a people was, of course, necessary for it was their ultimate conversion that was part of the onset of the millennium. Nevertheless, Christian writers emphasized with great passion the continued existence, rather than just the sufferings, of the Jews as a miracle in itself. Jews were no longer merely the passive recipients of God's punishment. In a way, they were to be admired and wondered at for their survival. Such a shift slowly cast a penumbra of the miraculous over the experience of the Jews. Their miraculous lives, guided by God to be sure, offered a continuing miracle testifying to the truth of Christianity.

The first expression of this idea, or at least the expression of it that had the most impact on subsequent authors, was articulated in Basnage's history. Here is the core text from the English translation of Basnage that made its way into many of the continuations and narratives that appeared in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

Notwithstanding the driness and barreness of the History we are upon, yet it offers to the Publick View an Object worthy of admiration; and the greatest Prodigy imaginable, is the preservation of the Jewish nation in the midst of all the Calamities they have run through for Seventeen Hundred Years ... we shall here see a Church, that has been hated and persecuted for Seventeen Hundred Years, subsisting and still numerous. ...Both Kings and People, Heathens, Christians, and Mahometans, who are opposite in so many Things, have united in the Design of ruining this Nation, and have not been able to effect it. The Bush of Moses surrounded with Flames, has always burnt without consuming. The Jews have been driven from all Places of the World, which has only serv'd to disperse them into all the Parts of the

<sup>17</sup> Robert Millar, *The history of the Church under the Old Testament, from the creation of the world, ... and the State of the Jews from the Babylonish Captivity to the present Time, are particularly considered.* (1730); Thomas Reader, *Memorable remarks upon the ancient and modern state of the Jewish nation; with several other particulars relating to the Jews. ...* (1786); [author anon.], *Israel's salvation: or, an account from the prophecies of scripture of the grand events which await the Jews, to the end of time* (1788).

Universe ... since in spite of so long a train of Miseries, and a so long tried Patience, the Jewish Nation is still kept up, and preserved by Providence ...<sup>18</sup>

Other English writers took up Basnage's language almost immediately. Maynard more or less copied Basnage on the miraculous nature of Jewish history in the continuation he included in his edition of Josephus.<sup>19</sup> Thomas Bradshaw, the Cambridge divine, reinforced Basnage's profound wonder at the survival of the Jews:

There is no circumstance more remarkable amongst all the events of this transitory state, than the dispersion of the Jews over the face of the whole earth; and their continuing a distinct and separate body amidst the various nations, people, and languages whither they have been driven. The history of nations does not furnish us with any thing similar; and we are obliged to look to the fulfilment of the prophecy relative to this peculiar people, and there to find the cause of their wonderful situation, which is exhibited as a constant and living miracle before our eyes. Christians of the present day have this additional proof of the divinity and excellence of their religion: not only Moses, and the prophets; not only Christ, and his apostles; but every son and daughter of Abraham whom they meet in the streets, corroborates the testimony, that the *Bible is true*. Notwithstanding their poverty and distress, and the various calamities to which the modern Jews are subject, they remain separate and detached, waiting the fulfilment of the residue of prophecy in their behalf; waiting the for the accomplishment of those purposes of mercy and reserved for them as the descendants of the chosen and elect of God.<sup>20</sup>

The wonder at the survival of the Jews soon came to characterize more extended treatments of Jewish history as well. Michael Mayers, the writer and cleric, wrote in his *History of the Jews from their Origin to their Ultimate Dispersion*:

And since their final expulsion from their own land, they have been “scattered among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other,” yet have they been enabled to preserve existence, through a lapse of nearly eighteen hundred years, amidst the hatred, execration, and persecution of all nations among whom they have been dispersed. They have wonderfully distinguished, conducted, and preserved; and are still kept separate from the rest of mankind,

<sup>18</sup> Basnage, *History of the Jews*, 465.

<sup>19</sup> See note 15 above.

<sup>20</sup> Bradshaw, p. 641.

presenting distinctive features of body, of mind, of habits, and behavior; and all this is, because eternal Providence entertains purposes of wisdom, love, and mercy concerning them, which are advancing to their final accomplishment.<sup>21</sup>

We find similar comments throughout the range of nineteenth-century works on Jewish history in the English—or later, American—Protestant milieu. Basnage's language survives in the appendix to the English translation of *History of the Hebrew Commonwealth*, by Johannes Jahn, the learned Viennese professor of biblical archeology and theology: "The preservation of the Jews as a distinct people is an event unparalleled in the annals of history, and is one of the most signal and illustrious acts of Divine Providence."<sup>22</sup> William Jenks, the noted Congregational clergyman, biblical scholar, and social reformer asserted in his preface to *The History of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity to the Present Time*:

To the student of human nature, by the medium of history, the documents in which the circumstances of the Jews are detailed, will ever afford the most valuable instruction; but it is on the Christian, and viewed in the light in which Christianity presents it, that the condition of the Jews urges its claims to consideration, with a force that none can resist who have felt the power of divine truth on their hearts.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> M. Mayers, *The History of the Jews from their Origin to their Ultimate Dispersion* (London, 1824), 476.

<sup>22</sup> *History of the Hebrew Commonwealth. Translated from the German of John Jahn ... with an appendix containing the continuation of the history of the Jews to the reign of Adrian. Translated from Basnage*. By Calvin E. Stowe (1828), 480: "Thus the divine truth is pledged for the perpetual preservation of some remnant at least of the Jewish race, as a distinct people, however apparently dispersed and abandoned. And this promise has been hitherto accomplished during three thousand years from its delivery, a duration of distinct existence unparalleled in the history of any other nation." See also Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at the time are fulfilling the world* (1850), 376: "And for what reason can we believe, that though they are dispersed among all the nations, yet by a constant miracle they are kept distinct from all, but for the farther manifestation of God's purposes towards them? The prophecies have been accomplished to the greatest exactness in the destruction of their city, and its continuing still subject to strangers, in the dispersion of their people, and their living still separate from all people; and why should not the remaining parts of the same prophecies be as fully accomplished too in their restoration, at the proper season, when the 'times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.'"

<sup>23</sup> Huie and Brownlee, *The history of the Jews: from the Babylonian captivity to the present time; comprising Their conquests, dispersions, wanderings, persecutions, commercial enterprises, literature, manners, customs, and Forms of Worship with an account of the various efforts made for their conversion compiled from the most authentic sources; with a pref. by William Jenks*

Subsequent histories continued to rely heavily or even exclusively on Basnage's language. Some books, like that of John Marsh, the minister and temperance advocate, included a "condensed" version of Basnage's discussion of the dispersion of the Jews in a separate section.<sup>24</sup> Others, like those of Hannah Adams, the prominent American historian of the early nineteenth century, and Henry Milman, perhaps the most popular and influential gentile historian to write about Jews in the nineteenth-century English-speaking world, followed Basnage's organization and sometimes his language in writing their narrative of Jewish history after the destruction of the Temple. All of these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts imitated Basnage in embracing the miraculous nature of Jewish survival.<sup>25</sup> Milman's language captured the reliance on Basnage's idea about the wonder of Jewish survival:

(1847), 7: "In every point of view in which the state of the Jews can be contemplated, it must be regarded as an object fraught with the deepest interest. They have been a wonderful people from the beginning. Their history, commencing with the call of Abraham, extending onward to the periods of their captivity—and the destruction of Jerusalem—and embracing the subsequent judgments that overtook them—their present dispersion—and their future glorious prospects,—is a history full of meaning and of interest, and valuable for the lessons which it teaches. It differs, in many important respects, from the history of any other portion of the human race."

<sup>24</sup> *An epitome of general ecclesiastical history: from the earliest period to the present time. With an appendix giving a condensed history of the Jews, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the present day. Illustrated by maps and engravings* (New York, 1836).

<sup>25</sup> Hannah Adams, *The history of the Jews from the destruction of Jerusalem to the nineteenth century* (Boston, 1812), 552. And on p. 551: "The preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, is an event unparalleled in the annals of history. To use the animated language of a modern writer of their own nation, 'Braving all kinds of torments, the pangs of death, the still more terrible pangs of life, we have withstood the impetuous torrent of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course, nations, religions, and countries. What is become of those celebrated empires whose very name still excites our admiration by the ideas of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power embraced the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Greece are no more; their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin; while a population of a few millions of men, so often subjugated, stands the test of thirty revolving centuries, and the fiery ordeal of fifteen centuries of persecution. We still preserve laws which were given to us in the first days of the world, in the infancy of nature. The last followers of a religion which had embraced the universe have disappeared these fifteen centuries, and out temples are still standing. We alone have been spared by the undiscriminating hand of time, like a column left standing amidst the wreck of worlds, and the ruins of nature. The history of this people connects present times with the first ages of the world, by the testimony it bears of the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind, and its remnants are likely to be preserved to the very day of universal

The history of the Jews is written, as it were, in their blood; they show no signs of life but in their cries of agony; they only appear in the annals of the world to be oppressed, robbed, tortured, massacred. Perpetually plundered; yet always wealthy; massacred by thousands, yet springing up again from their undying stock; the Jews appear at all times, and in all regions. Their perpetuity, their national immortality, is at once the most curious problem to the political inquirer—to the religious man a subject of profound and awful admiration.<sup>26</sup>

The nature of belief in the miraculous had no doubt changed since the seventeenth century. By the nineteenth century, devout Protestants who wished to preserve their faith in the truth of Scripture and the belief that God acted in history had to face increasing pressure from a post-Enlightenment culture where secularization was proceeding apace. It was in this context that the seemingly miraculous survival of the Jews may have become of particular interest and utility. The preservation of the Jews as a distinct people in the face of persecution and assimilation was truly remarkable. How did this people without a country survive as a distinct people up until the current day? Here was a miracle that was grounded in the details of historical events and social relations, involving people that many Christians recognized as part of their world. In the accounts of post-Temple Jewish history, they now had access to vivid evidence of the extent of this miraculous survival.

Josephus's status and authority as a witness to the fate of Jerusalem had given Jewish history a foothold in English theological and historical culture. He was the starting point for any narrative of Jewish history, and he remained a crucial source for believers well into the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

destruction.' (M. Michael Berr's Appeal to the Justice of Kings and Nations, written and published at Strasburg in 1801 and cited in the *Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrim*.)"

<sup>26</sup> Milman, *History of the Jews from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1832), 406. I have found one other nineteenth-century English history of the Jews that does not emphasize the miraculous nature of their survival. See Alfred Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation after the Destruction of Jerusalem under Titus* (Edinburgh, 1857).

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at the time are fulfilling the world* (1850), 383: "Josephus himself was no less wonderfully preserved than Titus, the one to destroy the city, and the other to record its destruction.... Thus was he saved from the most imminent destruction; and he himself esteemed it, as it certainly was, a singular instance of divine providence." Daniel Smith, *The Destruction of Jerusalem: abridged from the history of the Jewish wars by Flavius Josephus with a description of Palestine, and Brief Sketch of the History of Jerusalem Before the War; together with an epitome*

In the course of providing evidence for the fulfillment of scriptural prophecies about the fate of the Jews, Josephus had also brought his readers closer to the real experience of the Jews in the last days of Jerusalem. In his account, the Jews became individuals facing their deaths at the hands of the Romans. The intimacy and vividness of his portraits of Jews, such as the woman who consumed her child, demanded that readers pay attention to their fates as human beings. Even readers who looked only for confirmation that justice was meted out to the Jews could not ignore the pathos and tragedy of Josephus's account. Basnage saw the same drama and compelling human history in the later sufferings of the Jews. He called directly for Christians to respond to that suffering with human charity: "There is no exaggeration in it. I content myself with pointing to notorious Facts, and so far am I from designing to render the Nation odious by its Misery, that I conclude, that it ought to be looked upon as one of those Wonders we admire, without fathoming the depth of 'em, ... Christians ought to quicken their Regard and Charity of Men whom God so long preserves."<sup>28</sup>

The accumulated continuations of Josephus and later narratives of Jewish history conjured up real people. Of course, Christians saw in the continuing suffering, persecution, and survival of the Jews in the diaspora what they wanted to see: proof of God's power and the truth of Scripture. Nevertheless, their exposure to these narratives of Jewish history over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, even through a narrative prism that emphasized the miraculous survival of the Jews, led them to see Jews differently. For the first time, Christians thought that Jews who lived after the destruction of the Temple were human beings with their own history.<sup>29</sup>

*of its modern history the whole being intended to illustrate the fulfillment of the predictions of Moses and the Messiah* (New York, 1840).

<sup>28</sup> Basnage, *History of the Jews*, 466.

<sup>29</sup> Jewish scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement in Germany inherited the Jewish understanding of the diaspora as a divine punishment. This may have focused their scholarly attention on the diaspora, but it certainly did not shape their historical analysis or conclusions. Nils Roemer, *Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Madison, 2005), 15–25.

## CHAPTER 8

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# Alien, Everyman, Jew: The Dialectics of Dutch “Philosemitism” on the Eve of World War II

*Irene Zwiep*

*Nostra res agitur paries cum proximus ardet*—when our neighbor’s house is on fire, we should take precautions for the safety of our own. Needless to say, altruism is not the issue in this famous quotation from Horace<sup>1</sup>; it is plain common sense that is being endorsed here. When our neighbor’s house is on fire, it is unwise to look the other way. And when we join in the effort at extinguishing the flames, it may be as much from genuine compassion as from a legitimate concern for our own possessions. Like a blaze, somebody else’s bad luck may be contagious. Trying to avert it is a matter of prudence; empathy alone makes a poor excuse for putting your life at risk.

*Nostra res agitur*—our cause is at stake. Horace’s well-worn admonition was the premise of a volume of essays called *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* that was edited and published in 1939 by the Amsterdam professor of philosophy Hendrik Josephus Pos (1898–1955).<sup>2</sup> It takes but a brief glance to realize that the ten authors mobilized by Pos had no primary interest in

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<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Epistle I*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Pos, ed., *Antisemitisme en Jodendom. Een bundel studies over een actueel vraagstuk* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1939). The quotation resurfaces at the end of Pos’s own

rehabilitating real-time Jews or even abstract Judaism. Their first concern was to defend Civilization (the capital C is by no means accidental here) against the Jews' most recent nemesis: antisemitism, which by the end of the 1930s had evolved from an “inhumane and pathological mentality” into an intellectually motivated ideology that demanded serious academic refutation.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, contemporary critics argued that Pos's cerebral approach was more likely to enhance than to weaken antisemitic sentiments, not the least among the broader audience he hoped to reach.<sup>4</sup> Later readers would find themselves upset over the covert (or not so covert) antisemitic bias of some of his coauthors.<sup>5</sup> Yet where Pos's contemporaries rightly pointed at the limits of elitist reason *vis-à-vis* populist common sense,<sup>6</sup> later critics tended to overlook one tiny detail: the simple fact that, throughout history, siding with the Jews had never meant actually *liking* them. “We do not ask our readers to become prosemitic,” Pos himself acknowledged.<sup>7</sup> For him as for his contributors, the danger of antisemitism lay not in the harm done to the Jews but in the damage inflicted upon Western culture, of which the Jews were somehow a part.

The present volume on the Jew as legitimation invites us to reexamine Pos's *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* as an example of “philosemitism” as it has recently been defined by Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, that is, as one episode in a long tradition of gentiles backing the Jewish cause

chapter on “De Joodsche geest en het denken” (The Jewish Spirit and [Western] Thought), 147, on which see below.

<sup>3</sup> “mensonwaardig en pathologisch”: Pos, “Inleiding” (Introduction), xi.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ix. In order to reach that broad audience, the book was on offer for the reasonable sum of HFL 1.25. NB: For contemporary critiques, see Herman Langeveld, “Van gereformeerd hoogleraar tot voorzitter van het Comité van Waakzaamheid,” in *H.J. Pos (1898–1955) taalkundige en geëngageerd filosoof*, ed. Saskia Daalder and Jan Noordegraaf (Amsterdam: Huis aan de Drie Grachten, 1990), 29–68; George Harinck, “Betoverde herinnering 1. Menno ter Braak, antisemitisme en het Comité van Waakzaamheid,” *Liter* 3 (2000): 60–67.

<sup>5</sup> See esp. H. A. Gomperts's posthumously published and tumultuously received *Een kern van waarheid. Over angst, haat, zelfhaat en intellectueel antisemitisme bij Nietzsche en Ter Braak* (Amsterdam: Van Oorschot, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> On the populist appropriation of common sense, see Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense. A Political History* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2011), esp. 1–16, 221–57.

<sup>7</sup> Pos, “Inleiding,” ix. For a careful historical contextualization of the terms “antisemitism” and “anti-antisemitism” (at the cost of alternatives like “prosemitsim”), see Lars Fischer, “Anti-‘Philosemitism’ and Anti-Antisemitism in Imperial Germany,” in *Philosemitism in History*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 170–89.

in support of a non-Jewish agenda.<sup>8</sup> By accepting the duality of Western Judaeophilia, we can skip the dialectic of righteous gentiles versus rotten apples and shift our gaze to the complexity of the Judaeo–Christian relationship. “Philosemitism” is not simply antisemitism in the reverse. It has always relied on a combination of attraction *and* aversion, of conditional sympathy alternating with unconditional disgust, of stereotyped abstractions colliding with the interests of actual, living Jews. As the sum of these tensions, it is a prism that enables us to view the Western fascination with Judaism without lapsing into slippery verdicts—provided we are willing to trade moral conceit for grim historicism.

For all its flaws, Pos’s publication too deserves a more balanced scrutiny. What exactly were its principal concerns? What were the intellectual paradigms and popular clichés that nourished its argumentation? And, last but not least, precisely how did Jews and Judaism tie in with its overall agenda and rhetoric?

Pos had instigated *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* not from the ivory tower of the Amsterdam Municipal University, but as a member of the Comité van Waakzaamheid, a vigilante organization founded in 1936 to defend the values of modern society in the face of fascist barbarism. Nevertheless, everything about the volume bears the stamp of Pos-the-professor, who knew the political potential of academic research and had put his theoretical brilliance at the service of such concrete ideals as freedom, altruism, truth, courage, and justice.<sup>9</sup>

Science and scholarship, Pos believed, should never be neutral, but always objective, that is, morally autonomous and based on independent judgment.<sup>10</sup> Academics were not to turn their backs on current social questions<sup>11</sup> but, by virtue of their profession, should never subordinate their

<sup>8</sup> Karp and Sutcliffe, “Introduction: A Brief History of Antisemitism,” in *Philosemitism in History*, 1–28.

<sup>9</sup> This agenda, as laid down in Pos’s *Filosofie der wetenschappen* of 1940 and reaffirmed in “De toekomstige geest der universiteit” (written March 1945 in anticipation of the German capitulation), is discussed in Peter Derkx, *H.J. Pos, 1898–1955, objectief en partijdig. Biografie van een filosoof en humanist* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), 215–23.

<sup>10</sup> For modern trends in scientific objectivity, see Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” *Representations* 40 (1992): 81–128. For the “myth” of objectivity in the Humanities, with an emphasis on American historical writing, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> Witness the reference to “een actueel vraagstuk” in the volume’s subtitle.

judgments to society's current interests. Against this noble creed we can easily understand why Pos had no intention to counter antisemitism by feeding his readers a simple prosemitic alternative. Rather than persuading them to swap one cliché for another, he preferred to supply them with data that would enable them to draw their own conclusions, *quasi* without intervention from the author. In hindsight, or perhaps not even in hindsight, Pos's trust in man's capacity for independent judgment is touching. We should not forget, however, that it was this fundamental capacity (and not the Jews' social vulnerability) that had inspired his manifesto.

Neatly reflecting the book's basic design, the—at first sight indeed rather dreary—title is of mathematical simplicity. In eleven chapters, *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* sets out to confront antisemitism with its main object (the Jews) and, by contrasting their respective pros and cons, guide its readers toward a “free and measured judgment” (read: toward a unanimous rejection of national socialism).<sup>12</sup> In the first chapters, antisemitism was explained from three different scholarly angles, *viz.* that of history (by Jacques Presser, the only Jew on the team), biology (by geneticist P. J. Waardenburg, who situated antisemitism within current racial theory), and psychology (by psychiatrist Johannes van der Spek, who pondered the persistent plausibility of anti-Judaic clichés). For political reasons, their surveys were followed by an inventory of Jewish–Christian relations, compiled by church historian Johannes Lindeboom. Under the generic heading “de Joodsche geest en ...” (the Jewish spirit and ...), chapters five to ten offered reflections on the Jewish presence in ethics, law, philosophy, literature, art, and music. On the final pages, a demographic chapter on the Jewish population of the Netherlands was added for the benefit of “those who preferred fact over argumentation.” In the introduction, Pos explicitly welcomed the book's unwieldy polyphony, stating that he had gladly sacrificed conceptual coherence for the sake of the intellectual freedom he and his fellow authors were defending.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> “[E]en vrij en bezonnen oordeel [...] een houding die grote Nederlandse tradities waardig voortzet”; “Inleiding,” ix. Though deeply political, *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* thus in a sense upheld the objective “non-interventionist” ethos of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientific thinking; compare Daston and Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” 117–23.

<sup>13</sup> Significantly, two contributors overtly questioned the efficacy of Pos's contrastive scheme. Menno ter Braak (on whom more below) believed the irrational preoccupation with race could not be countered by a rational account of Jewish civilization. Legal scholar Ben Telders (1903–1945) argued that the “Jewish spirit” was too antisemitic an invention to be

Yet while the individual essays greatly differed in grasp, approach, and even appreciation of Jews and Judaism, they all relied on one basic strategy: the belief that Judaism was not only the worst victim but also the best corrective of national-socialist prejudice. On the face of it, the cure they prescribed was simple, bordering on the commonplace, when they proposed Jewish universalism (or cosmopolitanism, if you will) as *the* solution to the contracting horizons of modern nationalism.<sup>14</sup> Yet as soon as we venture beyond the surface, we find that some authors actually went at great length to ground their reconstructions of Jewish universalism in “real” Jewish life and thought. In a minute, we will take a closer look at their learned valorizations of modern Jewish experience. But first, in order to better appreciate these valorizations, we should briefly consider the mentality that had prompted them in the first place.

As mentioned earlier, the true inspiration of Pos’s volume was neither antisemitism nor Judaism, but the liberal, humanistic values of Western civilization. In the spirit of interbellum internationalism, Pos did not see civilization as a clearly demarcated, monolithic national archetype, but as a dynamic blend of races and cultures, never at rest and thus hard to grasp, brimming with tensions yet always striving for harmony and forever expanding its horizons in the process.<sup>15</sup> Pos’s emphasis on hybridity and flux obviously was meant to counterbalance National Socialism’s preference for pristine, stable monoculture; his enlightened inclusivism compensated for its particularist intolerance. Insofar as national particularism favored the “collective,” Pos conceded, it constituted a welcome cure for individualism, that other famous scourge of modernist modernity. Yet as soon as it sanctioned social exclusion, it became a dangerous, disbanding force. In his campaign against this disintegration, Pos decided to recruit an antipodal “power that represented the value of the universal” above all others. That power he found embodied in Judaism, which, in his own words, combined a “truly extraordinary particularism” with a “conscious commitment to humanity at large.”<sup>16</sup>

an object of scholarship. Since he would not stoop so low as to reconstruct it, he rather contributed a series of short (and highly entertaining) biographies of the most prominent Jewish personalities in modern Dutch jurisprudence; “De Joodsche geest en het recht,” 107–29.

<sup>14</sup> For cosmopolitanism as the ultimate correction of nationalist particularism, see e.g. Robert Fine and Robin Cohen, “Four Cosmopolitan Moments,” in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, ed. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 140.

<sup>15</sup> Pos, “Inleiding,” xiii.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., xiv.

In view of the Jews' unholy track record of social and religious aloofness, Pos did well to mention, however briefly, their "truly extraordinary particularism." Their status as a Chosen People, who begrudged mankind its due share in the service of its Creator, hardly seemed to warrant their being singled out for an important humanitarian mission. This tendency to shut out the world, however, had always been compensated by a tradition of Jewish global aspirations. Still, between Isaiah's prophecy that one day Israel would be "a light unto the nations"<sup>17</sup> and James Joyce's picking the Hungarian-Irish half-Jew Leonard Bloom as the ideal Ulysses for modern times, there lies a long and tortuous road.<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately for us, Pos's volume has various chapters that allow us to travel the historical route from particularism to universalism, or at least pause at some of its more recent stations. It is best (read: most clearly and eloquently) represented in the three articles that deal with "the Jewish *Geist*" in relation to ethics, philosophy, and literature respectively. Building on different conceptions of Jewish universalism, they give us a glimpse of the Jewish search for a constructive role in the making of Western modernity and of the gentile appraisal of that ultimately futile, ill-fated "commitment to humanity at large." On top of that, they offer an excellent illustration of Pos's real motive (already briefly touched upon above) for bringing out the volume: not to write a defense of Judaism by trading antisemitic stereotype for prosemitic cliché but to offer food for thought in politically troubled times. At its core, *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* was not about Jews, but about intellectual freedom, conceptual complexity, and individual judgment versus collective craze; about a *sound mind* in an otherwise healthy body; about objective scholarship that should never be allowed to become neutral. In Karp and Sutcliffe's ranking, by mobilizing the Jewish cause for this generic ideal, Pos's initiative certainly qualifies as hard core "philosemitism."

The most straightforward and, in a sense, the most familiar of the three evaluations was that by professor of ethics Hendrik van Oyen (1898–1980), whom Pos had chartered to describe the Jewish impact on Western morality.<sup>19</sup> I say straightforward because Van Oyen's chapter was

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 49:6.

<sup>18</sup> For Leonard Bloom as "the ultimate cosmopolitan," see Brian Cheyette, *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture, 1789–1914* (Edgware: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 41.

<sup>19</sup> Van Oyen, "De Joodsche geest en de ethiek," 83–106.

one of the few to approach Judaism not via abstraction and metaphor but as the concrete religion it had been for thousands of years (or at least since the late Enlightenment). And I say familiar because his argumentation owed much, if not all, to the Jewish heroes of twentieth-century Christian theology, viz. Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Baeck, and Hermann Cohen, whom Van Oyen, a devotee of the Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism, revered as “the new Plato,” “the cosmopolitan,” and “the Jewish prophet of our time.”<sup>20</sup> Toward the end of his chapter, Van Oyen even went as far as to say that he found little difference between current Neo-Protestantism and Judaism as reformulated by these modern thinkers. For a Marburgian like himself, the origins of this affinity should be traced back to Kant, who (according to Van Oyen) had modeled his idea of practical reason upon the ethics of Judaism as defined by Moses Mendelssohn. In Kant’s majestic formulation of the categorical imperative, he summarized, the thunders of Sinai could still be heard.<sup>21</sup>

If we have difficulty picturing Kant as a student of Mendelssohn, we have less trouble recognizing the combined imprint of these two great philosophers on modern Jewish religious self-conception. Backed up by Kant’s emphasis on ethics as practical reason, Mendelssohn’s priority of individual conscience over collective law had paved the way for a Jewish theology that transcended the limits of particularism and (indeed not unwelcome in times of emancipation) of nation and community. Moral principle, not halakhic practice, was the essence of modern Jewish religiosity. And unlike halakhic practice, that moral essence had implications for the world beyond Judaism. Already Mendelssohn had argued that at Sinai God had not just struck up a private conversation with the Jews. His Jewish followers readily confirmed that the Law (and not, by implication, God’s only Son) had been the ultimate Jewish gift to mankind. Thus Jewish ethical monotheism was born, a worthy contestant of enlightened Christianity, natural religion, and their successors.

In support of the central message of *Antisemitisme en Jodendom*, this universalist ethical monotheism was a godsend, provided it could be reconciled with its opposite: the Jews’ insistence on their being the Chosen People. For a reinterpretation of that Jewish exclusivity, Van Oyen relied on Leo Baeck (1873–1956), who had formulated a rather stern take on

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 104, after fellow Neo-Kantian Leon Roth (1896–1963), the first to occupy the chair in philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

divine election, the origins of which went back to Maimonides. According to this Maimonidean tradition, being picked out by God to keep His commandments was a mixed blessing, because it meant hard work and little reward.<sup>22</sup> Everyday reality was enough to remind one that practicing righteousness required constant, unflagging determination. Or, as Baeck summarized in *Das Wesen des Judentums* (1905), “Israel is elect, [only] when it elects itself.”<sup>23</sup> Rejecting the possibility of political nationhood, Baeck realized that keeping the *mitzvot* was crucial to Jewish continuity. “Either [Israel] will live as God has commanded,” he wrote, “or it will not live at all.” Nevertheless, in modern civil society this self-imposed moral existence could not be led for the sake of Israel alone, but should serve the redemption of society at large. It is hardly surprising that Baeck’s transformation of Jewish *national* exclusivity into a *religious* calling of *universal* import was gratefully taken up by Van Oyen, even if the latter could not help observing that Jewish moral universalism had sometimes been obscured by the introverted ritualism of “orthodox rabbinism.”

Aided by Buber, Baeck, Cohen, and Rosenzweig, Van Oyen managed to skip the awkward aspects of Talmudic Judaism and instead highlighted its fundamental impact on Western ethical mentality. First of all, he pointed out, Judaism had given man his God, in Whose image he had been created and to Whom he stood in an intimate moral relationship.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, it had given man his neighbor, a noble gift that went beyond sheer social pragmatism (empathy being the essence of humanity and all that).<sup>25</sup> Finally, he argued, Judaism had given man his Messiah, the belief in

<sup>22</sup> *Guide of the Perplexed* III.32. Paraphrasing Maimonides, Yeshayahu Leibowitz later (polemically) defined Jewish uniqueness as “not a fact … [but] an endeavour … not a reality, but a task”; in *idem, Judaism, Jewish Values, and the Jewish State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 86.

<sup>23</sup> Leo Baeck, *Das Wesen des Judentums* (Berlin: Nathansen & Lamm, 1905); the English quotations are from V. Grubbenwieser and L. Pearl, trans., *The Essence of Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 65–68.

<sup>24</sup> “De Joodsche geest en de ethiek,” 89–91, where Van Oyen somewhat eclectically equated Buber’s God as the I-and-Thou of man with the moral-religious correlation between God and man as stipulated by Cohen, relying on Rosenzweig’s conception of Love as the existential *Ereignis* in which God and man would meet.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 92–94, quoting Buber’s famous “das Judentum hat den Mitmenschen geschaffen” (p. 92).

the ultimate triumph of good over evil, read: in everlasting brotherhood.<sup>26</sup> “Thus ethical monotheism determines the inner course of history,” Van Oyen concluded.<sup>27</sup> Bolstered by the hopeful linearity of messianic teleology, this was indeed an optimistic conclusion, whose sublime confidence, needless to add, would prove no match whatsoever for the grubby nihilism of modernist barbarism.

If I started off by praising Van Oyen’s chapter as a relatively simple and upright account of Jewish ethics, we should not forget that it was, perforce, also a highly selective one. Favoring recent European developments over traditional oriental sources, and preferring Buber and Cohen over, say, Chatam Sofer or even Samson Raphael Hirsch,<sup>28</sup> Van Oyen had chosen to settle at the enlightened end of the scale. Siding with Baeck against Herzl, he had dodged the contested issue of Jewish nationhood that lay at the heart of the Jewish Question. And by describing congenial modern thought at the cost of antique custom, he obviously tried not to alienate his Christian contemporaries. Still, if his was a selective appropriation of Jewish lore, it was a relatively authentic representation, consistently low on adaptation and caricature. As we shall see, some of his coauthors had to go at greater length to fit the Jewish cause into their political agenda. One of them was Pos, whose reflections on “de Joodsche geest en het denken” constitute one of the most brilliant manipulations of Jewish philosophy ever written by a Western “philo-semit.”

Like Van Oyen, Pos was interested in the universal treasure that lay hidden behind Judaism’s particular façade. As a disciple of the Marburg Neo-Kantians, he believed the Jewish contribution to world philosophy could be summarized in one word: transcendence.<sup>29</sup> If we simplify the

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 94–96, under reference to Leo Baeck’s “Einheit der Nationen und Einheit der Zeiten” (p. 95).

<sup>27</sup>“Zo bepaalt het ethisch monotheisme den innerlijken gang der wereldgeschiedenis”; ibid., 95.

<sup>28</sup>NB: in his famous refutation of Reform Judaism (*Die Religion im Bunde mit dem Fortschritt*, 1854), the neo-orthodox Hirsch had rerooted universalism in *traditional* Jewish observance when he wrote that “[t]he more ... Judaism comprises the whole of man and extends its declared mission to the salvation of the whole of mankind, the less it is possible to confine its outlook to the four cubits of the synagogue. The more the Jew is a Jew, the more universalist will be his views and aspirations”; quoted from Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980 and later), 223.

<sup>29</sup>For Pos’s intellectual wanderings from Neo-Kantianism, via Husserl’s *Phänomenologie*, to Anglo-Saxon pragmatic realism after World War II, see Derkx, *H.J. Pos*, 266–83.

Marburg stance on transcendent idealism as a preoccupation with “thinking about thinking about reality” (from the conviction that reality only comes into being when processed by human thought), then we may begin to understand some of the choices made by Pos in his chapter on the history of Jewish philosophy. His focus on transcendence (i.e. on the ideal objective truths that lie *beyond* our comprehension) in combination with what he called our “thinking consciousness,” his emphasis on Judaism as a *Religion der Vernunft* and on grounding morality in critical thought are unthinkable without the cumulative influence of Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, and Ernst Cassirer.<sup>30</sup> For Pos, Jewish truth was the truth according to Kant as explained by his disciples of the *Marburger Schule*. Of course Moses, Spinoza and Einstein had never thought of writing down their ideas as systematic critiques of pure, critical, and practical reason. Pinpointing their allegiance to Kant was thus something of a *tour de force*. But, as we shall see, Pos was more than up to the task.

In seventeen densely argued pages, he explained how the Jews had gradually let their private philosophical message be absorbed by the world at large.<sup>31</sup> In the course of this progressive release, their insight into the quality of transcendence, of the “truth that is out there,” had steadily matured. A close reading of the biblical evidence revealed that the Mosaic mind had already begun to comprehend, and thus to create, a distance between the cause and effect of the universe, that is, between the inapproachable Creator and His empirical, tangible Creation. Granted, Moses had appealed to the realm of human experience rather than to philosophy when stressing the invisibility (also known as the holiness) of the God of the Israelites. Yet in good Kantian fashion he had joined pure with practical reason when he translated this abstract theory into concrete moral laws. The ancient Jewish art of performing justice, Pos concluded, was an accurate prefiguration of Kant’s enlightened moral cosmopolitanism.

<sup>30</sup> In one short, generic footnote, Pos stressed that his thoughts owed much to these three Marburg luminaries. The presence of Cohen’s *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (Leipzig: Fock, 1919) is manifest. Pos’s insistence on the fundamental role of the “creative mind” appears to continue insights from Cohen’s *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* of 1902. His decision to present the history of Jewish philosophy as a series of paradigm shifts ties in with Cassirer’s belief in the fluidity of the thinking self and the changes that befall its language and other tools. See Cassirer’s three-volume *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (1923–1929).

<sup>31</sup> Pos, “De Joodsche geest en het denken,” 130–47.

Following a long-standing *topos*, Pos located the next stage in the development of the Jewish *Transzentalphilosophie* in the Hellenistic city of Alexandria. More particularly, he referred to the Jewish philosopher Philo (c. 25 BCE-40 CE), in whose writings Plato and Genesis—the elusive World of Forms and the equally abstract Jewish *Gottesidee*—had finally met. More than anything, it was Greek allegory that had helped Philo rescue Jewish thought from Semitic esotericism. To paraphrase Pos’s words, it was only through Plato and the Stoics that the true sense of revelation was revealed to humanity.<sup>32</sup> Needless to say, the Jews had something to offer in return. If we are to believe Pos, their help in transforming late antique Neoplatonism from a pagan metaphysics into a pious semitheology could not be overestimated.

We immediately recognize how this Hellenistic idyll of intellectual reciprocity reflects Pos’s idea, briefly touched upon earlier in this chapter, of civilization as a never-ending dialogue between kindred and hostile forces. Philo’s hybrid philosophy was but one example of this ongoing multicultural conversation. Spinoza’s revolutionary pantheism—a term that was incompatible with idealism and therefore consistently hushed up by Pos—obviously constituted another. In Pos’s inimitable recapitulation, Spinoza’s philosophy became the final step in a long process of refining the notion of transcendence and liberating it from its Jewish restraints.<sup>33</sup> The intricate details of that last, decisive step need not distract us here. What we should remember, however, is that it had resulted in a form

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>33</sup> Even if we do not follow Yovel in understanding Spinoza’s thought in terms of “Marranist” immanence, transcendence may not be the first thing that comes to mind when we think of Spinoza’s philosophy (see Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics I. The Marrano of Reason II. The Adventures of Immanence* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989]). Yet as a Kantian reinterpretation, Pos’s version did not stand alone; cf. Henri Krop, “Spinozism and Dutch Jewry between 1880 and 1940,” in *Dutch Jewry in a Cultural Maelstrom 1880–1940*, ed. Hetty Berg and Judith Frishman (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007), 103–20. In treating Spinoza’s thought as simply *equivalent* to Kant’s, however, Pos seems to have gone off the beaten track. Compare, e.g., Leo Polak, who framed Spinoza’s philosophy as a critical “habit of mind” rather than a Kantian *system* of critical epistemology; in Leo Polak, “De betekenis der Joden voor de wijsbegeerte,” in *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland, Eerste deel (tot circa 1795)*, ed. Hendrik Brugmans and Abraham Frank (Amsterdam: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1940), 696–97.

of individual piety that could serve the modern consciousness when old-fashioned organized religion no longer seemed up to the task.<sup>34</sup>

By rethinking the world as concrete nature (*natura naturata*), caused by abstract “ideal” nature (*natura naturans*), Pos’s Kantian Spinoza had managed to dethrone the biblical Creator and rid Him of His all too human traits. Through the combined efforts of the *Tractatus* and the *Ethics*, the God of the Hebrews was turned from a jealous wreck into a divine, rational force that would inspire believers where law and revelation would not. Like the Jewish impact on Neoplatonism, this *Deus sive natura* was the ultimate Jewish gift to gentile thought: supremely transcendent yet securely within human reach, deeply religious yet free from mainstream church and dogma, outwardly universal yet essentially Jewish. In the eyes of Pos, it was this latter tension that epitomized the crux of Jewish intellectual productivity. At face value, he admitted, it looked as if Spinoza had denied his Jewish legacy; in reality, however, that legacy had helped him prepare his message for the world.<sup>35</sup> For Pos and many of his contemporaries, the Jewish contribution to Western civilization obviously came at a price: the denial of innate, individual and collective, Jewishness.

With this central point firmly pitched, Pos’s survey of what came after Spinoza was little more than an afterthought. The thinkers he adduced as modern envoys of “the age-old Jewish transcendence,”<sup>36</sup> viz. Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein, were the usual suspects, icons of general intellectual upheaval rather than secret Neo-Kantians. It is hardly surprising that Pos credited Marx for having translated the class struggle into a dispassionate theory and praised Freud for including the much-censored libido in his analysis of the human psyche. Like Spinoza, he stressed, both had dared to correct popular sentiment and as a result both were thrashed by common opinion. Einstein, by contrast, merely explained the cosmos in ways that transcended our wildest imagination and thus could not be deemed offensive, yet even he had been falsely accused of undermining the received order from his ambivalent position as a Jew.<sup>37</sup> Preoccupied with other themes, Pos merely noted the utter injustice of

<sup>34</sup> Pos, “De Joodsche geest en het denken,” 134–35. For the context of Pos’s interpretation of Spinoza’s philosophy, see Henri Krop, *Een paradoxale icon van Nederland* (Amsterdam: Prometheus Bert Bakker, 2014), chapter 10, pp. 519–627 (De ‘zilveren tijd’ van het spinozisme [1900–1940]).

<sup>35</sup> Pos, “De Joodsche geest en het denken,” 138.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>37</sup> “typisch jood-subversief … niet te goeder trouw”; ibid., 143.

the allegation. The task of explaining it was left to cultural critic Menno ter Braak (1902–1940), whose chapter on “De Joodsche geest en de literatuur” was an incisive (though not always favorable) evaluation of the role of Jewish *literati* in the modern European Republic of Letters.

As already mentioned above, Pos had adduced Marx, Freud, and Einstein not so much to discuss their work as to invoke their scholarly persona.<sup>38</sup> For him, Jewishness was crucial to that persona because it not only gave access to the realm of Kantian transcendence (as corroborated by Marx’s abstract dialectic, Freud’s embrace of sublimation, and Einstein’s discovery of new dimensions), but had also predestined them for the role of learned iconoclasts, knowledgeable outsiders whose theories had the power to uproot even the most fundamental tenets of Western wisdom.

By making this second point, Pos conjured up the image of the Jew as a disturber of the intellectual peace, a cliché made famous by social theorist Thorstein Veblen (1857–1927) in his 1919 article on the “intellectual preeminence” of modern Jewry.<sup>39</sup> In Veblen’s eyes, this Jewish prominence was the result of gifted individuals severing all ties with Judaism without, however, fully assimilating into their non-Jewish environment. The successful Jewish scientist, he argued, was destined to remain a “naturalized, though hyphenate, citizen in the gentile republic of learning.”<sup>40</sup> Naturalized, though hyphenate: the clue to Jewish intellectual triumph lay in the near-paradox between these two adjectives. No longer “one of them” but never quite “one of us,” the Jew inhabited a vacuum from where he viewed the world with matchless open-mindedness (Veblen preferred the German term *Unbefangenheit*). Having shed Jewish custom, but not yet privy to the gentile heritage, the in-between Jew could ask all kinds of questions without being slowed down by the burden of tradition. It was this twofold alienation, in combination with the ever-restless Jewish mind

<sup>38</sup> For the scientific persona as a cultural construct “between the individual biography and the social institution,” see Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, “Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories,” *Science in Context* 16 (2003): 1–8 (2).

<sup>39</sup> Thorstein Veblen, “The Intellectual Pre-Eminence of Jews in Modern Europe,” *Political Science Quarterly* 34 (1919): 33–42. David A. Hollinger, “Why Are Jews Preeminent in Science and Scholarship? The Veblen Thesis Reconsidered,” *Aleph* 2 (2002): 145–63, considered Veblen’s text “one of the most adamantly philosemitic treatises ever written by a gentile” (p. 146).

<sup>40</sup> Veblen, “The Intellectual Pre-Eminence,” 38.

(the product of aeons of wanderings), which according to Veblen accounted for the Jews' manifest excellence in modern science and scholarship.<sup>41</sup>

In Ter Braak's assessment of the Jewish contribution to literature, the idea of 'assimilation as distance' once more plays a prominent role, albeit in a less positive manner.<sup>42</sup> For reasons of logic as well as aesthetics, Ter Braak had mixed feelings about Jewish assimilation, and he showed no inclination to camouflage his doubts for the sake of "philosemitic" rhetoric.<sup>43</sup> The laborious integration of the "Jewish nation–non nation," he reminded his readers, had charged Europe with an insoluble Jewish Question.<sup>44</sup> In the field of literature, he was sorry to say, the recent admission of the Jews had yielded similar awkward contradictions.

On the downside, their entry into the European literary arena had produced a new, distinctly Jewish caste of *Zivilisationsliteraten*,<sup>45</sup> epigonic "manufacturers of common place,"<sup>46</sup> who valued skill over genius and preferred an easy flight into (socialist, pacifist, or humanist) ideology over the arduous road to the sublime. Ter Braak would not waste his breath over the work of "the Zweigs [...], the Feuchtwangers, the Wassermanns,

<sup>41</sup> Quick to politicize Veblen's essay, scholars have—wrongly—explained his words as an affirmation of Jewish social marginality rather than spiritual alienation; see e.g. Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Mind* (New York: Scribner, 1977), 332 (in a paragraph devoted to "Marginality and Eminence"), and Shulamith Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites. Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 228. Veblen's main political target, however, was Zionism and its "dominant bias of isolation" (p. 33), which he feared might fill the productive void created by life in the Diaspora.

<sup>42</sup> Ter Braak, "De Joodsche geest en de litteratuur," 148–64.

<sup>43</sup> Ter Braak defined Jewish assimilation as an objectionable but necessary process that "embodied the bad conscience of European culture"; *ibid.*, 157.

<sup>44</sup> Like Pos, Ter Braak preferred harsh conceptual fine-tuning over simple persuasion. Accordingly, his take on the Jewish Question was complex but always, *pace* his detractors, free from racial antisemitism. His allusions to the dilemmas posed by "het Joodsche volk–niet volk" (p. 157) almost literally foreshadow Zygmunt Bauman's characterization of the Jews as a "non-national nation" that had "cast a shadow on the fundamental principle of modern European order"; in Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 153.

<sup>45</sup> Ter Braak had borrowed the term from Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (published 1918). Throughout the chapter he specifically targeted Arnold Zweig, whose *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit. Die Wahrheit über die deutschen Juden* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1934) he dismissed as a hopelessly uncritical "clearance sale of saints" (*uitverkoop van heiligen*; 151).

<sup>46</sup> "De Joodsche geest en de litteratuur," 154, where Ter Braak referred to the Jewish "literaat ... als imitator en clichéfabrikant."

the Ludwigs, the Maurois” and other literary parvenus, who would never escape the dubious “limbo between authenticity and *litteratendom*.<sup>47</sup> Simultaneously, however, those same Zweigs and Feuchtwangers, Wassermanns and Ludwigs had at least partly redeemed themselves by taking on the role of cultural intermediaries in an increasingly divided Europe. Doggedly tilling the soil of international literature, they served as the last envoys between the increasingly impregnable bastions of nation-state culture. To belittle their efforts at negotiating the unnegotiable, Ter Braak conceded, would be snobbish.<sup>48</sup> Yet by the same token he could not bring himself to forgive them for contaminating European literature with their mediocre imitations.

In presenting the Jews’ precarious nationality as an inability to produce True Art, Ter Braak’s critique reminds us of Richard Wagner’s notorious rant against the *Verjüdung* of Western music.<sup>49</sup> There is, however, one notable difference between the two. Where Wagner had dismissed the work of *all* Jewish composers as “fremdartig, kalt, sonderlich, gleichgültig, unnatürlich und verdreht,”<sup>50</sup> Ter Braak was willing to make exceptions. The writings of Zweig and Wassermann, he argued, were “the half-hearted results of a naively conceived assimilation,”<sup>51</sup> the tragic outcome of a shallow transformation that had left these authors on the margins of Truth and Beauty. Against these relative failures, however, stood giants like the French internationalist Julien Benda (1867–1956), “rational mystic” Franz Kafka, and philosopher of despair Lev Shestov (*né* Judah Leib Schwarzmann, 1866–1938). Ter Braak carefully described how each of these authors had undergone a process of “true assimilation”<sup>52</sup> that had erased all traces of the particular and had metamorphosed them into spokesmen of the universal.<sup>53</sup> Forever alienated from Jewish life, they had, in a Veblenesque sense, gained privileged access to human experience and

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>49</sup> In 1850, Wagner had published *Das Judenthum in der Musik* under the pseudonym K. Freigedank. From 1869 onwards the treatise was published under his own name. For a critical analysis, see David Katz, *Richard Wagner: Vorbote des Antisemitismus* (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag Athenäum, 1985), 59–79.

<sup>50</sup> Wagner, *Das Judenthum in der Musik* (1869), 11.

<sup>51</sup> “De Joodsche geest en de litteratuur,” 155.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>53</sup> Compare Michel Foucault’s “universal intellectual” (complementary to Gramsci’s “organic intellectual”), in idem, *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), 126.

had captured its essence in books that knew no equal. By consciously eliminating (Benda), sublimating (Kafka), and transcending (Shestov) Judaism, they had turned emancipation into creation.<sup>54</sup> And through creating, they had touched upon humanity's innermost secrets, sharing them with their readers in the intimate way that is the privilege of the stranger: of the alien, the everyman—and the Jew.<sup>55</sup>

Of all the essays in *Antisemitisme en Jodendom*, Ter Braak's perhaps came closest to Pos's motivation for publishing the book: the public celebration of reason and judgment, of objective thinking and freedom of speech. Ter Braak's critical assessment of the modern Jewish condition shows why that condition was the ideal whetstone for this intellectual exercise. The Jews' contested national status and ambivalent cultural presence did not permit a quick refutation of antisemitic stereotype by a simple prosemitic alternative.<sup>56</sup> The dilemmas they posed were too complex to be answered through apologetics and euphemism. Touching European civilization at its core, they required thoughtful scrutiny of cause and effect, of move and countermove. Hardly surprising, the issue whether real, contemporary Jews had anything to gain from this abstract endeavor was never raised. At the end of the day, they were point of departure rather than subject, occasion rather than true concern of the essays in Pos's volume. *Nóstra res agitur*: when our neighbor's house is on fire, it is *our* house we really worry about. On the scale of Karp and Sutcliffe, Pos's shot at saving the House of Reason through a defense of Judaism thus stands out as yet another illustration of the ambivalent opportunism of modern "philosemitism."

As a plea for internationalism and intellectualism, *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* was very much the product of an interbellum mentality that was not to survive World War II. Immediately upon publication, however, the book was welcomed as a valuable tool for articulating the puzzling relationship between antisemitism and the Jewish Question. Pos's attempt

<sup>54</sup> "De Joodsche geest en de litteratuur," 163.

<sup>55</sup> Compare Eugene Goodheart's assertion that "[b]etween the universalist and the outsider there is a paradoxical affinity. The person who stands alone may become a kind of everyman in his alienation"; idem, "Jew d'esprit," in *The New York Public Intellectuals and Beyond: Exploring Liberal Humanism, Jewish Identity, and the American Protestant Tradition*, ed. Ethan Goffman and Daniel Morris (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2009), 40.

<sup>56</sup> "[Ik meen] te mogen concluderen, dat het schema van den Jodenhaat en het "contra-schema" van het humaniteitsideaal beide even simplistisch zijn, en afleiden van het Joodsche vraagstuk zoowel als van het vraagstuk van het anti-semitisme"; "De Joodsche geest en de litteratuur," 151–52.

to present the problem from all sides and to guide the reader beyond ingrained prejudice met with great approval in the Dutch public sphere.<sup>57</sup> The inevitable Janus-head of “philosemitism” also received due attention. Various reviewers noted that the contributors, while unanimously wary of National Socialism, were far from unanimous in their verdict on Jews and Judaism. Among Pos’s Jewish readers, lawyer Herman Duitz praised the authors for having had the courage not to gloss over Jewish crimes and misdemeanours.<sup>58</sup> Politician and unionist Polak even lauded the critical Ter Braak for proving himself a true “friend of the Jews by pointing out their errors.”<sup>59</sup>

But what about Jacques Presser? Though no doubt hired by Pos as the capable, objective historian that he was, as a Jew he was no impulsive bystander when the Jewish house caught flame.<sup>60</sup> Unlike his fellow authors, he was in no position to reduce Judaism to a distant metaphor or a premodern state of mind. Accordingly, where Pos and Ter Braak had focused on brilliant individuals who had chosen to abandon Judaism, Presser zoomed in on the collective experience of those who had stayed put.<sup>61</sup> In his historical contextualization of antisemitism, he contrasted the vulnerable intimacy of the ghetto with the doubtful security of emancipation, which he believed had left modern Jewry in a “treasury where it faced starvation.”<sup>62</sup> In the very year Horkheimer and Adorno started working on their *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, he too wondered how to square enlightened progress with modern anti-Jewish sentiment. Yet perhaps most characteristic of his position as “the only Jew on the team” was the short catalogue of Jewish arrogance (*Joodse hoogmoed*), which he tagged on to his survey as a playful, yet far from gratuitous endnote.

<sup>57</sup> The reviews published in *Gooi- en Eemlander*, *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*, *Nieuwsblad van Friesland*, *Telegraaf*, *Utrechts Volksblad*, *Zaans Volksblad*, and *Het Vaderland* all highlighted Pos’s attempt at explicitly circumventing bias. Somewhat predictably, the socialist *Volksdagblad* (20 July 1939) chastised Pos for his lack of anticapitalist activism. Missing the subtle point, *De Indische Courant* (8 July 1939) was the only one to emphasize that the Dutch readership had no need for Pos’s defense of “the Jewish race.”

<sup>58</sup> *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*, 2 June 1939.

<sup>59</sup> “[E]en vriend van de Joden die hen hun feilen toont”; *Utrechts Volksblad*, 22 May 1939.

<sup>60</sup> For an impression of Presser’s *Werdegang* as a (Jewish) historian, see Conny Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht. Abel Herzberg, Jacques Presser en Loe de Jong over de jodenvervolging* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1998), 47–66.

<sup>61</sup> “Het antisemitisme als historisch verschijnsel,” 1–18.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 16. Though the bibliography on pp. 17–18 makes no reference to the article, Presser’s words echo the gist of Salo W. Baron’s seminal “Ghetto and Emancipation,” *Menorah Journal* 14, no.4 (1928): 515–26.

His list of antisemitic incidents, Presser wrote, was counterbalanced by a fourfold record of Jewish conceit. There was, for one, the arrogance of the Suffering Jew, for whom enduring affliction was the mission of a lifetime. Then there was the Jewish Survivor, who hoped to defy modern antisemitism like his fathers had outlived the Spanish Inquisition. There was the arrogance of the Jew who knew he would sooner understand antisemitism than he would begin to understand himself. And there was the “arrogance of Jewish diffidence, which had sought its gentile friends among those who challenged antisemitism not for the sake of the Jew, but in celebration of the spirit of reason and justice.”<sup>63</sup> We will never know precisely what sentiment (frustration? self-hatred? objectivity?) had prompted Presser to append this final, ironic comment. Yet by brazenly implicating Pos’s *Antisemitisme en Jodendom* in his own short history of antisemitism, he managed to anchor the fleeting tune of gentile “philosemitism” in its eternal Jewish counterpoint.

<sup>63</sup> “Het antisemitisme als historisch verschijnsel,” 17.

## The British Empire's Jewish Question and the Post-Ottoman Future

*James Renton*

During the First World War, the British government conducted a global propaganda campaign to promote a new nation-based vision for the future of the sub-Anatolian lands of Western Asia that hitherto had been governed by the Ottoman Empire. In this reconceptualization of the region, Jews and Zionism were allotted a central role. The significance of this story went beyond the geographical confines of Western Asia itself; it was an important element in, and symbol of, the attempt to forge a new world order after the war—an order based, in theory, on the concepts of self-determination and democratic world governance but designed at root to sustain the power of the Allied imperial states, particularly Britain and France, in the new age of nationality. Zionism therefore became an integral part in the narrative and face of this evolving world order and one of the links between its institutions of power and what became known as the post-Ottoman Middle East.

This chapter argues that the British government's promotion of Zionism as a core component in the formation of a post-Ottoman Middle East was primarily an exercise in legitimization. As a part of the history of the Jew as legitimization, however, this story has an unusual twist: world Jewry

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itself was the primary target audience for the government's rhetoric. By October 1917, British policymakers were convinced that Jewish power—a false but widely held idea in governments across Europe—constituted a major element in pivotal strategic sites of the global war: the USA and Russia. Faced with the military crises of that moment, the British government attempted to swing Jewish influence behind the Allied powers. In the minds of important elements in the British policymaking elite, this perceived challenge constituted the British Empire's very own and very pressing Jewish "Question"—a supposed racial problem that threatened imperial interests and required resolution, alongside the long list of other racial "Questions" that provided neat boxes of problem categorization and prefabricated forms of solutions in Whitehall's knowledge bureaucracy. As per the race-thinking<sup>1</sup> of the foreign-policy elite during the war, nationalism, in the shape of Zionism, was seized upon as the answer to this Question: the means by which the government could inspire Jewish loyalty to Britain and the Allies. As a result, the British War Cabinet agreed to issue the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, with its promise to "facilitate" the "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

Zionism thus became an important element in the British government's rhetoric regarding a post-Ottoman Middle East. Nonetheless, the government did not, this chapter argues, envisage a significant political role for Zionism in the future of the region, and it certainly did not aim to establish Jewish statehood or even a Jewish majority in Palestine.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the British military administration in the Holy Land, following General Allenby's occupation of Jerusalem in December 1917, promoted Arab nationalism as well as Zionism. This was not an act of perfidy or simply poor policymaking—the two alternative explanations of Britain's Middle East policy put forward by competing schools of historians.<sup>3</sup> It was, rather, the product in large part of the wider net of race-thinking that shrouded

<sup>1</sup> On race-thinking, see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1973), ch. 6.

<sup>2</sup> For examples of the statist interpretation, see Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine: British-Jewish-Arab Relations: 1914–1918*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ, 1992), 311–32; Jon Kimche, *The Unromantics: The Great Powers and the Balfour Declaration* (London, 1968), 48.

<sup>3</sup> For the perfidy thesis, see Abdul L. Tibawi, *Anglo-Arab-Relations and the Question of Palestine 1914–1921* (London, 1978). For the incompetence argument, see Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and Its Interpretations*,

the political thought of the British imperial elite concerning the Middle Eastern world—the region and its diasporas. Indeed, ideas of race, the chapter contends, are the consistent theme in this story, from the belief in Jewish power in Whitehall to the government's promotion of two nationalisms in one land.

A principal aim of this chapter, therefore, is to explain the British government's thinking regarding the future of Zionism by situating it within a wider analytical frame of racial thought and the idea of a post-Ottoman Middle East.<sup>4</sup> This broader picture has been largely overlooked in the voluminous literature on the Balfour Declaration, which has tended to look at government thinking on Zionism in isolation.<sup>5</sup>

I will begin by tracing the emergence of the British government's idea of a nation-based post-Ottoman Western Asia and will then move on to the story of how and why Zionism became integrated into that idea. The final part discusses the British attempt to export the Middle East concept to Palestine during the war and how this led, in the shape of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, to the explosion of the government's racial logic, even though it was not recognized as such by those behind British imperial policy in Palestine at the time.

### FROM TURKEY IN ASIA TO AN ARAB FUTURE

Prior to the First World War, the British government pursued a policy of supporting the Ottoman Empire. Maintaining the Empire prevented Britain's competitors, particularly France, Russia and Germany, from taking hold of territory in the region, which was critical for the defense of key points of the British world-system<sup>6</sup>: Egypt and the Suez Canal on the western flank of Western Asia and the Persian Gulf to the east.<sup>7</sup>

1914–1939 (Cambridge, 1976), chs. 1–3; and Isaiah Friedman, *British Pan-Arab Policy, 1915–1922: A Critical Appraisal* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> On the race-thinking context of the Balfour Declaration, also see James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance, 1914–1918* (Basingstoke, 2007), chs. 1–2.

<sup>5</sup> For a recent example, see Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London, 2010). Even though Schneer includes a significant discussion of British Arab policy, it is not integrated into his analysis of British Zionist policy.

<sup>6</sup> On the Empire as a world-system, see John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Heller, *British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1914* (London, 1983).

The thinking behind this approach to the Ottoman Empire and Western Asia went beyond simple geopolitical calculation. Behind this policy lay a conception of the Ottoman imperial state as the deeply embedded and natural political framework for the region, which British policymakers often described simply as “Asiatic Turkey” or “Turkey in Asia.” Certainly, before 1914 we can see among the British elite pronounced distaste for the Ottoman regime as an Oriental despotism, as well as a strong countervailing narrative of the honorable Turk.<sup>8</sup> But such negativity did not affect the dominant political view of Western Asia as an inherently Ottoman space. As late as the middle of 1915, more than six months after Constantinople entered the war on the side of the Central Powers, British policymakers still clung to the idea of the Ottoman Empire as a necessary ordering and legitimating frame for Western Asia, even when they started to plan for the effective end of Ottoman sovereignty after the conflict.<sup>9</sup>

But by 1916, the British government aimed to dismantle the Ottoman Empire, a turn which resulted in large part from the instrumentalization of nationalism as a weapon of war by both the Allies and the Central Powers.<sup>10</sup> Influenced profoundly by a racial nationalist world-view, British foreign policymakers became preoccupied with rallying the public opinion of influential racial groups, as they saw them, in the principal strategic zones of the world war. They saw race, which, in their minds, incorporated religious belief and identity, as the basis of human and societal behavior. Lord Milner, one of the powerful members of the British War Cabinet of 1917 and 1918, encapsulated this view before the war with his aphorism: “the racial bond … is fundamental.” “[D]eeper, stronger, more primordial than … material ties,” he argued, “is the bond of common blood,

<sup>8</sup> James Renton, “Changing Languages of Empire and the Orient: Britain and the Invention of the Middle East, 1917–1918,” *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 3 (2007): 648.

<sup>9</sup> See the report and minutes of the Committee on Asiatic Turkey of April to June 1915: “British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia,” [Cabinet Papers, United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew] CAB 27/1.

<sup>10</sup> On the use of nationalism, see Hew Strachan, *The First World War, Vol. I: To Arms* (Oxford, 2001), ch.9; Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914–1923* (London, 2001); Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918* (Cambridge, 2011); Kenneth J. Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, 1976); James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance, 1914–1918* (Basingstoke, 2007), ch. 2.

a common language, common history and traditions.”<sup>11</sup> “[Q]uestions of race,” remarked A. J. Balfour, British Foreign Secretary from 1917 until 1919, are the “most important of all.”<sup>12</sup> For Balfour, Milner and many of their cadre of foreign policymakers in the capitals of Europe, racial identity was symbiotically bound up with an inherent sense of nationhood; they conceived that all races in Europe and Asia yearned, or could yearn, for national freedom. The European elite judged that the potency of racial consciousness and fidelity was such that racial groups operated as agents of tremendous power within society and politics. Faced with the emergency of a conflagration that threatened imperial survival, this conception of racial national publics led to a war for racial allegiance around the world. In his memoirs, former prime minister David Lloyd George explained:

[The Balfour Declaration] was part of our propagandist strategy for mobilizing every opinion and force throughout the world which would weaken the enemy and improve the Allied chances. Propaganda on both sides probably played a greater part in the last War than in any other. As an illustration I might take the public declarations we made of the Allied intention to liberate and confer self-government on nationalities inside the enemy Empires—Turkey, Germany, and Austria ... On principle, the democratic Powers of Europe and America had always advocated emancipation of the subject races held down by the great Empires. But we were also aware that the proclamation of liberation as part of our War aims would help to disintegrate the solidarity of the enemy countries ... It would have the effect of detaching from the governing races in those countries Poles, Alsace-Lorrainers, Czechoslovakians, Croatians, Roumans and Arabs dwelling within the boundaries of the Central Empires.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of 1917, this racial nationalist warfare determined to a significant extent the British government’s politics in the Middle Eastern world. From the autumn of 1914, with the prospect of the Ottoman Empire, the seat of the Caliphate, joining the side of Germany, Britain’s foreign policy establishment became desperate to secure the loyalty of world Islam. Gripped by a profound Islamophobia, they wished to counter the threat

<sup>11</sup> Lord Milner, *The Nation and the Empire: Being a Collection of Speeches and Addresses, with an introduction by Lord Milner*, G.C.B. (London, 1913), 39.

<sup>12</sup> “Race and Nationality by the Right Hon. Arthur J. Balfour, M.P., 21 October 1909,” in *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, Session 1908–1909* (London, 1909), 238.

<sup>13</sup> David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties* (London, 1938), 2:1118.

posed by the specter of a Muslim power fighting with Germany—fears that were exacerbated greatly by the Ottoman proclamation of a jihad against the Allies in November 1914 and the enemy's pan-Islamic propaganda. In addition, the British government wished to turn the Arabs of Western Asia against the Ottomans—a challenge that became all the more pressing with the failure by the autumn of 1915 of the effort to seize Constantinople via the strait of the Dardanelles. British policymakers in London, particularly Secretary of State for War Lord Kitchener, responded to these challenges by backing Arab nationalism, which, they believed, would enable the Allies to overcome the anti-Muslim charge and mobilize the Arab lands against the Ottomans. Although the India Office and the government of India raised opposition to this line of policy and even its advocates evinced profound ambivalence regarding the Arab world, Sir Edward Grey's Foreign Office pressed ahead. The focus of the campaign was Sharif Hussein's revolt against the Ottomans, which was launched in June 1916, and his declared fight for Arab freedom.<sup>14</sup> Centered on the promotion of the revolt, the British government built an extensive Arab nationalist propaganda machine.<sup>15</sup>

To the north of Hussein's war, the plight of the Armenians following the Ottoman genocide of 1915 constituted another element in the Allies' struggle for hearts and minds regarding "Asiatic Turkey." In the suffering of Christian Armenians at the hands of the Ottomans, figures in the British government such as Lord Robert Cecil, parliamentary undersecretary in the Foreign Office, saw a weapon of immense rhetorical power that could be used to inspire pro-Ally war enthusiasm in the United States and around the world. From 1915, British propagandists, such as the Foreign Office's Arnold Toynbee, grabbed onto the genocide as shocking evidence of Turkish barbarism.<sup>16</sup> And once Lloyd George and his Cabinet decided in early 1917 on the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and the prime minister initiated a propaganda campaign "The Turk Must Go!," the genocide was presented as being symptomatic of Turkish iniquity and a wider story

<sup>14</sup> David French, "The Dardanelles, Mecca and Kut: Prestige as a Factor in British Eastern Strategy, 1914–1916," *War & Society* 5 (1987): 45–62; Briton Cooper Busch, *Britain, India, and the Arabs, 1914–1921* (Berkeley, 1971), chs. 2 and 4; Kedourie, *Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*, chs. 1–3.

<sup>15</sup> Renton, "Changing Languages," 654–59.

<sup>16</sup> Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915–1923* (London, 1984), 69–88, 119.

of oppression.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Whitehall judged that Armenians had a critical military role in the war against the Ottomans in the Caucasus, particularly after the Bolshevik revolution.<sup>18</sup>

In 1915 and 1916, Britain's Armenian propaganda focused on the suffering of the Armenians and the evil of the figure of the Turk, though already in November 1916 Prime Minister Asquith spoke publicly of his government's resolve to see "an era of liberty and redemption for this ancient people." In 1917, as the principle of nationality emerged as the new fulcrum of global political discourse, the emphasis shifted firmly to the liberation and revival of the Armenian nation.<sup>19</sup>

Zionism was the last addition to the British Empire's collection of political causes in Western Asia. While the British government committed itself to Arab nationalism and advertised Armenian suffering in 1915 and 1916, the Foreign Office chose not to engage with Zionism.<sup>20</sup> Jews did not feature in the official government plans for a post-Ottoman Western Asia drawn up during those years: the recommendations of the Committee for Asiatic Turkey in June 1915 and the Inter-Allied agreement of May 1916 (the notorious Sykes–Picot Agreement).<sup>21</sup> Looked at now, the absence is glaring. But for the British imperial policymakers of the time, sub-Anatolian Western Asia was predominantly an Islamic Arab space; in the cartography for the post-Ottoman future sketched in 1916 by British and French diplomats, the only indigenous element was Arab.<sup>22</sup> Zionism almost featured in that cartography, but not because the Foreign Office saw Jews as having a natural place in the West Asian political firmament. Rather, the British Empire's global Jewish "Question"—the unresolved, imagined problem of an anti-Allied Jewish power in the world—required

<sup>17</sup> David Lloyd George memorandum, 19 February 1917, [Foreign Office Records, United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew] FO 395/139/42320; Philip Kerr to John Buchan, 22 March 1917, FO 395/139/63739.

<sup>18</sup> Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 93–100.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 86–119.

<sup>20</sup> Lancelot Oliphant minute, 27 June 1916, George Clerk minute, 29 June 1916, Sir Edward Grey minute, n.d., Oliphant minute, 4 July 1916, Maurice De Bunsen to Lucien Wolf, 4 July 1916, FO 371/2817/130062.

<sup>21</sup> Report and minutes of the Committee on Asiatic Turkey, April–June 1915: "British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia," CAB 27/1; Vincent Cloarec, *La France et la question de Syrie (1914–1918)* (Paris, 2010), 238–73.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Cambon to Sir Edward Grey, 9 May 1916, FO 371/2777/88317, with map signed by Georges Picot and Sykes, [Maps and Plans, United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew] MFQ 1/426.

a solution which the official mind came to believe could be found on the western littoral of Western Asia: in what they termed “Palestine.”

### THE JEWISH “QUESTION”

Before August 1914, the British imperial elite did not consider that their empire possessed a Jewish “Question”—a pressing and dangerous racial problem that required resolution. After all, the small transnational minority of world Jewry was mostly located outside of Britain’s colonial empire. But the global scale of the war, and the resources that it required, dramatically extended the political and economic geography of the British Empire, not least of which came to include a dependence on US finance—the engine of the Allied war machine. In its broadest sense, the British world-system now depended on the survival and mobilization of its allies and the prevention of enemy victory. This transformation, therefore, extended the props of the empire to include the societies of Allied countries, the United States, which became an Associated Power from April 1917 and economically significant neutral actors. Understood through the racial nationalist world-view that predominated among the war’s imperial elites, this change in the economic and political architecture of the European empires led to the worldwide war for racial opinion discussed above. In this context, the old antisemitic idea of global Jewish power and its potential for subversion—reflexively accepted in Whitehall—took on a new meaning and significance for the survival politics of the British Empire and led to the crystallization of the empire’s own Jewish “Question.”

By the end of 1915, members of the British Foreign Office were deeply concerned by the bogey of Jewish power, especially in the United States. Britain’s alliance with the world’s most antisemitic state, Russia, was thought to be pushing American Jewry into the arms of Germany, aided by German agents and pro-German Jews, whose numbers, unity and power were greatly exaggerated in the British official mind. US finance was already essential for the fighting of the war, and the consensus in the Foreign Office was that Jews, as a collective force, wielded great influence on Wall Street and in US society. But the Foreign Office felt that it was unable to exert pressure on Russia to change the fundamental basis of its internal Jewish policies. The British government, therefore, needed an alternative solution to the imagined pressing problem of how to keep

American Jewry on their side;<sup>23</sup> Cecil noted in March 1916: “it is not easy to exaggerate the international power of the Jews.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, although the locus of the Foreign Office’s Jewish “Question” lay in the United States, policymakers saw it as a global issue: wherever there were Jews, there lurked Jewish power and, potentially, subversion. As per the new nationalist politics of the war, British policymakers were persuaded by Jewish activists such as Lucien Wolf and Vladimir Jabotinsky that the Zionist concept offered a possible answer to their Jewish “Question.”<sup>25</sup> This solution required the introduction of Jews into the political cartography of the post-Ottoman future of the region. A cable from the Foreign Office to its ambassadors in Paris and Petrograd in March 1916 explained:

It has been suggested to us that if we could offer to the Jews an arrangement in regard to Palestine completely satisfactory to Jewish aspirations, such an offer might appeal strongly to a large and powerful section of the Jewish community throughout the world ... If the above view is correct, it is clear that the Zionist idea has in it the most far reaching political possibilities, for we might hope to use it in such a way as to bring over to our side the Jewish forces in America, the East and elsewhere which are now largely, if not preponderantly hostile to us. ... Our sole object is to find an arrangement which would be so attractive to the majority of Jews as to enable us to strike a bargain for Jewish support.<sup>26</sup>

The possibility that Zionism might be included in the Sykes–Picot Agreement was blocked chiefly by the opposition of the French Prime Minister Aristide Briand. He questioned the assertion that Palestine could sway Jewish power, expressed doubts that the Zionist project could be compatible with the promises of an Arab State, and stated that Arab policy had to be finalized before any steps could be taken with Zionism. But he did not dispute the premise of Jewish power or that it sided with the enemy.<sup>27</sup>

The aborted idea of Zionism holding a place in the post-Ottoman future was thus an importation of the global racial propaganda war being

<sup>23</sup> Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914–1919* (Oxford, 1992), 50–51, ch. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Lord Robert Cecil minute, c. 8 March 1916, FO 371/2671/35433.

<sup>25</sup> Renton, *Zionist Masquerade*, ch. 3.

<sup>26</sup> FO to Lord Bertie, Paris, and Sir George Buchanan, Petrograd, 11 March 1916, FO 800/96 (Sir Edward Grey Papers), cited in Friedman, *Question of Palestine*, 57–58.

<sup>27</sup> Cloarec, *La France et la question de Syrie*, 270; Friedman, *Question of Palestine*, 60–61.

waged between the Allies and the Central Powers. In Whitehall, this fixation with racial power in general, including that of the Jews, did not diminish. And the belief remained that Zionism could be used to legitimate the Allied cause for Jewry.<sup>28</sup> In December 1916, the Lloyd George Coalition replaced Asquith's government and initiated a military campaign to take Palestine. The planning for the British occupation of Palestine reopened the future of that territory, just as the British Empire's Jewish "Question" increased in importance.

Although the United States entered the war in April 1917, by the autumn the British government was still working to maximize their mobilization and their population's engagement with the cause.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the British Foreign Office and War Cabinet judged that Russia had to be kept in the conflict to prevent defeat. Following the Russian revolution of March 1917, they feared that this project was being fatally undermined by an eruption of pacifism and revolutionary socialism in the country. Foreign Secretary Balfour, Lloyd George and other senior British policy-makers believed that Jewish power could be a significant weapon in the struggle to meet these challenges. Convinced of enemy influence among US Jewry and of heavy Jewish involvement in antiwar and radical circles in Russia, the Foreign Office and the War Cabinet wished to channel Jewish power in favor of Britain and its allies. With their racial nationalist conception of ethnicity, they became convinced that Zionism was the best means of achieving this ambition. Balfour summarized this logic for the cabinet at the meeting that approved the declaration that was to bear his name, on 31 October:

The vast majority of Jews in Russia and America, as, indeed, all over the world, now appeared to be favourable to Zionism. If we could make a declaration favourable to such an ideal, we should be able to carry on extremely useful propaganda both in Russia and America.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Renton, *Zionist Masquerade*, ch. 2.

<sup>29</sup> David French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition, 1916–1918* (Oxford, 1995), 275–76; James Renton, "The Historiography of the Balfour Declaration: Toward a Multi-Causal Framework," *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture* 19, no. 2 (1998): 120–3.

<sup>30</sup> War Cabinet minutes, 261, 31 October 1917, CAB 23/4. On the reasons behind the Declaration, see Renton, *Zionist Masquerade*, chs. 3–4; Mark Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide*, vol. 1, *Devastation: The European Rimlands 1912–1938* (Oxford, 2013), ch. 1.

Two days later, Balfour signed the letter that proclaimed officially the government's commitment to "facilitate" "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." Soon after the declaration, the Foreign Office established a Jewish propaganda bureau—the Jewish Section of the Department of Information. Headed by a Zionist British civil servant, Albert Hyamson, formerly of the Post Office, the Jewish Section worked to convince Jewry and the wider world that Britain had inaugurated the rebirth of the Jewish nation in the Land of Israel.<sup>31</sup>

The British Empire's instrumentalization of "the idea of nationality"—to use the words of the prominent Middle East adviser, Sir Mark Sykes<sup>32</sup>—belonged to a sea-change in global politics, a new era, in which nationhood was celebrated as the future basis for the world order—an age of nationality that began in earnest in 1917 and 1918.<sup>33</sup> This departure in global political discourse was pushed forward by the provisional government in Russia, which had come to power following the March revolution and by President Woodrow Wilson in the United States.<sup>34</sup> But as much as British policymakers embraced the idea of nationality as a positive tool that could be used to mobilize the will of populations, it also posed a grave threat to the British Empire. Opposed to imperialism, dedicated to the ideal of nationality, and shaped, in principle, by the will of nations, the new international politics, as articulated in Russia and the United States, could not accept the replacement of one empire with another. And in Ottoman Asia, the Lloyd George Coalition had clear targets for postwar expansion. Certainly, Lloyd George pursued at certain points the possibility of a separate peace with the Ottomans. Nonetheless, the end of their rule in Western Asia was, for his government, a *sine qua non*.<sup>35</sup>

In April 1917, the British cabinet committee on peace terms decided that Britain had to control what they referred to as Palestine and Mesopotamia

<sup>31</sup> Renton, *Zionist Masquerade*, ch. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Sykes, "Memorandum on the Asia Minor Agreement," 14 August 1917, FO 371/3059/159558.

<sup>33</sup> See James Renton, "The Age of Nationality and the Origins of the Zionist-Palestinian Conflict," *The International History Review* 35, no. 3 (2013): 576–99.

<sup>34</sup> On the Provisional Government, see Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Search for Peace, February–October 1917* (Stanford, 1969). On Wilson, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York, 2007), Part I.

<sup>35</sup> V. H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy, 1914–1918* (Oxford, 1971), 129–31, 134–38, 213–15, 218–19, 286–87.

after the war.<sup>36</sup> The former would provide an essential buffer to protect Egypt, and the latter was needed to secure the Persian Gulf—the West Asian gateway to India. Militarily, these objectives lay within the grasp of the British Empire; in March 1917, the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force took Baghdad, and in December, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) marched into Jerusalem. But with the rise of US power and the need to contain the revolutionary ardor in Russia, it became the received wisdom in Whitehall that a British presence in these territories could only be made acceptable under the guise of the emerging new world order. This imperial imperative reinforced the government's desire to present itself as the champion of nationality in Western Asia. Sykes, then working for the War Cabinet, explained in May 1917: "Our only weapon with these people [opponents of imperialism in the Russian Government] is the theory of racial individuality and the argument that we cannot abandon conquered races to incurable oppressors like the Turks and Germans."<sup>37</sup>

Zionism also offered the British government a means of deflecting a further challenge to its future control of Palestine. The Sykes–Picot Agreement with France had stipulated that the Holy Land would come under an international administration after the war. The French government had a profound desire to govern Palestine, which many of the French imperial elite conceived as an integral part of Greater Syria—a zone regarded as France's birthright in the Levant. The international administration idea of 1916 had been a compromise solution to appease these ambitions without ceding the territory to France.<sup>38</sup> To prise Palestine away from the French government entirely would be no mean feat. With the rise of the nationality principle in global politics, the London Zionist leadership's wish for British rule in the Holy Land offered a way out for the Lloyd George Coalition. Sykes explained to Balfour that if France could be convinced to recognize "Jewish nationalism and all that carries with it as a Palestinian factor ... [it] will tend to pave the way to Great Britain being the appointed Patron of Palestine."<sup>39</sup> On 4 June, in a letter to the

<sup>36</sup> "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Imperial War Cabinet on Territorial Desiderata in the Terms of Peace," 19 April 1917; "Report of Committee on Terms of Peace (Territorial Desiderata)," 28 April 1917, CAB 21/77.

<sup>37</sup> Sykes to Sir Percy Cox, 23 May 1917, 42c, Sykes Collection, Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's College, Oxford (MECA).

<sup>38</sup> Cloarec, *La France et la question de Syrie*, 238–73.

<sup>39</sup> Sykes to Balfour, 8 April 1917, 42b, Sykes Collection, MECA.

Zionist leader Nahum Sokolow, the French government provided the desired recognition of Zionism; they too wanted to bring Jewish power firmly on to their side.<sup>40</sup>

Securing British colonial rule in Palestine was, however, secondary to the question of solving the British Empire's Jewish "Question": the menace of anti-Allied Jewish power. Indeed, the Foreign Office interest in Zionism was driven exclusively by the desire to capture Jewish influence.<sup>41</sup> Jewish power, not the extension of empire, was their primary concern regarding Zionism. And it was this concern that was the original and unifying motive for issuing the Balfour Declaration among all of its government advocates; hence, the emphasis on Jewish power in Foreign Secretary Balfour's explanation to the War Cabinet on 31 October. But even for Lloyd George and Sykes in their efforts to establish a British Palestine, Zionism was primarily a tool of legitimization, not an end in itself.

## THE MIDDLE EAST

At the time of the Balfour Declaration, which was published on 9 November, the Empire's challenges in Western Asia and the wider war intensified tremendously. Most significant of all, on 7 November the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd and took Russia out of the conflict. And as they ransacked the Russian imperial archives, the young revolutionaries discovered the bombshell that was the Sykes–Picot Agreement; they published it on 24 November.<sup>42</sup> The Ottomans did not hesitate to exploit such startling evidence of apparent secret western imperialism and treachery—undermining at a stroke Britain and France's claim to be altruistic champions of national freedom in Western Asia.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Henry Laurens, *La Question de Palestine: Tome Premier, L'invention de la Terre sainte* (Paris, 1999), 347–49.

<sup>41</sup> C. P. Scott to Lloyd George, 5 February 1917, Lloyd George Papers, Parliamentary Archives, London, LG/F/45/2/4; Sir Ronald Graham minute, 17 April 1917, FO 371/3052/78324; Graham minute, 21 April 1917, and Hardinge minute, n.d., FO 371/3052/82982; Cecil minute, 20 December 1917, FO 371/3061/24367.

<sup>42</sup> M. Philips Rice, "Russian Diplomacy I: The Secret Treaties," *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 November 1917, 5; "Asiatic Turkey: Full Text of Allies' Agreement with Ex-Tsar," *The Manchester Guardian*, 19 January 1918, 5.

<sup>43</sup> George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Safety Harbor, FL, 2001), 253–56.

The pressure was now on the British government to underscore its commitment to the nationality principle, and to show that the military campaigns in Western Asia constituted a genuine war of national liberation. From early December 1917, policymakers began to present publicly in the UK a nation-based idea for the future of the region, one that joined together Britain's disparate collection of nationalist policies: Arab nationalism, Armenian nationalism and Zionism. They argued that these movements were, together, the authentic basis of Western Asia but had been squeezed by Ottoman oppression for four centuries. At a high profile public meeting in London on 2 December 1917 to celebrate the Balfour Declaration, Cecil pronounced, "We welcome among us not only the many thousands of Jews that I see, but also representatives of the Arabian and Armenian races who are also in this great struggle struggling to be free. ... Our wish is that Arabian countries shall be for the Arabs, Armenia for the Armenians, and Judaea for the Jews."<sup>44</sup> This narrative reinforced Britain's commitment to the different nationalist movements and offered a composite vision in tune with the spirit of the times. Increasingly, the British foreign policymaking elite referred to the region as the "Middle East,"<sup>45</sup> a term that encapsulated the notion of a space of developing nations between East and West, who required European tutelage on their path to freedom.

### THE MIDDLE EAST IN PALESTINE

On 9 December 1917, General Allenby's EEF occupied Jerusalem. In the midst of the crises of that winter, the government exploited the capture of the Holy City as a major propaganda asset at home and around the world. As part of that project, Whitehall and the British administration in Palestine worked to show the Arab and Jewish worlds that the new dawn of national freedom under British auspices had begun. They used Hebrew and Arabic press, ceremony and the sponsorship of nationalist organizations and initiatives, including recruitment to both the Jewish Legion and the Arab Army. In brief, British propagandists, directed by Sykes in

<sup>44</sup> Great Britain, *Palestine and the Jews: Jewry's Celebration of its National Charter* (London, 1918), 17–18.

<sup>45</sup> For the bureaucratic terminology in Whitehall, see Helmet Meijer, "British Middle East Policy 1917–1921: The Inter-Departmental Level," *Journal of Contemporary History* 8, no. 4 (1973): 81–95.

particular, used the occupation of Jerusalem to showcase the beginning of the Middle East idea: the restoration of the Jewish and Arab nations together under British protection.<sup>46</sup>

Sykes and others in London judged that this promotion of two nationalisms in one land was not at all problematic.<sup>47</sup> The orthodoxy among the British Middle East policy elite was that the Arabs of the Holy Land were a racially mixed population who were enthused by the Arab revival but did not have national pretensions of their own.<sup>48</sup> And Zionism was not understood by Sykes, Balfour or most other advocates of the government's Zionist policy as a statist movement.<sup>49</sup> Rather, they considered Zionism principally as an endeavor of social engineering which would normalize anational—and therefore degenerate—world Jewry. In a memorandum in September 1917, Sykes wrote, “the Zionists do not want ... [t]o set up a Jewish Republic or other form of state in Palestine or any part of Palestine.” They desired, he contended, “Recognition of the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine as a national unit, federated with national units in Palestine.” The Zionists were not, he emphasized, “working for the establishment of Jewish supremacy in Jerusalem but for the building up of a regenerated Jewish race in Palestine.”<sup>50</sup>

As such, Sykes envisaged a suitably minor place for Zionism in the political arrangements for post-Ottoman Palestine: “If Arab nationality be recognised in Syria and Mesopotamia as a matter of justice,” he wrote in September 1917, “it will be equally necessary to devise some form of control or administration for Palestine. ... The Government would have to ... [d]evise a means of constitutional Government recognising the various religious and racial nationalities in the country viz: the Latins, Orthodox, Jews and Moslems, and according equal privileges to all such nationalities.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Renton, *Zionist Masquerade*, chs. 6–7; idem, “Age of Nationality,” 580–90.

<sup>47</sup> Sykes to William Ormsby-Gore, 17 November 1918, FO 371/3398/190447.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict 1917–1929*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1991), 12–14; Brigadier-General C. F. Clayton to FO, 11 February and 5 March 1918, FO 371/3391/27254 and 41979.

<sup>49</sup> For exceptions, see Lord Curzon, “The Future of Palestine,” 26 October 1917, CAB 24/30 and D. G. Hogarth minute, c. 20 August 1918, FO 371/3381/146256.

<sup>50</sup> Sykes, “Note on Palestine and Zionism,” c. 23 September 1917, Sykes Collection, no. 80, MECA. Also see Ormsby-Gore, “Attachment to Political Intelligence Summary, No. 4, 26 April 1918,” Wingate Papers, Sudan Archive, Durham University Library, 148/8/101.

<sup>51</sup> Sykes, “Note on Palestine and Zionism,” c. 23 September 1917, Sykes Collection, no. 80, MECA.

In the Holy Land, however, the Zionist and Arab populations understood the British government's plans for the future very differently. Within the Yishuv, many believed that the land was to become a Jewish State—imminently. And the majority of the Palestinian Arab elite believed that the new era for the Arab nation that they had been promised was to include the Holy Land. The “national right” of the Arabs of Filastin was the predominant political discourse by the end of 1918. Both movements cited the general principle of national freedom espoused by the Allied and US governments, and the promises made by Britain and France concerning the future for Zionism and the Arab nation.<sup>52</sup> That British propaganda had stirred the Palestinian desire for national freedom was clear to Britain's inaugural investigation into the causes of the conflict, following the Nebi Musa riots of April 1920—the first large-scale nationalist violence in Palestine:

[T]here can be little doubt that the declared policy of the Allies in favour of the self-determination of small nations encouraged the Palestinians to think, that whether they were to be permitted to unite themselves to the great Arab State forming on their borders or no [sic], they at least, under the mandate of one of the Great Powers, would be permitted to work out their own salvation and be masters in their own house.<sup>53</sup>

In the report's conclusions regarding the reasons for Palestinian Arab anger, the authors cited the “non-fulfilment” of British wartime propaganda promises as the first reason on their list.<sup>54</sup> With regard to Jewry, the same report reflected that following the Balfour Declaration, “[t]he whole race ... must have thrilled to the prospect that opened before them, the onrush to fulfilment of long brooded over prophecies.” It complained, however, about “the loose references to the Declaration by the Allies’ orators and Press and the outspoken statements of the Zionists [sic] extremists”; and bemoaned the Zionist attitude of “We want the Jewish State and we won’t wait.”<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Muslim-Christian Association, Jaffa, to Military Governor, 16 November 1918, FO 371/3386/213403; Laurens, *La Question de Palestine*, 424; Haim Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine: Identity and Nationalism from the Crusades to the Present* (Basingstoke, 2008), 90–91, 164–66; Renton, “Age of Nationality,” 590–93.

<sup>53</sup> Court of Inquiry report, 1 July 1920, 7–8, FO 371/5121/9379.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 10, 19–20, 33, 46.

The Court of Inquiry appointed in April 1920 was tasked with the job of investigating “the extent and causes of racial feelings” in Palestine.<sup>56</sup> It is here—in the British imperial preoccupation with, and concept of, “racial feelings,” and the wider race-thinking to which it belonged—that we must locate and explain the British Empire’s engagement with Zionism in the Great War. Sykes, Lloyd George, Balfour, and others looked at Jews and Zionism through the lenses of a broader racial imagining of the globe, in which race lay at the center of human existence—its past, present, and future. To their minds, national consciousness constituted the apex of racial development, and the future of the nation was the central consideration of all races that were sufficiently advanced. Hence, in the context of total war, the British government, like their allies and enemies, seized on the idea of using national liberation as a means of mobilizing populations. Races were powerful, they believed; but few were judged to possess as much power as the Jews. It was primarily for this reason that Whitehall worked so hard to legitimate the Allied cause for world Jewry with the promise of a golden future for Zionism, and why, in turn, Zionism became an important part of legitimization of the idea of the nation-based Middle East.

But the race-thinking that led to this policy also possessed within it the foundations of its undoing. It assumed that Jews would not—could not—desire national independence and that the Arabs of Palestine, thought to be at a lower rung of civilizational development than the Jews, did not even constitute a national community, let alone have the capacity to dream of national freedom. The emergence of two statist nationalist movements fighting for Palestine gave the lie to this racial universe. But like much of the racial architecture of European thought before 1939, the British government’s approach to Palestine withstood the spectacle of its inherent contradictions until the violence of colonialism’s denouement finally forced its collapse.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 1.

# The Action Portuguesia: Legitimizing National-Socialist Racial Ideology as a Dutch Sephardic Strategy for Safety, 1941–1944

*Jaap Cohen*

“The most detestable nation ever to have sullied the earth.”<sup>1</sup> This is how the great French *philosophe* Voltaire (1694–1778) described the “Jewish nation” in his *Philosophical Dictionary*. His extreme antisemitism has nowadays been widely noted and criticized, but it was also contested in his own time. One of Voltaire’s challengers was the Dutch-Sephardic economist and philosopher Isaac de Pinto (1717–1787), who stood on good terms with a broad circle of European secular intellectuals. Although a great admirer of Voltaire, in 1762 he wrote a famous refutation of Voltaire’s antisemitic essay *Des Juifs*. In these “Critical reflections,” De Pinto accused Voltaire of having failed to make a distinction between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. On the latter, De Pinto agreed with Voltaire that they had become “debased and degraded,” although this was not

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, “Dictionnaire Philosophique (1764),” in *Voltaire. Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Louis Moland (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1878–1879), 20:517–18.

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their own fault but a result of continuous vilification, persecution, and insult.<sup>2</sup> However, the Sephardim did not deserve at all the epithets that Voltaire was lavishing on them.

De Pinto offered three main points in his exoneration of Sephardic Jewry. First, he wrote that the Portuguese and Spanish Jews differed from the enlightened peoples of Western Europe in nothing but religion. In fact, they competed with other Europeans “in refinement, elegance, and show.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, according to De Pinto, the Sephardim of France, England, and Holland integrated completely into these societies and deemed themselves “to form one people with them.”<sup>4</sup> There were many examples of noble Sephardim who had been of great use to and stood in close contact with the royalty or leadership of the various nations in which they lived.<sup>5</sup>

Second, the Sephardim hold themselves aloof from other Jews. They strictly refrained from intermixing with Ashkenazim, and they had different synagogues, ceremonies, and cemeteries.<sup>6</sup> They also did not have beards, and there was nothing “peculiar in their dress.”<sup>7</sup>

Third, the Sephardim thought of themselves as being descendants of the noblest families of the tribe of Judah. This was the reason for their “elevation of mind” and their preservation of purer morals than the Ashkenazim.<sup>8</sup> The Sephardic synagogue looked, according to De Pinto, “like an assembly of senators.”<sup>9</sup> If one had to name any vices of the Sephardim, it would be “contempt for industry and for trade” or “profuseness”—nothing like the “basest avarice” that Voltaire was accusing them of.<sup>10</sup>

De Pinto’s refutation failed to impress Voltaire. Although Voltaire promised De Pinto in a personal letter to make adjustments in a new edition of his essay, he never did. Actually, his antisemitism would only amplify in his further writings.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Isaac de Pinto, “Critical Reflections,” in *Letters of certain Jews to Monsieur Voltaire*, ed. Antoine Guénée (Philadelphia 1795), 33–53 (41).

<sup>3</sup> De Pinto, “Critical Reflections,” 37.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 39–40.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 37–38.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 36, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Adam Sutcliffe, “Can a Jew be a Philosophe? Isaac de Pinto, Voltaire, and Jewish Participation in the European Enlightenment,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6 (2000): 31–51

One hundred and thirty-seven years after the De Pinto–Voltaire correspondence, there was another author who wrote the ugliest phrases against the Jews, phrases that could easily compete with Voltaire’s anti-semitic writings: the German writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927), who in his immensely popular *Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1899) advanced various racist theories on how the Aryan “race” was superior to others—especially to the Jews, who, according to Chamberlain, belonged to an “alien people” that was an extremely negative force in European civilization: “Our governments, our law, our science, our commerce, our literature, our art ... practically all branches of our life have become more or less willing slaves of the Jews.”<sup>12</sup>

However, Chamberlain did not ignore all distinctions in his portrayal of the Jews. After meeting some “pure” Oriental Sephardim, he had begun to comprehend the significance of Judaism in the world. “This is nobility in the fullest sense of the word, genuine nobility of race!” he exclaimed in *Grundlagen*. “Beautiful figures, noble heads, dignity in speech and bearing.” According to Chamberlain, they differed in everything from the troops of Ashkenazi *Bochers* (orthodox yeshiva students) whom he saw walking everyday through the Friedrichstraße in Berlin.<sup>13</sup>

Apparently, the racist, antisemitic author H. S. Chamberlain had similar opinions on the qualitative difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewry as his eighteenth-century Jewish predecessor Isaac de Pinto. Both De Pinto and Chamberlain were influenced by the so-called myth of Sephardic superiority (or supremacy).<sup>14</sup>

This myth had existed for ages, finding its basis in the centuries-old Sephardic claim of noble lineage. Jews living in Muslim Spain claimed to be descendants of the royal tribe of Judah, and the emergence of a

(37–39); on the background of the Voltaire–De Pinto discussion, see Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 180–84, 269–70.

<sup>12</sup> Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Lees (London & New York: John Lane, 1910), 1: 330.

<sup>13</sup> Chamberlain, *Foundations*, 273.

<sup>14</sup> The term “Sephardic supremacy” was coined by Ismar Schorsch in his classic article about this subject. Other authors, like John Efron and Todd M. Endelman, use instead the term “Sephardic superiority,” without altering the meaning of the concept. Ismar Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 34 (1989): 47–66; John M. Efron, “Scientific Racism and the Mystique of Sephardic Racial Superiority,” in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 38 (1993): 75–96; Todd M. Endelman, “Benjamin Disraeli and the Myth of Sephardi Superiority,” *Jewish History* 10 (1996): 21–35.

Jewish courtier elite only confirmed this assertion.<sup>15</sup> After the forced mass conversions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the claim reached a peak, when converted New Christians used it in response to racial polemics, that is, the statues of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood), which sought to differentiate between “noble” Old Christians and “impure” New Christians. Instead of impure, these New Christians reversely stated that they were actually the noblest of all peoples.<sup>16</sup> “For if nobility lies in antiquity, who goes back further [than the Jew]?” wrote the *converso* writer Juan de Lucena (1430–1506) suggestively.<sup>17</sup>

Also after their emigration to north-west Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Sephardim, often converting or reverting to normative Judaism, persisted in using the same discourse. This time, they utilized the concept to mark off boundaries between themselves and Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe—Jews who were often considered poor, unskilled, and uncivilized.<sup>18</sup> By stating their superiority over them, the Sephardim could create their own group identity and protect their social status.

<sup>15</sup> David Graizbord, “Religion and Ethnicity among ‘Men of the Nation’: Toward a Realistic Interpretation,” *Jewish Social Studies* 15 (2008): 32–65 (47–48); David Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” *Past & Present* 174 (2002): 3–41 (28); Benjamin R. Gampel, “A Letter to the Wayward Teacher: The Transformations of Sephardic Culture in Christian Iberia,” in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. David Biale (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 389–447 (390–91, 413); Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 164–65.

<sup>16</sup> Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities,” 30–33. As a result of the destabilization of traditional categories of religious identity after the mass conversions of 1391, David Nirenberg signaled a “genealogical turn” not only on the part of *conversos*, but also among (Old-)Christians and Jews. See also Endelman, “Benjamin Disraeli and the Myth of Sephardi Superiority,” 25–26; Miriam Bodian, “‘Men of the Nation’: The Shaping of Converso Identity in Early Modern Europe,” *Past & Present* (1994): 48–76 (61–62); Graizbord, “Religion and Ethnicity among ‘Men of the Nation’,” 49–50.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Bodian, “‘Men of the Nation’,” 62.

<sup>18</sup> Yosef Kaplan, “The Self-Definition of the Sephardic Jews of Western Europe and Their Relation to the Alien and the Stranger,” in *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391–1648*, ed. Benjamin R. Gampel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 121–45 (144–45); Endelman, “Benjamin Disraeli and the Myth of Sephardi Superiority,” 26; Bodian, “‘Men of the Nation’,” 65–70; Gordon M. Weiner, “Sephardic Philo- and Anti-Semitism in the Early Modern Era: The Jewish Adoption of Christian Attitudes,” in *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), 189–214 (192–97). For the case of Amsterdam, see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation. Conversos and Community*

The Sephardim themselves were not the only Jews who believed in the myth of Sephardic superiority. Already from the sixteenth century on there were also Ashkenazim who, often out of a sense of self-criticism, turned to the Sephardic example. In the age of Haskalah and emancipation, enlightened German Jewry even used the Sephardic discourse as a model for integration. As Ismar Schorsch has noted in his classic article on this subject, numerous nineteenth-century Ashkenazi historians, novelists, and rabbis not only glorified the Golden Age of Sephardic Jewry in Medieval Spain, where a great cultural and intellectual xenogamy had arisen between the Jews and the Islamic Moors, they also hailed the heroic responses to the oppression of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. This resulted in great changes in various areas of Jewish life. Liturgy, synagogue architecture, literature, and scholarship all were heavily influenced by Sephardic examples.<sup>19</sup> This was also true for the field of physical anthropology: as the historian John Efron stated, for many Jewish, nineteenth-century physical anthropologists, the Sephardic Jew served as an equivalent of the Jewish “Aryan,” with noble and delicate features like an oval face, almond-shaped eyes and dark eyebrows.<sup>20</sup>

Gentiles used the concept of the idealized Sephardic Jew as well. *Fin-de-siècle* authors like Julius Langbehn and, as already mentioned, Houston Stewart Chamberlain contrasted the idealized Sephardic Jew with the unassimilable and dangerous Ashkenazi Jew.<sup>21</sup> They depicted Sephardic Jewry as an example of an integrated and “normal” Jewish community. In this way, the Sephardim could serve as a legitimization for their stringent antisemitic writings.

*in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 125–30, 133; Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld, *Poverty and Welfare Among the Portuguese Jews in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 117; Yosef Kaplan, “The Portuguese Community in 17th Century Amsterdam and the Ashkenazi World,” in *Dutch Jewish History*, ed. Jozeph Michman (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1989), 2:23–45.

<sup>19</sup> Schorsch, “The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy,” 47–66. For a recently published study on this subject, see John M. Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Efron, “Scientific Racism and the Mystique of Sephardic Racial Superiority,” 93.

<sup>21</sup> David J. Wertheim, *Salvation through Spinoza. A Study of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (Leiden: Brill 2011), 58–59. See also Efron, “Scientific Racism,” 77. He explains that for non-Jewish scientists, the idealized Sephardic Jew “was proof that a noble, physically beautiful Jew had one time been a historical reality.”

It is well known that these *fin-de-siècle* racist writers, especially Chamberlain, were of great influence to Adolf Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg and their national-socialist ideology.<sup>22</sup> However, the myth of Sephardic superiority failed to make its entrance into the ideology itself. When in February 1941 the Nazis summoned all Dutch individuals with at least one Jewish grandparent to register themselves, they did not differentiate between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. Despite, or maybe because of, this, the registration obligation of February 1941 in Holland marked the starting point of a new, dreadful chapter in the history of the myth of Sephardic superiority—a chapter in which all of the abovementioned historical, cultural, political, and anthropological elements came together.

The first person to make use of the myth of Sephardic superiority during the Dutch occupation was the civil engineer and conservative publicist Louis Frederik Teixeira de Mattos (1872–1945) of The Hague. He was a descendant of one of the three Sephardic families in the Netherlands who were ennobled during the nineteenth century. He really did live the life of a nobleman: he was well-to-do, had a large estate in the rural, eastern part of the country, and he was a member of various exclusive leisure clubs in The Hague. The only element that made him “different” in high society circles was his Jewishness. Jews were never completely accepted in early twentieth-century Dutch societal circles, in which social antisemitism was no exception. This must have been one of the reasons why Teixeira de Mattos converted to the Walloon Reformed Church, married a Christian woman, and traced his ancestry back to a noble Christian family in medieval Portugal.<sup>23</sup> Thus, he considered himself religiously nor racially Jewish. Still, because his four grandparents had belonged to the Sephardic communities of Amsterdam and The Hague, he was supposed to register as a Jew in February 1941.

Teixeira de Mattos decided to fight the ordinance. His lawyer wrote a lengthy letter to the Nazi rulers of the Netherlands, in which he stated that Teixeira de Mattos belonged to an illustrious family of “century-long culture bearers” who as “utterly Aryans were part of our people.” Registering

<sup>22</sup> Michael Biddiss, “History as Destiny: Gobineau, H. S. Chamberlain and Spengler,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* ser. 6, vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 73–100 (87).

<sup>23</sup> L. F. Teixeira de Mattos descended from Diego Teixeira de Sampayo, who possibly descended from the noble Sampayo family of Portugal. On this claim, see Daniel M. Swetschinski, *Orphan Objects: Facets of the Textiles Collection of the Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), 137–47.

them as Jews would mean that this famous family “would get lost to the *European Kultulkreis*”—apparently, in February 1941 the lawyer already had a clear vision of the disastrous fate of European Jewry.<sup>24</sup>

A few weeks later, the Germans received a second letter, written by the brothers Frank and Charles Mendes de Leon. Although they were not ennobled, they surely were well-to-do and also converted to Christianity. Furthermore, they were closely affiliated to the Teixeira de Mattos family. Because of their partly similar genealogy, the Mendes de Leon-brothers claimed to be descendants of Old Christian, Iberian aristocracy as well.<sup>25</sup> To support their argument, they added a historical essay to their letter, about the origin of Dutch Sephardim. In this seven-page document, the authors described how since the arrival of *conversos* in Amsterdam, these “fine civilized people” almost were not distinguishable from Spanish and Portuguese Old Christians. On the other hand, the distinction between them and the Ashkenazim was “very large in culture, living, and rite.”<sup>26</sup>

It was the task of the German Director for the Interior Administration, Hans Georg Calmeyer, to decide upon “racially ambiguous” Jewish cases.<sup>27</sup> Not a stringent Nazi, he was receptive to the claims of both converted Sephardic families. In the autumn of 1941, Calmeyer changed the legal status of the concerned from “J4” (a person with four full-Jewish grandparents) to “A” (Aryan).<sup>28</sup> They did not have to fear the humiliating anti-Jewish measures of the occupier anymore.

When members of the Sephardic communities in Amsterdam and The Hague heard about the successful maneuvers of the Teixeira de Mattos and Mendes de Leon branches, dozens of Sephardic families decided to try to alter their status in the same manner: after they had sorted out their family trees in an extremely detailed way—all beginning with Iberian,

<sup>24</sup> E. H. Th. Kwast to *Reichskommissar Seyß-Inquart*, 22 February 1941. Central Bureau for Genealogy (CBG), The Hague, Calmeyer Archives, dossier Teixeira de Mattos (180).

<sup>25</sup> Frank and Charles Mendes de Leon to *Generalkommissar Wimmer*, 28 March 1941. CBG, Calmeyer Archives, dossier Mendes de Leon (117).

<sup>26</sup> Frank and Charles Mendes de Leon, “Historischer Ueberblick,” addendum to their letter of 28 March 1941, CBG, Calmeyer Archives, dossier Mendes de Leon (117).

<sup>27</sup> Much has been publicized about the controversial figure of Calmeyer. Recent studies are Mathias Middelberg, *Judenrecht, Judenpolitik und der Jurist Hans Calmeyer in den besetzten Niederlanden 1940–1945* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2005); Geraldien von Freitag Drabbe Künzel, *Het geval Calmeyer* (Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt, 2008); Ruth van Galen-Hermann, *Calmeyer, dader of mensenredder? Visies op Calmeyeers rol in de jodenvervolging* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> CBG, Calmeyer Archives, dossier Teixeira de Mattos (180).

Old Christian forefathers from the Middle Ages—they sent petitions *en masse* to Calmeyer, claiming Iberian-Christian descent, pointing out their noble and sophisticated way of living and underlining their difference from Ashkenazim. Calmeyer was overwhelmed with this large amount of new requests. Fearing criticism by colleagues, he did not dare to free that many new applicants from their Jewish status.<sup>29</sup> He asked the Reich Genealogical Authority (*Reichssippenamt*) in Berlin to provide an answer for the “Sephardic question.”<sup>30</sup>

While the *Reichssippenamt* was studying Calmeyer’s question, the Sephardim did not sit still. Because all the Sephardic applicants were basically making use of the same arguments, the conservative, Sephardic ex-judge and community leader Nochem de Beneditt started a campaign to free the 4500 Dutch Sephardim from their Jewish status—collectively.<sup>31</sup>

The influential De Beneditt wrote a draft petition, in which many elements of the myth of Sephardic superiority came together.<sup>32</sup> De Beneditt made use of six arguments. First, he stated that anthropological research had determined that Sephardim belonged to the Mediterranean race, whereas “the Jews” were racially Asiatic. This statement was based on a study by the famous Dutch neuroscientist and physical anthropologist Ubbo Ariëns Kappers, who in 1934 had measured the skulls of 233 Ashkenazic and 235 Sephardic Jews from Amsterdam.<sup>33</sup> Second,

<sup>29</sup> In a personal conversation with the Sephardic lawyer Emile Moresco, one of Calmeyer’s colleagues explicitly stated that “the granted exemptions have led to criticism”: E. Moresco to S. van Oyen, 17 October 1941. NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD), Amsterdam, arch. 860, nr. 129.

<sup>30</sup> According to a letter of the head of the *Reichssippenamt* Kurt Mayer to *Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* Wilhelm Harster of 27 August 1943, Mayer had received Calmeyer’s question on 31 October 1941. NIOD, arch. 77, inv. nr. 1262.

<sup>31</sup> About this campaign, see Van Galen-Herrmann, *Calmeyer, dader of mensenredder?*, 98–105; Von Frijtag, *Het geval Calmeyer*, 127–41; Middelberg, *Judenrecht*, 310–24; Bob Moore, *Victims and Survivors: the Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940–1945* (London: Arnold, 1997), 122–23; Salomon Louis Vaz Dias, “‘Talmoed Tora keneged koelam’. Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente te Amsterdam in de Tweede Wereldoorlog,” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 29, 1 (1995): 29–70 (33–43); Y. H. M. Nijgh, “Genealogie gedurende de bezetting,” in *Liber amicorum Jhr.mr. C.C. van Valkenburg* (The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 1985), 219–34; J. Presser, *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (London: Souvenir P, 1968), 305–11.

<sup>32</sup> This draft is dated 13 November 1941, NIOD, arch. 249–364D, inv.nr. a5.

<sup>33</sup> C. U. Ariëns Kappers, *An Introduction to the Anthropology of the Near East in Ancient and Recent Times. With a Chapter on Near Eastern Bloodgroups* by Leland W. Parr (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1934), 63–66.

De Beneditti used the argument of Old Christian origin of the Dutch Sephardim. In the ages after their often forced conversion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they had mixed with Old-Christian Iberian families. The third argument was about their noble lineage, one of the main elements of the myth of Sephardic superiority. Fourth, De Beneditti pointed out that Sephardim always had produced notable diplomats, doctors, and artists who maintained a prominent position in Dutch society and who were “by their appearance, their clothing, their manners and their character in nothing to be distinguished from their co-civilians.” Fifth, De Beneditti stressed that the social and cultural institutions of the Amsterdam Sephardic community—like a hospital, a retirement home and a cemetery—were more important to its members than the religious institutions. “Membership is only indirect and far-related to religion,” De Beneditti even stated. Finally, the former judge made use of a political argument: the Sephardim in the Netherlands “never had been hostile towards the Germans, but always had explicitly strived [...] for bridging the differences.”

De Beneditti’s petition was never sent to the German occupier, but served as a scheme for the so-called Action Portuguesia, an operation set up by a committee of De Beneditti and a number of his co-members of the Amsterdam Sephardic community. This committee generated means from individual members to enlist the services of a couple of dedicated lawyers, who together with several renowned scientists produced various reports to assist the collective cause.<sup>34</sup>

The starting point was a new, large report on the history of the Sephardim in the Netherlands, written anonymously by the Antillean-Sephardic, historically engaged engineer Percy Cohen Henriquez.<sup>35</sup> Based on a wide variety of sources, among others the writings of H. S. Chamberlain, it was basically a developed version of the earlier report by the Mendes de Leon-brothers. The main argument of this extensive report of 37 pages was to prove that the sixteenth-century *conversos* had been fully mixed with Christian noble families on the Iberian Peninsula. According to Cohen Henriquez, it had been the Inquisition which had forced them to escape

<sup>34</sup> Bookkeeping of the Action Portuguesia, Amsterdam City Archives (ACA), arch. 788, inv.nr. 120.

<sup>35</sup> [Percy Cohen Henriquez], “De afkomst der dusgenaamde Portugeesche Joden” (1942), NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1526.

the Peninsula, “turning Christians into Jews.”<sup>36</sup> The report pointed out that because of the mixing with Old Christians, the *conversos* were *racially* not Jews anymore upon their arrival in the Netherlands.

To gain support from the academic world, the committee and its lawyers sent copies of the historical report to 24 Dutch university professors, asking for support of the thesis that the German measures against the Jews should not be applied to the group of Sephardim, because of their “nature, attitude to life and their position in Dutch society.”<sup>37</sup> One of the professors, the highly acclaimed (especially in German circles) law historian Duco Rengers Hora Siccama, indeed wrote a lengthy and supportive letter.<sup>38</sup> In a later phase, a few other academics who were members of, or at least affiliated with, the Dutch National Socialist Party also expressed their support. For instance, the Hegelian professor of philosophy J. Hessing hailed the Sephardim because of their “scientific and philosophical mind, their good taste and artistry, their civilized culture, which meant that they belonged to the best Dutch civilians, at any rate opposed to political intrigue and social-democratic and communist movements.”<sup>39</sup>

De Benedicty himself also wrote a separate treatise, in which he argued that the Sephardim always had participated in intellectual and social life in the Netherlands.<sup>40</sup> This was in contrast to the Ashkenazim, who behaved as an alien people and who were seen by the Dutch accordingly. The fact that Ashkenazic peddlers did not refrain from loudly appraising their goods on a Sunday in front of a Christian church, said enough, according to De Benedicty.<sup>41</sup> He found it unjust that the fully assimilated Sephardim were likely to get dragged into a grand drama—“a drama,” wrote De Benedicty, “which will be continued until the Ashkenazim [...] lose their strangeness in the eyes of others.”<sup>42</sup>

Apart from glorifying the Sephardim, De Benedicty apparently did not hesitate to take jibes at the Ashkenazim. It is likely that this was the reason

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>37</sup> For a list of names of the professors, see a letter of lawyer A. N. Kotting to the members of the Portuguese committee, 5 June 1942. The reports were eventually sent on 26 June 1942. Municipal Archives of The Hague (MATH), arch. 780, box 4183 alg.

<sup>38</sup> D. G. Rengers Hora Siccama to lawyer H. van Krimpen, July 1942. NIOD, arch. 20, inv. nr. 1527.

<sup>39</sup> J. Hessing to N. de Benedicty, 24 October 1943. NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1526.

<sup>40</sup> ACA, arch. 788, inv.nr. 137.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 66.

why the lawyers did not want to hand De Benedicty's document over to the Germans: in that way, the Nazi measures against the Jews would be explicitly legitimized. However, the lawyers did send an address to Nazi *Reichskommissar* Arthur Seyß-Inquart, in which they stipulated that the group of Sephardim had always had a reputable position in Dutch society—implicitly stating that the Ashkenazim had not.<sup>43</sup>

The historical-genealogical, cultural, and political arguments were all sorted out with great care by the committee and its helpers. However, there was one kind of argument which was considered most important: the racial or so-called anthropological argument. Here, an opportunity was available to connect with the Germans and the racial theories that stood at the center of their national-socialist ideology. At the beginning of the Action Portuguesia, the committee asked the renowned scientists J. F. van Bemmelen and C. U. Ariëns Kappers to write statements on the racial composition of Sephardim. Indeed, Van Bemmelen stated that the Sephardim possessed “a specifically personable and distinguished appearance,” which was in accordance with “the civilized and more developed class they exclusively belong to.”<sup>44</sup> Subsequently, Ariëns Kappers confirmed his own 1934 study by stating that there was an important difference in skull index between Sephardim and Ashkenazim: the former had significant longer heads than the latter. Moreover, according to Ariëns Kappers, the Sephardim were deprived of the typical Jewish nose, also called a “6-like nose.”<sup>45</sup>

At a later stage, in 1943, the young doctor-anthropologist Arie de Froe entered the scene. He repeated Ariëns Kappers’s 1934 research, but in a much more elaborate way. He surveyed no fewer than 375 Amsterdam Sephardim, not only measuring their skull indices, but also 31 other variables, like the distance between their eyes, the thickness of their upper lip and the height, length, width, and depth of their nose. De Froe compared this primary source material with the research on Ashkenazim by anthropologists of high acclaim in the Third Reich. The result was a report called “The anthropology of the so-called Portuguese Jews in the Netherlands.”<sup>46</sup> It contained 96 pages full of graphics, tables, and datasets, which led to

<sup>43</sup> Y. H. M. Nijgh to A. Seyß-Inquart, 13 June 1942. NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1524.

<sup>44</sup> J. F. van Bemmelen to lawyers M. J. van der Flier, Y. H. M. Nijgh and L .M. I. L. van Taaligen-Dols, 19 March 1942. NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1525.

<sup>45</sup> Statement by C. U. Ariëns Kappers, n.d., NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1525.

<sup>46</sup> A. de Froe, “Die Anthropologie der sogenannten portugiesischen Juden in den Niederlanden” (1943). NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1532.

one irrefutable conclusion: on basically all researched body features, the Sephardic Jews differed significantly from Ashkenazi Jews—even more than non-Jewish Dutchmen did. The Sephardic Jews clearly belonged to the Mediterranean race, whereas the Ashkenazi Jews consisted of a mix of Nordic and Alpine race-types.

De Froe not only provided a great amount of statistical data, he also added 92 portrait photographs of Sephardic Jews from Amsterdam to the report, in order “to provide an image which is not to be reached by any measure or rate.”<sup>47</sup> Next to all these pictures of the distinctively dressed Sephardim, De Froe mentioned notable facial features: often, the subject photographed had a substantial forehead, an oval face and a “telling, intelligent look.”<sup>48</sup>

Some of these photos, which were taken by the photographer Jaap d’Oliveira, also appeared in a supplementary book to the report. This book contained 78 beautiful pictures and photos of the most famous and aristocratic figures in the history of the Dutch Sephardic community, combined with living doctors, scientists, and musicians, often with mention of their immediate Sephardic family members.<sup>49</sup> Contrastingly, 44 photos of Eastern Sephardic Jews, originally used as illustrations in a nearly twenty-year-old physical anthropological journal article, were added to the dossier.<sup>50</sup> The persons in these pictures were descendants of Jews who during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had not converted to Christianity, but had fled to the Balkans. Consequently, they were not racially mixed with Mediterranean people—with their beards, big noses and tired looks, they were similar to the stereotypical images that existed of Ashkenazi Jews.

Additionally, De Froe persuaded Louise Kaiser, the director of the Phonetical Laboratory of the University of Amsterdam, to conduct a small research project on the speech of Sephardim. After examining ten

<sup>47</sup> De Froe stated this in a separate booklet in which he summarized the results of his research. A. de Froe, *De antropologie van de zoogenaamde Portugeesche Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1943), 7.

<sup>48</sup> See, for instance, the caption of the photos of Professor J. L. Palache, who was the chairman of the Amsterdam Sephardic Community, De Froe, “Die Antropologie,” pictures 45 and 46.

<sup>49</sup> *Abbildungen von Personen Portugiesischer Abstammung in den Niederlanden* (1943), NIOD, arch. 20, inv. nr. 1529.

<sup>50</sup> F. Wagenseil, “Beiträge zur physischen Antropologie der spanischen Juden und zur jüdischen Rassenfrage,” *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Antropologie* 23 (1925): 33–151.

Sephardim, she concluded that in several of the families Portuguese words were still used, but that “there were no signs at all of the use of any particular Jewish vocabulary in their speech.”<sup>51</sup>

Still, for De Froe, a large scientific research, a photo album and a linguistic report were not enough. Finally, he wrote a small treatise in which he briefly summarized the preliminary conclusions of another research project in which he was involved: research on the psychology of the Portuguese Jews in the Netherlands, mainly conducted by psychiatrist Coenraad van Emde Boas. Van Emde Boas had 30 Sephardim take Rorschach tests and submitted lengthy questionnaires on character and temper to the members of the Portuguese Jewish Community.<sup>52</sup> De Froe and Van Emde Boas compared the results with data about Ashkenazim, which they had partly collected as well. One of the preliminary conclusions was that the conduct of Sephardim was mostly “calm and collected”: “the male character being dignified, the female’s gracious or noble. They usually refrain from gesticulating, but persevere for a notable long time in the same position.”<sup>53</sup> The point was clear: also character- and temper-wise, the Portuguese Jews differed a little from the Dutch, but they differed much more from the “lively, waving, jovial, extravert, gabby, emotional, primarily, practical-intelligent Ashkenazim.”<sup>54</sup>

Did the Dutch Sephardim have a chance of surviving the Holocaust by tirelessly elaborating on their arguments? When taking into account attempts of other European, (quasi-)Jewish groups, it can be stated that, indeed, the Action Portuguesia was not necessarily a dead end. An Iranian diplomatic official in Vichy-France, Abdol-Hossein Sardari, succeeded in rescuing a small group of about 100 Iranian Jewish families in Paris by using fairly similar racial arguments: although these “Mosaic Iranians” practiced the Jewish religion, they were supposed to be racially non-Jewish, while their language, culture, education, nationality, and way of dress were akin to the Muslim Iranians.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the Crimean Karaites, a religious group following the Hebrew Bible, also stated that they did not belong

<sup>51</sup> Memorandum L. Kaiser, 7 June 1943. NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1526.

<sup>52</sup> Van Emde Boas collection, Amsterdam (private collection). With many thanks to Walter van Emde Boas, who generously gave me access to his father’s documents.

<sup>53</sup> A. de Froe, *De psychologie van de zoogenaamde Portugeesche Joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1943), 8.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>55</sup> Fariborz Mokhtari, *In the Lion’s Shadow: The Iranian Schindler and his Homeland in the Second World War* (Stroud: The History Press, 2011), 10–20, 94–113.

to the Jewish “race.” Partly because Nazi experts and policy-makers could not arrive at a clear-cut conclusion regarding these claims, the Karaites of Crimea were eventually able to survive the Holocaust.<sup>56</sup>

Of course, during the time in which all of the reports, albums, and papers of the Action Portuguesia were being produced, the key to the answer on the “Sephardic question” was stagnating in Berlin: Calmeyer and his superiors had asked the Reich Genealogical Authority for a motivated opinion. After this Institute forwarded the question to the State Institute for the History of the New Germany (*Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*), it took almost two years until an answer was received.<sup>57</sup> In the meantime, the “pure” Dutch Sephardim—that is, the ones who could prove that they had at least three Sephardic grandparents and who were not married to Ashkenazim—were put on the “list of persons without East-Jewish admixture and not married with eastern Jews” (*Liste von Personen portugiesischer Abstammung ohne ostjüdische Beimischung und nicht mit Ostjuden verheiratet*), a *Sperrliste* that provided protection until further notice for deportation to the concentration camps in Eastern Europe. At first, this list consisted of 1014 names.<sup>58</sup> After the criteria were extended—people had to prove that they had at least seven Sephardic great-grandparents—only 362 Sephardim were approved on the list.<sup>59</sup> For the unfortunate rest of the group, the rescue possibility based on the myth of Sephardic superiority would forever remain an empty shell.

For the 362 “pure” Sephardim this turned out to be the case as well, but in a significantly later stage of the war. Only in the late summer of 1943 did Calmeyer receive an answer from Berlin on the Portuguese issue.<sup>60</sup> The Nazi racial expert, Wilfried Euler, turned out to be, just as Calmeyer himself, receptive to the Sephardic anthropological claim. However, he was reluctant to accept the historical, cultural, and genealogical arguments. Euler pointed

<sup>56</sup> Because of the Karaites’ ties with the Muslim Tatars, geopolitical considerations also became an important factor in this matter. See Kiril Feferman, “Nazi Germany and the Karaites in 1838–1944: Between racial theory and Realpolitik,” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 39, no. 2 (2011) 277–94 (281–90).

<sup>57</sup> K. Mayer to W. Harster, 27 August 1943. NIOD, arch. 77, inv.nr. 1262.

<sup>58</sup> MATH, arch. 870, box 4183 alg.

<sup>59</sup> “Liste von Personen portugiesischer Abstammung ohne ostjüdische Beimischung und nicht mit Ostjuden verheiratet,” MATH, arch. 870, box 4183 alg.

<sup>60</sup> K. Mayer to W. Harster, 27 August 1943. Included was the report of W. Euler, “Zur Frage der genealogischen Einordnung der sogenannten portugiesischen Juden in den Niederlanden,” NIOD, arch. 77, inv.nr. 1262.

out that from 1810 on, mixed Sephardic-Ashkenazic marriages had been allowed and significantly increased in number; the fact that only 362 of the 4500 Sephardim could claim “pure” Portuguese descent, was an important sign that the Sephardic group was not as separated from the Ashkenazim as it claimed to be. And although the Sephardim played down their religious involvement, it was undeniable that from the point of arrival in Amsterdam on, they had practiced the Jewish religion and identified themselves as Jews. “The Dutch Sephardim have always felt like Jews and are born, raised, and deceased in Jewish spirit,” wrote Mayer in his accompanying letter to Euler’s report.<sup>61</sup> Finally, the fact that in 1930 the Dutch Sephardim had sent rabbis to Portugal to educate groups of crypto-Jews in the true foundations of their faith and rite—a fact that was cunningly pointed out by another Nazi official—did not speak to their advantage either.<sup>62</sup>

In order to come to a final verdict, on 2 February 1944—almost two years after the first mass deportations of Jews—the Nazis organized a “Portuguese razzia.” All protected Sephardim were collected at their homes and deported to the Dutch transit camp of Westerbork. Several weeks later, they were put in lines. Two high-ranking SS officers and camp commander Gemmekker inspected the group—with a dramatic outcome. Despite the anthropological reports, in the eyes of the three Nazis most Sephardim did have Jewish features. Moreover, the inspectors made the rather perverse statement that the Sephardim in fact had recognized their Jewishness by wearing the obligatory star during the war years. The judgment was clear: Sephardim were racially inferior (*Rassisches Untermenschentum*), as one of the SSers put it.<sup>63</sup> The Action Portuguesia had been in vain. On 25 February 1944, a group of 308 Sephardim was deported to Theresienstadt. The vast majority died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz—one of the victims being the initiator of the Action Portuguesia, Nochem de Benedetty.

<sup>61</sup> K. Mayer to W. Harster, 27 August 1943. NIOD, arch. 77, inv.nr. 1262. On Mayer and his institute, see Thomas Pegelow, “Determining ‘People of German Blood’, ‘Jews’ and ‘Mischlinge’: The Reich Kinship Office and the Competing Discourses and Powers of Nazism, 1941–1943,” *Contemporary European History* 15 (2006): 43–65; Eric Ehrenreich, *The Nazi Ancestral Proof: Genealogy, Racial Science, and the Final Solution* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 78–120.

<sup>62</sup> The head of the Dutch branch of Adolf Eichmann’s IV B 4, W. Zöpf, added two documents of the Dutch Marranos Committee to the dossier, in order to prove the involvement of Dutch Sephardim in the religious training of crypto-Jews in Portugal. NIOD, arch. 77, inv.nr. 1262.

<sup>63</sup> H. Aust to H. A. Rauter, 20 February 1944. NIOD, arch. 77, inv.nr. 1262.

This dreadful episode of the Dutch Sephardim during World War II shows how the ancient myth of Sephardic superiority was—albeit unsuccessfully—utilized, transformed, and enlarged to serve as a tool to rescue a community. The first Dutch chronicler of the Dutch occupation, Mr. Wielek, judged the attempt harshly. He explicitly quoted the petition that the lawyers for the Sephardim sent to *Reichskommissar Seyß-Inquart*. According to Wielek, the Sephardim tried to make clear, “that they were not Jews, that they had not come to the Netherlands as parasites (*Schmarotzer*), and that they did not have rapacious motives (*raffgierigen Motiven*) when they arrived”—implicating that the Ashkenazim *were* rapacious parasites.<sup>64</sup>

In fact, the shocking quotations that Wielek used were not to be found in the original petition.<sup>65</sup> Although the Sephardim did state that they were venerable members of society—implicating that the Ashkenazim were not and in this way seeming to legitimize the Nazi policies against the latter—they did not use the shameful words *Schmarotzer* and *raffgierigen Motiven*.

However, it was these exact words that would often be repeated in Dutch historiography in regard to and connected with the Action Portuguesia.<sup>66</sup> Several Ashkenazi historians discussed it in an even more negative manner than Wielek had. In 1950, Abel Herzberg wrote ironically in his book *Chronicles of the Persecution of the Jews (Kroniek der Jodenvervolging)* that when reading about De Froe’s anthropological measurements of the Portuguese Jews, he was especially curious about the measurements of their backbones—“but one is not able to find those.”<sup>67</sup> One year later, M. Wallenstein wrote in the weekly *The Jewish Chronicle* about this “shameful episode,” in which the Dutch Sephardim had renounced their

<sup>64</sup> H. Wielek, *De oorlog die Hitler won* (Amsterdam: Amsterdamsche Boek- en Courantmij., 1947), 294.

<sup>65</sup> Y. H. M. Nijgh to A. Seyß-Inquart, 13 June 1942. NIOD, arch. 20, inv.nr. 1524.

<sup>66</sup> See, for instance, Abel J. Herzberg, *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging, 1940–1945*, 5th ed. (Amsterdam: Querido, 1985 [1950]), 186; J. Presser, *Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom 1940–1945* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1965), 2: 72; Joseph Michman, “Historiography of the Jews in the Netherlands,” in *Dutch Jewish History. Proceedings of the Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, ed. Joseph Michman and Tirtsah Levie, (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1984), 7–29 (14); Joost Divendal and Henriëtte Lakmaker, *Emmy J. Belinfante 1875–1944. Tussen rook, alcohol en mannen* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2001), 209.

<sup>67</sup> Herzberg, *Kroniek*, 184.

origins.<sup>68</sup> Finally, in his classic 1965 book *Ondergang*, historian Jacques Presser used the words *Schmarotzer* and *raffgierigen Motiven* as well. Moreover, he asked rhetorically if the Sephardim indeed had lost everything—“even their honor.”<sup>69</sup>

On the contrary, one of the most important scientific helpers of the Sephardim, Arie de Froe, was still convinced of the justness of the anthropological branch of the Action Portuguesia after the war. He even repeated the conclusions of his anthropological research on the Sephardim in a 1949 encyclopedia lemma: “The Ashkenazim [...] show a Nordic-Alpine mix. [...] The Sephardim are connected with the Mediterranean race.”<sup>70</sup> This is an explanation for the large scale of the Action Portuguesia. If De Froe and his colleagues had not believed in the main arguments of the Action, they would not have conducted their research this thoroughly and extensively. Moreover, De Froe stressed that the collective rescue operation did not lead to more disadvantages on the Ashkenazi side.<sup>71</sup> He was right. The German goal for the destruction of Dutch Jewry would still have been the same whether the Sephardim would have persisted in going on with the Action Portuguesia or not.

Finally, the question arises, up to what point the Sephardim themselves believed in their arguments. In seeking to answer this, the Sephardim can be divided into three groups. The first subgroup comprised the vast majority of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam. After the late eighteenth-century economic crises, these families had seen a devastating drop in wealth, after which they had soon mixed and intermarried with Ashkenazim.<sup>72</sup> For them, the myth of Sephardic superiority was indeed nothing more than a myth. Of course, initially some of them tried to use their Portuguese ancestry as a rescue strategy. However, when the

<sup>68</sup> M. Wallenstein, “The Marranos of Holland. A Memory to the Last War,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 August 1951.

<sup>69</sup> Presser, *Ondergang* 2: 73.

<sup>70</sup> A. de Froe, “Inleiding tot de anthropologie,” *Eerste Nederlandse Systematisch Ingerichte Encyclopaedie*, ed. C. J. van der Klauw et al., 12 vols, (Amsterdam: E. N. S. I. E., 1946–1960), vol. 6 (1949), 237–43 (243).

<sup>71</sup> A. de Froe to D. Cohen, n.d. [1951]. NIOD, arch. 249–364D, inv.nr. a8.

<sup>72</sup> R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, “Enlightenment and Emancipation, 1750–1814,” in *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, ed. J. C. H. Blom, R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, and I. Schöffer; trans. Arnold J Pomerans and Erica Pomerans (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002) 164–91 (173–76); J. C. H. Blom and J. J. Cahen, “Jewish Netherlanders, Netherlands Jews, and Jews in the Netherlands, 1870–1940,” in *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, 230–95 (231).

Germans stated that only “pure” Sephardim were being allowed on the Portuguese List, they were forced to find other ways to save their lives.

The second subgroup was the one of well-to-do Sephardic families that had converted to Christianity in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to fully assimilate into Dutch high society. The myth of Sephardic noble lineage was part of their identity and enhanced their position in pre-war aristocratic circles.<sup>73</sup> During the war, exponents of this group, namely branches of the Teixeira de Mattos and Mendes de Leon families, started the utilization of the myth. As mentioned before, members of these families successfully appealed their registration as Jews.

The third subgroup consisted of the elite of the Amsterdam and The Hague Sephardic communities. These families were the “grandees,” who had managed their community for ages.<sup>74</sup> They also had undergone a significant drop in wealth after the economic crises of the eighteenth century, but many of them refrained from intermarrying with Ashkenazim. Further, they glorified their ancestors’ heroic flight from the Iberian Peninsula. They were proud of the illustrious history of the Sephardim in Holland’s Golden Age, and they were doing their utmost to maintain a sense of *gravidade*, which they felt was connected to Sephardic Jewry.<sup>75</sup> After exponents of this subgroup had realized that it would be worthwhile to inform the Germans on the apparent differences between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, they did everything within their abilities to systematically elaborate on all elements of that theory. This resulted

<sup>73</sup> The way these families dealt with their Jewish background is quite similar to the attitude of the converted nineteenth-century British statesman Benjamin Disraeli, about whom Isaiah Berlin noticed: “No doubt the fact that he was born a Jew offered an obstacle to his career: he overcame it by inflating it into a tremendous claim to noble birth.” Isaiah Berlin, “Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and the Search for Identity,” in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* ed. Henry Hardy (London: Hogarth Press, 1979), 252–86 (268).

<sup>74</sup> To a certain extent, the social position of these families was similar to the elite Sephardic families in the United States. Stephan Birmingham, *The Grandees: America’s Sephardic Elite* (New York, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1971). See also Aviva Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 81–88. It is noteworthy that many of the elite Sephardim in the United States stressed Christian instead of Jewish noble ancestry, just like the Teixeira de Mattos and Mendes de Leon branches.

<sup>75</sup> Also Isaac de Pinto was pointing out “a supercilious gravity” as one of the distinguishing characters of the Sephardim. De Pinto, “Critical Reflections,” 39. Another catchword, mainly used by Ashkenazi historians, was “*grandezza*.” As Aviva Ben-Ur rightly notices, this was “a misplaced Italian word referring to the innate grandeur or nobility of Sephardic Jews.” Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America*, 18. On the “*grandezza*” of the Sephardim, see Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Mind* (New York: Scribner, 1977), 380–81.

eventually in a time-related victory of nearly two years for the mostly elite, “pure” Sephardim—time which could have been used to go into hiding. But because these grandees partly believed in their own theories, they continued to believe in a good outcome as well. As a result, many of them refrained from going into hiding.

These upper-class Sephardim were truthfully doing the same as Isaac de Pinto had done 180 years before: promoting the cause of the own Sephardic, collective identity. They were hoping that the Nazis would recognize their Sephardic noble ancestry, just as H. S. Chamberlain, one of the inspirers of national-socialist ideology, had done in his antisemitic writings. Instead, the Nazis acted like Voltaire: they initially gave the Sephardim some hope by indicating that they would change their attitude on Sephardic Jewry, but in the end they strongly held on to an all-embracing antisemitic stance.

The history of the Action Portuguesia is one on the most extreme examples of the way Jews were legitimized for non-Jewish purposes and how this confronted Jews with the possibility—or, rather, the necessity—to make controversial choices. It is extreme first of all, because through the myth of Sephardic superiority, Sephardic Jews were not just legitimizing particular non-Jewish ideas, but antisemitism in its most gruesome appearance. Second, it is extreme because in spite of this instrumentalization of Sephardic and Ashkenazi difference, that very fact appeared to afford Sephardim from the Netherlands a way to escape their impending doom in the dark years of the German occupation. Making use of this opportunity, however, brought with it the cost of partaking in a discourse that not only pitted Sephardic Jews against Ashkenazi Jews, but also legitimized the antisemitic ideology behind their extermination.

## Disowning Responsibility: The Stereotype of the Passive Jew as a Legitimizing Factor in Dutch Remembrance of the Shoah

*Evelien Gans*

In February 1949, a remarkable lawsuit took place in Amsterdam. A Jewish lawyer, one of the founders of the clandestine World War II paper *Het Parool*, brought a charge against a non-Jewish, Dutch Reformed writer and well-known former resistance fighter.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish Hans Warendorf (1902–1987) had been able to escape to England, but several of his cofounder *Parool* friends and resistance comrades had been killed. Among them were several Jews: Maurits Kann, Jaap Nunes Vaz and Sieg Vaz Dias.<sup>2</sup> The accused, Klaas Norel (1899–1971), had for his part an outstanding record as an editor of the clandestine Dutch Reformed paper *Trouw*, as an underground man, and as the author of the book *Engelandvaarders* (1945) for children and young adults about World War II in the Netherlands, which has been very popular up to the present day.

<sup>1</sup> NIW, 30 January 1948; *Het Parool*, 6 February 1948; *Trouw*, 18 February 1949, NIOD, KB I 5145.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the illegal *Parool*: Madelon de Keizer, *Het Parool 1940–1945. Verzetblad in oorlogstijd* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1991).

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## THE COWARDLY JEW: A COURT CASE IN 1949 AND 1951

What made Warendorf bring Norel to trial? In the 1947 book *De tyrannie verdrijven* (Driving away Tyranny), Norel had written very negatively about the attitude of the Jews during the war. He argued that the Jews had not defended themselves against “the pogroms.” Others had taken up the cudgels for them.<sup>3</sup> That had not come as a surprise to Norel. Jews were only motivated to make an effort when there was a chance of success, he wrote, and there was no such chance when it came to fighting. Still, it amazed him that the Jews had initially done so little to evade the Nazi grip. “After all, even though they are no heroes, they are shrewd for sure.” On the contrary, however, they had meekly collaborated in their own registration, and, when handing in their radios and bicycles, they had “run like hares.” Only when the Nazis had stretched out their paws to their property and furniture had they woken up—and then firmly. With great cunning they had withdrawn “uncounted millions” from the enemy. But shrewdness had not been enough: “They needed help. And it was generously offered to them by the Dutch.”<sup>4</sup> Because of such passages, Warendorf charged Norel with calculatedly offending a population group.

Several anti-Jewish stereotypes figure in Norel’s text: the eternal outsider, the rich Jew, the materialistic Jew who is shrewd—mainly for materialistic reasons. But in this article the focus is on the stereotype of the passive Jew, the Jew who is, by definition, no hero, who does not know how to fight, the Jew who is subservient to his oppressor, who is obedient at any price and, in fact, a coward. In this article I will argue that since the liberation in 1945, the stereotype of the passive Jew was used to trivialize the responsibility of non-Jewish Dutchmen, legitimizing their passivity with regard to the Holocaust. To make this point, I will go briefly into the history of this stereotype, how it manifested itself immediately after the war and on some other occasions, and finally, how it has returned in the analysis of the Shoah or Holocaust in recent Dutch historiography.

Like most other stereotypes, the faint-hearted Jew who does not manage to become a hero has a long history. This image originates in the Middle Ages. Before that, in the old, biblical times the Jews figure as an experienced military opponent. In Greco-Roman antiquity, as opposed to

<sup>3</sup> *Tyrannie*: part of the series History of the Years of Occupation; Norel here specifically cited the closure of Leiden University and the February Strike.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Het Parool*, 6 February 1948.

several negative images like the Jew as lazy (having a weekly day of rest), as a misanthrope (refusing to marry or eat with non-Jews), and being perverse (because of the Jew's circumcised penis), there was a reservoir of positive assessments as well. Jews were also associated with "cardinal virtues" like, above all, wisdom, but also justice, temperance, piety, and, crucial to this context: courage.<sup>5</sup> The Jews in Diaspora, however, offered a different picture. In the Middle Ages they were, as a non-Christian minority, not allowed to bear arms. This, in combination with the fact that when attacked during pogroms and other violent assaults they were not able to defend themselves by force of arms, gave rise to the stereotype of the passive and cowardly Jew, in terms of physical defense, weapon use, and masculinity.<sup>6</sup> Phenomena like seventeenth-century and particularly eighteenth-century Jewish packs of thieves,<sup>7</sup> or self-defense groups of Russian Jews against pogroms in the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>8</sup> did not register. One of the most notorious expressions of this stereotype occurred in the German empire, when during World War I a *Judenzählung* (the counting of the number of Jews who fought in the German army) was carried out in an attempt to find evidence to support antisemitic suspicions that a disproportionately large number of German Jews did not fulfill their military duties and consisted of war profiteers. The outcome was not published, supposedly to spare the Jews. Only in 1920 did the inquiry prove to have been a monstrosity: relatively as many Jews had fought at the front as their gentile counterparts. By then, however, the

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, eds., *Philosemitism in History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8. Among other sources, the authors base their work on Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 201–3.

<sup>6</sup> Ben Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen. Joden in verzet en illegaliteit 1940–1945* (Amsterdam: Balans, 1990), 11–12; Evelien Gans, “‘Vandaag hebben ze niets—maar morgen bezitten ze weer tien gulden’. Antisemitische stereotypen in bevrijd Nederland,” in *Polderschouw. Terugkeer en opvang na de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, ed. Conny Kristel (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2002) 313–353 (321).

<sup>7</sup> Rena Fuks-Mansfeld, “Verlichting en Emancipatie omstreeks 1750–1814,” in *Geschiedenis van de joden in Nederland*, ed. J. C. H. Blom et al. (Amsterdam: Balans, 1995), 181; Evelien Gans, *Jaap en Ischa Meijer. Een joodse geschiedenis 1912–1956* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), 31; idem, *Goje nijd & joods narcisme. Over de verhouding tussen joden en niet-joden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Arena, 1994), 10–11.

<sup>8</sup> See inter alia, Evelien Gans, *De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken. Een historische studie over joodse sociaaldemocraten en socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Vassallucci, 1999), 24.

rumors had produced their harmful effect, reinforcing the image of the Jew as weak and cowardly.<sup>9</sup>

In February 1949, Warendorf declared in court that he had lodged the complaint against Norel in the name of his Jewish friends who had perished in the resistance, and whose reputation Norel had dragged through the mire, but who could not defend themselves anymore against Norel's allegations. Warendorf, who acted as a witness as well, stated that the percentage of Jews who had participated in the resistance, compared with that of the non-Jewish Dutch, had been remarkably high.<sup>10</sup> Warendorf based his remark on a letter from the (Jewish) historian Loe de Jong (1914–2005), since 1945 the director of the newly founded Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (now NIOD). De Jong had provided Warendorf with some historical facts and examples with regard to the resistance by Jews in the Netherlands during World War II, referring to the fights between Dutch national socialists (NSBers) and Jews, to a specific Jewish assault group, and to the participation of Jews in many “mixed” resistance groups, mentioning several individual Jewish resistance fighters by name. His conclusion was that the percentage of Jews who had participated in the resistance had definitely matched that of other Dutchmen—a statement that would, sometime later, be further emphasized by the (Jewish) historian Jacques Presser, De Jong's former teacher. Presser pronounced in several publications that the Jewish resistance had exceeded that of Dutch gentiles. Later historians and researchers have confirmed and elaborated on the fact that Jews had played an important role in the resistance.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Only the specific Jewish structure of age and profession had caused a small difference: Saul Friedländer, *Nazi-Duitsland en de Joden. Deel 1. De jaren van vervolging 1933–1939* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1998), 96–97. This work was published in two volumes; the second volume was *De jaren van vernietiging 1939–1955* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2007), 93–94. According to Werner Bergmann, the results were not published because of protests against the *Judenzählung*, mainly on the part of Jews: Werner Bergmann, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2002), 67.

<sup>10</sup> *Het Parool*, 18 February 1949. See also Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem, Archief Gerechtshof Amsterdam, inv.nr. 489-177/197/345, P-V van zitting 5e kamer rb Amsterdam, 17 February 1949.

<sup>11</sup> *De Volkskrant*, 13 April 1951, *Het Vrije Volk*, 12 April 1951, *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, 13 April 1951: NIOD, KB II 307. Loe de Jong to J. C. S. Warendorf, 17 February 1949, NIOD, Corresp. Archief Loe de Jong, 1948–1949, ser adv. For Jacques Presser: *Het Vaderland*, 4 May 1961, and *Ondergang, De Vervolging en Verdelening van het Nederlandse Jodendom 1940–1945* ('s Gravenhage: Staatsdrukkerij, 1965) 2:5. The theme of Jewish

During the sitting of the court, Warendorf accused Norel of falsifying history. He stressed the necessity of preventing future generations from acquiring a very wrong idea of the position of the Jews. The police court judge in question, however, was not sensitive to Warendorf's plea in favor of historical accuracy versus falsification. He judged by juridical criteria, though, perhaps, not only by those. Norel's defense had been equivocal. He admitted he had generalized too much, but held on to most of his characterizations. It is not clear if the court decision—Norel was acquitted—was influenced by Norel's reputation as a resistance fighter and his compassion for the Jews, as expressed in other publications—arguments that were articulated by both Norel himself and his lawyer. In the end, the court decided that, though the contested passages lacked tact and were wrongfully generalizing, there was no proof for calculated offense.<sup>12</sup> Two years later when the case was taken to a higher court, where Warendorf acted as a witness again, Norel was acquitted for a second time. The only difference was that this time there was hardly any publicity.<sup>13</sup>

Conspicuously, at times, the genesis and founding of Israel offered a counterimage against the stereotype of the passive, obedient Jew. The sitting at the appellate court against Norel in 1951 is a good case in point. One of the arguments emphasized by the prosecutor was that, actually, the

resistance would be elaborated in Braber, *Zelfs als wij zullen verliezen*; idem, *This Cannot Happen Here: Integration and Jewish Resistance in the Netherlands, 1940–1945* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013); idem, *Waren mijn ogen een bron van tranen. Een joods echtpaar in het verzet, 1940–1945* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015); Loes Gompes, *Fatsoenlijk Land. Porgel en Porulan in het verzet* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg, 2013). With a DVD of the documentary *Fatsoenlijk land* (2013) by Loes Gompes and Sander Snoep (Lumen films, 60 minutes). It would be ridiculed in Chris van der Heijden, *Dat nooit meer. De nasleep van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Nederland* (Amsterdam and Antwerp: Contact, 2011), 527–28.

<sup>12</sup> *Het Parool*, 15 March 1949, NIOD, KB I 5145; *Trouw*, 3 March 1949, ibid. Whereupon the prosecutor, who had demanded a high fine for offense of a Dutch population group, appealed. Undoubtedly, the sentence he requested was based on Article 137c of the Criminal Code, adopted in 1934, which criminalized deliberately offending any group in the population. This new article had been introduced mainly because insults aimed at “our Israelite fellow citizens” had taken on a kind of “epidemic character”: *Wetboek van Strafrecht* (Criminal Code), 19th printing [till 1968], ed. C. Fasseur (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1969), 69. During the hearing the presiding judge was Mr. Van Lier and the prosecutor was Mr. Kist: *De Waarheid*, 18 February 1949; the defense lawyer was W. de Vries: *Trouw*, 18 February 1949, ibid.

<sup>13</sup> *De Waarheid*, 27 April 1951. See also Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem, Archief Gerechtshof Amsterdam, archiefstuk 561–201, arr. No. 468, rolnr. 545/49.

Jews in Palestine had proven to be extremely ready and able to fight.<sup>14</sup> A few years before, a Dutch Reformed minister who had been closely associated with resistance activities during the German occupation wrote that the “Jewish fighters” in Palestine were, oddly enough, “not as cowardly as Jews always tend to be depicted.” In his article, he focused on several manifestations of postwar antisemitism and on the attitude of Dutch gentiles toward the plight of the Jews, characterizing it as “much impotence, helplessness, fear, unwillingness, and everything which comprises our shame and our sorrow.”<sup>15</sup> Nor was the prosecutor’s case restricted to referring to Palestine. He stated that Norel had indeed reproached the Jews for having meekly turned in their radios to the Nazis, but that the same was true for the largest part of the non-Jewish population.<sup>16</sup>

However, the mechanism according to which the position of the Jews who had needed help (to hide, for example) was turned against them was more dominant. It gave rise to feelings of superiority, which, mixed with a demand for gratitude, produced an image of the Jews as a people who had not been able or willing to defend themselves. The case against Norel is just one of many examples during the first years after the liberation.<sup>17</sup> I will restrict myself here to two other episodes before I switch to the factor of “Jewish passivity” in recent Dutch historiography.

### THE PASSIVE JEW: EICHMANN TRIAL (1961) AND A FINAL SCHOOL EXAMINATION (1983)

Compared to other Western European occupied countries, the number of Jews in the Netherlands who were murdered was high, both relatively and in absolute terms—some 104,000, or 75 %. In Dutch historiography it has been argued convincingly that the most crucial reason was the ideologically highly motivated and extremely antisemitic SS regime in the Netherlands that, after the February strike of 1941, took over the organization of the

<sup>14</sup> Literally “*buitengewoon weerbaar*”: *De Volkskrant*, 13 April 1951, KB II 307.

<sup>15</sup> F. R. A. Henkels, “De Joden en wij,” *Tijd en Taak*, 11 January 1947. The image of the militant Jew would in the long run, and in combination with steadily increasing Israeli nationalist militancy and repressive policies toward the Palestinians, change into the stereotype of the belligerent and merciless Jew—or Zionist.

<sup>16</sup> *De Volkskrant*, 13 April 1951.

<sup>17</sup> For more examples, see Evelien Gans, “The Meek Jew—and Beyond,” in *The Holocaust, Israel and ‘the Jew’. Histories of Antisemitism in Postwar Dutch Society*, ed. Remco Ensel and Evelien Gans (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016).

persecution of the Jews completely.<sup>18</sup> Other important factors were the relative late start of Dutch organized resistance—hiding addresses became available on a wide scale only after the expansion of forced labor by Dutch men in April 1943, when most Jews were already deported—and the, comparatively legalist, cooperative attitude of both the Dutch administration, civil servants like the police, and the population, the Jews included—to which should be added that the last group was, compared to the Dutch majority, the most vulnerable, being the target of systematic persecution.<sup>19</sup>

Awareness of the gravity of this fact only came slowly, a process in which the presumed passivity of the Jews frequently surfaced. The most common view in historiography is that in the public memory of the war until the 1960s national unity and continuity were emphasized within the frame of two counterpoints: resistance and collaboration. There was no room for any specific attention for those who were most particularly and systematically victimized and persecuted: the Jews.<sup>20</sup> Still, from the beginning,

<sup>18</sup> I am emphatically using the term antisemitism without a hyphen, because nothing like Semitism ever existed. The term anti-Semitism was an invention or construction of confirmed antisemites who, at the end of the nineteenth century, transplanted the designation of Semitic languages to a concept of social-political and racist Jew-hatred. See Evelien Gans, “They have forgotten to gas you”: Post-1945 Antisemitism in the Netherlands,” in *Dutch Racism*, ed. Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2014), 71–100 (71, 95); David Hirsh, “Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections,” The Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism (YIISA), Working Papers Series # 1 (New Haven, CT, 2007), 16. I am interchangeably using the terms “antisemitic” and “anti-Jewish.”

<sup>19</sup> There is a lot of literature on this theme. For a summary of the various factors (and the hierarchy between them) for the high percentage of deported and murdered Jews in the Netherlands, compared to Belgium and France: Pim Griffioen en Ron Zeller, *Jodenvervolging in Nederland, Frankrijk en België. Overeenkomsten, verschillen, oorzaken* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011), 1025ff. See also Guus Meershoek, *Dienaren van het gezag. De Amsterdamse politie tijdens de bezetting* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1999), 214; J. C. H. Blom, “De vervolging van de joden in international vergelijkend perspectief,” *De Gids* 150, no. 6/7 (June/July 1987), 494–507; idem, “The persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands in a comparative international perspective,” in *Dutch Jewish History*, ed. J. Michman (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1989), 2:273–89.

<sup>20</sup> See for example: Frank van Vree, “De dynamiek van de herinnering. Nederland in een internationale context,” in *De Dynamiek van der Herinnering. Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog in een internationale context*, ed. Frank van Vree and Rob van der Laarse (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2009), 17–40; Frank van Vree, “Iedere dag en elk uur. De jodenvervolging en de dynamiek van de herinnering in Nederland,” in *Wie niet weg is, is gezien. Joods Nederland na 1945*, ed. Hetty Berg and Bart Wallet (Zwolle/Amsterdam: Waanders, 2010), 57–72; idem, *In de schaduw van Auschwitz. Herinnering, beelden, geschiedenis*

the murder of the majority of the Jews was spoken of and written about. The newspapers reported about the Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz trials in 1945 and 1947. Feelings of guilt existed from the start. However, there were also mechanisms to push these away. Emphasizing Jewish passivity was one of them. There was much indignation—not in the least within Jewish circles—toward the former chairmen and members of the Jewish Council, and their position and role during the occupation. They figured as Jewish collaborators par excellence.<sup>21</sup> Such mechanisms were sometimes recognized, for example, by the Dutch Reformed minister quoted earlier. And they could lead to phenomena like blaming the victim and—what in Germany was characterized as secondary antisemitism and *Schuld- und Erinnerungsabwehrantisemitismus* (antisemitism based on defense of guilt and unwelcome memories)—an unwillingness to openly face the past of the Holocaust, disguised by criticism of Jewish behavior.<sup>22</sup>

In the various literatures on the dynamics of history and memory of the war in the Netherlands, the Eichmann trial in 1961 is looked upon as a breakthrough: never before had the world been confronted so explicitly with the exceptional nature of the Nazi extermination policy and the testimonies of those who survived it.<sup>23</sup> It made the issue of how the Nazis had been able to do what they did more central than before. Though earlier present in a fragmented way, the debate on the question whether the Dutch Gentiles had taken up a position of weakness and indifference or, on the contrary, of self-sacrifice and fearlessness toward their Jewish compatriots, became a louder one in 1961. At least as important for this article is the second boomerang effect, triggered by Eichmann's trial. As an echo of the statement of Klaas Norel—"the Jews didn't defend themselves against

(Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 1995), 113. Cf. Ido de Haan, *Na de ondergang. De herinnering aan de Jodenvervolging in Nederland 1945–1995* (Den Haag: Sdu, 1997), 99–129.

<sup>21</sup> Abel Herzberg, Jacques Presser and Loe de Jong each paid much attention to the role of the Jewish Council. See also Hans Knoop, *De Joodsche raad. Het drama van Abraham Asscher en David Cohen* (Amsterdam/Brussels: Elsevier, 1983); Willy Lindwer and Johannes Houwink ten Cate, *Het fatale dilemma. De Joodse Raad voor Amsterdam 1941–1843* ('s Gravenhage: Sdu, 1995); Gans, *De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken*, 481–91, 603–31.

<sup>22</sup> See inter alia, Werner Bergmann, “‘Störenfriede der Erinnerung’. Zum Schuldbabwehr-Antisemitismus in Deutschland,” in *Literarischer Antisemitismus nach Auschwitz*, ed. Klaus-Michael Bogdal, Klaus Holz, and Matthias N. Lorenz (Stuttgart-Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2007), 13–35. Evelien Gans, “‘They have forgotten to gas you,’” 71–100 (84–90).

<sup>23</sup> Frank van Vree, *In de schaduw van Auschwitz* (see note 20), 113; Conny Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht. Abel Herzberg, Jacques Presser en Loe de Jong over de jodenvervolging* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1998), 235–36.

the pogroms”—the question resounded: “Why didn’t the Jews offer resistance?” This time the question first floated in Israeli society because of and during the Eichmann trial, but from there it drifted elsewhere.<sup>24</sup>

The issue was debated in the media. We find many voices stressing that the Jews had not been willing to hide, even when they had the possibility to do so. Often the main responsibility for the disastrous developments was passed on to the Jewish Council, and it was frequently argued that neither Jews nor non-Jews had known what the fate of the Jews would be in Poland. An extreme example of blaming the victim flowing into outright antisemitism was a column in the Belgian journal *The Post*, which was read widely in the Netherlands too. The author referred to the Jew whose work it had been to burn the gassed Jews, among whom his own two daughters, and emphasized his condemnation of this man by arguing that he was sure he himself would have refused to do so. He also wrote that Jewish capos had often been “more merciless than the SS itself.”<sup>25</sup> In the same style, when the Jewish jurist and writer Abel Herzberg had, ten years before, published his work on the persecution of the Jews *Kroniek der Jodenvervolging* and his diary on Bergen-Belsen, *Tweestromenland*, Dutch newspapers paid relatively much attention to the behavior of the victims—to “that fighting, complaining, and stealing community of the concentration camp community.”<sup>26</sup> Such claims were countered by others stressing the early and substantial Jewish contribution to the resistance movement. Some argued that it was the Gentile population who had behaved like the proverbial “lamb,” for example by closing their doors to the Jews, and who argued that the non-Jews could have known “the truth” if they had wanted to. As one of the latter, a non-Jew, wrote: What else to think, seeing the bestial transport of whole families in cattle carriages? “Only the method of destruction was initially unknown.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> In the same year as Eichmann’s trial, 1961, *The Destruction of the European Jews* was published by Raoul Hilberg, who turned against the concept of “passive resistance.” Hilberg called it a disastrous and utterly inadequate strategy toward the Nazi extermination machine, and went so far as to speak of the role of the Jews in their own destruction: Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, 122. Hilberg’s point of view was partly a reaction on the work of historians like Philip Friedman and Ben-Zion Dinur who had distinguished many different kinds of passive and mental resistance.

<sup>25</sup> *De Post*, 14 May 1961.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, 240.

<sup>27</sup> F. J. Krop, *Algemeen Dagblad*, 22 April 1961. For an overview of this debate, see Gans, “The Meek Jew—and Beyond” (note 17).

The victim-blaming and the leveling out or reduction of differences (I have labeled this mechanism *nivelleren* in Dutch) in the situation, position, dilemmas, and motives of perpetrators, bystanders, and victims occurred from the start. It implied the supposition, consciously or unconsciously, that the Jews themselves had contributed in their own way to the Shoah—to their own destruction. This can be interpreted as a mechanism according to which the Jews and their supposed attitude and actions (or the lack of them) serve both more generally as an explanation of the Shoah, and as legitimization for non-Jewish passivity and shortcomings.

A most interesting example can be found in the final examinations of the subject History for VWO (pre-university education) in 1983. The so-called Jewish Question formed the last part of the exam, which took place on, of all dates, the fourth of May—the Dutch National Commemoration Day. Most relevant here are three questions and some of the official answers. Question 27a read as following: “Why did so many Jews in our country obey the measures ordered by the German occupier just like that?” One of the correct answers referred to the summons by the Jewish Council, a second to the Jewish “idea of fate” (*noodlotsgedachte*); the third one mentioned the lack of hiding addresses, especially early in the war. Question 27c quoted from the diary of the Jewish Etty Hillesum, who wrote that the fact that one segment of the Jews helped transporting the rest (the majority), would never be redeemed. The question was: why did this segment of Jewry help? Two of the correct answers were: “Obedience,” and: “Resignation (“diaspora” feeling).”<sup>28</sup> Another question asked for an explanation why the Allied forces had not come into action in order to prevent the *Endlösung*. The correct answers were supposed to be that they had hardly been able to believe it, and, though the knowledge was there, possibilities for action had been lacking.<sup>29</sup>

In a number of letters to the editor Jewish history teachers protested against the biased, simplistic, and inadequate content and method of the exam. They stated that the subject was far too complex to be marked by means of one-dimensional scores. Serious doubt was cast on the expertise of the exam compilers by undermining their factual introductions and their

<sup>28</sup>Two other “correct” answers were: by assisting they thought they would make the fate of the Jews more bearable, and would save as many Jews as possible; fear for the things to come: A. Buitenkant and P. Kohnhorst, “Bij geschiedenisexamens zorgvuldiger zijn met het ‘Joodse vraagstuk’,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 26 May 1983. Thanks to Wout Ultee.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

concepts like “‘diaspora’ feeling” and “idea of fate,” which were labeled as “myths.” The diary of Etty Hillesum, it was argued, had been read and interpreted incorrectly and superficially.<sup>30</sup> The question was raised if, with regard to the issue of the attitude of the Allied Forces, the compilers of the exam had not been able to cope with the cynical explanation that those Forces had had other priorities than preventing the murder of Jews.<sup>31</sup> One teacher suggested that the members of the examination commission had tried:

to find an excuse for the fact that the vast majority of the Dutch people had idly watched the deportation of their Jewish compatriots—out of “resignation (diaspora feeling)”?—and quite a few Dutch officials had actively cooperated.<sup>32</sup>

Several protests followed on the part of Jewish community against the final exam questions concerned, as being discriminatory toward Jews. The Dutch Ministry of Education nevertheless refused to remove these from the book in which all exam questions would be published.<sup>33</sup>

### “JEWISH PASSIVITY” AND THE “OBEDIENT JEW” IN RECENT DUTCH HISTORIOGRAPHY

Against the background of the debate about the Jewish attitude during the German occupation, the major historians of the Shoah in the Netherlands: (Abel Herzberg (1893–1989), mentioned above, and the historians Jacques Presser (1899–1970) and Loe de Jong each tried to find their balance on the scale between glorification of Jewish resistance and vilification of Jewish passivity, between “active” and “passive” resistance.<sup>34</sup> In *Jewish Resistance against the Nazis* (2014), edited by Patrick Henry, many facts,

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.; Dr. Henriette Boas, “Geschiedenis-examen wekt onjuiste indruk van joodse tragedie,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 8 June 1983. Boas was not specifically a history teacher, but rather a teacher in classical studies, a journalist, and an active Zionist with a reputation of many, often adequate letters to the editor.

<sup>31</sup> Buitenkant and Kohnhorst, “Bij geschiedenisexamen zorgvuldiger zijn.”

<sup>32</sup> Drs. S. Bloemgarten, “Joodse vraagstuk,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 30 May 1983. Thanks to Salvador Bloemgarten.

<sup>33</sup> “Ministerie weigert discriminerende vragen over joden te schrappen,” *Leeuwarder Courant*, 16 November 1983. Future research will have to provide some more details of this case and its continuation.

<sup>34</sup> See Gans, “The Meek Jew—and Beyond” (see note 17).

myths (like the one of the Jews going like sheep to the slaughter), prejudices, omissions, and distortions with regard to Jewish resistance are dealt with academically on an international scale. One of many conclusions why the myth of Jewish passivity is so tough, though ahistorical and contrary to the facts, is that it is “more comfortable to blame the victim.”<sup>35</sup> Another question tackled is what actions should *count* as resistance, emphasizing all sorts of “passive” resistance in dangerous and dead-end situations.<sup>36</sup> One article on Jewish resistance in the Netherlands focuses mainly on many divergent forms of “active” Jewish resistance, varying from armed raids and killings of Nazis to providing hiding addresses.<sup>37</sup>

In the last decade, however, characterizations like “passivity,” “obedience,” and “resignation” with regard to the attitude of the Jews during the German occupation have found their way into major trends of Dutch historiography on World War II in the Netherlands. Two Dutch historians, Chris van der Heijden and Bart van der Boom, who are very present in the current debates, both academic and public, use categories like resignation, obedience, and passivity on the part of the Jews in an—in my view—generalizing, if not stereotypical and thus ahistorical manner. The publications of both led to a debate both in the academic world and the public domain that is still continuing.

Elsewhere I have discussed and criticized Van der Heijden’s work more thoroughly than I can do now.<sup>38</sup> Briefly: both in his much-discussed 2001 book *Grijs verleden* (Gray Past) about World War II in the Netherlands,

<sup>35</sup> Richard Middleton-Kaplan, “The Myth of Jewish Passivity,” in *Jewish Resistance against the Nazis*, ed. Patrick Henry (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 3–26 (21–22). For this aspect of “comfort,” see also Yehudi Lindeman and Hans de Vries, “‘Therefore be courageous, too’: Jewish Resistance and rescue in the Netherlands,” in *ibid.*, 185–219 (218).

<sup>36</sup> Berel Lang, “Why didn’t they resist *more?*,” in Henry, ed., *Jewish Resistance against the Nazis*, 27–39.

<sup>37</sup> Lindeman and De Vries, “‘Therefore be courageous, too’,” 185–219.

<sup>38</sup> Evelien Gans, et al.: “Iedereen een beetje slachtoffer, iedereen een beetje dader. De Nederlandse Historikerstreit over de grijze oorlog,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 27 January 2010; idem, “Eigentlich waren doch alle ein bisschen Täter und Opfer... Nivellierungstendenzen und sekundärer Antisemitismus im Geschichtsbild des niederländischen Historikers Chris van der Heijden,” in *Täter und Tabu. Grenzen der Toleranz in deutschen und niederländischen Geschichtsdebatten*, ed. Nicole Colin, Matthias Lorenz, and Joachim Umlauf (Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 2011), 33–47; idem, “‘Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas’: The History and Significance of an Antisemitic Slogan in the Netherlands, 1945–2010,” in *Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities. Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges*, ed. Günther Jikeli and Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun

and in his dissertation *Dat nooit meer* (That Never Again) in 2011 about the aftermath of the war, Van der Heijden argues that the initially reserved, relativizing position of Dutch society toward the war in the 1950s underwent a complete reversal in the 1960s. Then mainstream historiography, in particular the two (Jewish) historians Presser and De Jong, started “a repetition of the war, in word and image.” According to Van der Heijden, this was an unnecessary revision exercise because “one could have easily turned one’s back to the recent past.”<sup>39</sup> Subsequently, Presser and De Jong’s exercise would be blown up further by mostly leftist and intellectual representatives of a generation who had been children during the war and wanted to stamp the perception of World War II with their experience. This process was, finally, completed by the generation of baby boomers who had no personal experience with war and repression whatsoever, but discovered they could use the war in their struggle for emancipation. In this way, Van der Heijden argues, these groups instrumentalized the war as a mirror, an “event [*gebeurtenis*] which one sought out deliberately” for one’s own (political) purposes.<sup>40</sup> The core of Van der Heijden’s analysis is his statement: “First there was the war; then came the story of the war. The war was bad, but the story made the war even worse.”<sup>41</sup> His suggestion is that public memory and historiography have represented the war as more extreme and terrifying than it actually was. The obvious question that arises is: for whom? Has “the story about the war” made the persecution of the Jews worse than it was?<sup>42</sup>

Van der Heijden’s trivializing approach is also prompted by his awkwardness about the increasingly central position of the Shoah in historiography and memory, and its function as moral benchmark.<sup>43</sup> The “gray

(Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London: Springer, 2013), 85–103; idem, “‘They have forgotten to gas you,’” 71–100.

<sup>39</sup> Chris van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden. Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam/Antwerp: Contact, 2001), 9. See also: idem, *Dat nooit meer. De nasleep van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Nederland* (Amsterdam/Antwerp: Contact, 2011), 329.

<sup>40</sup> Van der Heijden, *Dat nooit meer*, 329–30, passim.

<sup>41</sup> Van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> See inter alia, Evelien Gans, “On gas chambers, Jewish Nazis and noses,” in *Racism and Extremism Monitor: Ninth Report*, ed. Peter R. Rodrigues and Jaap van Donselaar, transl. Nancy Forest-Flier (Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting and Leiden University, 2010), 74–87 (79), [http://www.annefrank.org/ImageVaultFiles/id\\_12537/cf\\_21/Monitor9UK.PDF](http://www.annefrank.org/ImageVaultFiles/id_12537/cf_21/Monitor9UK.PDF)

<sup>43</sup> According to Van der Heijden, the Shoah has “burdened” the international community with the “moral duty to do all that is possible to prevent a repetition”: *Dat nooit meer*, 605. “Burdened” (*opgezadeld met*) is, of course, far from a “neutral” term.

factor” in his work, meaning that most people tend to keep muddling, leads to the previously mentioned leveling approach in which victim and perpetrator converge, people are at the mercy of fate, and individual freedom of choice is minimal.<sup>44</sup> In this universe, Van der Heijden describes Jews and Jewry mostly in a schematic and stereotypical way: as partial collaborators (the Jewish Council), full collaborators (Jewish members of the National Socialist Party, NSB), and perpetrators (Israel). And, of course, as victims. I will elaborate on this last aspect. In *Grijs verleden*, Van der Heijden writes: “Apart from the inevitable exceptions, this was what happened. Just like all Jews let themselves be registered, the major part resignedly [*gelaten*] allowed itself to be deported.”<sup>45</sup> The problem with this recurring keyword “resignedly” is, as stated before, that it is a cliché—a stereotype that ignores the innumerable possibilities, impossibilities, the severe repression, the doubts and dilemmas Jews were facing, their powerlessness, the suicides, the growing apathy and agony, and the countless ways in which they still tried to find a way out, till it was too late and the net closed around them. Even then, there were Jews who succeeded in escaping—from the Hollandsche Schouwburg (the central Amsterdam assembly place for deportation), the platforms, and the trains.<sup>46</sup> According to Van der Heijden’s observation, however, “only” one in seven Jews tried to hide (in fact it was one in five<sup>47</sup>), and that is why he concludes that the most important cause of the success of the German extermination policy was the *species hollandica judaica*, a term he took from the Jewish historian Sigmund Seeligmann (1873–1940), intended to signify the specificity

<sup>44</sup> See inter alia, Evelien Gans, “Ischa Meijer, De soldaat van Oranje en de Fassbinderaffaire. Zere plekken in de naoorlogse verhouding tussen joden en niet-joden in Nederland,” in Berg and Wallet, eds., *Wie niet weg is, is gezien*, 152–71 (156–57).

<sup>45</sup> *Grijs verleden*, 225. On page 230 Van der Heijden writes that “the majority of the Jews let themselves, indeed, be carried off resignedly” (*merendeel van de joden zich inderdaad gelaten liet wegvoeren*).

<sup>46</sup> See for example, Annemiek Gringold, “Het gebouw der tranen. Zestien maanden deportatie uit de Hollandsche Schouwburg,” in: *De Hollandsche Schouwburg. Theater, Deportatieplaats, Plek van herinnering*, ed. Frank van Vree, Hetty Berg and David Duindam (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 118–51 (139–42).

<sup>47</sup> According to the most recent historical research the “conservative estimate” is that about 28,000 of the 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands went into hiding: Marnix Croes and Peter Tammes, “Gif laten wij niet voortbestaan.”: *Een onderzoek naar de overlevingskansen van Joden in de Nederlandse gemeenten 1940–1945* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2004), 195.

of Dutch Jewry.<sup>48</sup> To Van der Heijden, this presumed Jewish passivity—which as I have argued elsewhere, appears to me as not without some degree of secondary and *Schuldabwehr* antisemitism—serves the purpose of exempting non-Jews from their responsibilities toward their persecuted Jewish compatriots. Jews serve here as a legitimization for those who did not behave “heroically,” or at least in solidarity.

In *Dat nooit meer: De nasleep van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Nederland* (2011), Van der Heijden explicitly emphasizes the notion of “Jewish passivity.” Correctly he refers to the many publications on passivity and collaboration among Jews by diverse authors such as Raoul Hilberg and Hannah Arendt. Referring to Herzberg, Presser, and De Jong, he himself, however, uses the term in a stereotypical way and detaches it from the caveats and qualifications these authors use. He fails to reflect on it or problematize it, but rather considers it a given.<sup>49</sup> After having raised questions like whether the Jews had been able to resist, and particularly, whether they had even tried to, he first remarks that in the postwar period the issue had been mostly evaded as too painful. Then he criticizes Abel Herzberg, who would have resolved the matter by arguing that there had been no possibilities for Jewish resistance—neglecting Herzberg’s attention for Jewish passive and active forms of resistance as well<sup>50</sup>—and accusing Presser of having refused to recognize the fact that the Jews had offered no resistance. According to Van der Heijden, Presser’s denial of Jewish passivity even led him to overcompensate, bringing him to devote

<sup>48</sup> In relation to the general passive attitude of Dutch society—including the Jewish population—and the high rate of registration and relatively low numbers of Jews who went into hiding (in his view also conceived thusly by historians such as Loe de Jong and Bob Moore), he writes: “Seen in this way, the principal reason for the success of the German eradication policies would once again be the *species hollandica judaica* [...].” (*Zo bezien zou de voor-naamste oorzaak van het succes van de Duitse uitroegingspolitiek weer die species hollandica judaica zijn* [...].) Van der Heijden, *Grijs verleden*, 233–34. The architect of the almost “perfect” Dutch registration (including the new identity cards), the Dutch civil servant Jacob Lentz, is not mentioned in *Grijs verleden*. Van der Heijden also neglects to place “success” in quote marks, an occupational disability that researchers and writers dealing with World War II and Shoah should be alert to.

<sup>49</sup> Van der Heijden, *Dat nooit meer*, 527–28.

<sup>50</sup> Abel Herzberg, “Verzet in verlatenheid. De problematiek van het Joods verzet,” in *Bericht van de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Afl. 54, *Verzet van Joden*, 13 February 1971, 1486–1488 (1488). See also Kristel, *Geschiedschrijving als opdracht*, 103. Kristel spends a chapter on the approach by historians and other scholars, both in the Netherlands and internationally, to the reactions of Jews to the Shoah or Holocaust: *ibid.*, 85–134.

an exhaustive—and in van der Heijden's eyes overstated—passage in his study *Ondergang* to the theme of Jewish resistance. So in fact, Van der Heijden charged Presser with having distorted history in order to soothe his frustration with regard to the lack of Jewish resistance. Here, again, he ignores historical sources and literature, which confirm Presser's approach.<sup>51</sup>

He then finally comes to De Jong, who like Presser would have softened the painful question by passing all responsibility to the Jewish leadership, even though he did not deny the existence of "Jewish passivity."<sup>52</sup> De Jong had, indeed, written that within an eternally threatened and powerless European Jewry, it had become tradition, nearly instinct, to largely react passively to repression and persecution. In the first place, however, De Jong, unlike Van der Heijden, contextualizes and historicizes this analysis. In the second place, he did not apply his assessment to the attitude of Dutch Jews during the German occupation.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary, De Jong wrote that the Jews had represented a higher, perhaps even considerably higher percentage of resistance fighters than the 1.5 % they constituted of the Dutch population as a whole.<sup>54</sup> If the attitude of the Jewish Council had indeed confirmed the "image of the subservient, servile, cowardly Jew," the opposite had remained largely invisible: that Jews had fulfilled a very substantial part in the resistance, was only known to their coresistance fighters.<sup>55</sup>

The historian Bart van der Boom, for his part, won the Libris History Prize in 2012 for his study *Wij weten niets van hun lot: Gewone Nederlanders en de Holocaust* (We know nothing of their fate: Ordinary Dutchmen and the Holocaust). Praise—also in several reviews<sup>56</sup>—was followed by sharp criticism. I have been one of his critics, working closely together with my

<sup>51</sup> See note 11.

<sup>52</sup> Van der Heijden, *Dat nooit meer*, 528. In his footnote, Van der Heijden bases this simplification of De Jong's approach on one sentence by De Jong, who wrote: "One bowed one's head, let the violence pass, cleared out the splinters, buried the dead and lived on": De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, 7, 511 (Van der Heijden wrongly refers to p. 462).

<sup>53</sup> Loe de Jong, for that matter, tended to formulate "negative" Jewish qualities that would have arisen because of a disharmonic Jewish history: De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, 5, 507. See also Gans, *De kleine verschillen*, 515.

<sup>54</sup> De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, 7, 1049–1050. See also Gompes, *Fatsoenlijk land* (see note 11), 130.

<sup>55</sup> De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, 7, 435–36.

<sup>56</sup> In addition to the report of the Libris History Prize jury, for some of the outspoken positive reviews and comments: Friso Wielenga, *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review* 127, no. 4 (2012), review 77; Robin te Slaa, *De Volkskrant*, 26 May 2010; Chris van der Heijden, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 23 May 2012; Michel Krielaars, *NRC Next*, 26 October 2012.

colleague historian Remco Ensel; other scholars (and also non-scholars who wrote letters to the editor of several papers) got involved, as did Van der Boom himself, who responded elaborately to these criticisms of his book, hardly adjusting his views and most of the time defending them.<sup>57</sup> The debate became so broad and extensive that it was referred to as a Dutch *Historikerstreit*.<sup>58</sup>

Van der Boom is of the opinion that the view that “ordinary Dutchmen” (a very obscure category in itself) looked away when their Jewish compatriots were deported, and even gave the Nazis a helping hand, is deeply rooted in Dutch historiography and public memory. Van der Boom calls this view the “myth of the guilty bystander.” It is this myth he wants to dispose of, as well as several of the presuppositions it is built on. The main assumption Van der Boom wants to challenge is the one that says that the bystander was guilty because he knew, or could know, what the fate of the Jews was. On the basis of 164 diaries, he claims to prove that the majority of the bystanders were not only horrified by the antisemitic Nazi policy, but did not know what was ahead: the gas chambers. He assumes that had they known, they would have in all probability helped the Jews more than they did,<sup>59</sup> implying that their lack of knowledge relieves

<sup>57</sup> Much of what follows is based on our own articles and the publications of others, named here: Bart van der Boom, “Wij weten niets van hun lot”: *Gewone Nederlanders en de Holocaust* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012); idem, “Ordinary Dutchmen and the Holocaust: A Summary of Findings,” in *The Persecutions of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940–1945: New Perspectives*, ed. Peter Romijn et al. (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, 2012), 29–52; Evelien Gans and Remco Ensel, “Wij weten iets van hun lot. Nivelleren in de geschiedenis,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 13 December 2012, 32–35; Remco Ensel and Evelien Gans, “Wij weten iets van hun lot,” part 2, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 6 February 2013 (included in the digital file of *De Groene Amsterdammer*: <http://www.groene.nl/commentaar/2013-01-30/nederlanders-en-de-jodenvervolging>). Cf. Evelien Gans and Remco Ensel, “Niet weten van de gaskamer verklaart passiviteit niet,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 16 May 2013. Reply by Bart van der Boom, “Ook die joodse verraders zijn interessant,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 9 January 2013 and idem, “Een antwoord aan mijn critici,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 6 February 2013, included in the digital file. Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf Dekker, “Egodocument als bron,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 24 January 2013; Guus Meershoek, “Een aangekondigde massamoord,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 31 January 2013, 30–33. Van der Boom also replies on his blog [www.wijwetennietsvanhunlot.blogspot.nl](http://wijwetennietsvanhunlot.blogspot.nl) (hereafter referred to as “blog”). Remco Ensel and Evelien Gans, “De inzet van de joden als ‘controlegroep’: Bart van der Boom en de Holocaust,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 126, no. 3 (September 2013), 388–96; Christina Morina, “The ‘Bystander’ in recent Dutch Historiography,” *German History* 32, no. 1, 101–11.

<sup>58</sup> Jaap Cohen, “Hoe cruciaal is onwetendheid?”, *NRC Next*, 3 April 2013.

<sup>59</sup> Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*, 415. See also “We waren onwetend, niet onverschillig,” *Volkskrant*, 25 April 2012.

them of any sizeable guilt. Van der Boom has been harshly criticized from different angles. He rejects concepts and instruments like “denial” and “repression” as part of “a controversial psychoanalytical theory.”<sup>60</sup> He has been attacked for his one-dimensional reading of the diaries as “a clear mirror of what the diary writers thought or felt,”<sup>61</sup> for writing “if-history,” and for making knowledge of discrimination and persecutions preceding the deportations irrelevant for his main thesis that ordinary Dutchmen had no knowledge of the Shoah, defining this in an utterly restrictive way as a “subjective certainty” of “death upon arrival.”<sup>62</sup>

What matters here, however, is that in his work we also see again a return of the notion of “Jewish passivity,” and an instrumentalization of this notion, this time to reject what he understands as “the myth of the guilty bystander.” The important role Jews play in his narrative is already revealed in the bias in his selection of diaries. From the 164 diaries (of the thousands available) Van der Boom selected 53 written by Jews. That number is disproportionately large in relation to the percentage of Jews within the Dutch population. When it comes to the question Jews were faced with, whether to go into hiding, he again places an excessively large emphasis on diaries of Jews who chose not to hide, mainly because of not knowing what fate lay ahead of them, and of fear of punishment.<sup>63</sup> Apart from misinterpreting the diaries, one here again bumps into a leveling approach in which, this time, the position and dilemmas of bystanders and victims are too easily thrown together. He defends his usage of such

<sup>60</sup> Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*, 383–85; Gans and Ensel, “Wij weten iets van hun lot,” 34; Abram de Swaan, “Klaag heel Nederland niet meer aan voor de Holocaust,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 14 June 2014. In his article, sociologist and psychiatrist De Swaan argues that “denial” is inherent in general human knowledge in literature, psychology, and daily contact.

<sup>61</sup> Baggerman and Dekker, “Egodocument als bron.” For Van der Boom’s account for the use of the diaries: Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*, 112–13.

<sup>62</sup> Van der Boom, “Ordinary Dutchmen and the Holocaust,” 42, 44, 47.

<sup>63</sup> When criticized for his disproportional attention for Jews who could, but did not hide, Van der Boom reacts that he gives tens of examples of those in his book: Fabian van Semang, “Wij weten niets van hun lot. Een nieuwe benadering van de Jodennietroeïng in Nederland.” Interview met Bart van der Boom in *Sporen van herinnering. Pedagogie en Geschiedenisoverdracht* 2, no.6 (2012), 2–4. See also blog Van der Boom, 17 May 2013; blog FAQ question 11. In fact, he manipulates the number and character of the (Jewish) diaries concerned. Of the 53 Jewish diaries he used, 34 diary writers hid, and 19 did not. Eight of those nonhiding Jews say nothing about their motives; seven of them write they could have hidden, but did not for all kinds of reasons: Ensel and Gans, “De inzet van de joden als ‘controlegroep’,” 392–93.

a large group of Jewish diaries with the argument that the Jewish authors serve as a “control group.”<sup>64</sup>

He makes his point assuming that the Jews, though their position was crucially different, often behaved according to the same motto as non-Jews: “obedience was safer than resistance.” This brings him to infer that, if even Jews believed being caught might involve a greater risk than being deported to a labor camp, non-Jews must have certainly believed this.<sup>65</sup> But here he ignores major differences between Jews and non-Jews. First of all, all Jews had to make this decision, by no means all non-Jews. Furthermore, the decision to go into hiding was a very radical step with many consequences and complications. Certainly there were Jews who could have hidden and did not, but for this there were all kinds of reasons; one of them was, indeed, the assessment that being caught meant certain death, while being sent to a supposed labor camp did not. Other reasons, however, were the unwillingness to leave elderly parents behind, to be totally dependent on strangers, to being confined and totally isolated. Moreover, many Jews simply lacked the contacts or money to hide. Apart from this, Van der Boom neglects the fact that it was harder to find a hiding address for Jews than for non-Jews. As one member of the resistance put it: “We scored [*was het raak*] only one out of ten times.”<sup>66</sup> It could also happen that an address and false documents arrived too late, or not at all. Van der Boom mistakenly represents hiding as filling in a questionnaire: yes or no in a situation of, often, many doubts, dilemmas, and utmost despair. Giving a disproportionate amount of attention to the Jews who did not go into hiding makes Van der Boom use them as his legitimization, arguing that if *they* were not sure whether hiding was a wise thing to do, why would non-Jews not hesitate about offering them a place of hiding?<sup>67</sup> Here again we encounter the spotlight on the passive and obedient Jew.

Van der Boom pursues a similar line of thought when it comes to the possibility of escaping the Westerbork transit camp. Quoting three Jewish

<sup>64</sup> By this Van der Boom means, he explains, that though the Jews as victims differ in a crucial respect from his proper research population (the Dutch Gentiles), they otherwise show a striking resemblance, namely their imagination and access to information. Van der Boom focuses subsequently mainly on the similarities.

<sup>65</sup> Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*, 413. Idem, “Ordinary Dutchmen and the Holocaust,” 47; Ensel en Gans, “De inzet van de joden als ‘controlegroep’,” 392.

<sup>66</sup> Gompes, *Fatsoenlijk land*, 58 (see note 11). See also Presser, *Ondergang*, 2:255; Moore, *Slachtoffers en overlevenden*, 197.

<sup>67</sup> Van der Boom, *Wij weten niets van hun lot*, 413.

diaries in which escaping from transit camp Westerbork is called easy, Van der Boom states that the fact that only 210 Jews did actually escape, is only one example of a “deliberate choice against resistance.”<sup>68</sup> Again, the complexity of the situation—like leaving behind dear ones and also the reprisals which were the consequence of escape for those who stayed behind—is being ignored.

The simplifications, the notion of the passive Jew, the assumption that Jewish behavior was an important factor in their own death, and the implication that this at least to a certain extent relieves non-Jews of their responsibility—all came together when Van der Boom made a cry from the heart, in *NRC Handelsblad*, in July 2013. Stating that because of a wrong risk assessment many Jews decided not to hide but to “go on transport,” he added: “One would want to shout to them even now: Don’t do it.”<sup>69</sup> It was a grotesque and utterly a-historical remark, revealing, once again, the existence of the notion of a supposed “Jewish passivity.”

#### CONCLUDING REMARK: THE CONTEMPORARY JANUS FACE OF “THE JEW”

To be perfectly clear: of course there was passivity, obedience, and resignation among the Jews in the Netherlands (and elsewhere), and this should never be a taboo. A Jewish chauvinist or heroic interpretation of the Jewish position and role during World War II (and in history in general) should be avoided at all costs. On the other hand, these aspects should neither be unduly emphasized; they should be contextualized and analyzed thoroughly, and the same goes for the Jewish position and perspective as such, the various degrees of resistance included. And in any case, as some of the teachers in 1983 had remarked: with respect to the controversial subject concerned, judging decisions of people who had found themselves in a situation of life or death should be avoided.<sup>70</sup>

The stereotype of the passive, resigned, and obedient Jew is an old one, which has cropped up in various historical contexts—one of them being the postwar period in relation to the Shoah or Holocaust. Here, it could

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 397–98, 401; Bas Kromhout, “We hebben het nicht gewusst”: Bart van der Boom over Nederlanders en de Holocaust,” *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, May 2012, 22. That escape from Westerbork was “easy” is also refuted in Lindeman and De Vries, “Therefore be courageous, too,” 210.

<sup>69</sup> *NRC Handelsblad*, 12 July 2013.

<sup>70</sup> Buitenkant and Kohnhorst, “Bij geschiedenisexamens zorgvuldiger zijn.” Buitenkant and Kohnhorst wrote from their own perspective and position: a good history teacher knew he should pass no judgment in respect to this subject.

serve as part of the mechanism of blaming the victim. If we, however, place this stereotype in the context of other images of the Jew, we see that he wears a Janus face: he is a pariah—and at the same time Satan; a parasite who does not accomplish productive labor—and simultaneously powerful and clever, conspiring among his own sort on how to conquer the world and whom to bribe. This double image of “the Jew” as both inferior and superior is still present today. The powerful Jew possesses an abstract, universal, intangible, and global power. But this power is also physical: that is to say Israel, with its strong army, and both its dominant position and repressive policies with regard to the Palestinians.<sup>71</sup> Nowadays, the stereotype of the militant and merciless Israeli, even regarded as a “Nazi”—and “the Israeli” is often equated with “the Zionist” and “the Jew”—runs rampant. It is remarkable that at the same time as this development is taking place, which has driven the “coward” increasingly into the background, his counterpart turns up in recent historiography—and not only in Dutch historiography.<sup>72</sup> It would be worthwhile to do some more internationally comparative research on both the myth of “Jewish passivity” and the manifestation of the contemporary Janus face of “the Jew.”

<sup>71</sup> Gans, “They have forgotten to gas you,” 74–75. With regard to the “abstract” Jewish power I follow Moishe Postone, “The Holocaust and the Trajectory of the Twentieth Century,” in *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century*, ed. Moishe Postone and Eric Santner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 81–114 (93–94). But I also disagree with his statement that Jews have hardly any concrete and physical power: they do not have it in “diaspora,” but they do have it in Israel. See also Gans, “They have forgotten to gas you,” 90–92. Moreover, the other face of the “Jewish Janus” is still there, represented by the goyish envy of “the Jew” as “the ultimate victim” or by “the Jew” as an object of sexual revulsion, fascination, and resentment; and by that of the stereotype in public opinion and in historiography of the weak and obedient Jew during World War II that is analyzed in this article. See Evelien Gans, “Introduction: Why Jews are More Guilty than Others,” in Ensel and Gans, *The Holocaust, Israel and ‘the Jew’* (see note 17).

<sup>72</sup> See for example, the criticism of Gunnar Paulson’s book *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), which, in a much more extreme way than in the Dutch historiography quoted above, blames the Jews for not having fled in large numbers to the other side of the city to find hideouts among their Polish neighbors and thus accusing them of “racism” (34), suggesting that the Jews had a “collective death wish” (61–62), neglecting the despair that overtook the Jews (64) who had not been prepared to “give it a go” (67). Also in this case the Jewish perspective is disregarded (64). His critic Havi Dreyfuss states moreover that Paulson used his sources selectively: Havi Dreyfuss, *Changing Perspectives on Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust*, Search and Research, Lectures and Papers (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem/The International Institute for Holocaust Research/Center for Research on the Holocaust in Poland, 2012), 55 and *passim*. Thanks to Dan Michman.

## A Source of Legitimacy: Evangelical Christians and Jews

*Yaakov Ariel*

In 1897, when Theodore Herzl convened the first Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland, Christian Zionist supporters followed the deliberations and wrote approving reports in evangelical and pietist journals. Henry Dunant, the founder of the International Red Cross, and William Hechler, a German-British minister, writer and educator, were more than spectators, offering Herzl encouragement and advice.<sup>1</sup> The alliance between Hechler and Herzl, in particular, represented one of the first instances in which Reformed, pietist, or evangelical Christians and Jewish Zionist activists cooperated in mutual attempts to promote the idea of the Jewish resettlement of Palestine. While Christian Zionists differed considerably in their beliefs, motivations, and visions from their Jewish friends, they have offered each other political and moral support, as well as a sense of legitimacy for their respective beliefs and projects. Christian support has

<sup>1</sup> On William Hechler and his relationship with Herzl, see Amos Elon, *Herzl* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1975), 212–19, 296, 321–23, 438; Paul Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891–1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 3–43. On Henry Dunant, see Caroline Moorhead, *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland, and the History of the Red Cross* (London: HarperCollins, 1998). Most writers overlook Dunant's pro-Zionist activities.

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therefore been vital to the development of the Zionist movement and later on the State of Israel, just as evangelicals have derived a great amount of reassurance from what they have considered the progress of Zionism and Israel as stepping stones on the way to the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>2</sup>

This article will track this mutual dependency from the beginnings of political Zionism up to present-day Israel. It will demonstrate that the encounter between evangelicals and Jews involved much more than political support. It included mutual exchanges and offerings of legitimacy in cultural and spiritual realms, as well as the creation of borderline congregational and intellectual territories.

In order to understand the fascination of pietist and evangelical Christians with the Jews and the realities of their lives, one needs first to explore the manner in which such Christians have read and understood their sacred scriptures, especially prophetic passages, and how they have related them to the Jewish people and to the Holy Land.

### EVANGELICALS, BIBLICAL PROPHECIES, AND THE JEWS

The messianic hope, which has served as a major incentive for the rise of pietist and evangelical interest in the Jews and support for the Zionist and Israeli causes, draws on a long tradition.<sup>3</sup> In its early generations, Christianity was messianically inclined, its followers expecting the imminent return of Jesus to establish the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>4</sup> After Christianity became the dominant religion in the Mediterranean world in the fourth century, Christian thinkers and groups became mostly amillennial, expecting the return of Jesus in a remote future or interpreting biblical passages with messianic overtones as allegorical. According to that view, the church replaced Jesus on earth and had a mission to instruct its followers and ensure their salvation. However, millennial groups that expected the return of Jesus to earth emerged during the Middle Ages, drawing on messianic passages in biblical

<sup>2</sup> On the early history of Christian Zionism, see the recent books: Shalom Goldman, *Zeal for Zion: Christians, Jews, and the Idea of the Promised Land* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Robert Smith, *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Bart Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

books such as Daniel and Revelation, often refusing to accept the standard Christian exegeses of the texts and predicting the imminent end of the world-as-we-know-it.<sup>5</sup>

The Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century brought with it a burst of apocalyptic expectations, often coupled with new translations and fresh readings of the sacred Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> Looking at the Old Testament in a new manner, a number of Protestant groups, both within the more radical left wing of the Reformation and the more mainstream Reformed tradition, expected the Jews to play an important role in the imminent events of the End Times. The English Revolution in the mid-seventeenth century also stirred messianic hopes and gave rise to premillennialist groups, which took interest in the Jewish people and the prospect of their return to Palestine. Messianic hopes played a part in the deliberations on the return of the Jews to England in the 1650s.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, premillennialist Christians in Britain and Holland followed with fascination the Jewish messianic movement stirred by Shabbatai Zvi in the mid-seventeenth century, hoping that it would bring about the return of the Jews to Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

Already at this stage, one could notice some of the characteristics of Christian interest in the life of the Jews and the prospect of their return to Palestine. Such Christians tended to read their sacred Scriptures in a more literal manner, ignoring mainstream Christian exegetical traditions that began with the fathers of the church. In contrast to older branches of Christianity, they saw the Jews as heirs to the covenant between God and Abraham, and as the object of biblical prophecies about a restored Davidic kingdom in the land of Israel. In their messianic scenarios, the return of the Jews to Palestine was the first step in the advancement of the messianic timetable. However, their image of the Jews, which was based on Scripture and not on encounters with actual Jews, was often mixed. It signified a departure from older, more hostile, Christian understanding of the Jews and their place in history and an assertion that the Jews held a much-needed role in the unfolding of the divine drama of salvation. That role was very different than the one assigned to them by Augustine

<sup>5</sup> Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*.

<sup>6</sup> George Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), chronicles extensively such groups.

<sup>7</sup> David Katz, *Philosemitism and the Return of the Jews to England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Shabbatai Zvi: The Mystical Messiah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970).

at the turn of the fifth century. Evangelicals saw the Jews as the Chosen People, God's first nation. While the Jews' position in this era is sorrowful, in their understanding, the Jews will regain their place again as a leading nation in the millennial kingdom, and it is the duty of Christians to treat them with kindness. Pietists and evangelicals became fascinated with the developments in the life of the Jews, searching for signs that the political and cultural events they had predicted were materializing and that their reading of the Scriptures and understanding of the course of history was therefore correct.

Evangelical Christian proto-Zionism appeared on the scene with much vigor in the early decades of the nineteenth century with the rise of the evangelical movement in Britain and a new wave of fascination with prophecy in the English-speaking world and the prospect of the arrival of the messianic times.<sup>9</sup> Two types of Christian messianic faiths gained prominence among nineteenth-century evangelicals, "historical" and "futurist," differing as to when the events of the End Times were to begin. For the most part, these two messianic schools shared views of the role of the Jews and the Holy Land in God's plans for humanity.<sup>10</sup> Adherents of both schools became supporters of Zionist agendas as well as of missionary activity among the Jews.<sup>11</sup> For long years, the predominant messianic school was historical, identifying current events with biblical passages, while the messianic faith in its futurist, dispensationalist form, focusing on messianic events still to come, became widely accepted in America in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Dispensationalism became the messianic faith of conservative evangelicals, fitting well with conservative outlooks on contemporary society and culture. It has meshed well with a pessimistic critique of culture and a philosophy of history that divided divine economy and human experiences into different eras, offering, among other things, reassurances in the face of uncertainty.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Yaakov Ariel, "The French Revolution and the Reawakening of Christian Messianism," in *The French Revolution and Its Impact*, ed. Richard Cohen (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 1991), 319–38.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978).

<sup>11</sup> For example, Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 80–101.

<sup>12</sup> A. G. Mojtabai, *Blessed Assurance: At Home with the Bomb in Amarillo, Texas* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986).

Liberal Christians have often viewed the evangelical messianic faith as based on an unsophisticated, if not idiosyncratic, reading of the biblical texts.<sup>13</sup> Pietists and evangelicals have been certain, however, that their eschatological faith derives from an unbiased reading of chapters and verses in the Bible. Each act, stage and player in the messianic scenario is accompanied by biblical prophetic lines.<sup>14</sup> Their understanding of the role of the Jews and the Holy Land has thus been tied to a larger outlook on the sacred Scriptures and history, revolutionizing conservative Protestant attitudes toward the Jews. According to the dispensationalist reading of biblical passages, God has different plans for the Jews, the church and the rest of humanity. Such messianically oriented Christians define the church as the body of the true believers, composed of those who have undergone inner experiences of conversion, have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior, and have taken it upon themselves to live saintly Christian lives. They alone will be saved and spared the turmoil and destruction that will precede the arrival of the Messiah. Jews are, in many ways, a special category since, while not yet redeemed, they have a great mission and future ahead of them and thus deserve more good will and devotion on the part of true Christians than do other unconverted people. For evangelicals the definition of Christians is not membership in churches, self-identification as Christians, or baptism. True Christians are those who have undergone inner experiences of conversion in which they have accepted Jesus as their personal savior. Only they will be saved, spared the turmoil of the apocalyptic times, and guaranteed eternal life. Evangelicals therefore preach the need for conversion even to self-declared Christians.

<sup>13</sup> James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Peabody: Trinity Press International, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> For example, John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962); Elwood McQuaid, *It is No Dream: Bible Prophecy: Fact or Fanaticism* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1978); Alvin Showalter, *New Chronological Harmony of History and the Bible* (Cape Town: privately published, 1988); John Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991); Timothy Tow, *PropheScope on Israel* (Singapore: Christian Life, 1992); Harold Sevener, *God's Man: Daniel in Babylon, the Visions and Prophecies of Daniel* (Charlotte: Chosen People Ministries, 1994); David Larsen, *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church: A New Perspective on History and Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1995); Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996); Kendell Easley, *Living with the End in Sight: Meditations on the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000); Tim LaHaye, Jerry Jenkins, and Sandi Swanson, *The Authorized Left Behind Handbook* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2005); Dan Bruce, *Lifting the Veil on the Book of Daniel* (n.p.: Prophecy Society, 2012)

The dispensationalist school of Christian messianic thought, which has become prominent among messianically oriented Protestants, views the Bible as a book holding God's plans for all categories of humanity in all eras, including apocalyptic times. The End Times, they believe, will begin with the rapture of the church (based, among other reasoning, on 1 Thess 4:17). The true believers will be snatched from earth and meet Jesus in the air. Those believers who die prior to the rapture will rise from the dead and will also join the living in heaven. These saintly persons will remain with Jesus for seven years (according to some versions, for three and a half years) and thus be spared the turmoil and miseries that will be inflicted on those who remain on earth during that period. For the latter, this period will be marked by natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and famines, as well as wars and murderous dictatorial regimes (based on Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21; Luke 18:7; 2 Pet 3:2–4). By the time Jesus returns to earth, about two thirds of humanity will have perished.<sup>15</sup>

For the Jews, the seven years that stand between the current era and messianic times will be known as the "Time of Jacob's Trouble." The Jews will return to their ancient homeland "in unbelief," without accepting Jesus as their Savior. They will establish a political commonwealth there—not the millennial Davidic kingdom, but nonetheless a necessary step in the advancement of the messianic timetable. Living in spiritual blindness, the Jews will let themselves be ruled by the antichrist, an impostor posing as the Messiah. The antichrist will inflict a reign of terror, directed at, among others, Jews who will accept the belief in Jesus during this period. The arrival of Jesus at the end of the Great Tribulation will end the rule of the antichrist. Jesus will crush this satanic figure and his armies, and will establish the millennial kingdom. Those Jews who survive the turmoil and terror of the Great Tribulation will accept Jesus as their Savior. There will follow a period marked by the righteous rule of Christ on earth, with the Jews inhabiting David's ancient kingdom and Jerusalem serving as the capital of the entire world.

<sup>15</sup> For details on this eschatological hope, see, e.g., Hal Lindsey's best-seller *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971); and Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins popular series, *Left Behind* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1996–2005).

## EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS, MISSIONS, AND ZIONISM

The Protestant messianic reading of the Bible can well explain the interest shown in the Jews and the prospect of their national redemption. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Evangelical premillennialist Christians have come up with a series of initiatives intended both to instruct the Jews as to what evangelicals considered to be the Jews' real Messiah and the Jewish destiny in history, and to bring about or promote the national restoration of the Jews in Palestine.

One of the more noted among such evangelical activists was William Blackstone, a businessman and promoter of the dispensationalist messianic faith from Oak Park, Illinois. Blackstone militated in his bestselling tracts for the centrality of the Jewish people in God's plans for humanity.<sup>16</sup> In 1887, he founded the Chicago Hebrew Mission, one of the larger evangelizing agencies at the time. In establishing the mission, Blackstone and his associates were not hoping for a mass conversion of the Jews. They rather saw the mission as a means of becoming involved with the Jews, trying to share their beliefs with that people and prepare them for the great events of the End Times, and help struggling immigrant Jews materially and spiritually. Although unacceptable to the Jewish elite, in effect, the missions created an in-between culture and community that ultimately legitimized the Jewish experience and brought it closer to evangelical consciousness.

Setting out to visit Palestine in 1888, Blackstone was deeply impressed by the developments that the first wave of Zionist immigration had brought about in a country he had considered to be a desolate land. He viewed the agricultural settlements and the new neighborhoods in Jerusalem as "signs of the time," indicating that an era was ending and the great events of the End Times were to occur very soon. Blackstone decided to take an active line and help bring about Jewish national restoration to Palestine. In 1891, he organized a petition urging the president of the United States to convene an international conference of the world powers that would give Palestine back to the Jews. More than 400 prominent Americans—congressmen, governors, mayors, publishers and editors of leading newspapers, notable clergymen and leading businessmen—signed Blackstone's petition. Although it failed to bring the American government to take a meaningful action regarding its request, the petition reflected the warm support that the idea of the Jewish

<sup>16</sup> See Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Bible House, 1908), 211–13, 236–41.

restoration to Palestine could receive among Protestants influenced by a biblical messianic outlook on the Jews and Palestine.<sup>17</sup>

Blackstone devised a theory that has become a cornerstone of American Christian supporters of Zionism and Israel ever since. He asserted that the United States had a special role and mission in God's plans for humanity: that of a modern Cyrus, to help restore the Jews to Zion.<sup>18</sup> God has chosen America for that mission on account of its moral superiority over other nations, and America will be judged according to the way it will carry out its mission.<sup>19</sup> This theory enabled American evangelicals to combine their messianic belief and understanding of the course of human history with their sense of American patriotism. Consequently, although they have often criticized contemporary American culture, they have indeed remained loyal citizens of the American commonwealth.

When Theodore Herzl began his efforts in the mid-1890s to secure international recognition for the idea of a Jewish state, pietists and evangelicals showed much interest in the new movement and offered support. William Hechler became, in effect, an advisor to Herzl and his liaison to the Protestant Christian rulers of Europe.<sup>20</sup> Hechler introduced Herzl to the Grand Duke of Baden, who reacted sympathetically and promised to support the Zionist cause. The Grand Duke, in turn, introduced Herzl to the German emperor, whom Herzl wished to turn into a patron of the Zionist cause. Some of the characteristics of the relationship between Christian supporters of a biblical messianic faith and Jewish Zionist leadership were laid down at that time. The Jewish Zionist leaders were not familiar with pietist or evangelical biblical exegeses and did not take the premillennialist theology seriously. Rather, they viewed it as a somewhat eccentric conviction and focused instead on the moral and political support its adherents provided for their cause.<sup>21</sup> Herzl did not

<sup>17</sup> Yaakov Ariel, "An American Initiative for a Jewish State: William Blackstone and the Petition of 1891," *Studies in Zionism* 10 (1989): 125–37.

<sup>18</sup> For Example, 2 Chr 36:22–23; Isa 45:13.

<sup>19</sup> In a letter to Woodrow Wilson, 4 November 1914, and in a telegram to Warren G. Harding, 10 December 1920, in Blackstone's Personal Papers at the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

<sup>20</sup> On Hechler and his relationship with Herzl, see Elon, *Herzl*, 212–19, 296, 321–23, 438; Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891–1948*, 3–43.

<sup>21</sup> See Yaakov Ariel, "William Blackstone and the Petition of 1916: A Neglected Chapter in the History of Christian Zionism in America," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 7 (1991): 68–85; Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, 75–96.

comprehend what motivated Christians like Hechler to become supporters of the fledgling Zionist movement. But he became satisfied that Hechler was genuinely a supporter, and that was all that mattered to him. Pietist and evangelical Christian Zionists, for their part, had mixed feelings about the Zionist movement. Their immediate reaction to the Zionist endeavor was enthusiastic, and their reports on the rise of the Zionist movement and the developments in Palestine were reminiscent of those of Jewish Zionists. Zionism and the Jewish settlements in Palestine served as “signs of the time,” proof that the end of this era was at hand and the apocalyptic events were to occur very soon. They were, however, disappointed by the secular character of the movement and saddened that the Jewish Zionists were unaware of what the pietist and evangelical Christians considered to be the real significance of the Jewish return to Palestine. They were certain that they needed to educate the Jews as to what to expect when the great events of the End Times begin to unfold.

As the Zionist movement grew and systematized its work, evangelical supporters began coordinating their work with the Jewish Zionist leadership. Receiving endorsement for his plan from major Protestant churches and coordinating his efforts with those of the American Zionist leadership, William Blackstone organized a second petition in 1916, calling upon the president of the United States, then Woodrow Wilson, to help restore Palestine to the Jews. American Zionist leaders, including Louis Brandeis, Steven Wise, Jacob de Haas and Nathan Straus, saw the Christian efforts as beneficial to the Zionist cause and established a warm relationship with Blackstone. The American evangelist did not keep his premillennialist faith and messianic motivations secret from his Jewish friends, but the Zionist leaders were not bothered by his apocalyptic predictions. They did not expect the Rapture to take place, and they saw the help that Blackstone was providing them as the only concrete outcome of his messianic faith. Likewise, Blackstone and his American Protestant associates related to the Zionist movement favorably, but they did not believe that a political and cultural program devoid of Jesus could bring salvation to the Jews and guarantee their well-being. In their opinion, only faith in Jesus and Jesus’s return to earth would bring with it the moral and spiritual regeneration of the Jews and their return to a secure and preferred position of God’s first nation.

Blackstone’s efforts in 1916–1917 were more effective than in 1891, for he and his friends succeeded in convincing President Wilson to allow the

British to issue the Balfour Declaration.<sup>22</sup> Evangelical Christians welcomed the Balfour Declaration and the British takeover of Palestine. They interpreted these developments as further indications that the ground was being prepared for the arrival of the Messiah. Their joy over the new regime in Palestine dominated two conferences on biblical prophecy that took place in Philadelphia and New York in 1918.<sup>23</sup> Evangelical and pietist Christians maintained a profound interest in the events that were taking place in the life of the Jewish people and especially in the development of the Jewish community in Palestine. Evangelical and pietist journals with pro-Zionist leanings, such as *Our Hope*, *The King's Business*, *The Moody Monthly* and the Pentecostal *Evangel*, regularly published news on developments in the life of the Jewish people, the Zionist movement, and especially the Jewish community in Palestine. They were encouraged by the new wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine in the years of the British administration of the country, and events like the opening of the Hebrew University in 1925 and the new seaport in Haifa in 1932 were publicized in their periodicals. They saw the struggles and turmoil that befell the Jewish nation in the period between the two world wars and during World War II in light of prophecy and the biblical predictions about "the time of Jacob's Trouble."<sup>24</sup> They interpreted these developments as signs that the Jews were energetically building a commonwealth in their ancient land and that the great events of the End Times were to occur very soon.<sup>25</sup> Excited by the prospects of an imminent second coming of Jesus to earth, they expressed dismay at the periodic British restrictions on Jewish immigration. They also criticized the Arabs for their hostility toward the Zionist endeavor and for their violence against the Jews. They saw attempts at blocking the building of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine as equivalent to putting obstacles in the way

<sup>22</sup> Ariel, "William Blackstone and the Petition of 1916," 68–85.

<sup>23</sup> William L. Pettingill, J. R. Schafer, and J. D. Adams, eds., *Light on Prophecy: A Coordinated, Constructive Teaching, Being the Proceedings and Addresses at the Philadelphia Prophetic Conference, May 28–30, 1918* (New York: The Christian Herald Bible House, 1918); Arno C. Gaebelein, ed., *Christ and Glory: Addresses Delivered at the New York Prophetic Conference, Carnegie Hall, November 25–28, 1918* (New York: Publication Office, "Our Hope," 1919).

<sup>24</sup> For example, Arno Gaebelein, "The Shadows of Jacob's Trouble," *Our Hope* 38 (1932): 102.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., George T. B. Davis, *Fulfilled Prophecies That Prove the Bible* (Philadelphia: Million Testaments Campaign, 1931); and Keith L Brooks, *The Jews and the Passion for Palestine in Light of Prophecy* (Los Angeles: Brooks Publications, 1937).

of God's plans for the End Times.<sup>26</sup> But in the years following the Balfour Declaration, conservative evangelical and pietist political power was on the decline, and the influence of Christians holding premillennialist messianic faiths, both in Britain and in America, weakened considerably. In Britain, the evangelical movement was just a shadow of what it had been a century earlier: Evangelical and pietist suggestions and protests did not shape British policies in Palestine, although they might have had some influence on modifying them, and in America, after the Scopes trial in 1925, conservative evangelicals withdrew to a large degree from the public arena. Evangelical leaders did not see themselves as influential national figures whose voices would be heard by the policymakers in Washington or as people who could advance a political agenda on the international level. On the European continent, the rise of the Nazis to power subdued, if not completely crushed, pro-Zionist pietist activity. At a very crucial moment in the life of the Jewish people, its Christian supporters were weak. They would resurface after World War II and the birth of the State of Israel, and would play again an important role in interacting with Jews, trying to influence the course of that people's history and being affected by the developments among the Jews.

### 1948, 1967, EVANGELICALS AND JEWS

Evangelical responses to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 were often enthusiastic. Evangelical journals published sympathetic articles and followed the young Jewish state with great interest in an attempt to interpret its significance for the unfolding of prophecy and the advancement of God's plans in the ages. While evangelical visitors were not happy with the secular character of the Israeli government and society, some of the things they saw, such as the mass emigration of Jews in the late 1940s and 1950s from Asian, African and East European countries, enhanced their messianic hopes.<sup>27</sup> Although evangelicals criticized the Arab hostility against Israel and supported the Israeli state in its military and diplomatic struggles, evangelical leaders expressed a belief that the land of Israel could maintain

<sup>26</sup> James Gray, "Editorial," *Moody Bible Institute Monthly* 31 (1931): 346.

<sup>27</sup> Louis T. Talbot and William W. Orr, *The New Nation of Israel and the Word of God* (Los Angeles: Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1948); M. R. DeHaan, *The Jew and Palestine in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954); Arthur Kac, *The Rebirth of the State of Israel: Is It of God or Men?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958); and George T. B. Davis, *God's Guiding Hand* (Philadelphia: Million Testaments Campaign, 1962).

a thriving Arab population alongside the Jewish community and that Israel had an obligation to respect human rights and treat Arabs with fairness.<sup>28</sup> In striving to reconcile premillennialist teachings with the hopes and fears of Arab congregants and potential converts, they emphasized that the ingathering of the Jews in the land of Israel and the eventual reestablishment of the Davidic kingdom did not necessitate the banishment of Arabs from that land. In spite of such reassurances, only rarely did pietist or evangelical Arabs become supporters of Zionism and Israel.<sup>29</sup>

The June 1967 war had a strong effect on evangelical political and messianic views. The dramatic Israeli victory, and the territorial gains it brought with it, strengthened the conviction of many evangelicals that Israel was created for a mission in history and was to play an important role in the developments that were to precede the arrival of the Messiah.<sup>30</sup> It served as a proof that evangelicals read the Bible correctly and their predictions were materializing. The war served, in other words, as a huge source of legitimization. It was in those years that the evangelical camp in the United States grew in numbers, confidence and political power. Likewise, the evangelical population in Latin America has grown, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, and become a powerful constituency that has developed, among other things, a favorable attitude toward Israel. In addition, evangelical and pietist groups in countries such as Holland or Finland have served since the 1970s as pro-Israel lobbies, counterbalancing anti-Israel sentiments in their nations. The growth of the evangelical community in Korea has also stirred greater interest in the Jews, their culture, and destiny. Christian supporters all around the globe involved themselves in such causes as the demand to facilitate Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union in the 1970s–1980s and later on in the transporting and absorbing of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews into Israel in the 1990s–2000s.<sup>31</sup> They also visited the Holy Land and adopted some features of Jewish and Israeli cultures.

In the United States, evangelicals motivated by a more literal reading of biblical passages became Israel's most ardent supporters in the

<sup>28</sup> John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 19.

<sup>29</sup> On Palestinian-Arab Christian Zionists, see Sahri Huri, *Udat al Masiyah* (Jerusalem: El Mia el Hia, 1939).

<sup>30</sup> E.g., L. Nelson Bell, "Unfolding Destiny," *Christianity Today* (1967), 1044–45.

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., Jay and Meridel Rawlings, *Gates of Brass* (Chichester: New Wine Press, 1985).

American public arena. They have turned into a pro-Israel lobby that uses its political power to promote policies favorable to the interests of the Jewish state. The decades following the June 1967 war were marked by massive American support for Israel in terms of money, arms and diplomatic backing. Among other resources, since the 1970s the United States has provided Israel with yearly monetary grants of billions of dollars (12 billion in the 2010s). For many conservative Christians in America, their pro-Israel stand was an appreciation of the importance of the State of Israel for their biblical-prophetic camp that went hand in hand with American interests as they understood them.<sup>32</sup> For the evangelist and ardent premillennialist Hal Lindsey, who has written from the perspective of a Cold War warrior and later on as an advocate of the war on terror, Israel stood on the right side of history in this era, in addition to its expected crucial role during the End Times. The 1967 war boosted Lindsey's premillennial faith to such a degree that he risked predicting that the End Times would come in 1988, 40 years after the birth of Israel, when the Israelis would be better prepared for their heroic role in the apocalyptic times.<sup>33</sup> The evangelical premillennialist understanding of Israel has influenced the attitudes of prominent conservative American public figures. One notable example has been that of Jesse Helms from North Carolina, who served as a United States senator during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. A convinced premillennialist, Helms, who as chair of the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee labored to limit American financial support abroad, approved of the extensive financial support that the United States offered Israel. Helms's attitude was not unique. From the 1970s to the present, dozens of pro-Israel Christian organizations emerged in the United States and other countries. These include a number of Latin American nations, where in the last decades evangelical Christianity has been on the rise. While a number of such groups have also engaged in evangelization efforts directed toward Jews, these organizations mustered political support for Israel. Their leaders have lectured in churches, distributed material on Israel and organized tours to the Holy Land.

A number of American presidents in the last generation have been close to conservative evangelicals and influenced by their global vision.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Hal Linsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 56.

Tellingly, this did not include Jimmy Carter, a born-again Southern Baptist president, who has been a progressive evangelical and held liberal political views. Carter did take an interest in the Middle East and brought Egypt and Israel to sign a peace treaty, but the role he played was that of a progressive American statesman rather than a “Bible-believing” evangelical Christian. He was never concerned with the messianic hope of paving the way for the Davidic kingdom, and he did not give preference to Israeli interests over and against Arab ones.<sup>34</sup> In later years, Carter openly criticized Israeli policies, reflecting the growing disapproval of liberal Protestants, including progressive evangelicals, of the line Israel has taken vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Ironically, the rift between Israel and its former liberal friends increased the bond between conservative evangelicals and right-wing Israelis. Both sides have found legitimization in the others’ views.

But Ronald Reagan, who replaced Carter as president in 1981, was undeniably influenced in forming his Middle East policy by the massive support he received from conservative evangelicals.<sup>35</sup> Reagan’s supportive pro-Israeli policy toward Israel was adopted by his successor, George H. W. Bush, who was also close to pro-Israel evangelicals and relied on their support.<sup>36</sup> While other considerations determined Reagan’s and Bush’s policies, the evangelicals’ favorable attitude toward Israel and the insistence that America should assist the Jewish state played an influential part.<sup>37</sup> Bill Clinton’s relationship with Israel has to be judged very differently than that of Reagan or Bush. Although nominally an evangelical Christian himself, Clinton was not a conservative Bible believer, and he did not receive much support from evangelicals, who saw him as representing liberal values to which they have been opposed. Yet it should not be overlooked that his roots were in the Bible-Belt, in a church that promoted a special attitude toward Israel.

George W. Bush’s administration was strongly influenced by evangelical, pro-Israeli sentiments. A committed conservative Christian himself, Bush

<sup>34</sup> Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> See Martin Gardner, “Giving God a Hand,” *New York Review of Books* (13 August 1987), 22. On American presidents and Israel see Paul Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel: The Heirs of Cyrus* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*.

<sup>37</sup> On American presidents, religion, and Israel, see Paul Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel: The Heirs of Cyrus* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

relied heavily on conservative support and, in addition to extending political and financial support to Israel, was reluctant to initiate diplomatic moves that might have upset evangelical supporters of Israel.<sup>38</sup> Barack Obama and his wife were members for many years of a charismatic African-American church in Chicago, but while the congregation and its pastor promoted a direct reading of the Bible, their interpretation of the Christian sacred scriptures was somewhat different than those of evangelicals with dispensationalist leanings. Like most African-American conservative churches, theirs has not embraced a pro-Israel outlook, although some pastors and groups have followed biblical exegesis and messianic hopes similar to that of white evangelicals.

The years following the June 1967 war also saw an increase in the actual presence and activity of evangelical Christians in Israel and of evangelical-Jewish encounters. Tours of evangelical and pietist groups to that country increased, as did the numbers of field-study seminars and of volunteers coming to kibbutzim. Evangelical Christians even established institutions of higher education in Israel, one of these being the Jerusalem University College set up by Douglas Young, an evangelical theologian with a pro-Zionist orientation.

### PRO-ISRAEL ORGANIZATION

One of the better-known Christian organizations for support of Israel is the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ). Its story tells us a great deal about the relationship that has developed between the evangelical and pietist communities and Israeli society and government. In the 1970s, evangelical and pietist activists, who settled in Jerusalem, founded a local fellowship that aimed to muster support for Israel. The participants met weekly, prayed, sang and discussed means to promote Christian support for Israel in order to counterbalance anti-Israel sentiments in the Christian world.<sup>39</sup> One of the founding leaders of the group, the Dutch minister Jan Willem van der Hoeven, suggested organizing large annual gatherings of Christian supporters of Israel from all over the world

<sup>38</sup>Weber, *On the Road*; Merkley, *American Presidents*; Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*. Spector's book examined the Bush administration's policies very comprehensively and pointed to strong evangelical influences as well as careful White House policies.

<sup>39</sup>On the Christian world and Israel in the 1940s–1980s, see Paul Merkley, *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2001).

during Sukkoth, the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, commemorating the temporary dwellings of the Israelites in the wilderness after the exodus. His theological rationale was that according to the Bible (Zech 14:15), Gentiles were also commanded to gather in Jerusalem during the festival. In 1979, the group launched its first yearly Tabernacles festival, a weeklong assembly of Christian supporters of Israel highlighted by a biblical meal on the shore of the Dead Sea and a march through the streets of Jerusalem.

In 1980, the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, passed the “Jerusalem Law,” which declared the city of Jerusalem, including its Arab parts, to be the capital of the State of Israel. In protest, almost all countries with embassies and consulates in Jerusalem moved their diplomatic staffs to Tel Aviv. This evacuation provided a dramatic point at which the Christian activists announced the creation of the International Christian Embassy as an act of support for Israel.<sup>40</sup> The Embassy chose as its logo two olive branches hovering over a globe with Jerusalem at its center. “This symbolizes the great day when Zechariah’s prophecy will be fulfilled, and all nations will come up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles during Messiah’s reign on earth.”<sup>41</sup> Israeli officials noted the propaganda value of the Embassy’s creation and welcomed the new organization. It made the point, they believed, that even though many countries had removed their embassies and consulates from Jerusalem because of Arab pressure, the Christian world backed Israel.

The Embassy seeks to represent all true Christians and has made efforts to open branches and gain supporters in as many countries as possible, although most of its supporters are Protestants.<sup>42</sup> While most of its founders and leaders have come from Europe and North America, the ICEJ has further received support from other parts of the globe, including the growing number of Latin American evangelicals, tens of thousands of whom have participated in the annual tours of the Holy Land sponsored by the Embassy. Embassies around the globe distribute journals, brochures and DVDs and also collect money for the Embassy’s philanthropic enterprises in Israel and recruit pilgrims who wish to join the annual gathering in Jerusalem. The Davidic music it promotes represents evangelical New

<sup>40</sup> James McWhirter, *A World in a Country* (Jerusalem: B.S.B. International, 1983), 160–74.

<sup>41</sup> Van der Hoeven, “If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem,” 4.

<sup>42</sup> A typewritten list of ICEJ international representatives, dating to February 1992, includes representatives in the United States in Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Maryland, California, and Wyoming.

Christian Music with biblical messianic wording and references to the Land of Israel and its history. Like other evangelical groups, it has used visual Israeli motifs in its publications and productions.

The Embassy is one of the first Christian institutions to systematically donate money to Israeli enterprises and carry extensive welfare work in the country, aiding needy and elderly Israelis.<sup>43</sup> The Embassy has also helped finance Jewish immigration and settlement in the country, including in the former West Bank of Jordan.

During the 1980s to the 2000s, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, the Embassy's ideologue at the time, emerged as one of the better-known spokespersons on Israel and its role in history.<sup>44</sup> Van der Hoeven shared the Christian premillennialist vision of Israel as a transitory but necessary vehicle on the messianic road. In his view, Palestinian organizations hostile to the Israeli project have been instruments of Satan, while Arabs who are true Christian believers support the Israeli cause.<sup>45</sup> Van der Hoeven's attitude toward Jews and Israel has been ambivalent. He has expressed the firm belief that the Jews are the heirs of biblical Israel, God's chosen people, destined for a glorious future in the messianic age, but he also has harbored feelings of frustration, expressing bitterness, for example, that so many Israelis have been unwilling to support a firmer political agenda. In order to be accepted by the liberal West, he complained, they were willing to compromise their national aspirations and, in so doing, betray their purpose in God's plans for the End Times. For him, "land for peace" could impede the divine plan for human redemption. The Jews are not just another people who can make choices according to their political needs; they have a burden to carry, a duty and purpose in history. If they neglect to fulfill their mission, the Jews will miss their second opportunity for redemption.

<sup>43</sup> On the various activities of the Embassy in the early 1990s, see its brochure, "The Ministry of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem" (Jerusalem: International Christian Embassy, 1992). Arlynn Nellhaus, "Go Tell It on the Mountain," *Jerusalem Post Magazine* (9 October 1992), 6–7.

<sup>44</sup> On van der Hoeven's views on Israel, see his book, Jan van der Hoeven, *Babylon or Jerusalem* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1993).

<sup>45</sup> *Le Maan Tzion Lo Echeshe* (Jerusalem: International Christian Embassy, 1990), 13.

## MESSIANIC JUDAISM

A major feature of pietist and evangelical relation to the Jews has been the mission. Since the rise of the pietist movement in central Europe at the turn of the eighteenth century and the evangelical movement in Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century, missions to the Jews have occupied an important place in the conservative Christian agenda and have come to characterize the messianic-oriented Christian interaction with the Jews, even more than pro-Zionist activity. Its meaning for evangelicals and pietists has gone far beyond attempts to capture Jewish souls. Such Christians have seen themselves as taking part in the divine drama of salvation. Propagating Christianity among the Jews meant teaching the people of God how to read biblical passages properly and learn about their role and purpose in history, as well as saving some of them from the turmoil of the apocalyptic times. Evangelicals established numerous missions to the Jews, operating all around the Jewish diaspora.<sup>46</sup>

The best-known of today's evangelical missions, Jews for Jesus, works to promote pro-Zionist sentiments, calling its music band the "Liberated Wailing Wall."<sup>47</sup> The organization promotes and utilizes Jewish and Israeli symbols, language, and artifacts at the same time that asks its workers and converts to join Protestant churches. The messages and material culture it promotes has served to legitimize Judaism among Protestants and Christianity among Jews. While the ICEJ has tried to revive Christian interest in Tabernacles, Jews for Jesus has helped stir interest in Passover. Historically, Christians have celebrated Easter, demonstrating, if anything, suspicion and hostility toward the major Jewish holiday. The more positive atmosphere that developed in the post-1967 era in relation to Israel and Jews, and the campaigns that Jews for Jesus and similar groups have launched to create a favorable image to Jews and their culture has brought about a change in relation to the most controversial Jewish holidays. Interest in Jewish rites and customs has increased in evangelical circles, and the growing celebration of Passover signifies that trend. Before Passover, representatives of Jews for Jesus, and other groups, visit thousands of churches and conduct Passover celebrations. Many churches organize such events on their own, often with the help of Jewish members. Such endeavors

<sup>46</sup> A. E. Thompson, *A Century of Jewish Missions* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1905).

<sup>47</sup> Yaakov Ariel, "Counterculture and Missions: Jews for Jesus and the Vietnam Era Missionary Campaigns," *Religion and American Culture* 9 (1999): 233–57.

promote legitimization of Judaism within evangelical circles and legitimize evangelicalism as a camp open to other traditions and cultures, including Judaism, as long as adherents promote faith in Jesus. Large churches often have Jewish fellowships in their midst that provide cultural space to Jewish participants, who, in their turn, create something of a Jewish lobby within their communities, promoting, among other agendas, a supportive position toward Israel.

The rise of Jews for Jesus took place in the same years that Messianic Judaism, another Christian-Zionist movement, emerged on the scene. A movement of Jewish converts to evangelical Christianity, Messianic Jews see themselves as overcoming the historical differences between Judaism and Christianity, and amalgamating the Christian faith with Jewish identity, symbols, and causes. There were a handful of Hebrew Christian congregations before the 1970s in different countries, including Israel and Britain, but the more Jewish-assertive movement of Messianic Judaism would not have come on the scene if it was not for the growing legitimacy of Judaism and Jews in the American evangelical camp. This too was a consequence of the 1967 war, which caused a growth in the prestige of Jews among evangelical Christians and in the interest of Jews who became Christians in maintaining their identities as Jews and combining it with faith in Jesus.<sup>48</sup> The era was more open to ethnic pride and evangelicals ceased insisting that members and converts follow the more conventional Anglo-American ways and manners.

Like evangelical Christians, Messianic Jews relate strongly to both the Hebrew and Greek Bibles, and while following Christian views that see the Old Testament as pointing to the New Testament, they have also promoted the idea of a covenant relationship between God and Israel. The Messianic Jewish ideology has militated that becoming Christian does not work to eradicate Jewish identity. On the contrary, it turns Jews into complete Jews, true to their real goal and purpose. From the 1970s to the present, Messianic Jews have established more than 400 congregations in Israel, Britain, the United States, Canada, Argentina, South Africa, and other countries with Jewish communities. By stressing the Jewish identity of Jews who embraced Jesus and not considering them ordinary Christians, they have worked to promote legitimization of Jews and Judaism among Christians and of Christianity among Jews.

<sup>48</sup> Yaakov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000).

Arabs and pro-Arab Christian churches and leaders have resented the theology and agenda of pro-Israel evangelical groups.<sup>49</sup> The Israeli leadership, on the other hand, has welcomed its unexpected allies with open arms.

### ISRAELIS AND CHRISTIAN SUPPORTERS

Israeli leaders have not always comprehended the nature of the special attitudes of Christian Bible believers toward the new state and have therefore overlooked elements in the Christian messianic theology and activity to which, in principle, they would have objected. Israeli officials could not tell the difference between its mainline Christian supporters, mostly during the 1940s to the 1960s, who showed sympathy for Israel on the basis of political or humanitarian considerations, and its conservative evangelical supporters, whose attitudes have been rooted in a biblical messianic faith.<sup>50</sup> They were unaware of the details of the Christian eschatological hopes and had never heard of such terms as “the Great Tribulation” or the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble.” Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, is a case in point. Ben-Gurion believed that Christian supporters viewed the establishment of the State of Israel as the ultimate fulfillment of biblical prophecies rather than as a stepping stone toward the realization of such prophecies. He expressed his views in an address he wrote for the opening of an international Pentecostal conference that convened in Israel.<sup>51</sup> He and other leaders were also not aware that messianic hopes encouraged not only support for Zionism and for Israel but also extensive missionary activity among the Jews.

Since the late 1970s, as the evangelical pro-Zionist influence on American political life has become more apparent, the Israeli government has taken active measures to establish contact with evangelical Christians.<sup>52</sup> The 1967

<sup>49</sup> Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Judaism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed, 1983); Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road Map to Armageddon* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2004); Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> A striking example of this failure to understand can be found in Michael Pragai’s book *Faith and Fulfillment* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1985). The author, who served as the head of the department for Christian churches and organizations in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the nature of the evangelical support of Zionism and of the differences between conservative and mainline/liberal churches.

<sup>51</sup> Yona Malachy, *American Fundamentalism and Israel* (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1978), 106–11.

<sup>52</sup> “Israel Looks on U.S. Evangelical Christian as Potent Allies,” *Washington Post* (23 March 1981), A11.

war has had a very different effect on liberal and conservative Christians than on evangelical Christians. Many liberal Protestant thinkers and activists have become critical of what they have come to see as Israel's expansionist policies and have at times even voiced their disapproval of the entire Israeli project. Israeli leaders have come to rely instead on evangelical support, and have become more welcoming than before to evangelical overtures. Israeli officials speak at evangelical conferences, and known evangelists such as Pat Robertson and John Hagee met with Israeli leaders as part of their touring schedules in Israel. Israeli leaders have relied on groups such as the International Christian Embassy or Christian United for Israel as vehicles to reach the Protestant Christian community, believing that it represents a large segment of Christianity.<sup>53</sup>

Ironically, conservative evangelicals often find a common language with right-wing Orthodox Jews, many of them in the settlers' circles. In 1988, the magazine *Nekuda* ("Settlement"), an organ of the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria, published a favorable article on the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem entitled "Without Inhibitions: Christians Committed to Judea and Samaria." Emphasizing that the Embassy had no missionary intentions, *Nekuda* described the Embassy as a Christian pro-Israel group that, unlike many Jews, realized that the Bible authorized the Jews to settle their land.<sup>54</sup>

This relationship is accompanied by paradoxes. While the ICEJ refrains from missionary activity, other evangelical groups have pursued their missionary agendas, causing much irritation among Orthodox Jews. One of the Begin government's earliest acts of legislation, in the late 1970s, was intended to restrict such activity, not realizing that evangelism was carried out by the same elements in Christianity with whom the Israeli government was trying to establish a friendly relationship.<sup>55</sup> In this case, one can speak about an attempt to de-legitimize the other group. Evangelical friends of Israel were at first concerned about the proposed law but were relieved to discover that it did not relate to the kind of work they were carrying out in the country and that the Israeli attorney general did not implement the law.

<sup>53</sup> "Israel's Leaders Greet the Embassy," in *Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord* (Jerusalem: International Christian Embassy, 1991).

<sup>54</sup> Luria, "LeLo Tasbichim," 30–34.

<sup>55</sup> Yaakov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 277–78.

In the mid-1990s, a number of Orthodox and non-Orthodox members of the Knesset came out again with initiatives to outlaw missionary activity.<sup>56</sup> In 1996, an initial first-round proposal to curtail missionary activity passed in the Knesset. But then the nature of the relationship between the evangelical community and Israeli society became unprecedentedly clear. Missionaries operating in Israel called upon their supporters around the globe to raise their voices against the impeding law. One of their appeals read:

We call upon the international Christian community to join us in our opposition to this law. As Christian believers in the God of Israel and in Jesus the Messiah and Savior of the world, we have a special respect and appreciation for the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. We seek and pray for the welfare of all of God's people in the land. We view with grave concern the erosion of Israel's democratic freedom by this proposed law.<sup>57</sup>

Israeli embassies and consulates in countries with evangelical populations were virtually flooded with letters of protest against the law. Many wrote directly to the prime minister in Jerusalem. The standard letters emphasized that they were written by friends of Israel who wished the country well. But they also warned the government that the passing of such a law would turn its current supporters against it. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who at first offhandedly supported the bill, changed his mind and promised evangelical activists he would oppose it.<sup>58</sup> The aborted attempts at curtailing missionary activity in Israel pointed to the fact that the close relationship between evangelicals and Israelis took precedence over resentment at missionary activity. Israeli leaders could not afford to restrict those elements of their friend's activities with which they disagreed. Or in other words the legitimization each group offered the other censored attempts at de-legitimation. The evangelical-Israeli ménage resembled a marriage of convenience: both sides gaining support and legitimacy for their visions and agendas from the other side, while holding some reservations and misgivings. Evangelicals harbored stereotypical images of Jews, a remnant of traditional

<sup>56</sup> Daniel Ben Simon, "Doing Something for Judaism," *Haaretz* (18 December 1997, English edition, 1–2.

<sup>57</sup> For example, a letter circulated through the Internet by Noam Hendren, Baruch Maoz, and Marvin Dramer, March 1997.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Christian cultural hostility toward that people.<sup>59</sup> This has changed gradually as Jews and evangelicals have come to encounter each other more often than before and have begun cooperating in various projects, including the building of the Temple.

### REBUILDING THE THIRD TEMPLE

One of the outcomes of the June 1967 war for Christians expecting the second coming of Jesus has been the Israeli takeover of the Temple Mount on which the temple could be rebuilt. The prospect of rebuilding the temple excited premillennialist Christians, often considering the building project as the one event standing between this era and the next.<sup>60</sup> A striking demonstration of the new prominence of the temple in Christian messianic thought could be found in Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Lindsey was strongly impressed by the June 1967 war and its consequences, and he placed Israel at the center of the eschatological drama.<sup>61</sup> For him, the rebuilding of the temple and the rise to power of the antichrist were major components of the apocalyptic times, without which the coming of the Messiah could not take place.

There remained, however, a number of obstacles to the advancement of this stage in the prophetic timetable. Many Israelis understood the outcome of what they have come to call the Six Day War—itself a name with messianic overtones—in messianic terms, but most of them did not wish to rebuild the temple. There was the unavoidable reality that the Temple Mount was a Muslim site, complete with magnificent mosques and administered by Muslims. The Israeli Minister of Defense at the time, Moshe Dayan, designed a policy that insisted on maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount.<sup>62</sup> In addition, rabbis declared that Jews were forbidden to enter the Temple Mount, considering the place as sacred as when the temple was standing.<sup>63</sup> They noted that Jews were required to purify themselves

<sup>59</sup> Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966).

<sup>60</sup> Raymond L. Cox, "Time for the Temple?" *Eternity* 19 (1968): 17–18; Malcolm Couch, "When Will the Jews Rebuild the Temple?" *Moody Monthly* 74 (1973): 34–35, 86.

<sup>61</sup> Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 32–47.

<sup>62</sup> Shmuel Berkovitz, *The Temple Mount and the Western Wall in Israeli Law* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, 2001).

<sup>63</sup> See *m. Kelim* 1:8. Cf. "Har HaBayit [Temple Mount]" in *HaEncyclopedia HaTalmudit* 10, 575–92. [Hebrew]

with the ashes of a Red Heifer before entering the Mount, and there have not been Red Heifers to be found.<sup>64</sup> Rabbis also feared that Jews might walk into restricted sacred space, such as the Holy of Holies, which ordinary Jews and even ordinary priests were not allowed to enter.<sup>65</sup>

An Australian premillennialist, Dennis Michael Rohan, decided to change the existing reality. After spending some time as a volunteer in an Israeli kibbutz, Rohan visited Jerusalem in July 1969 and while there, convinced that God had designated him for that task, planned and executed the burning of the El-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount in an attempt to secure the necessary ground for the building of the temple.<sup>66</sup> The mosque was damaged, and Arabs in Jerusalem rioted. Rohan was arrested, put to trial, found insane and sent to Australia to spend the rest of his life in an asylum.<sup>67</sup> Most premillennialist Christians, however, have not taken the law into their own hands but have sought legal and peaceful means to advance their agenda. Since the 1970s, a number of Christian premillennialist groups and individuals have promoted the rebuilding of the Jewish shrine through a variety of activities, most of them centered on encouraging Jews to prepare for the building of the temple.<sup>68</sup> Such Jews could be found. Since the late 1960s, a number of Jewish groups organized toward the rebuilding of the temple. Such Jews study temple rituals, manufacture utensils to be used for sacrificial purposes according to biblical or Talmudic texts, or try to breed a new variety of heifer. Others try periodically to pray on the Temple Mount or to demonstrate against government restrictions. They have served since the 1970s to sustain the Christian messianic imagination, serving as “signs of the time,” indications that the current era is ending and the apocalyptic events of the End Times are near.<sup>69</sup> They also serve as opportunities for right-wing

<sup>64</sup> Numbers 19.

<sup>65</sup> Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 279–88.

<sup>66</sup> I am indebted to Avinoam Brog for sharing with me information and impressions on Rohan's stay in the kibbutz and his motive for burning the mosque.

<sup>67</sup> See Jerusalem District Court Archive, Criminal File 69/173.

<sup>68</sup> On the Jewish groups aiming at building the Temple, see Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, 264–69, 279–88; Nadav Shragai, “To Bring God Home,” Haaretz, 17 September 1998, B2; Moti Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> Jeffrey, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*, especially pp. 108–50. For example, Don Stewart and Chuck Missler, *The Coming Temple: Center Stage for the Final Countdown* (Orange, CA: Dart Press, 1991), 157–70.

evangelical Christians and Israeli Jews to build alliances and engage in mutual venues. Ironically, the same elements in Israeli society that militated for the failed anti-missionary laws become particularly close to conservative evangelicals, benefiting from their generosity and offering them legitimization and reassurances.

Christian proponents of building the temple have made efforts to discover the exact site of the ancient shrines. Some have searched for the lost ark, a quest that inspired a number of novels and movies.<sup>70</sup> Some evangelical Christians have also searched for the ashes of the Red Heifer, while others have supported attempts to breed such heifers.<sup>71</sup> A new interest has arisen in Christian conservative circles in the temple building, its interior plan and its sacrificial works, as well as in the priestly garments and utensils.<sup>72</sup> The rebuilt temple has also played an important role in novels and other fictional works. The most popular has been the series *Left Behind*, which was published in the late 1990s and early 2000s and has sold tens of millions of copies, many of them among non-evangelical Christians. The novels take place in the aftermath of the Rapture, describing the struggles of those left behind, not least of them the rise to power of the antichrist, one of whose “achievements” is orchestrating the removal of the mosques to New Babylon.<sup>73</sup>

One of the Israeli groups that has established a working relationship with evangelical Christians has been the *Land of Israel and Temple Mount Faithful*. Pat Robertson, the renowned leader of the 700 Club (one of the better known evangelical networks) and a one-time presidential candidate, offered his support and hospitality to Gershon Solomon, the founder of the group. In August 1991, the 700 Club aired an interview

<sup>70</sup> On the premillennialist fascination with the lost ark, see Doug Wead, David Lewis, and Hal Donaldson, *Where Is the Lost Ark?* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishing, n.d.); Don Stewart and Chuck Missler, *In Search of the Lost Ark* (Orange, CA: Dart Press, 1991).

<sup>71</sup> Lawrence Wright, “Forcing the End,” *The New Yorker* 74, no. 20 (20 July 1998): 42–53; Jewish Telegraph Agency, 2 September 1999, online: <http://www.jta.org/sep99/02-cows.htm>

<sup>72</sup> For example, C. W. Sleming, *These Are the Garments* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, n.d.); Wead, Lewis, and Donaldson, *Where Is the Lost Ark?*; Stewart and Missler, *In Search of the Lost Ark*; Thomas Ice and Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992).

<sup>73</sup> Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1995). The series has sold more than 20 million copies. On the temple, see, e.g., LaHaye and Jenkins, *Left Behind*, 415; Nicolae: *The Rise of Antichrist*, 369; *Tribulation Force*, 208, 277.

with Solomon. Robertson described Solomon's group as struggling to gain the rightful Jewish place on the Temple Mount. "We will never have peace," Robertson declared, "until the Mount of the House of the Lord is restored."<sup>74</sup> Solomon, for his part, described his mission as embodying the promise of a universal redemption of humanity. "It's not just a struggle for the Temple Mount, it's a struggle for the ... redemption of the world," he declared.<sup>75</sup> The close relationship that has developed between conservative evangelicals and right-wing Jews has increasingly become friendly and trusting. A number of evangelical writers have even modified their apocalyptic predictions in order to make them more Jewish-friendly. In new evangelical novels and books, for example, the antichrist is no longer a Jew. A number of evangelicals have joined settlers in the West Bank as volunteers, assisting, among other ventures, in the cultivation of wine grapes, an occupation one would hardly expect conservative evangelicals to be involved with in the United States.

As cooperation over plans to build the temple suggests, the evangelical-Jewish relationship relates also to Islam and to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Radical evangelicals such as Hal Lindsey, Franklin Graham or Jan Willem van der Hoeven take a negative attitude toward Islam and refuse to accept the sovereignty of Muslims on the Temple Mount. It should therefore come as no surprise that the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians over a peace agreement have caused alarm among some premillennialist Christians,<sup>76</sup> but for most of them their hopes for the rebuilding of the temple have remained strong.<sup>77</sup> One cannot tell what would happen if, from a radical evangelical and Jewish perspectives, Israel works against God's will and the unfolding of prophecy by giving up its official control of the Temple Mount. Both officials and followers of the saga fear that such a development might stir Jewish and Christian extremists to take steps that could lead to violence but in the activists' own eyes would be intended to secure the Jewish and Christian presence on the mountain.

<sup>74</sup> Robert I. Friedman, *Zealots for Zion* (New York: Random House, 1992), 144.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 144–45.

<sup>76</sup> See articles in the *Middle East Intelligence Digest*, a publication of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem in the 1990s–2000s, or in the *Jerusalem Connection* in the 2000s–2010s, <http://www.thejerusalemconnection.us/>

<sup>77</sup> For example, the series *Left Behind*.

## CONCLUSION

The evangelical extensive involvement with the Jewish people, including pro-Zionist and pro-Israel activity, has been an extraordinary development in the history of relationships between religious communities. In no other case have members of one religious tradition considered another religious community to hold a crucial role in God's plans for human redemption and to be God's first nation. Likewise, it is unique that Christians view a foreign country as holy and as the ground zero of apocalyptic and messianic times without claiming it as their own. The revolutionary nature of evangelical attitudes toward and interaction with Jews is highlighted when one bears in mind that for most of its history the major trends in Christianity have seen Judaism as replaced by the church. The explanation for the almost incredible evangelical and pietist view of the Jews lies, to a large degree, in the nature of the conservative evangelical reading of Christian sacred texts, including in the centrality of the Hebrew Bible in addition to the New Testament within the evangelical canon of sacred scriptures, in the more literal reading of the sacred texts, and in the evangelical meshing of Biblical exegesis with a premillennialist messianic faith. Such Bible-believing Christians have come to perceive the rebuilding of the Jewish state and the temple by the Jews as necessary stages toward the realization of the messianic age.

Theoretical theological rationale alone, without what evangelicals have conceived to be vital signs of the advancement of history, would not have been sufficient for such an enchantment to remain active for so long. The evangelical willingness to invest time, money, efforts and personnel in Jews and Israel, and stand on their side in the international arena has not gone unrewarded. The developments in the life of the Jewish people since the rise of the Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century, in particular the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the Israeli successes during the 1967 war, have in their turn worked to offer validation of their faith and their reading of scriptures, their understanding of history, and by extension their worldview. This has been the source of their continued fascination with the Jews and Israel, which, especially at certain moments, has supplied dramatic events that evangelical writers and preachers have interpreted as meshing with their predictions of events and as such offering legitimization to their larger worldview, their critique of global politics, morality and culture. One wonders, therefore, how evangelical attitudes would change if and when the Jews and Israel would cease to provide the kind of hope-filling events that Christian Zionists have found so reassuring.

## Settlers in a Strange Land: Dutch, Swiss, American, and German Protestants in Nes Ammim (Israel), 1952–1964

Toward a Christian Kibbutz in Galilee

*Gert van Klinken*

In the North of Israel, situated between Jewish *kibbutzim* in the plain of Asher in the Galilee, there is a remarkable *moshav* (agricultural settlement with family housings). Unlike the many other Israeli *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, it was not founded by Jews fulfilling the dream of returning to their homeland, or enjoying the independence of a Jewish state. Its founders were Christians. Though not very well known in Israel or the Jewish Diaspora, the *moshav* is famous in significant parts of the Protestant world. Nes Ammim, as the settlement is called, has throughout its existence attracted many volunteers, to whom it served as a symbol for their solidarity with the Jewish project of returning to Palestine. It also seemed an ideal place to search for the Jewish roots of Christianity and to engage in dialogue with Judaism. Also, Nes Ammim became a popular focus for Christian tourism in the Galilee.

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The fact that Christians have felt a need to participate in the creation of the Jewish State, in classic Zionist fashion by working its land, illustrates in a particular way how Jews served as a legitimization of Christianity. Furthermore, it is remarkable that they were allowed to do so by the Israeli authorities, as Christian missionary activity in Israel is kept to a minimum and the Jewish State was founded to serve the interests of Jews, not of Christians. For the Israeli government, it was the economy that counted most. Final clearance to go ahead was given by the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem in January 1964, for the following reasons:

Mobilizing industrial capital and know-how (...), an activity which would help the industrialisation of the State of Israel and its economic development.<sup>1</sup>

The regional council of Ga'aton mentioned a second motive for its willingness to facilitate the project:

Expressing the hope that Nes Ammim will strengthen the relations between the state of Israel and the countries from where the settlers will come.<sup>2</sup>

Christians from a number of different nationalities had founded Nes Ammim in 1960. Both the Jews and the Protestants were recent arrivals in this part of the Western Galilee. The Jews had founded the city of Nahariya in 1934, in search of a place where they could build a national state of their own, and more arrived in the wake of the Holocaust. The founders of Nes Ammim came during the 1950s from Holland and Switzerland, soon to be followed by committees in America and Germany. These were countries that had all experienced contemporary history in a different, though related way. Holland had been occupied during the Second World War. The former colonial empire in Indonesia had been lost to Sukarno. Switzerland had been neutral during the war, from which the USA had emerged as a victor and Germany as the guilty perpetrator of genocide.

This article will discuss how their project of building a *moshav* reflected interpretations of Christianity—in particular the question how Protestants had to relate to Jews and in what way Judaism legitimized Christianity—that

<sup>1</sup>S. Amir (Prime Minister's Office) to J. Bernath (chairman of Nes Ammim International, Zürich), Jerusalem 21 January 1964, in: Archive Nes Ammim Netherlands (ANAN), Amersfoort.

<sup>2</sup>M. Gerzon to J. Pilon, Jerusalem 19 March 1963, in: Historical Documentation Center of the Free University in Amsterdam (HDC VU), Archive Nes Ammim Netherlands, box 37.

varied as they bore the marks of these different backgrounds. It will further show how the project of establishing a Christian *moshav* in the Jewish State brought these differences out and how it led to debates on the nature and the purpose of the settlement and ultimately to conflicts and a separation between the different partners. As such it will illustrate the anxiety faced by Protestants in coping with the quandary of finding in their theological outlook a place for Judaism that worked in a post-Holocaust world. Most of the literature on Christian Zionism focuses on American evangelical movements, where the Jewish return to Palestine serves quite specific theological and eschatological Christian interests, which aim at the ultimate conversion of the Jews to Jesus as Messiah.<sup>3</sup> Although such ideas did play a role in the process leading up to the establishment of the moshav, the motives that eventually led to the foundation of Nes Ammim (with consent of the Israeli authorities) are of a somewhat different nature. Here, the Zionist project served as legitimization for Christianity based upon the theologically motivated need to not only accept and appreciate Judaism, but also assist in the establishment of the Jewish State, and thus regenerate Christianity after the Holocaust by earning ‘forgiveness’.

#### JOHAN PILON<sup>4</sup>

The move away from messianic motives can be discerned in the outlook of the founding father of the settlement, Johan Jacob Pilon. He was born in 1917 on the isle of Java in what was then the Dutch Indies. His father worked as an ophthalmologist, and his grandfather had been active as a missionary on the island of Sumba. The Pilon family belonged to the Reformed Church. Johan Pilon was sent to Holland to study medicine in Amsterdam, a city in which he witnessed the deportation of the Jews. The young student from Indonesia worked for an illegal newspaper, was arrested by the Germans, and went into hiding after his release.<sup>5</sup> Brought up in a colonial setting, Pilon had been taught to expect that Christian Europe epitomized a pinnacle of civilization. The experience of witnessing

<sup>3</sup> Wilkes, George R., ‘Christian Zionism’, in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. by Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (Cambridge, 2008), 453.

<sup>4</sup> Family Archive Pilon (FAP), Haarlem.

<sup>5</sup> Kok, A., and A. J. van Dijk, ‘S.E.S.A.M. in Oorlogstijd [S.E.S.A.M. in Wartime]’, [www.odesesam.nl](http://www.odesesam.nl) (retrieved 2013).

deportation and mass murder in this very part of the world delivered a profound blow to his Christian self-confidence.<sup>6</sup>

Following his marriage to the Roman Catholic nurse Stijn Wentholt, the young couple left Holland as soon as they could after liberation, once Johan had passed his doctor's exam. They settled in a small hospital in Sulawesi in Indonesia. He was a missionary doctor, his salary being paid by the Christian Reformed Churches.

## TIBERIAS

Pilon ended up in the young Jewish State after he was evacuated from Indonesia following the Dutch surrender of Sulawesi to the State of Indonesia. He was offered a new posting in 1952 at the Church of Scotland Mission Hospital in Tiberias in Israel. Known as the 'Beth Cholim Scotti',<sup>7</sup> it received grants from the Israeli government, provided that Christian missions would not bother Jewish patients. Both the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) were actively engaged in the maintenance of the hospital. The intention of the DRC was to engage the Jews in a dialogue between equal partners. The DRC welcomed the buildup of the Jewish State, as it saw an opportunity for a free discussion of the message of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> Apart from a few intellectuals, this discussion was impracticable in the Netherlands. A staggering 102,000 of an estimated 130,000 Jewish citizens had been killed, and the scars ran deep. The few surviving Dutch Jews were not interested in dialogue with Christianity and simply detested the Jewish mission. However, they would welcome help from almost any quarter for the development of the newly born State of Israel. If the DRC's Council for Church and Israel and the deputies for the RCN Jewish mission wanted to meet the Jews, their obvious approach was to go to Israel. Subsequently, the RCN sent a minister to the hospital for a 'moderate' continuation of the Jewish mission within the grounds of the Beth Cholim Scotti. Pilon's posting in Tiberias, once again as a missionary doctor, was financed by the RCN as well.

<sup>6</sup> Klinken, Gert van, 'Johan Jacob Pilon', in: *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme [Biographical Lexicon for the History of Dutch Protestantism]* 6 (Kampen, 2006), 228

<sup>7</sup> Livingstone, W. P., *A Galilee Doctor: being a sketch of the career of Dr. D.W. Torrance of Tiberias* (Londen, 1925), 9-265.

<sup>8</sup> Grolle, J. H., *Een volk op weg naar huis [The Homecoming of the Jewish People]* (The Hague, 1953).

### JEWISH MISSION AT WITS' END

Pilon felt at ease in the Galilee. In Israel, he could express his concern for others in a practical way. This opportunity was envied by many other Dutch Protestants, including RCN's residing pastor in Tiberias, Roelof Bakker (1902–1977). Bakker was an official missionary, his paid job being to convert the Jews. During the war he had been interned in the Amersfoort concentration camp. Like Pilon, Bakker was deeply concerned by the fact that the Holocaust had been perpetrated in Christian Europe. Though Bakker was a confirmed Protestant, his doubts relating to missionary work were growing. The supposition seemed to be that the Jews needed the Church for a proper understanding of God. The Jewish community vehemently objected: six million had died, and they could not afford to lose a single soul to the missions. Bakker wondered whether they might be right. He admired the young Jewish State. If God's hand might be discerned in the history of ancient Israel, might that not also be the case now? He would not relinquish his faith or his missionary job, but the main change was a wish to support the State of Israel in a practical way. Bakker was also well aware of the difficulties of a significant group of Jews who had been converted to Christianity. They covered a wide range of Christian denominations, but still considered themselves Jewish. When living in the State of Israel, many of these converted Christians often even continued to observe Jewish Law. The most common designation for this group in the 1950s was 'Jewish Christians'. Might their inclusion in a support program for Israel prove to be a way to make them acceptable to the Jewish people?

The theological reasons that led to Bakker's admiration for Israel also made him very anti-Arabic. In his eyes, Arabic leaders such as Nasser aimed, just like Hitler, for the destruction of a people whose achievements in Israel revealed God's presence. It was an assessment shared by Pilon. Right in front of the Scottish hospital stood the ruins of the former Arab quarter of Tiberias, destroyed in 1948. Of 5000 Arabs, an estimated 4000 had fled or had been forced to leave. The State of Israel had nationalized their land and the remains of their homes and possessions in 1950.<sup>9</sup> Pilon and Bakker had no objections. In their minds, Arab refugees had left for Jordan and Syria, and Jewish refugees from these countries had arrived in

<sup>9</sup> Eisenberg, Lotte, *Meine Gäste. Tiberias und ich* (Jerusalem, 1979) [Jewish viewpoint] and Srouji, Elias S., *Cyclamens from Galilee. Memoirs of a physician from Nazareth* (New York, 2003) [Aab viewpoint].

Tiberias. In a way, there had been an equal deal, just as between Greece and Turkey in 1921. But apart from this, the Dutch were more interested in the Jews than in the Arabs. The life experiences of men like Pilon and Bakker were intertwined with the history of Judaism, which fascinated them both. Bakker looked for ways to reconnect Jewish Christians to that history. After all, they considered themselves Jews and many of them still tried to follow Jewish Law. Pilon, raised in Indonesia, had been shocked by Europe, a ‘failed continent’. Christianity was in need of regeneration, and Israel might provide an example of how to achieve it. The Arabs were, at best, people in the background; at worst an obstacle to their Christian views of the destiny of the Jews.

### Claude Muller-Duvernoy

His French colleague in the Jewish mission field offered a way out of Bakker’s predicament. Claude Muller-Duvernoy (Nancy, 1929) worked for the Schweizerische Evangelische Judenmission. Like Bakker, he soon found his way to Israel. On his arrival in 1954, his convictions changed drastically and he became a fervent opponent of missionary work. The Israelis needed no missionaries: here was a spearhead of Western civilization, together with the mother religion of Christianity, in the midst of a hostile Arab world:

Mitten unter den Ländern, die ein feudales, absolutistisches, diktatorisches Regime haben, existiert nun ein Volk mit demokratischer, sozialistischer Regierungsform. Mitten unter den Ländern, in denen die Frau eine Sklavin ist, ist nun ein Staat, dessen Außenministerium durch eine Frau [Golda Meir] geleitet wird.

Muller-Duvernoy believed in eschatology. On the return of Christ, the Jews would accept Him as their messiah. But that was the future. The urgent task in the present was Christian aid for the State of Israel. Practical cooperation would prepare the field for dialogue, and dialogue was necessary because this would be more helpful than mission work to achieve the acceptance of Jewish Christians in Israel. So Muller-Duvernoy proposed to withdraw all Western Christian missionaries from Israel unless they were actively engaged in health care, education or technical development:

Dabei wissen sie alle recht wenig vom Judentum und bemühen sich auch nicht mehr darüber zu erfahren. (...) Und was tun diese Menschen eigentlich? Sie leben dahin, lösen regelmäßig ihren Scheck ein, verteilen nach links und rechts Bibeln und kindliche Traktate, vollziehen leichtfertige Taufen, die sie nicht selten mit einem Visum nach Kanada, Australien usw. belohnen.<sup>10</sup>

Christian Gentiles would do well to stop talking, considering what they had inflicted in the days of Hitlerism. Land labor by the sweat of their brows would serve the spoilt Americans and Europeans well. It was Muller-Duvernoy, who eventually proposed the establishment of a *kibbutz* of Christian *halutzim* (pioneers).

#### ROTTERDAM COMMITTEE

Bakker had returned to Holland in 1955, where he was still supposed to distribute the missionary paper *Licht en Leven* (Light and Life) among Auschwitz survivors. Having met Muller-Duvernoy in Tiberias, Bakker had been convinced that the Christian attitude toward the Jews should not focus upon such missionary activity. He eagerly took up his proposal to establish a Christian *kibbutz*. Bakker's place of residence was the port of Rotterdam—destroyed during the war, and now a self-confident center of large-scale economic reconstruction. The local captains of industry, especially the Protestants among them, shared an admiration for the energy and stamina of the Jewish State.<sup>11</sup> They were willing to finance a Christian *kibbutz* as a contribution to the economic development of Israel and as a place where the Christian Jews—in the perception of Muller-Duvernoy the only people entitled to proclaim the Gospel in Israel—could take over the missionary aims of the outdated Jewish mission.

Bakker appreciated Pilon as a practical man who knew how to organize a hospital in the jungle of Sulawesi. He asked him whether he would be willing to lend his hand to the *kibbutz* plan. Pilon said yes, despite being fully occupied with his job as a practicing gynecologist in the Tiberias maternity hospital.

<sup>10</sup> Muller-Duvernoy, Claude, 'Ein Jahr in Israel', *Der Freund Israels* 1957, 1–2.

<sup>11</sup> Bakker, Roelof, 'Oecumene en Israël [Oecumenism and Israel]', *Centraal Weekblad* 20 July 1957.

## PLANNING A CHRISTIAN SETTLEMENT

During the spring of 1958, Pilon proposed a settlement of Christians, but not under the control of any church. A Protestant conviction was necessary but also sufficient. The preference was for a *moshav ovdim* (with individual plots) or *moshav shituvi* (a home per family, and agricultural land in common use). The Socialist ideals of a classic *kibbutz* would not fit Christian family life.

Remarkably, the project was launched without Muller-Duvernoy's involvement. Pilon contacted a trusted colleague, Hans Bernath, in Nazareth.<sup>12</sup> The choice was motivated by practical considerations. Bernath was a surgeon in the Arab hospital and a man for all seasons. The Swiss doctor worked long hours in the operating theater, lent a hand to repairs and building programs and was good at improvisation. He belonged to a Free Church tradition with some Anabaptist roots. Arab or Jew made no difference to him. Unlike Bakker or Pilon, he was not interested in the State of Israel. Human states were facts of life, but they had nothing to do with the Kingdom of God. His motivation for the project came forth from his belief that it was up to the Christians to show the mettle of their faith by humble deeds on behalf of others. It was through Bernath that land for the settlement could be actually acquired.

## ABDULLAH SALMAN SALEH KHAYR

In 1959, Bernath had an interesting conversation with one of his patients, the Druze sheikh Abdullah Salman Saleh Khayr from Abu Sinan.<sup>13</sup> During the British mandate of Palestine, Khayr had acted as a district officer in Galilee, having taken a law degree at the American University in Beirut. Now he was out of office and had to take orders from an Israeli military government.

Khayr told Bernath that he had little to expect in Israel and intended to leave for Lebanon. He was willing to sell his land in the Plain of Asher to the northeast of the city of Akko, but only to a Christian or Muslim party, not to the Israelis whom he considered intruders. He put up for sale a major share of the 'village lands' of Abu Sinan. There is some irony in

<sup>12</sup> Farah, Shafiq, *What Shall I Do with My Life? The Exciting Story of a Swiss Couple in Nazareth*, (North York, 1995), 124-9.

<sup>13</sup> Firro, Kais M., *The Druzes in the Jewish State: A Brief History*, (Leiden, 1999), 23,111.

the fact that the plot for Nes Ammim could be bought and turned into a *moshav* only because it concerned a Christian project.

### ENTER THE AMERICANS

During the summer of 1959, the project seemed to be well on course. Pilon was the planner in the Galilee, Bakker the fund-raiser in Rotterdam, while Bernath persuaded his brother Jakob to assemble a committee in Switzerland. He managed to arouse quite some enthusiasm there and found Swiss supporters of the plan mostly among the members of the *Freie Evangelische Gemeinden* (evangelical free churches) and of the *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde*, or *Église Morave en Suisse*. At the same time, in Detroit, an American group of supporters rallied around Chawa Kranhouse, a Christian Jew. Kranhouse hoped that the *moshav* would stimulate the growth of an organized ‘Hebrew Church’ in Israel, which was also the heart’s desire of Muller-Duvernoy. The Jewish Christians were seen to be ‘*God’s chosen remnant in Israel*’,<sup>14</sup> the true Judaists, which the ‘normal’ Jews to them were not. Apart from Messianic splinter groups, no pro-Zionist Hebrew Church actually existed. The main point for Kranhouse and Muller-Duvernoy was their expectation that such a Church would provide a vehicle for the acceptance of its members in Israeli society. Kranhouse initiated the working platform Israel Christian Settlement Inc., presided over by Dr. Roy Aldrich of the Detroit Bible Institute. Aims of the settlement, as the Americans saw them, were the following:

- that there would be a visible representation to Jew and Gentile of God’s faithful remnant in Israel;
- that unbelieving Jews might be given a better opportunity of knowing their Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, by hearing the message of everlasting life from the lips of self-supporting consecrated Jews;
- a self-supporting Hebrew Christian community, able to remain in their native land and to bear witness of Him Who was rejected, the Holy One of Israel.<sup>15</sup>

In America, this was nothing unusual. Any religious community in the USA was supposed to propagate its values, to try to compete with and

<sup>14</sup> Nes Ammim USA, *To God’s chosen remnant in Israel* (Newark, 1959).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 2–4.

attract others. In Israel things were different. Israelis were willing to accept the private convictions of Christian Jews but found their mission efforts intolerable.

This also differed from Pilon's views, who was influenced by a radical interpretation of the work of Karl Barth as it was expressed in the paper *Israel and the Church*, published by the Synod of the DRC in the Netherlands. It presented the dialogue between Church and Israel as a unique understanding between the two prime receivers of God's revelation in the Bible. This dialogue was played out at a higher level than any that could be attained by other world religions. Judaism and Christianity were parallel lines toward the common future of the Messiah.<sup>16</sup> It was clear that missionary activity was incompatible with this concept, even though the idea was at odds with the motives of the Swiss and Americans. After reading *Israel and the Church*, Pilon realized that the ideal of dialogue expounded there was also incompatible with the claim of the Jewish Christians like Kranhouse, to be 'God's chosen remnant'. To engage the Jews in the dialogue Barth advocated, Pilon needed partners of a different kind. He found them in the land of the origins of the Holocaust: Germany.

### ENTER THE GERMANS

A chance meeting with Pastor Erich David from Velbert (Rheinland) offered an opportunity for Pilon to contact German fellow-Protestants. *Oberkirchenrat* Nikolaus Becker soon followed, together with Horst Dahlhaus, *Pfarrer* Lothar Ahne of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, and others. Male members of this group had been in the Hitler Youth or the German army during the period of National Socialism. They were keenly aware of the fact that they had been part of a criminal regime. The Germans of the Velbert group needed Jewish forgiveness. They were willing to assist in the *kibbutz* plan, but only if the Israeli government was willing to accept this and only if the Israeli population would not feel offended by their presence. Clearly, this would take time.

The robust American self-confidence was very different from the attitude of the Velbert group. Germany was a guilty nation, a *Täternation*. Paradoxically, this contributed to a firm position on the German side. The Velbert group laid down a principle from which they would never waver:

<sup>16</sup>DRC (Dutch Reformed Church), *Israël en de Kerk [Israel and the Church]*, (The Hague, 1959), 18–20.

a Christian *kibbutz* in Israel would have to comply with the wishes of the Jewish host society. Unlike the Dutch, the Swiss, and the Americans, the Germans foresaw that a Christian *kibbutz* in the Galilee would meet with firm opposition. The differences did not end here. The Velbert group was convinced that a Hebrew Church would be a grave mistake. They believed that after the terrible losses of the Holocaust, the Jewish people could not afford to lose any more of its members. Apart from that, Christian Jews stood in great danger of losing their way in a no-man's-land between Christianity and Judaism.

### FOUNDING MEETING, THE NETHERLANDS, SEPTEMBER 1960

The RCN missionary center hosted the project's first international meeting, in which the Dutch, the Swiss, the Americans and the Germans all participated. The meeting revealed the first cracks in the collaboration between these groups who came to the project with such diverging motivations. The Americans preferred the name Immanuel (God with us) from Isaiah 7:14, the name of the Messianic King, identified in Christian tradition as Jesus Christ (Matt 1:23). However, the chosen name became Nes Ammim ('banner of the peoples', Isaiah 11:10) after it had been proposed by the Dutch. They understood the quotation as a reference to a common Biblical heritage of Jews and Christians. The American Mennonite Roy Kreider would later take 'Nes Ammim' to refer to Jesus Christ and a missionary ambition anyway, arguing in 2004, 'The Dutch Mennonite pastor, Frits Kuiper, took it from Isaiah 11:10, signifying the Coming One as an ensign to the nations, showing the way to return to the Lord'.<sup>17</sup>

Although they managed to agree on the name, the Dutch and Germans had different ideas. They aimed for Jewish-Christian dialogue, not Jewish mission in a new guise. Moreover, Bakker and Pilon concluded that the community:

- intended to work together with the Israelis and to contribute to mutual understanding;
- would aid Israel through investments and 'know-how';

<sup>17</sup> Kreider, Roy H., *Land of Revelation: A Reconciling Presence in Israel*, (Scottsdale, 2004), 137.

- would do so in awareness of Christian moral guilt following the Holocaust.<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish Christians were hardly mentioned. This was deeply disappointing for the group around Kranhouse, which subsequently dropped out of the program.

### AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

For the Americans, there was nothing unusual in the idea of settling a God-given land. Propaganda for the Christian faith was taken as self-evident, and consistent with both the right of free speech and support for the rebuilding of the State of Israel. The Americans recognized Israeli sensibilities concerning Jewish Christians, but would still like to include them as soon as possible:

The gap of misunderstanding and suspicion continues today in the land of Israel, and can be bridged by the Jewish Christian as he participates in the rebuilding of his ancient home-land. (...) A Christian settlement will be a visible Christian response to today's needs in Israel, and thus is its very existence a testimony to the claims and power of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Another point of interest for the Americans was eschatology:

The rebirth of the State of Israel is rich in drama and closely related to the fulfilment of the Prophetic Word. Since May 14, 1948, Israel has tripled in population to a present 2,032,500, welcoming home her children from the four corners of the earth as foretold: *The Lord thy God will bring thee again into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers* (Deut 30:5). One cannot explain this integral relationship between the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and the Book of Israel, apart from through the supernatural.

On barren hillsides and eroded lands Israel has planted thirty million trees, reclaimed one million acres from swamp and sand, and brought in irrigation.

<sup>18</sup> Report by R. Bakker and J. J. Pilon, Baarn, 22 December 1960, in FAP.

<sup>19</sup> *A Christian Settlement in Israel*, Detroit 1960, in Het Utrechts Archief (Utrecht Archives, HUA), Deputies Church and Israel RCN inv.nr. 371.

Apace with this rescue of a land neglected and exploited has been the revival of an ancient culture springing from the Hebrew Scriptures.

These ideas were not new, and neither was the idea of an American evangelical community in Palestine. Clorinda Minor from Philadelphia had founded a village for farmers in the Holy Land in 1851, alongside the American Agriculture Mission. Yet another group, the ‘Overcomers’ from Chicago, had founded the American Colony to the north of the Old City of Jerusalem. The idea was to hasten the return of the Jews to their homeland Canaan, an event, which in its turn would usher in the return of Jesus. Clorinda Minor ‘had been obsessed by the idea that all Christians had to participate in preparations for the return of the Jews’.<sup>20</sup> For Nes Ammim USA, these ideas remained fully relevant:

Amongst those God has regathered to Israel are Jews who believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour; and these (...) are faced with the 20th century challenge of proving the reality of their faith.<sup>21</sup>

### A DUTCH RESPONSE

Pilon felt otherwise. He had seen how the Jews of Amsterdam had been deported, and he had seen the colonial war in Indonesia. In his opinion, guilty nations were in no position to proclaim the Gospel to others, as if they held a superior truth. It was up to the Christians to repent. They should help, they should listen—and they should stop behaving as if the Israelis needed basic instruction in the Bible.

Pilon detested most Germans, after what he had seen them do during the Hitler years. But he had to admit that it was only in Germany that he could find Christians thinking in a non-missionary way when it came to Judaism:

In Germany the urge for *Wiedergutmachung* is felt, very much more than say in England or America. (...) We Christians have very little left to boast.

<sup>20</sup>Tveit, Odd Karsten, *Anna's House. The American Colony in Jerusalem*, trans. by Peter Scott-Hansen (Nicosia, 2011), 98.

<sup>21</sup>A *Christian Settlement in Israel*, Detroit 1960, in Het Utrechts Archief (Utrecht Archives, HUA), Deputees Church and Israel RCN inv.nr. 371.

There is no room for approaching Israel in an arrogant way, as we sometimes tend to do!<sup>22</sup>

The Americans had difficulty in understanding what he was trying to say. From Detroit, Chawa Kranhouse wrote to Pilon:

The government of Israel will have more respect for us if we make a distinctive Christian contribution and simply state that we expect to live as Christians working toward building up the country. Let us not hide what we are ... [W]e have a banner and it must be unfurled.<sup>23</sup>

### MEETING ISRAELI AUTHORITIES, SEPTEMBER 1960

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the founding of Nes Ammim is not the Christian wish to found a *moshav*, but the favorable Israeli response to the plan. It well illustrates how the Christian usage of the Jew as legitimization may involve some awkwardness, but could also be perceived to serve Jewish interests. This happened after most of the Americans left the project, and with them its missionary motives. This certainly helped to establish good relations with the Israeli authorities. Pilon approached the Israeli government advisor on Protestant affairs Prof. Zwi Werblowsky of the Hebrew University together with Heinz Kremers. Kremers was a New Testament scholar, who was a driving force behind the German Nes Ammim committee, and who had already cooperated with Werblowsky in the academic field.<sup>24</sup> His look at Jewish–Christian relations was well suited to convince the Israelis. As we saw, rather than hoping for converts to Christianity, the Germans believed that Christianity needed the Jews for forgiveness and for an understanding of the true message of the Torah.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the American participants in Nes Ammim, Kremers even harbored empathy toward Jewish contempt of missionary activity:

Under the heavy cloud of darkness and death that descended upon Europe, Holocaust survivors still see silhouetted in the gloaming against the horizon,

<sup>22</sup> J. J. Pilon to Ch. Kranhouse, Heemstede, 19 July 1960, in FAP.

<sup>23</sup> Ch. Kranhouse to J. J. Pilon, Detroit, 14 July 1960, in FAP.

<sup>24</sup> Hasselhoff, Görge K. and others (eds.), *Heinz Kremers – Vom Judentum lernen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2015), 22.

<sup>25</sup> Kremers, H. *Liebe und Gerechtigkeit: Gesammelte Beiträge* ed. by Adam Weyer and Thomas Kremers (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1990).

countless spires of Christian churches, and alongside, blackening German skies, the tall smoking chimneys of the ovens where the bodies of gas chamber victims were incinerated. Christians went peacefully to sleep with their Bibles by their bedside, while Jewish neighbors were hounded from their beds and hiding places to be herded like doomed cattle onto death trains destined for concentration camps, with no one having the courage to protest. Is it any wonder that the Jewish soul is allergic to Christians and the Christian message?<sup>26</sup>

Werblowsky agreed to help Pilon and Kremers. At the same time, he wondered whether these friendly and ‘progressive’ Christians could be called Christians at all. Whatever virtues Jesus Christ might have possessed, an aptitude for interreligious dialogue was hardly among them. How could Pilon and Kremers deny that and still remain church members? ‘I am unable to recognize what kind of Christian you are. It is certainly not the New Testament version of the Christian faith’.<sup>27</sup> However, as people of good will, he decided, they might be able to contribute to the rebuilding of the Jewish State by means of their Christian *moshav*. But he added a warning in German:

Wir Juden sind durch die Verfolgungen, Jahrhunderte hindurch, für das Christentum überempfindlich geworden. Erst sollen Steine beseitigt werden, bevor überhaupt ein Gespräch möglich ist—nicht durch das Wort, sondern die Tat.<sup>28</sup>

Werblowsky wrote the ‘motivation’ for Nes Ammim, to be presented to the Israeli government. It shows how in his view Zionism enabled a favorable attitude toward a project that might as well have been very controversial. Not only was any help in building the Jewish State welcome, the unprecedented Jewish independence Israel provided, had in his eyes strengthened the Jews enough to engage with Christians in spite of the suffering Christianity had caused in history. As he put it:

The unhappy history of the relationship between Christians and Jews during the centuries of Israel’s exile, as well as the heavy responsibility which

<sup>26</sup> Kreider, Roy H., *Land of Revelation: A Reconciling Presence in Israel* (Scottsdale PA, 2004), 91.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, 92.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Bericht über die Verhandlungen in Israel der internationalen Delegation, zur Vorbereitung einer christlichen Siedlung vom 24 November bis 4 Dezember 1960’, in FAP.

Christianity bears—directly and indirectly—for the immense Jewish suffering, have created a gulf between Jews and Christians which only a most determined moral and spiritual effort can heal.

The ways and methods usually adopted in the past by Christians to bring about a so-called ‘rapprochement’ (i.e. the missionary efforts to convert the Jews) have only deepened the gulf and increased suspicion, particularly as the missionary preaching contrasted so lamentably with the reality presented by the Christian World.

As a result of all this, and taking into account that the Jewish people firmly established in its own land no longer needs to fight shy in suspicious self-defence of the Christian fellow-countries, a number of Christians have come to the conclusion that a radically new departure is necessary. The Christian’s duty is not only to help the young State, by way of amends for the past, with sympathy and financial aid from afar, but also to work towards mutual goodwill and understanding on the concrete level of human relationships.

Inspired by the genuine desire to turn over a fresh leaf in Jewish-Christian relations, the aim of the sponsors is a Christian community, serving Israel by investment, economic initiative and technical know-how.<sup>29</sup>

This text was accepted by the Nes Ammim committees of Holland, Switzerland and Germany. The Americans objected and dropped out, with the exception of the Mennonites. Jakob Bernath and Pilon presented the memorandum to Levi Eshkol on 11 December 1960. Pilon described his surprise at the positive reception during the meeting:

Eshkol ist Finanzminister aber hält auch das Portfolio für Siedlungen und ist in der Regierung der Person der in solchen Sachen, auch in Investierungen, entscheidet. Und hier, ganz unerwartet, war der Empfang des Projektes ganz positiv. Speziell Jakob hat bei der Sitzung eingehend die ideologischen und danach die technischen Grundlagen erklärt. Eshkol stellte viele Fragen, u.a. ob es noch Möglichkeit gebe dort oben mehr Land zu kaufen, da 1000 Dunam ihm wenig zu schien. Sonst könnte die Regierung vielleicht uns Boden verkaufen, sagte er. Dann ob wir schon die richtigen Leute finden könnten. Dann noch Fragen über die Landwirtschaft und Industrie. Er sagte schlieszlich, dasz er in einer Sondersitzung mit Ben Gurion und Golda Meir das plan besprochen hatte und die Regierung sehr interessiert sei und bereit ist mitzuhelfen wo wir es brauchen. (...) Dem Jakob sagte Eshkol noch dasz eine Schweizeruhrfabrik in der Moshav eine gute Sache wäre!<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum concerning the presentation of an investment project in Israel, November 1960, in FAP.

<sup>30</sup> J. J. Pilon to H. Bernath and others, Heemstede, 18 July 1961, in FAP.

In a practical sense, the *moshav* Nes Ammim would contribute to the State of Israel by means of investments and technological innovation. In moral terms, the aim was to show the good will of Christians. To foster respect for Judaism, Christians would receive opportunities to live and work in Israel. There still remained a hint of superiority in all this: Israel would benefit from what Christians in Europe and the USA had to offer. After this, nothing stood in the way of the founding of the *moshav*. Work started without celebration. A derelict Arab bus was brought over from Nazareth, and used as accommodation by the first Swiss pioneers. Soon, they were joined by the Dutch and Americans, the Germans being not yet allowed visa for this purpose. Erich Lehmann, an Israeli who had helped to found the coastal settlement Nahariya in the 1930s, came over to visit. He liked what he saw:

Irgendwie hat es für uns etwas Beruhigendes, dass die Siedlung mit so bescheidenen Mitteln gegründet worden ist. Nichts von einer feierlichen Grundsteinlegung. Keine Reden und Spruchbänder. Auch Nahariya ist in diesem Sinne niemals gegründet worden, und es hat ihm gar nichts geschadet. (...) Auf dem Rückweg durch den Kibbuz Lohamei haGettaot beobachteten wir die Vorbereitungen zum Gedenktag des Warschauer Ghetto-Aufstands, die dort getroffen wurden. Ein weitgespannter Bogen jüdischen Schicksals und ein echter Wunsch nach Bewältigung einer zweitausend Jahre alten Vergangenheit verbindet die beiden Siedlungspunkte. Hier ein Museum des Grauens und des Schreckens, das für immer das Ungeheuerliche festhalten soll und muss. Wenige Kilometer entfernt: ein Neubeginn, eine Hoffnung—eine kleine Insel der tatsächlichen Hilfsbereitheit in einem Meer von Indifferenz.<sup>31</sup>

Those involved in the establishment of Nes Ammim show us different Christian attitudes toward Judaism and different degrees to which Jews served as a legitimization for their views. The Americans envisaged the *moshav* as bringing technological expertise to Israel and the Gospel to the Jews. They saw no contradiction: the USA recognized freedom of speech and intellectual competition as civil virtues under the Constitution. The Frenchman Muller-Duvernoy objected to missionary work but stressed the viability of a future ‘Hebrew Church’ in Israel. The Swiss surgeon Hans Bernath believed in the moral example of Christian aid for the needy, not in the building of a Jewish state.

<sup>31</sup> Lehmann, Erich M., ‘Erster Besuch in Nes-Amim’, *Jedioth Chadashoth* 26 (Summer 1963).

Germans like Kremers and Dutchmen like Pilon tried to go beyond these positions. The establishment of a Christian settlement in the Jewish State helped them to legitimize their Christianity in three senses. First of all, for them, Judaism was the source from which Christianity had sprung, and their presence in Israel brought them closer to the roots of Christianity. Secondly, they saw in the success of the establishment of Israel the hand of God, and through the *moshav* they could partake in this modern miracle. Thirdly, after the Holocaust in their own countries, they firmly believed Christianity was in need of Jewish forgiveness. Nes Ammim was a way to ask for it and to earn it. In the end they won the day, at the expense of the Swiss and the Americans, whose countries had not directly been involved in the Holocaust.

The principal difference between the original conception of the *moshav* and its implementation after the exit of Muller-Duvernoy, Bakker, the Swiss and the Americans (who left the scheme for a second time in 1967) was the exclusion of Jewish Christians from the board and from the resident population of the village Nes Ammim. Their presence had been essential for the participation of Muller-Duvernoy, Bakker and Kranhouse. Bernath encountered difficulty in finding suitable workers among the Jewish Christians, but he saw no reason to exclude his Jewish co-religionists on principle. Kremers and Pilon did just that: Nes Ammim could not ask for forgiveness and ‘steal’ Jewish souls at the same time.

## How the Turn to the Jews After the Shoah Helped Open Catholics to Religious Pluralism

*John Connolly*

Depicting a Christian relation to the Jews that has lasted over many centuries as “the Jew as legitimation” is an understatement. Christianity grew out of Judaism and saw itself as the fulfillment of promises and predictions contained in the Hebrew Bible, which Christianity claimed as its own, as an Old Testament preceding a New Testament. The former is not simply a book of stories, but a set of signs pointing to Christ. Though radical changes have taken place in Christian ideas about Jews in the past half-century, culminating in the statements of the Second Vatican Council (about which more below), this stance of appropriation was not forsaken. Perhaps it is in Christianity’s DNA. It is everywhere. Think of Christmas carols of the “King of Israel,” think of Handel’s Messiah and the passages from Isaiah. Browsing Amazon recently, I found a book entitled *Jesus on Every Page*, in which professor and pastor David Murray “reveals Christ’s presence throughout the Old Testament—in the Creation, the Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Proverbs.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus on Every Page: Ten Simple Ways to Seek and Find Christ in the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN, 2013).

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In theory, appropriation can be benign. Several branches can grow out of the same trunk. But, as we know, for most of the history of Christianity, the relationship was hostile. Legitimate Judaism was projected as lying in the past; Judaism had fulfilled its purpose by pointing the Way to the Church. Judaism of the present was illegitimate, unfaithful. More than that, it was exploited to legitimate Christianity's claims to truth. A man-made fact, namely the marginalization of Jews by Christians over many centuries, was taken as evidence that God had abandoned Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

In the Catholic Church (and in much of Protestantism), this vision of Jews has changed radically in the last 60 years. The Vatican II document *Nostra aetate* ("In Our Time") of 1965 says that Jews of the present are "most dear to God" and that the promises made by God to the Jews in the Pentateuch remain in force. In opposition to Protestant theology, but earlier Catholic theology as well, this document does not project or require that Jews become Christian at any point in the near or distant future.<sup>3</sup>

But this document also opened a new chapter in the story of Jew as legitimization. One interesting, overlooked, and somewhat puzzling aspect of this document, the first authoritative Catholic theological statement about the Jews, is that it speaks not just about the Jews but also about Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and indirectly of animists. Why, one might wonder? After being silent for so long, was it not enough for the church to speak simply about the Jews? Was that not capacious enough a subject, especially given the Vatican's failure to speak explicitly in defense of the Jews during the dark years of the Third Reich?<sup>4</sup>

To answer this question, I want to focus on an unusual group of Catholics who attempted to speak out against discrimination against Jews at a time when the center of the official church and the church's most powerful bishops—at least in Europe—were silent, demonstrating how they inaugurated a new Catholic vision of the Jews. My goal will then be to explore why and how this vision of the Jews not only came to blossom in the 1960s but also

<sup>2</sup> Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, rev. ed. (New York, 1985); David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> On the history of this development, see my *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Thinking on the Jews, 1933–1965* (Cambridge, MA, 2012); Neville Lamdan and Alberto Melloni, eds., *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Jewish–Catholic Relations* (Berlin, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* (Bloomington, IN, 2000).

brought with it, and legitimated, a new vision of other religions, and indeed of humanity. In a direct but unobserved way, the struggle to end anti-Judaism opened the Catholic mind to the virtues of tolerance more generally.

The story begins in the 1930s with a broad-ranging dispute among Central European Christians over whether Jews could be baptized and thereby, like anyone else, become full-fledged Christians. On one side stood influential German Protestant and Catholic theologians who argued that the Jewish refusal to recognize Christ as Messiah had caused permanent damage to the underlying substance connecting Jews, their genetic matter.<sup>5</sup> Jews supposedly passed on the negative inclinations and aptitudes associated with faithlessness from one generation to the next. One influential German Jesuit argued that this perversion could not be undone in one generation. Jews who converted would still have to work on themselves for generations to become proper Christians.

Theologians influenced by such views mixed academic theology with biological racism. If God ruled the world, they reasoned, then he did so through nature; and if he did so through nature, the dictates of his will would be visible through race, which in their view constituted a basic building block of nature. (This idea was traced to the view of St. Thomas Aquinas, whereby “grace presupposes nature.”)

Yet such theologians met opposition from handfuls of Christian, mostly Catholic, emigrants from Nazi Germany, operating out of Engelbert Dollfuss's and Kurt von Schuschnigg's Austria, but also Switzerland and France, from the mid to late 1930s. Central was a priest originally born in Moravia named Johannes Oesterreicher; like most of his comrades he was a convert to Catholicism—in his case, from Judaism.

Oesterreicher gives the story continuity because in the 1960s, by then a priest in the United States, he was called to the Second Vatican Council as a theological advisor and helped draft the statement *Nostra aetate*. Thirty years earlier, he was, however, still working in a parish in central Vienna and was horrified to see racism making inroads among other Catholics. He feared that racism made Catholicism repugnant and would severely complicate his life's mission of bringing Jews into the church so that they could find “fulfillment” as he had. Before his conversion, he had been a secular Jew, and he believed that other secular Jews lived without hope of personal and communal redemption. But racism also made Oesterreicher himself seem a second-class citizen in the church, and so the battle also had a personal edge.

<sup>5</sup> From *Enemy to Brother*, 117ff. and passim.

One line of argumentation for Oesterreicher and his friends was purely scientific. They cast doubt on the ability of science to verify the transmission of shared characteristics—like intelligence, let alone propensity to sinful behavior—in coherent and identifiable human groups. Race was, they maintained, a fiction.<sup>6</sup> But the other line was scriptural. If one took the racists' claim seriously that peoples or nations had predisposition to God's grace, then, according to Christian scripture, it was the Jewish people whose predisposition was greatest. That was the view expressed in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, Chap. 11, in which he compared Jews to natural branches that grew out of a "cultivated olive tree" and Gentiles to "wild branches" grafted in to faith "against all nature."

For both sides of this debate, Jews performed a kind of legitimization. For racists, they provided a religious argument for the full inclusion of Catholics into the German *Volk*, or people, after being identified for decades, especially during Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, as its enemies.<sup>7</sup> Jews were those who provided a paradigm of negativity through which to seal the unity of the German Christian people. In contrast to the Jews, the Germans were supposedly a racial group that was pleasing to God. The Jews thus helped end alienation of German Catholics with the German people, and in a sense reconcile them with history, the history of their day, the high point of racism.

For Catholic antiracists of the 1930s, many of whom were of Jewish background, Jews also had a special role to play. They were to save humanity from evil. They would accomplish this mission by doing what, in their view, Jews should have done 2000 years earlier: become followers of Christ. This group, to which philosophers Jacques Maritain and Dietrich von Hildebrand also belonged, but whose most active and insistent figure was Johannes Oesterreicher, had been drawn to apocalyptic thought by the nihilism of Nazism and believed that humanity was approaching some kind of final confrontation of good versus evil. In this imminent denouement, following a particular interpretation of St. Paul (also from his letter to the Romans), they believed Jews would turn to Christ and usher in his second coming, and with that, the redemption of humankind.

They did not passively wait but wrote and agitated against racism and against discrimination against Jews, and tried to get their bishops to speak out as well. In 1939, they hatched several plans to get the Vatican to

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 112–13.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 65ff.

speak out and condemn Hitler. In one scheme, the Pope was supposed to release Catholic German soldiers from their oath to Hitler. In another, the Vatican was scheduled to coordinate an international aid drive for persecuted German Jews.<sup>8</sup> None of these plans was successful. In 1939 and 1940, Oesterreicher broadcast sermons into German-controlled Central Europe from a station in Paris, telling listeners of German war crimes and that Hitler was the “anti-Christ.” In May, Oesterreicher caught one of the last trains out of free Paris southward to Marseilles, then made his way through the Pyrenees to Lisbon, and then got a visa to the United States.

The war came, the world did not end, but six millions Jews lost their lives. This fact was well known in Central Europe in the summer of 1945. Did it change the basic idea of Christian theology that Jews should become Christians? It did not, even among those like Oesterreicher who called themselves foes of antisemitism. Any good university library contains evidence of this mindset. In August 1945, the Swiss Protestant pastor Robert Brunner launched a new journal, *Judaica*, supported by the Swiss Christian missions to foster study of Judaism. Brunner published a piece entitled “Mission to the Jews after the Second World War?” that asked whether evangelization of Jews should continue after the deaths of “six million defenseless human beings.” His answer was yes, it should. In fact, Christians should feel shame that they had not done more to make Jews Christian before the war. That might have saved lives. And to those who thought that mission endangered the “existence” of Jews, he said: Christians cannot be Christian if they ignore Christ’s “command” to do missionary work. Those who forsook mission were denying that Christ was God.<sup>9</sup>

But at the same time, something was changing. Jews were legitimating new kinds of tolerance by drawing together those who, in various religious traditions, felt an abhorrence of antisemitism, in particular racial antisemitism. As we have seen, even before the war a confrontation with antisemitism was helping some Christians discern the falseness and evils of racism, and the underlying unity of the human race. This remains a poorly researched story. But we see it in the development of Jewish-Christian collaboration in the fight against racism. At one point in the 1930s, the Catholics I mentioned above joined with Jewish intellectuals and scientists—secular as well as religious—to organize an international

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 157–60.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Brunner, “Judenmission nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg?,” *Judaica* 1, no. 4 (1945): 298, 301.

conference against racism.<sup>10</sup> Guided in part by the ideas of Franz Boas, they were a scientific and moral cutting-edge favoring solidarity. In the United States, Christians and Jews had banded together in the late 1920s to fight bigotry; Jews had become active after witnessing anti-Catholic bigotry. Ten years later, a number of prominent American Catholics joined in a common front with Jews and Protestants in denouncing atrocities against Jews in Germany.<sup>11</sup>

Such initiatives may seem natural from today's point of view, but in their time they were extraordinary. Catholics participated in interreligious dialogue, despite warnings from the Vatican about indifferentism. In some cases, church authorities suppressed ecumenical work, including cooperation with Jews, into the 1950s.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, excessive attention to the Vatican, a frequent trend in writings on the church, causes us to miss the subterranean movement among rank-and-file believers.

<sup>10</sup> Among the figures on the Jewish side were Hugo Iltis, Ignaz Zollschan, and Lucien Levy-Bruhl. See *From Enemy to Brother*, 60–61.

<sup>11</sup> Historian John Borelli writes: “In the context of concern for the Jews, an extraordinary moment of public ecumenical cooperation unfolded in late 1938 following the infamous pogrom against Jews, *Kristallnacht*, taking place across Germany and Austria on November 9–10, 1938. In response, Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit, who chaired the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, joined Rev. George Butterick, President of the Federal Council of Churches, and other Christian officials in denouncing German atrocities against Jews. Catholic hierarchs individually had already condemned Nazi violence against Jews and against church leaders. Archbishop Mooney, a former member of the Holy See’s diplomatic corps, would have been well aware of the enduring attitude at the Holy See toward public ecumenical gestures. Still, he issued a public statement with other Christian leaders, even the head of the Federal Council of Churches. Structures similar to the National Council of Christians and Jews followed in Britain, Canada, and Australia.” See “The Origins and Early Development of Interreligious Relations,” *US Catholic Historian* 28, no. 2 (2010): 86.

<sup>12</sup> After the closing of the International Council of Christians and Jews office in Geneva in 1949 and the withdrawal of the Americans from this organization, a World Brotherhood was formed in Paris as an international organization. It received the blessing of Rome. At the same time, Rome warned of going too far in cooperation with Protestants and Jews, holding up the danger of religious indifferentism. In November 1954, a prohibition was issued for further Christian–Jewish cooperation, which was not lifted until 1964 (by Paul VI). See Josef Foschepoth, “Vor 50 Jahren: Die Gründung der Gesellschaften für Christlich–Jüdische Zusammenarbeit,” in *Der Dialog zwischen Juden und Christen: Versuche des Gesprächs nach Auschwitz*, ed. Hans Erler and Ansgar Koschel (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 176. In March 1954, the Vatican ordered the withdrawal of Catholic members of the Council of Christians and Jews in the UK, who had been headed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Bernard W. Griffin, a joint president. Church authorities claimed they were in sympathy with the aims of the Council and its fight against antisemitism, but they charged the Council with “indifferentism.” See *American Jewish Yearbook* (1956), 313–14.

In the immediate postwar years, anguish about the Holocaust—even if that word was not used—had caused not only Christians and Jews to come together, but also Christians and Christians. The best-known event was the Seelisberg meeting in Switzerland in 1947, an emergency conference on antisemitism convened by Jews, Protestants, and Catholics with the task of attaining a “new vision.” “The simple refutation of superficial accusations made against Jews is in no way sufficient for combating antisemitism,” the organizers argued.<sup>13</sup> Opposition had to be more broadly based:

Recent history shows that an attack on Jewry is an attack on the fundamental principles of Judaism and Christianity on which our ordered human society depends. Accordingly it is advisable to deal with anti-Semitism as a special case requiring special treatment, though suggestions for dealing with anti-Semitism may be applicable to other types of group tensions.<sup>14</sup>

For Christians, this coming together promoted cooperation among themselves and an appreciation across sectarian boundaries of what Christianity was. To fight antisemitism, Christians had to attain a new sense of what was Christian. In other words, the fight against antisemitism gave an impulse for ecumenism, for Christians to become more aware of what they had in common, arguably with an urgency that no other matter had commanded, involving not simply practical matters, like the fight for social justice, but also theology, the hardwiring of religion. They had to ask, against many centuries of tradition, why anti-Judaism—theological contempt for Jews—was incompatible with Christianity. How had Christianity perhaps become unchristian?

These questions led to a series of statements by the Catholic Church, culminating in the Vatican II document *Nostra aetate*, in which this issue was worked out at a profound level, in opposition to much that had been said about the Jews since the earliest days of the church, thus constituting a revolution in thought.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “Zu analysieren dagegen, dass die bloße Tatsache der jüdischen Sonderexistenz unter den Völkern jene Motivationen auslöst, die ja nun sämtlich im modernen Antisemitismus auf die Spitze getrieben sind, kann gar nicht anders als komplexlösend wirken. Speziell die Christenheit aber ist es sich schuldig, jeden Schatten eines Vorwands zu beseitigen, den ihre religiöse Unterweisung antisemitischer Mordgier gewähren könnte. In der Konsequenz dieser Einsicht entstanden 1947 die sogenannten Seelisberger Thesen ...,” Karl Thieme, “Der religiöse Aspekt der Judenfeindschaft,” *Freiburger Rundbrief* 37/40 (October 1957): 7–14.

<sup>14</sup> William W. Simpson, “The Ten Points of Seelisberg: A Significant Anniversary,” *Sidic* (Service International de Documentation Juéo-Chrétienne) 10, no. 1 (1977): 21.

<sup>15</sup> *From Enemy to Brother*, chapter eight.

Much of this revolution occurred beyond view of the public. Let us return to John Oesterreicher, who like many other Catholics took refuge outside of Europe, in his case New York City, where he changed his name in 1940 from Johannes to John. In 1946, Oesterreicher reflected on the fate of his parents in a letter to the Austrian writer Felix Braun. “Yes I have had news,” he wrote. “My dear father died in Theresienstadt. It is some consolation to think that he, who although not Christian in belief was one at heart, to whom the Beatitude of the Peacemakers applied, died a relatively peaceful death. My poor mother, however, was taken to Poland; I need not tell you what that implies.”<sup>16</sup> The letter shows that anguished thought about his father opened an insight for Oesterreicher that had been orthodox but rarely taught Catholic teaching for centuries, namely that people outside the church could be saved.<sup>17</sup> More common was the view that there is no salvation outside the church (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*). Yet he, in a sense, baptizes his father after the fact. He did so not by saying that there is holiness beyond the church, but through intellectually expanding the boundaries of the church.

In accordance with this line of thought, in the course of the 1950s, Oesterreicher, once an avowed missionary, gradually began relinquishing missionary efforts toward the Jews for what he called ecumenism. As part of those efforts, he moved from his “mission church” in Manhattan and opened an Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in New Jersey in 1953. That same year, a case of child abduction shook much of the French and international audience. The affair involved the Austrian Jewish couple Dr. Fritz and Annie Finaly, who had taken refuge near Grenoble after 1938 and lived there until their arrest by the Gestapo and deportation to Auschwitz in February 1944. Months earlier, they had entrusted their boys, aged two and three, to a convent, which,

<sup>16</sup>To Felix Braun, 8 February 1946, in John M. Oesterreicher Collection, Seton Hall University Archives & Special Collections Center (SHU/SCC, JMO Collection, South Orange, NJ), RG 26.4.1, box 1.

<sup>17</sup>In the late 1940s, the Vatican had been forced to confirm this teaching (of Pius XI) because of the challenge of Father Leonard Feeney, Catholic preacher at Harvard, who was telling students that everyone outside the Catholic Church was destined for hell. The teaching went back to Augustine, but in the 1940s, Rome was determined to guard against “indifferentism.” According to Augustine, “God is not unjust, so as to deprive the just of the reward of justice, if the sacrament of the divinity and humanity of Christ was not announced to them.” From *Contra Julianum*, 4.3.25, PL 44.750, cited in Fr. William Most, “Is There Salvation Outside the Church,” at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/scriptur/outsid.txt>

lacking facilities to care for small children, had placed them in the care of the devout Catholic Antoinette Brun. After the war, members of the Finaly family tried without success to gain custody of the boys. In 1948, after Brun had them baptized, the family sued in French courts and finally gained an order for the boys' repatriation in January 1953. The French Catholic hierarchy, under pressure from the French state, finally agreed to help, and the boys left France for Israel. But theologians wondered: did this move involve subjecting their souls to everlasting torment?

In his own academic journal, Oesterreicher printed a report on the events in France by his friend, the American priest Edward Flannery. The answer to whether Catholics must despair at the salvation of the children was a clear no. God willed that all humans, Catholic or not, be saved and brought to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>18</sup> This was a view upon which "all the theologians who treated the Finaly problem ended in one way or another."<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, there was no need to lament the church's loss of temporal power with which to enforce ecclesiastical laws. "In these new circumstances," Flannery concluded, "and as her methods become more spiritual, the Church can act more as a 'leaven' among souls."<sup>20</sup>

Such words seem to anticipate Vatican II before anyone imagined it would be convened. During Vatican II, bishops from all over the world convened in Rome from 1962 to 1965, with the intention to bring the church "up to date." Breakthroughs were achieved to a more tolerant church and a church more open to the world; among other things, the church recognized freedom of conscience. As far as the Jews were concerned, as I mentioned, the Council stated that God continues to love them. The text of *Nostra aetate* (In Our Time), the 1965 Catholic declaration that condemned antisemitism, recognizes the continuing legitimacy of Judaism as a religion but also as practice carried on by particular people. Yet the declaration goes further to speak appreciatively of other religions.

In retrospect, we tend to think of this opening of the church to the world as somehow necessary, preordained. In fact, it was highly contingent. It would not have happened save for the new pope, John XXIII, whose term began in 1958. At the beginning, the Pope did not intend to address the church's relation to the Jews, let alone to other religions.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Edward H. Flannery, "The Finaly Case," *The Bridge: A Yearbook of Judeo-Christian Studies* 1 (1955): 312.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 313.

And there was no groundswell from within the church. When the Pope announced his intention to call a council in 1959, only a handful of the hundreds of proposals for agenda items (*vota*) mentioned Christian–Jewish relations. In over 800 pages of notes sent from Dutch, Belgian, French, English, German, and Polish bishops, not a single suggestion was made to consider Christian–Jewish relations at the Council. Many bishops wanted discussion of relations with other Christians, but none intimated that antisemitism within the church was a problem.<sup>21</sup>

Yet in June 1960, the French Jewish historian Jules Isaac, who had been a major force at the Seelisberg meeting in 1947 (and who had lost his wife, daughter, and son-in-law in the Holocaust), made an impassioned appeal in a private audience with John XXIII, and that, according to knowledgeable sources, made the difference. John decided that the issue would be dealt with by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, in other words, as an ecumenical matter. But it was kept secret at the beginning out of fear for vulnerable Christians in North Africa and the Middle East, who would suffer retribution for any positive recognition by the church of “Israel,” even if the meaning was purely theological.<sup>22</sup>

Yet word leaked quickly, and it became known in the world press as early as 1961. The issue forced the church to wonder about its relation to other religions beyond Judaism. “As justified as the topic was theologically and ecumenically,” historian John Borelli has written, “Jewish relations could not be addressed without also coming to terms with relations with other religions, especially Islam, given the Church’s engagement in many places in the world.”

This happened in part out of theological necessity, but in part also, ironically, because of opposition from within the church. Let me start with an example of the latter. Cardinal Amleto Cicognani, Vatican Secretary of State, was not a particular friend of reconciliation between Christians and Jews. He wanted to strike the item from the conciliar agenda and said in 1962: “If we discuss the Jews, why not also the Muslims.” In his view, there was no need to speak of either, because “Jews and all others who are outside the church know that the Church will receive them with great love if they

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Stransky, “The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*,” public lecture at Georgetown University, 4 October 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Borelli shows that the World Council of Churches at Evanston in the 1950s had shared this concern, with appreciation of the fears with respect to Arab Christians. However, there was also some concern that Jews might not want to be discussed within the framework of Christian unity. See Borelli, “The Origins,” 89–90, 92.

desire to embrace the Catholic faith.”<sup>23</sup> But when it became clear that the Pope would not strike this item from the agenda, Cicognani adjusted his approach. If the church *did* speak about the Jews, it would have to make clear that there was nothing special about them. He declared in 1964 that it would be necessary to speak of the “Muslims” and also of “pagans generally as creatures of God and therefore included in his universal salvific will.”<sup>24</sup>

This official concern that the Jews not be shown any “preference” guaranteed that the statement on the Jews would force the church to speak about more than the Jews. But this outcome, unanticipated by the Cardinal and other conservative forces in the Vatican, still implied that there was something special about the Jews *and* that the church esteemed other religions. St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, the scriptural base upon which this revolution pivoted, left no other choice, because it spoke of God’s enduring promises to the Jews as a people in history.

The theologians in charge of drafting a statement on the Jews, including Msgr. John Oesterreicher, had in a sense anticipated the Cardinal’s demand and did not object to it. Drafts that appeared well before Cicognani’s intervention made clear that a statement on the Jews could not avoid speaking of humanity as a whole. Take for example words written for a “decree on the Jews” from November 1961 (before it was clear that the decree would go beyond the Jews): “The Church believes that Christ, who ‘is our peace,’ embraces Jews and Gentiles with one and the same love and that he made the two one (see Eph 2:14). She rejoices that the union of these two ‘in one body’ (Eph 2:16) proclaims the whole world’s reconciliation in Christ.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Alberto Melloni, “Nostra Aetate and the Discovery of the Sacrament of Otherness,” in *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People: Recent Reflections from Rome*, ed. Philip Cunningham, Norbert Hofmann, and Joseph Sievers (New York, 2007), 131.

<sup>24</sup> Giovanni Miccoli, “Two Sensitive Issues: Religious Freedom and the Jews,” in *History of Vatican II*, vol. 4, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak (Leuven, 2002), 143. From the meeting of 16 April 1964 of the Council’s coordinating commission: Si propone quindi che nell’appendice relativa agli Ebrei siano ricordate anche le altre religioni monoteistiche e che l’argomento sia trattato in modo generale sottolineando, che verso nessun popolo, devono essere usate parole offensive.

Sia accentuata l’affermazione de fraternita universale e sia condanta qualsiasi forma di oppressione di popoli o razze.

Sia fatto un accenno anche ai popoli pagani, quali figli di Dio.

Su proposta dell’Em.mo. Card. Confalonieri, viene deciso di non chiamare piu Appendix questa parte, ma Declaratio de Iudeis et de non christianis.

*Acta synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (Vatican City, 1970–1999), 2:292–93.

<sup>25</sup> The text (as well as early drafts) is reprinted in Cunningham et al., eds., *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People*, 191.

The final statement of 1965, the declaration *Nostra aetate*, included those lines, as well as sections on Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists, but also the following:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.<sup>26</sup>

And then in the final paragraphs, right after the section on Jews, the statement, which began only as a statement on the Jews, rejects all discrimination:

We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8). No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned. The Church reprobates, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, (14) so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven. (15)

Therefore, contemplation of the special place of a particular people in "salvation history" had led the universal church to appreciate the way in which God's love is spread among the human race. *Nostra aetate*, in historian John Borelli's words,

provided a basis for interreligious relations in the oneness of the human family, the common search for God, especially in answering the age-old enigmas of life, and the Gospel values to preserve and foster what is true and good in

<sup>26</sup>"Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* Proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965" at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)

other religions, which often reflect a ray of that same truth that enlightens all. It then specifically talked about “animism” without naming it; Hinduism and Buddhism, urging the sons and daughters of the church to enter into dialogue; Muslims, exhorting cooperation and respect, “social justice, moral welfare, and peace and freedom for all humankind” despite the history of hostilities.<sup>27</sup>

In a similar vein, David M. Neuhaus has written:

The dialogue with the Jews opens the door to a dialogue with the religious other who is only the first among many that the church meets on her pilgrimage on earth. In fact, *Nostra aetate* begins in paragraph 1 with the ringing affirmation that “all peoples comprise a single community” and so the church must give “primary consideration ... to what human beings have in common and to what promotes fellowship among them.”<sup>28</sup>

The point is that there would be no *Nostra aetate* without the intent to say something about Jews in the shadow of the Holocaust; *Nostra aetate* is the basis for the church’s expanded appreciation of truth residing in other faiths, and it opened new paths. Still one might wonder: why did Jews have this role? It was clear in the minds of many that the Holocaust demanded some statement from the church, but why did that necessitate a turn to the world? This is a huge topic that must be part of future research, but here is a brilliant suggestion by the Italian historian Alberto Melloni. In his view, it has something to do with the otherness of the Jew. Melloni writes as follows:

In text and in life, in experience and in history, Judaism has become the paradigm not only of interreligious dialogue, but also the paradigm of every difference, the sacrament of all otherness, the locus theologicus where the Christians can show that every “other” alludes in its very alterity to the One who is totally other and yet is totally close to every woman and to every man. It is this mystery of salvation that marks “our age.”<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> From “Vatican II preparing the church for dialogue,” *Origins* 42, no. 11 (2 August 2012), 170.

<sup>28</sup> “Engaging the Jewish People,” in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions: A Comprehensive Study*, ed. Karl Joseph Becker, Ilaria Morali, Gavin D’Costa, and Maurice Borrmans (Maryknoll, NY, 2010), 413.

<sup>29</sup> Melloni, “*Nostra Aetate*,” 151. Sacrament of otherness seems to be his idea. See his *Chiesa madre, chiesa madrina: un discorso storico sul cristianesimo che cambia* (Einaudi, 2004), 55.

Indeed, from biblical times the church had thought of humanity as divided between Jews and Gentiles.<sup>30</sup>

After the Council, we see successive statements issuing from the Vatican that register an increasing appreciation of holiness residing in other faiths. The Council had made other gestures in the direction of recognizing religious pluralism, but *Nostra aetate* was foundational; in Michael Fitzgerald's words, it was the "official charter for interreligious dialogue."<sup>31</sup> We see greater emphasis on acts of the Holy Spirit than on the grace of Christ, and more explicit recognition that multiversity of faiths is not to be regretted, but somehow reflects divine providence. In practical terms, the new approach involved a shift from an active conversion agenda to one of faith in the powers of the Holy Spirit and in the desire of God to save all humans. Here is a culmination of reflection by John Paul II at a general audience in 1998:

It must be kept in mind that every quest of the human spirit for truth and goodness and in the last analysis for God, is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The various religions arose precisely from this primordial human openness to God. At their origins we often find founders who, with the help of God's Spirit, achieved a deeper religious experience. Handed on to others, this experience took form in the doctrines, rites, and precepts of the various religions.<sup>32</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Even if the teaching was submerged, it was possible from the days of Augustine to imagine non-Christians as saved. What was new in John Paul's words was positing a permanent role for other religious traditions—beginning with Judaism—in the order of salvation. *Nostra aetate* proclaims that "the Catholic church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions."<sup>33</sup> The pivot was on a single text, Paul's letter to

<sup>30</sup> See the draft statement above from November 1961 for a recent enunciation.

<sup>31</sup> Michael L. Fitzgerald, "A Theological Reflection," in Becker, *Catholic Engagement*, 384. He adds that it does not provide a "complete theological framework for interreligious relations."

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 393.

<sup>33</sup> One limit of this and other Vatican II texts is that it is not clear whether "other religions become obsolete by the fact of their reaching fulfillment in Christianity." Do they have an intrinsic worth? See Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY, 2002), 65.

the Romans 9–11, which for centuries was taken to signal that Jews must become Christians. Now it was taken to mean that Jews themselves have an enduring mission. To see the change, let us consider a pre-Vatican II reading of Romans by theologian Gregory Baum, who became an important advisor at the Council:

Eschatology, the branch of theology which has been given so much attention in recent decades by both Protestants and Catholics, has also brought to light the relation of the Church of Christ to the Jewish people. Since eschatology deals with the completion of Christ's redemptive work at the end of time and the meaning which this last event gives to our existence in the present, the ultimate return of the Jewish people to the community of salvation, announced in the Epistle of the Romans, has attracted the attention of theological writers. In this sense, measuring her by the prophecy as yet to be fulfilled, the Church cannot be called complete without Israel.<sup>34</sup>

Yet by 1977, Gregory Baum had become a leader in asserting that the Catholic Church, “after Auschwitz,” must not attempt to convert the Jews.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, but characteristically, this very text eschews all attempts at simple scriptural interpretation. At the end of his letter to the Romans, Chap. 11, Paul concludes: “Who has known the mind of the Lord?” This intuition has been a bedrock for interreligious work.

Was this change really as contingent as I have suggested? One might reflect upon the metaphor one uses to signal contingency. Perhaps the emergence of *Nostra aetate* was more like a spark falling into combustible material than a random comet descending from the heavens. Oesterreicher and his allies had prepared the ground. And it would not have happened but for the remorse among bishops and Christians more broadly, and the more general context of Christian minds opening to new ideas about Jews.

But the road was winding. It was not only former Jews (this has been much noted) but former missionaries who ultimately broke with mission. And it was the insistence of an anti-Judaic Cardinal (Cicognani) that Jews were not special that permitted the church to see Jews as existing among the religions, and thereby to discern, *according to Christian teaching*, that they are special indeed.

<sup>34</sup> *The Catholic Quest for Christian Unity* (Glen Rock NJ, 1965 [orig. 1962]), 217–18.

<sup>35</sup> See Michael McGarry, “Can Catholics Make an Exception? Jews and the New Evangelization” (1994) at [http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research\\_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/mcgarry.htm](http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/mcgarry.htm)

# The Battle for Jewish Sympathy: The House of Orange, the Dutch Jews, and Postwar Morality

*Bart Wallet*

## INTRODUCTION

In the immediate postwar period, after some initial interest in the plight of Jews during the Second World War, Dutch Jewry had become nearly invisible in the public realm. The community was decimated and, due to its small numbers, no longer treated on equal footing with other religious denominations by the government.<sup>1</sup> The energetic reconstruction of the community was a process that was primarily directed inward, while Zionist ideology furthermore directed Dutch Jewish attention to the young State of Israel.<sup>2</sup> For a significant part of

<sup>1</sup> *Verslag van de Handelingen der Permanente Commissie tot de Algemene Zaken van het Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap*, June 1954–December 1955, 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> Evelien Gans, *De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken: Een historische studie naar joodse sociaal-democraten en socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Vassallucci, 1999), 593–602.

Dutch Jewry, the Netherlands had become just *galut*, Diaspora, and had lost the special position attributed to the country by many prewar Dutch Jewish nationalists.<sup>3</sup>

All this changed in the 1960s, when Dutch Jewry was repositioned from the margins to the middle of Dutch society. From then on, for several decades, it became a source of legitimization in society and politics in a hitherto unprecedented way.

This new role for Dutch Jewry became evident for the first time in 1965, when Princess Beatrix introduced Claus von Amsberg as her fiancé. The fact that she chose a German who had been a member of the Hitler Jugend and had served in the Wehrmacht shocked many, Jews and non-Jews alike. Prime Minister Jo Cals even acknowledged in the parliamentary debate that his own first reaction had been one of disappointment, which changed for the better after he had met Claus.<sup>4</sup> In the public debate on the wedding of Beatrix and Claus, Jews played a major role, whether they liked it or not. Each of the groups involved—the Royal House, the government, and the opponents—connected the topic to the Shoah and tried to get Dutch Jewry on their side. As radio commentator Max van Ghijn stated, the Dutch Jewish weekly *NIW* had become authoritative in this affair.<sup>5</sup> Both proponents and opponents of the marriage referred to the weekly, to the position taken by Jewish institutions, and to Jewish opinion leaders. The influential journal *Vrij Nederland* even stated that the *NIW* with its criticism had put spikes in the wheels of Prime Minister Cals.<sup>6</sup>

In this paper, I will analyze how Jews were used as a source of legitimization for all parties involved and how Dutch Jews reacted to these strategies. First, I will give an overview of the various phases in the debate and how each of these challenged Dutch Jewry to respond or act. Then I will analyze the respective ways that opponents and proponents of the wedding used Jewish history and traditions and the Jewish community to defend their position. Finally, I will discuss the effect of this debate on Dutch Jewry internally and in society, demonstrating how the affair with

<sup>3</sup> Bart Wallet, “‘The Great Eagle, the Pride of Jacob’: Joseph Hirsch Dünner in Dutch Jewish Memory Culture,” in *Religious Cultures of Dutch Jewry*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Leiden and Boston: Brill, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> *Handelingen Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal* 10 November 1965.

<sup>5</sup> M. H. G. [M. H. Gans], “De Kamerdebatten,” *Nieuw Israëlitisch Weekblad* (NIW), 19 November 1965.

<sup>6</sup> Gans, “De Kamerdebatten.”

respect to the royal wedding marked a profound change in the position of Jews in Dutch society, whereby they became a central legitimizing force for public morality.

### THE AFFAIR IN FIVE ACTS

On May 6, 1965, just one day after the intensely commemorated and celebrated memorial days for the Second World War, the British newspaper *Daily Express* opened with a photo in which Princess Beatrix could be seen walking hand in hand with a hitherto unknown man. His identity was soon discovered; the man turned out to be the German diplomat Claus von Amsberg.<sup>7</sup> From that moment on, a public debate continued that lasted at least a year. Five different phases can be distinguished, of which each represented a new challenge to Dutch Jewry.

The first phase was the period from the publication of the photo in the newspaper until the engagement on June 28, 1965, which was sooner than Beatrix had wanted but seemed to be the only way to escape continued debate. Claus's German nationality immediately became the center of the debate, and a special committee of the RIOD, the national institute for war documentation, led by its director Lou de Jong, researched his past and concluded that although he had been a member of the Hitler Jugend and had served in the Wehrmacht, Claus had not been a Nazi and had not participated in war crimes. This report paved the way to announcing the engagement to the Dutch public.

In this phase, the Jewish community initially tried to stay out of the discussion and adhered to the traditional Jewish attitude toward authorities in general and the House of Orange in particular. The Orthodox NIK denomination, which still represented the majority of Dutch Jewry, concluded that this case had to be treated as *dino de malchuso dino*: Princess Beatrix, the Royal House, and the government had made a decision, and Jews "could not and should not take a different position than we had taken on earlier comparable cases in the past." On the day of the engagement, therefore, synagogues and Jewish institutions, the NIK stated, had to respond positively to governmental instructions to hang out the Dutch

<sup>7</sup>For a general overview of the events, see Hans Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig: Geschiedenis van een generatieconflict* (Amsterdam and Antwerp: De Arbeiderspers, 1995), 211–21.

national flag.<sup>8</sup> Beatrix and Claus also made a couple of visits to introduce Claus to the Dutch public. In Rotterdam, Chief Rabbi Vorst participated, while in Amsterdam the three Jewish communities—Portuguese, Ashkenazi Orthodox, and Liberal—communicated that they would not attend for practical reasons, as the meeting was scheduled on Shabbat.<sup>9</sup>

It was only a small group of young Dutch Jews that from the start objected to the marriage and to the prospect of Claus as the husband of the Dutch queen. Joop van Tijn—a young promising television journalist for the socialist VARA broadcasting company—set up a campaign against participation in the visit of the couple to Amsterdam, while the later famous Amsterdam sociologist Bram de Swaan also voiced his concerns.<sup>10</sup> The reaction of the Jewish establishment was one of surprise. De Swaan had just published his severe criticism of Zionism as “Jewish sentimentalism,” while now he objected to Claus at least partly using Jewish argumentation.<sup>11</sup>

Soon, however, the establishment found out that it had underestimated the feelings among Dutch Jewry. Most criticism stayed inside the community and did not enter the public sphere. For anyone participating in Jewish community life, it was nevertheless evident that the engagement and wedding were becoming a tough topic. It crystallized around the customary prayer for the Royal House, *Hanoten Teshua*. In one kehillah, the chazzan decided only to mention Queen Juliana; in other communities, the *petikhah* (opening section of the prayer) was omitted, while many voiced the opinion that they would object to an inclusion of Claus in the prayer after the wedding. After heated debates, the Chief Rabbinate decided indeed not to include Claus’s name in the prayer but to consider him to be comprised in the phrase “... vekhol beit ha-malkut” [... and

<sup>8</sup> Jewish Cultural Centre Amsterdam (JCC), Archives Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap (NIK), Private Archive Sal Boas, letter from the Permanent Committee (PC) to the Central Committee (CC), 25 June 1965; the Amsterdam NIHS, however, had already decided at this stage not to display flags; JCC, NIK, Minutes of the CC, 6 February 1966.

<sup>9</sup> Amsterdam City Archives (ACA), Archive Nederlands-Israëlietische Hoofdsynagoge Amsterdam (NIHS), Minutes of the Board, 1 and 8 July 1965; JCC, NIK, Boas, Letter from the PC to the CC, 16 November 1965.

<sup>10</sup> “Bon voor quizmaster Joop v. Tijn wegens plakken pamfletten,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 2 July 1965.

<sup>11</sup> Ina Schuurman, “De joden en de verloving,” *NIW*, 30 July 1965; JCC, NIK, Boas, Letter from Boas to other members of the PC, 10 January 1966; Bram de Swaan, “Het joodse sentimentalisme betrapt,” *Propria Cures* (1964), republished in idem, *De draagbare De Swaan*, ed. Johan Heilbron and Geert de Vries (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), 27–35.

all of the Royal House]. In the Portuguese community, the Portuguese section of the prayer was changed from “descendentes Oranje Nassau” into “membros Oranje Nassau,” so they could avoid mentioning Claus’s name in the prayer.<sup>12</sup>

The next phase was from the engagement up until the Act of Consent, which was brought into parliament by the government on 10 November 1965. Now the topic of Claus’s connection to National Socialism, the Shoah, and the Jews became fully part of the political debate. Initially, the government’s reaction was restrained, but it then concluded that in public debate “the Jewish question” had become more and more dominant. In circles close to the royal family, this was observed as well. A friend of Claus, Ferdinand von Bismarck, instigated a private intervention in the public debate through Alfred Mozer. Mozer was a Hungarian German who fled to the Netherlands in the 1930s and acquired a major role in the Dutch social democrat PvdA party. Mozer worked closely with Von Bismarck in the European Economic Community, and he now brought out a letter in favor of Claus. He enlisted three arguments, each of them related to Claus’s stance toward Jews, which should convince the Dutch public of Claus’s pro-Jewish convictions.<sup>13</sup> These four arguments, which I will discuss later in more detail, were included by the government in the argumentation for the Act of Consent. In the newspapers and in parliament the Jewish connection became fully part of the discussion. Finally, the majority of parliament voted in favor of the Act of Consent, but only after stressing that Claus’s record toward Jews was positive.

The third phase constituted a part of the second chronologically but was a topic on its own, namely the debate concerning the location of the wedding. Both Wilhelmina and Juliana had married in The Hague, but Beatrix and Claus opted for Amsterdam, as they personally felt attracted to the city. As soon as this became known, renewed criticism was voiced: How could the couple opt for the city that had suffered the most from the Holocaust and had lost a huge part of its Jewish population? This topic became so dominant that the Royal House decided to act on its own. Earlier attempts by Claus to introduce himself to the Jewish community, first by visiting Chief Rabbi Aron Schuster, later by having a meeting with the board of the NIK, were rejected by the Jewish community. They

<sup>12</sup>JCC, NIK, Chief Rabbinate of the Netherlands (CRNL), 3 November 1965 and 25 November 1965.

<sup>13</sup>“Mozer: Wél blijken van goede gezindheid: Alfred Mozer schrijft over von Amsberg,” *Het Vrije Volk*, 1 November 1965.

deemed the time too early and were only open to meeting after parliament had decided and Claus had consequently received formal status.<sup>14</sup> On the eve of the debate in parliament, in which the location would be debated as well, Queen Juliana had a conversation with the Amsterdam mayor Gijs van Hall, in which she expressed her personal support for Amsterdam as location. Van Hall, however, suggested that, in order to win over the part of the population that thus far had stayed outside of the debate, Beatrix should take the initiative herself. Beatrix, he proposed, should write a letter to the government, expressing her respect for the feelings of the Amsterdam population with regard to the Second World War history and therefore leaving the issue of the location in the hands of the government. Thus, Van Hall suggested, people would sympathize with Beatrix and Claus, and the responsibility for the location would be only the government's.<sup>15</sup>

On Sunday, 31st October, representatives of the three Jewish communities—Portuguese, Orthodox, and Reform—and two on behalf of the former resistance (Stichting 1950–1945) were invited to the house of Amsterdam mayor Gijs van Hall, as Prime Minister Cals wanted to meet them. From the NIK, Chief Rabbi Schuster and Chairman Isaac Dasberg participated; the Portuguese community was represented by Dr. Jacques Z. Baruch and Abraham Senior Coronel, while Dr. Mau Goudeket and Rabbi Dr. Jacob Soetendorp were the delegates of the Reform community. They met during the afternoon of 31st October, and Cals explained the government's position on the Act of Consent and the location, which had to be Amsterdam. The Jewish representatives all voiced criticism, in contrast to the representatives of the former resistance, H. A. Douqué and A. H. van Namen. The resistance even urged the Jews to consent, as documented in the internal Jewish reports on the event, since they feared that otherwise the Jews would be blamed for not having the wedding in Amsterdam, “which they deemed to be to our [Jewish] disadvantage.”<sup>16</sup> The idea of

<sup>14</sup> ACA, NIHS, Minutes of the Board, 11 November 1965.

<sup>15</sup> ACA, Private archive of Wim Polak, Correction secret minutes of meeting Burgomaster and Aldermen, 29 October 1965. After critical questions from members of the City Council, Van Hall stated that he had only acted as an intermediary between the Crown, the government, and the Jewish community, without letting the City of Amsterdam get involved in the issue. ACA, Polak, Answers to questions of G. Wijsmuller-Meijer and P. Snel-Warries, November 1965. Cf. the document in the same archive in which Burgomaster and Aldermen agree not to get involved in a public debate on the location, but rather to accept the outcome of the parliamentary debate.

<sup>16</sup> JCC, NIK, CRNL, 3 November 1965.

receiving more than 500 German guests at the wedding in Amsterdam, part of whom had served in the German army, was however too much for the emotions of many Jews, the Jewish representatives claimed.

Cals concluded that he could not win over the Jewish communities. Then he was phoned from the royal palace at Soestdijk, and he reported to Prince Bernhard how the conversation had gone. After some time, Bernhard called back and told that the couple wanted to meet the Jewish representatives themselves on the same evening. The Jewish representatives felt they could not object to the meeting and consented. Dasberg later said that they were “taken by surprise” by the request. After Claus’s previous meeting with representatives of the former resistance, the Jewish press had taken a negative stance toward such a meeting with representatives of the Jewish community.<sup>17</sup> Now it seemed unavoidable. All night, until 12 o’clock, they discussed the topic in an open sphere. In the meantime, Cals had left the meeting. Beatrix made clear that out of all the groups that criticized the wedding and the location, among them republicans, communists, students, and Provos, she took only the Jewish communities seriously. As she concluded that Dutch Jewry had serious problems with the wedding in Amsterdam, she finally decided that the wedding would take place in the small village of Baarn, where they lived, instead of Amsterdam. That would mean, she said, a completely different wedding, more intimate and less a celebration shared with the Dutch people. But if the Dutch Jews objected to Amsterdam, she was willing to give in. Together the couple and the Jewish representatives wrote a letter that the couple would send to the government in order to ask to change the location from Amsterdam to Baarn.<sup>18</sup>

Two days later, on the 2nd of November, the representatives were summoned again to Van Hall’s house. Prime Minister Cals told them the government had overruled Sunday evening’s decision and had decided to stick to Amsterdam as location. The Princess of the Netherlands, the future queen, should not marry in a small village, but in the capital. In the international arena, any other location than Amsterdam would not be understood. Thus, nothing changed, despite “the feelings of the Jewish community,” as Cals stated.<sup>19</sup> The secret

<sup>17</sup> Ina Schuurman, “De joden en de verloving,” NIW, 30 July 1965.

<sup>18</sup> JCC, NIK, Boas, Letter from the PC to the CC, 16 November 1965; CRNL, 3 November 1965; Secret minutes of the CC, 6 February 1966.

<sup>19</sup> ACA, NIHS, Minutes of the Board, 11 November 1965; JCC, NIK, Secret minutes of the CC, 6 February 1966.

meeting, however, did not stay secret. The Amsterdam daily *Het Parool* brought out the news that the couple wanted to take Jewish concerns seriously, but the government had finally opted for Amsterdam in a decision made on the same day. The NIK board stressed in an internal letter that none of the Jewish representatives had leaked to the press.<sup>20</sup> Two of the representatives, Chief Rabbi Schuster and physician Dasberg, concluded that they had simply been used to create a positive public image, but that in fact the government had long before decided to stick with Amsterdam.<sup>21</sup> After the acceptance of the Act of Consent, a renewed attempt by Claus to meet the Dutch chief rabbis, as part of his official visits to all major Dutch religious denominations, was again rejected. Emotions were still too heated to formally receive Claus, the chief rabbis argued.<sup>22</sup>

The fourth phase was the wedding itself. The Jewish communities, at least the chief rabbis, would receive an invitation to attend the church service in the Westerkerk. As parliament had adopted the Act of Consent, the Jewish communities had to accept the outcome, according to *dino de malchuso dino*. But did that also mean that they had to participate in the wedding? Chief Rabbi Schuster consulted a group of some 20 influential Jewish leaders, to help him make the right decision.<sup>23</sup> The majority of the group advised him not to go, as a large part of the community would not understand his decision, which would surely result in many Jews resigning from their positions in the community and many membership resignations. Letters threatening to do so had already arrived. Rabbi Soetendorp even stated, “Even if only one Jewish widow would object, we would respect her emotions and take

<sup>20</sup>JCC, NIK, Boas, Letter from the PC to the CC, 16 November 1965.

<sup>21</sup>JCC, NIK, Secret minutes of the CC, 6 February 1966; CRNL, 3 November 1965. Schuster even suggested that Queen Juliana received the Chief Rabbis and administration of the NIK on the NIK's 150th anniversary in September 1965, in order to pave the way for the wedding and consent of Dutch Jewry.

<sup>22</sup>JCC, NIK, CRNL, 6 December 1965.

<sup>23</sup>ACA, NIHS, Minutes of the Board, 26 December 1965. Among those present were Izak Zadoks, Jitschak Dasberg, Jo S. van der Hal, Rabbi Jacob Soetendorp, Haham Salomon Rodrigues Pereira, Mau Goudeket, Chief Rabbi Eliezer Berlinger and Levie Vorst, Rabbi Meir Just, Sam Eisenmann, Moses König, Izak G. Lange, Hartog Beem, Aron de Haas, Max Gans, Sal Boas, D. D. da Silva Solis, Professor David Simons, H. R. Eyl, Eduard Spier, Bob Levisson, and I. Pais. They represented informally the three Jewish denominations, some large Jewish communities, Jewish Social Welfare (JMW), Dutch Zionist Organization (NZB), and the Jewish press.

her side.” Fear of a split within the Jewish community was widespread among those present. Schuster, together with The Hague Jewish leader Izak Zadoks, visited the private secretary of Juliana and asked not to get an invitation at all. That was impossible, as in that case Juliana would discriminate between the religious denominations. But, the secretary said, Juliana respects and understands the Jewish feelings. In Schuster’s second meeting with his advisors, most interpreted these words on the part of the secretary as the possibility of returning the invitation and subsequently not attending. A minority, however, argued that refusing an invitation by the queen was such an insult that it would seriously harm Jewish interests.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Schuster and the other rabbis decided not to go and wrote a letter to Queen Juliana expressing Jewish fidelity to the royal family, but stating that the “infinite grief” which “still is not forgotten” made it impossible to accept the invitation.<sup>25</sup>

The last phase was the least difficult. The Jewish communities decided not to participate in the festivities, and Chief Rabbi Schuster declined the offer to take a seat in the national committee appointed to choose a present for the couple. The NIK also decided that on the day of the wedding, Jewish buildings would not display a flag. Only when local conditions were such that the general population would not understand and would be hostile were Jewish communities permitted to display a flag.<sup>26</sup>

### JEWISH LEGITIMATION I: THE OPPONENTS

The first who used the Jewish argument as legitimation were the opponents of the engagement and wedding. The young PSP party took the lead and was joined by republicans, the anarchistic Provo movement, students, part of the PvdA faction, part of the former resistance, and parts of the Jewish

<sup>24</sup> JCC, NIK, Boas, notes made by Boas during the meeting of 2 January 1966; this private archive also contains several letters and notes documenting Boas’s own stance, namely that the invitation should be accepted. Together with some sympathizers, he attempted to mobilize those in favor of participation as a counterweight to what he considered as too emotional and less “realpolitisch” reasoning on the part of most others. During a heated debate in the CC on 6 February 1966, the vast majority of the delegates, however, supported the stance taken by Chief Rabbi Schuster.

<sup>25</sup> JCC, NIK, Boas, Letter from Schuster, Rodrigues Pereira and Soetendorp to Juliana, 7 February 1966.

<sup>26</sup> ACA, NIHS, Minutes of the Board, 16 February 1966; JCC, NIK, Letters from PC to local Jewish communities, 13 January 1966 and 14 February 1966.

community. For the radical Provo movement, the wedding came at the right moment: the Provo journal stated that this was an excellent opportunity to agitate against the monarchy and to revolt against authorities in general.<sup>27</sup>

In public expressions, the opponents referred often to the Holocaust. In Amsterdam graffiti texts such as “Clauschwitz” and “Claus raus” appeared, cars of the wedding procession got “illegal pamphlets” echoing those distributed during the war, while some opponents during the protests wore the yellow Jews’ star and carried placards with “six million” on them. Police officers were characterized as SS soldiers, while radical youth labeled themselves as the rightful heirs of wartime resistance.<sup>28</sup>

In parliament, PSP representative Henk Lankhorst stated that if Claus were “a good German,” he would understand that he is totally unacceptable as the husband of the future head of state in a country where no fewer than 100,000 Jews had been deported and murdered. But, he stated, Claus clearly was no representative of “das andere Deutschland.” In his opinion, the meeting with the Jewish representatives was nothing less than pressuring the Jews to consent to the marriage. The minority PvdA MPs who voted against the Act of Consent used as an argument the claim that since 1945 Claus had not clearly distanced himself from the German atrocities against the Jews.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Henriëtte Boas, Dutch Jewish journalist for the Jerusalem Post and well-known *enfant terrible*, commented in the Israeli newspaper, responding in radical terms to the opponents’ use of Jews as legitimization:

Seeing these Provos, who like “rebels without a cause” are filled with negative, destructive feelings [...], one is reminded of certain prewar fascist groups, although some on the tenth of March even wore a yellow star and carried the words “six million.” Their use of Jews as a pretext for creating difficulties does not differ so much from what fascists and Nazis did. They are a much greater threat to the future of the Netherlands than Mister Claus von Amsberg, who seems to be an honest, sympathetic, hard-working, intelligent man, completely aware of his responsibility.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Erik de Graaf, “De herinnering aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog in de jaren zestig,” *Groniek: Historisch Tijdschrift* 128 (1995): 332–38; Marko Otten, “Het Oranjekomitee ‘De Parel van de Jordaan’: Humor als actiemiddel in de jongerenbeweging in de jaren ’60,” *Groniek: Historisch Tijdschrift* 98 (1987): 125–38.

<sup>28</sup> “Claus von Amsberg: ‘Hollanders hebben humoristische inslag’,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 8 March 1966.

<sup>29</sup> *Handelingen Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 10 November 1965.

<sup>30</sup> S. Hamburger, “De Israelische pers over het Huwelijk,” *NIW*, 25 March 1966.

For part of the Jewish population, the use of the Jewish argument by opponents of the wedding was rejected not only out of principle, but also because they did not want to be perceived as allied with the revolutionary youth movement. Sal Boas, an influential lawyer, member of the PC, and brother of Henriëtte Boas, argued that the Jewish community sided with “agitators and Provos” who wanted to destroy order in society, while Dutch Jews’ interest was exactly the opposite, namely to keep societal order.<sup>31</sup> Another, J. Horn from The Hague, argued that the rabbis gave in to republicans, through which Dutch Jews were misused in order to demonstrate against the Royal House and against Queen Juliana, “who cannot be accused at all of a hostile attitude against the Jews.”<sup>32</sup>

## JEWISH LEGITIMATION II: THE PROONENTS

The proponents of the wedding played the Jewish card as well. Although during the parliamentary debate several political parties stressed that the Jews should not be misused as an argument, many politicians and opinion leaders staged the Jews in their pleas in favor of the wedding.<sup>33</sup> The pastor who would lead the wedding service, Rev. Henk J. Kater, stressed beforehand in an interview that he had talked with Claus about the position of the Jews and about their suffering caused by the Germans. Kater also stated that the liturgy would be Dutch Reformed, but with an international character. He therefore included English and French hymns; German, however, would not be heard during the service.<sup>34</sup>

In the media as well as in the parliamentary debate, one argument was frequently used; it was first raised by Frits van der Poel in the news show KRO Brandpunt on Dutch television. It claimed that refusing Germans is just as unacceptable as refusing Jews. The Jewish weekly *NIW* commented on this argument as demonstrating that Jews apparently were perceived not as Dutch citizens but as foreigners, just like Germans or Italians. This must prompt us, the *NIW* continued to its Jewish reading public, not to postpone “our aliyah” too long.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> JCC, NIK, Boas, Letter from Boas to other members of the PC, 10 January 1966.

<sup>32</sup> J. Horn, “Vertegenwoordiging VI,” *NIW*, 4 March 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Gans, “Kamerdebatten”; *Handelingen Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 10 November 1965; *Voorlopig verslag commissie van rapporteurs inz. naturalisatie Claus von Amsberg*, 30 November 1965.

<sup>34</sup> “Ds. H.J. Kater: huwelijksdienst wordt geen nationale show,” *Leeuwarder Courant*, 21 December 1965.

<sup>35</sup> Ina Schuurman, “De joden en de verloving,” *NIW*, 30 July 1965.

The government, in turn, took over the “Jewish” argumentation offered by Mozer in his letter. First, after his studies, Claus had briefly worked for the firm of the Jewish lawyer Walter Lippmann in Hamburg, and worked there on cases of restitution for Jews.<sup>36</sup> Both *NIW* editor-in-chief Max Gans and the PSP commented sharply that it is “naïve and irritating” to use friendship with Jews as a “discharging argument.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the PSP commented in the Senate, Lippmann was not the best key witness the government could want: although a German Jew, he stated that Hitler had also done some good, like the construction of the autobahn, reducing unemployment, and social legislation.<sup>38</sup>

The second argument in favor of Claus was that during his period as a German diplomat in Latin America, his loyalty had been with the prewar German, mostly Jewish community, instead of the postwar German, mostly Nazi community. The consul general of Israel in Santo Domingo was also asked, and he responded accordingly by giving a positive character witness statement concerning Claus. Finally, Claus had expressed the wish to his superiors to serve at the recently opened West German embassy in Israel. He had a fascination for the country and wanted to work there.<sup>39</sup>

Jewish criticism of the wedding was generally accepted by politicians and the Royal House, but some of the proponents reversed the argument and attacked the Jews for their stance. As noted above, the two representatives of the resistance already thought it wise to warn the Jewish representatives about anger against the Jews. The few Jewish leaders who argued for accepting the invitation to the wedding reasoned as well that in *galut* Jews should be wary of provoking non-Jewish anger. Indeed, some blamed the Jews for the affair. In the regional daily *De Gooi- en Eemlander*, someone aggressively stated that the House of Orange did not deserve such an insulting treatment from the Jews, given the welcome the Portuguese Jews had been given here and the freedom granted to them by the Orange family—not to mention the visits Jewish institutions had received from queens Wilhelmina and Juliana.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> “Mozer: Wél blijken van goede gezindheid: Alfred Mozer schrijft over von Amsberg,” *Het Vrije Volk*, 1 November 1965; *Handelingen Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 10 November 1965; *Handelingen Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 7 December 1965.

<sup>37</sup> M. H. G. [M. H. Gans], “De Verloving,” *NIW*, 5 November 1965.

<sup>38</sup> *Handelingen Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 7 December 1965.

<sup>39</sup> *Handelingen Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 10 November 1965.

<sup>40</sup> J. P. van den Wildenburg, “Bedankt,” reprinted with commentary in *NIW*, 4 March 1966.

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

Why was it that in the middle of the 1960s the Jewish community became such an important tool in the legitimization of a Dutch royal wedding? To explain that, four reasons should be mentioned.

First, one should consider the renewed attention for the Shoah and the redefinition of morality in terms of Second World War experiences. The public memorial culture with regard to the Second World War started to change under the impact of a series of events: the Eichmann trial in Israel, the broadcasting of Lou de Jong's TV series "The Occupation," and the publication of Jacques Presser's history of Dutch Jewry during the Second World War, *Ondergang*. Each of these added to an increased awareness of what had happened to the Jews during the war period. The stress on the "heroes of the war," especially the resistance, shifted to the "victims of the war," namely the Jews.<sup>41</sup> Tellingly, in 1963, much to the dismay of the former resistance, the memorial ceremonies in Amsterdam 4th of May were put forward to the 3rd of May in order to enable Orthodox Jews to participate without violating Shabbat.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, during the 1960s, a cultural revolution challenged the nineteenth-century structuring of society according to ideological convictions. New ideological and political movements, such as the Pacifist Socialist Party and the social liberal D'66 party, called for a radical transformation of society. As the political elites did not reject their wishes outright, but rather sought to implement them in existing structures, the proponents of the cultural revolt were remarkably successful.<sup>43</sup> One of the consequences was that it prompted a redefinition of the common moral framework of Dutch society. Thus far, as was also documented in several laws, "Christendom above religious diversity" was regarded as the basis of society throughout Dutch society and politics.<sup>44</sup> In the nineteenth century, Dutch Jews also consented to participate in society on this formula. In the 1960s, this

<sup>41</sup> Frank van Vree, "Iedere dag en elk uur: De jodenvervolging en de dynamiek van de herinnering in Nederland," in *Wie niet weg is, is gezien: Joods Nederland na 1945*, ed. Hetty Berg and Bart Wallet (Zwolle and Amsterdam: Waanders/Joods Historisch Museum, 2010), 57–72.

<sup>42</sup> "‘Voormalig Verzet’ tegen dodenherdenking—3 mei," *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 22 March 1963.

<sup>43</sup> James Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw: Nederland in de jaren zestig* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1995), *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> For this phrase and its application, see J. A. Bornewasser, "Thorbecke en de kerken," *BMGN* 87, no. 3: 375–95.

became highly problematic, as a growing number of Dutch citizens no longer defined themselves as Christians or even as religious at all. Society was in need of a new moral framework.

Here the two processes—the Shoah memorial culture and the ideological reorientation of society—crossed. The recent history of the Second World War, and especially the persecution and murder of Jews, offered a new narrative to define good and evil. The lesson “never again” meant that present political issues had to be interpreted through the prism of the Shoah. Discrimination between ethnic, religious, or ideological groups in society had to be banished completely. Dutch Jews’ position consequently changed from a small neglected minority to a bearer of common Dutch morality, or put differently, to Dutch society’s living conscience.<sup>45</sup>

Tellingly, VVD Senator Harm van Riel opened his contribution in the debate with the remark that just a few months ago he had read Presser’s *Ondergang*, which opened his eyes to the Jewish emotions concerning the present topic.<sup>46</sup> The House of Orange too realized that in order to win Dutch society for the marriage, the Jewish community had at least to be pacified. Jewish criticism was not just an opinion from a marginal group in society, but had become influential in society at large.

Second, winning over the Jews was important for the image of the Netherlands and the House of Orange internationally. International press was ready to position the wedding in a Second World War frame, and it focused on the attitude of the former resistance and the Jewish community.<sup>47</sup> Just before the wedding, NBC aired a documentary “Daughters of the House of Orange” in which images of the deportation of Dutch Jews were mixed with images of the royal family. Nearly all pictures selected of Claus showed him wearing the uniform of the Hitler Jugend. The wedding was announced as taking place in the Westerkerk, at a stone’s throw away from the Anne Frank House.<sup>48</sup> In order to counter such tendentious portrayals, Dutch Jewry had to be lined up behind the House of Orange—or at least to stay silent.

<sup>45</sup> Ido de Haan, *Na de ondergang: De herinnering aan de Jodenvervolging in Nederland 1945–1995* ('s-Gravenhage: Sdu, 1997) 129, 151–56.

<sup>46</sup> *Handelingen van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 7 December 1965.

<sup>47</sup> “‘Hopelijk in nieuwe periode blijdschap en geluk’,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 15 March 1966.

<sup>48</sup> “Amerika zag eenzijdige film over Oranje-huis,” *Limburgs Dagblad*, 22 February 1966. The connection between the Anne Frank House and the location of the wedding, and the riots on the wedding day in the former Jewish quarter, was also accentuated by the French *Soir* and *Paris Presse*; “Buitenlandse pers besteedt veel aandacht aan relletjes,” *De Tijd*, 11 March 1966.

Third, the relationship with West Germany and Germans was still a delicate topic. Many politicians argued that they themselves had difficulties dealing with Germans, while on the other hand they realized the necessity of accepting Germany as a partner in NATO and the European Economic Community. The fact that around the same time, in 1965, Israel and West Germany had opted for full diplomatic ties and exchanged ambassadors influenced the debate in the Netherlands as well. If Israel was able to accept the former Wehrmacht commander Rolf Pauls as ambassador, should the Netherlands not accept soldier Von Amsberg?<sup>49</sup>

Fourth, Israel itself played a role as well. Whereas Dutch Jewry was difficult to win over, the Israeli ambassador David Shaltiel was quick to congratulate the royal couple. When the rumor went around that the couple would go on honeymoon to Israel, he expressed his joy and welcomed them.<sup>50</sup> The respective Israeli ambassadors had already tried for years to convince the Dutch royals to visit Israel, but the Dutch government had repeatedly blocked such a visit, although Juliana and Beatrix were more than willing. Israel's attitude and the ambassador's presence in the Westerkerk placed Dutch Jewry in a difficult position. However, according to Haaretz, Israeli newspapers took sides with Dutch Jewry and praised their courage, character, and nobility.<sup>51</sup>

### AFTER THE WEDDING

After the wedding, Beatrix and Claus made huge efforts to restore the relationship with Dutch Jewry. The first interview Claus gave after the wedding was given in 1970 to the *NIW*. In the interview he expressed his understanding of the position taken by Dutch Jews during the wedding; their absence was "an indication that by our decision to marry we had hurt a very important group in the Netherlands." He acknowledged that only during the "impressive" meeting at Van Hall's house did he realize the degree in which West European Jewry had also suffered. Before then, he had only read and heard about East European Jewry's plight, Claus commented.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup>JCC, NIK, Secret minutes of the CC, 6 February 1966.

<sup>50</sup>JCC, NIK, Secret minutes of the CC, 6 February 1966.

<sup>51</sup>S. Hamburger, "De Israelische pers over het Huwelijk," *NIW*, 25 March 1966.

<sup>52</sup>Hans Knoop, "Z.K.H. Prins Claus wil bezoek brengen aan Israel," *NIW*, 7 August 1970.

The interview was followed by an impressive number of visits to Jewish institutions and communities. While their predecessors very infrequently visited synagogues and Jewish institutions, as they were certain of Jewish loyalty, Beatrix and Claus had to work hard to win over the hearts and minds of Dutch Jewry. Beatrix, for example, visited the Beth Haim cemetery in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel in 1973, while two years later she went to the 300th anniversary of the Esnoga in Amsterdam; together the couple celebrated 30 years of Israeli independence at the official ceremony in The Hague.<sup>53</sup>

Particularly effective was their show of sympathy for Israel. Like Juliana, Beatrix and Claus were outspoken in their sympathy for Israel. In the 1970 interview, Claus had already explicitly expressed his great sympathy for Israel and his wish to visit the country.<sup>54</sup> In 1976 the couple finally visited Israel, after having received an invitation which they probably arranged themselves through inviting Chaim Ben Shagar, the president of Tel Aviv University, to their residence, Drakensteyn. In Israel, the couple conflicted with ambassador Ariens, who was instructed by the government to keep the visit private and out of the political sphere. The couple, however, made their own arrangements for visits with Israeli politicians such as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, former prime minister, Golda Meir, several ministers, and Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek. Beatrix herself wore a blue dress with a white hat most of the time. The high point of the visit was the opening of the new Beatrix Wing of the medical faculty of Tel Aviv University.<sup>55</sup>

The strategy appeared to be effective: when in 1980 Beatrix became queen of the Netherlands, no Dutch Jewish criticism was heard at all.<sup>56</sup> The children of the strictly Orthodox Cheider school even stood on Dam Square with little Dutch flags to sing for the queen. Also as queen, Beatrix remained intensely involved with Dutch Jewry, as did Claus, visiting both Shoah commemorations and festive events. Her official visit to Israel in 1995 was marked by a speech before the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, in which she formally broke with the Dutch myth of the Netherlands as a nation collectively helping the Jews during the war years.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> “Vandaag jubileumviering Esnoga: Band Oranje–Portugezen meer dan drie eeuwen oud,” NIW, 22 August 1975; “Prinses Beatrix en prins Claus naar Israëlviering in Haags Congresgebouw,” NIW, 5 May 1978.

<sup>54</sup> Knoop, “Claus.”

<sup>55</sup> Bart Wallet, “Koningin van Joods Nederland,” NIW, 1 February 2013.

<sup>56</sup> ACA, NIHS, Minutes of the Board, 21 April 1980.

<sup>57</sup> Coos Huijsen, *Beatrix: De kroon op de republiek* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2005), 98, 156.

## CONCLUSION

During the debate concerning the wedding of Beatrix and Claus, the new prominent public role of Dutch Jewry became clear. Ideological changes in society, combined with renewed attention for the Shoah, prompted Dutch Jews from this moment on, and for several decades, to serve as a source of legitimization of various—sometimes conflicting—political programs and ideologies. Dutch Jews had never asked for such a role, but they had to learn how to deal with it. As the 1965–1966 case shows, internally this caused fierce debate and even fear of a split in the community. Although the “Jew as legitimization” might have been an effective argument in public and political debate, Dutch Jews themselves generally objected to such an exploitation of their history, traditions, and existence.

## Geert Wilders and the Nationalist-Populist Turn Toward the Jews in Europe

*David J. Wertheim*

In 2013, the World Jewish Congress decided to convene in Hungary. Its president, Ronald Lauder, wrote an article that was published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to explain this decision. Describing Hungary as “a xenophobic and increasingly antisemitic country,” he justified this choice as follows:

The number of anti-Semitic or anti-Roma statements increased dramatically in recent years, and some of them have come from senior members of the prime minister’s party or his government (...) it is for this reason that the World Jewish Congress will hold its Plenary Assembly meeting in Budapest in May. We want to send a strong signal that Hungary—home to the third-largest Jewish community in the European Union—is on a dangerous track. (...) [B]ut I still hope that the leader of this country will find his political compass again and change course. Hopefully before it’s too late.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald S. Lauder, “Viktor Orbán has lost his political compass,” 4 April 2013, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/Y5dv8F>

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Since Victor Orbán has been in office, mandated by an absolute majority, he has aroused widespread concern about the functioning of liberal democracy in Hungary. The constitution explicitly “recognizes the role of Christianity in preserving [Hungarian] nationhood,”<sup>2</sup> endangers freedom of media, and—to the dismay of historians—denies Hungary’s own responsibility for the Hungarian Holocaust.<sup>3</sup> Other controversial initiatives of the Orbán government are: legislation that makes it possible to arbitrarily deprive churches in Hungary of official designation; changes in the electoral system to Fidesz’s advantage; the extension of government influence on the appointment of judges; and the distribution of Hungarian passports to ethnic Hungarians living across Hungary’s boundaries, to stress Hungarian territorial claims outside its borders.<sup>4</sup>

But whoever thought that Orbán’s style of exercising power would entail an attempt to denounce or ignore this move by the WJC was in for a surprise. Orbán not only accepted the WJC’s invitation to speak, he did everything he could to ban a demonstration against the WJC by Hungary’s far-right and openly antisemitic Jobbik party, and the tone of his speech, rather than defensive, apologetic, or perhaps latently antisemitic, was self-congratulatory and appreciative of Jews. Not only did he refer to the Talmud, pride himself that under his lead Hungary had been fighting antisemitism, and state that the constitution ensured true protection to the Jewish people and all minorities, “who live side by side with us,” he also credited the Jewish people for inspiring the Hungarian nation and for the support it allegedly gave to his controversial policies. Discussing the issue of ethnic Hungarians living in Hungary’s neighboring countries and the controversy on the new constitution, he said:

<sup>2</sup> Hungarian Government, “The New Fundamental Law of Hungary,” accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/q01TuY>

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Ország-Land, “New Hungarian Constitution Shirks Responsibility for the Holocaust,” *New English Review*, September 2011, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/Fkljur>

<sup>4</sup> Keno Verseck, “Amendment Alarms Opposition: Orbán Cements His Power with New Voting Law,” *Spiegel Online*, 30 October 2012, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://bit.ly/1KONhHc>; Christoph Schult, “Fair Trial at Risk: Report Slams Hungary’s New Constitution,” *Spiegel Online*, 12 March 2012, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/vmtRAB>; editorial, “Hungary’s strongest leader targets the media,” *The Washington Post*, 19 July 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/3idi>; Erasmus (religion and public policy column), “A slippery Magyar slope,” *The Economist*, 25 September 2014, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/IOI2J3>

It is here that I remember those Jewish communities who stood up for the rights of Hungarians living beyond our borders and for the dual nationality of Hungarians. It is here that I must mention the loud and open support expressed by Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger during the course of international debate on our Constitution. Their support is living reassurance and encouragement of the fact that our work is not in vain.<sup>5</sup>

These were not the words of an antisemite, and antisemitic supporters of his party would not likely appreciate them. But this speech went further than just a strongly worded rejection of antisemitism. Orbán not only denounced antisemitism, he also recognized the Jews as allies in his fight for international acceptance for his controversial policies including “the rights of Hungarians living beyond our borders” and the new constitution.<sup>6</sup>

Orbán’s popularity is part of a surge of nationalist sentiment throughout Europe in the post-Cold-War and post 9/11 era, which may also be perceived in the advance of nationalist-populist movements in many other European countries such as the Front National in France, the Vlaams Belang in Belgium, Pegida in Germany, Lega Nord in Italy, UKIP in the United Kingdom, and the PVV in the Netherlands. These may themselves prefer the term patriotic, which has less negative connotations, but what matters is that they all emphasize the importance of an—often exclusivist—national identity and argue that this identity should be protected, cherished, and strengthened. They do so by rallying on a number of issues, sometimes with a particular emphasis such as Islamophobia (in the Netherlands), euroscepticism (in England), separatism (in Belgium), anticultural relativism, or a combination of these. Orbán’s strategy in dealing with the World Jewish Congress reflects a trend among these movements, in which they are more and more turning toward the Jews in efforts to seek alliances, gain respectability, and in some cases also anchor their ideology.

<sup>5</sup> Complete text of speeches by Viktor Orbán, Péter Feldmájer, and Ronald Lauder at World Jewish Congress meeting, 6 May 2013, Politics.hu, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/ZgY8ee>

<sup>6</sup> In a speech in 2015, he has also accepted Hungarian responsibility for the Hungarian Holocaust. Speaking of the Second World War, he said: “we were love-less and indifferent when we should have helped, and there were many, very many Hungarians who chose evil over good, who chose shameful acts instead of honest ones.” Marton Dunai “Orban acknowledges some Hungarians’ chose evil over good”, *Reuters*, accessed 23 September 2015, <http://reut.rs/1LgzPj5>

This “Jewish turn” is all the more remarkable since nationalist sentiment has a long history of generating antisemitism. When nationalism became a dominating ideology throughout Europe in the course of the nineteenth century, Jews, branded as cosmopolitans and accused of holding dual loyalties, became its natural adversary. The ideologues of antisemitism such as Édouard Drumont, Richard Wagner, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Julius Langbehn, and many others all viewed antisemitism as a necessary barrier to protect the integrity of their respective national cultures. As Drumont wrote in his antisemitic pamphlet *La France Juive*, “What is not said is the encroachment of the Jewish element in the painful agony of such a generous nation, the role which it has played in the destruction of France, the introduction of a foreign element in an organism, which until then remained healthy.”<sup>7</sup>

We see outbursts of antisemitism parallel to many moments of national enthusiasm. In Hungary, for instance, the anticomunist period of White Terror that established the nationalist Horthy regime went hand in hand with antisemitic violence and measures. In Germany, there have been waves of antisemitism with the victory against Napoleon, the unification of Germany in 1871, the First World War, and the nationalist rebellion against the Weimar Republic, which eventually led to Nazism. In France, the Dreyfus affair spurred fears of Jewish national disloyalty. Of course, we only need to read the Magna Carta of antisemitism, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, to see how Jews were portrayed as an international conspiratorial secret power with the explicit purpose of undermining the sovereignty of various nations. After the Second World War, the pairing of nationalism and antisemitism continued. The far right expressed its nationalism through neo-Nazism, antisemitism, and Holocaust denial. In fact, this pairing and the legacy of the Holocaust became an important factor in the bad reputation nationalism acquired in this era. “Nazi” and “Fascist” became common terms with which to bring anything that reeked of nationalism into disrepute.

In the twenty-first century, however, we suddenly see a very different picture. In this change, the Netherlands has taken the lead. During the second half of the twentieth century, the nationalist agenda in the Netherlands, as elsewhere, was left to the extreme right parties. Some, such as the NVU, held antisemitic views and glorified Hitler. Others, like the Centrumpartij that achieved parliamentary representation in the 1980s, did not show such signs but also lacked a strong view on Jewish themes.

<sup>7</sup> Édouard Drumont, *La France Juive*, (Paris: C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1883), 17.

This changed when a number of politicians did manage to gain considerable electoral success with an agenda emphasizing the importance of strong Dutch national identity. They were preceded in the 1990s by Frits Bolkestein, the leader of the Dutch conservative liberal party, the VVD, who was soon overtaken by Pim Fortuyn in 2002, then Rita Verdonk, and, most strongly, Geert Wilders. With the exception of Frits Bolkestein, all these politicians founded new parties that enjoyed strong popular support, and they all made an important point of supporting Israel and fighting antisemitism.<sup>8</sup>

I will limit myself, when it comes to the Dutch case, to Wilders and his party, the PVV. Not only does his party seem to be the most enduring and his nationalist-populist agenda the most fundamental, but his and his party's positive attitude to the Jews was and is by far the most conspicuous. Wilders formed the PVV in 2004 after having served as an MP for the VVD in the Dutch Parliament since 1997. His party achieved a win of 24 of the 150 seats in the 2010 elections, which resulted in the formation of a government that depended on his party's parliamentary support. As a result, Wilders gained access to executive power as he was invited to participate in negotiations on government policy and allowed to have a say in the appointment of cabinet ministers. Since causing that government to fall in 2012, his political influence seems to be waning, but not however his popularity. His party manages to continue to top the polls on a regular basis.<sup>9</sup>

National pride is an important element in Wilders's view. It complements his concerns about Islamization and mass immigration as well as his euroscepticism (the 2012–2017 party program of the PVV is called “*their Brussels, our Netherlands*”),<sup>10</sup> and it is manifested in an unapologetic employment of common but also long-forgotten national symbols.<sup>11</sup> Remarkably, this pride is accompanied by a tremendous admiration for Israel

<sup>8</sup> In 2003, Frits Bolkestein warned about Muslim antisemitism during a remembrance speech for the *Kristallnacht*; later he caused widespread debate by warning that thanks to antisemitism within the Muslim community, it had become impossible for sentient Jews to live in the Netherlands, and in 2014 he participated in a solidarity demonstration for Israel. Fortuyn even wrote a book about Israel: Pim Fortuyn, *50 jaar Israël, hoe lang nog?: Tegen het tolereren van fundamentalisme* (Utrecht: Bruna, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> “Ontwikkeling politieke voorkeur sinds september 2013,” *Peil.nl*, 5 August 2015, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://www.noties.nl/peil.nl/>

<sup>10</sup> Partij voor de Vrijheid, “*Hun Brussel, Ons Nederland*,” 2012, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/6L1J00>

<sup>11</sup> For instance, the *prinsenvlag* (the orange-white-blue flag) used by the Orangists during the Dutch Revolt and the figure of Michiel de Ruyter (portrayed as a national hero).

and the Jewish people. This manifests itself in many ways. Wilders himself lived in Israel for two years and has visited the country, he has often proudly asserted, more than 40 times.<sup>12</sup> In parliamentary debates, the PVV shows itself to be a strong supporter of Israel, adopting positions that in Israel are quite far right on the political spectrum. In 2010, for example, Wilders told an audience in Tel Aviv that “the Jewish villages and cities in Judea and Samaria are ideological outposts of freedom, and no hindrance to peace”<sup>13</sup> and that there was no need for a Palestinian State because Jordan was, in fact, Palestine. He entertains a close relationship with Avigdor Lieberman,<sup>14</sup> the leader of the nationalist revisionist Zionist party Yisrael Beiteinu, who served as Israel’s foreign minister from 2009 to 2012 and again from 2013 to 2015 and became defense minister in 2016. When Israel’s hawkish prime minister Ariel Sharon died, he traveled to Israel to attend the funeral and used the occasion to post a tweet with a picture of himself at the Wailing Wall.<sup>15</sup> Martin Bosma, the party’s main ideologue, decorated his room with the largest Israeli flag he could find during a trip to Tel-Aviv, as well as with a text from Isaiah that he also used—in Hebrew—as the motto for his book on the ideology of the PVV.<sup>16</sup>

Wilders gives a number of reasons for his and his party’s support of Israel. First of all, in his eyes it is a front line in the war on Islam. Wilders argues that “The jihad against Israel isn’t against Israel only. It’s against the whole West.”<sup>17</sup> To him, therefore, “Israel is the canary in the coal mine,”<sup>18</sup> or in the words of Martin Bosma, “If the armies of Hezbollah and Hamas march through the streets of Tel Aviv, Amsterdam and Paris will be lost.”<sup>19</sup>

The *prinsenvlag* was later also used by the Dutch national socialist party NSB and the South African Boeren, and its use by the PVV therefore caused controversy.

<sup>12</sup> Isi Leibler, “Geert Wilders and European Democracy,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 February 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/pQfYiA>

<sup>13</sup> Geert Wilders, “Speech Geert Wilders, Tel Aviv,” *Geert Wilders Weblog*, 5 December 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/YDp6C6>

<sup>14</sup> “Wilders spreekt met Liebermann,” *NRC*, 4 December 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/YvBs3R>

<sup>15</sup> Geert Wilders, 13 January 2014, accessed 5 August 2015, <https://goo.gl/KDQOOS>

<sup>16</sup> Martin Bosma, *De schijn-élite van de valse munters* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010), 219.

<sup>17</sup> David Horovitz, “Dutch ‘values’ party head set to gain seats in current election,” *Jerusalem Post*, 6 September 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/3UG8rG>

<sup>18</sup> Idem.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Bosma, *De schijn-élite*, 275.

But it is not just a front line in the sense that Israel represents some distant dam protecting the West against the “tsunami of Islamization.”<sup>20</sup> His anti-Islam agenda may indeed make Jews an obvious ally—his enemies enemy are his friends—but Wilders’s turn to the Jews runs deeper: For Wilders, as the Jewish State, Israel embodies an integral part of Western culture; “We in the West” he repeatedly states “are all Israel.”<sup>21</sup> Following authors like Bat Ye’or and Pim Fortuyn,<sup>22</sup> Wilders defines this West as founded upon Judeo-Christian and humanistic values. As “the cradle of the Judeo-Christian tradition,” Jerusalem belongs to its spiritual essence.<sup>23</sup>

Besides his support for Israel, Wilders’s turn to a nationalism that embraces the Jewish people is expressed by his fondness of viewing himself as treading in the footsteps of those who fought Nazism. He views antisemitism expressed by Muslims as evidence of the danger inherent in Islam and designates Islam a “fascist ideology.”<sup>24</sup> He also likes to state that the Koran contains more antisemitic passages than *Mein Kampf*,<sup>25</sup> and at the very end of his movie *Fitna*, a text appears calling for defeat of “the Islamic Ideology,” the same way that “Nazism was defeated in Europe.”<sup>26</sup> Bosma did something similar with another enemy of the PVV, the socialists, by provocatively declaring that Hitler was a socialist, since Hitler had once said that to be a socialist one has to be an antisemite.<sup>27</sup> This inclination to identify with the enemies of Nazism also permeates his rhetoric. On several occasions, he employed the word “resistance,” a word with obvious connotations connected to the fight against Nazism, to voice his

<sup>20</sup> Geert Wilders, “De tsunami van de islamisering moet stoppen,” *Volkskrant*, 18 November 2006, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/b2gtmK>

<sup>21</sup> Isi Leibler, “Geert Wilders and European Democracy,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 February 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/pQfYiA>

<sup>22</sup> Bat Ye’or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 9; Pim Fortuyn, *De verweesde samenleving in het informatietijdperk* (Amsterdam: van Gennep, 2001), 41.

<sup>23</sup> The notion of a Christian-Judeo tradition has been analyzed and criticized, see for instance: Slabodsky, Santiago, *DeColonial Judaism: Triumphal Failures of Barbaric Thinking*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Nathan, Emmanuel, and Anya Topolski (eds.), *Is There a Judeo-Christian Tradition?: A European Perspective* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Geert Wilders, “Genoeg is genoeg: verbied de Koran,” *PVV.nl*, 8 August 2007, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/YdqBFu>

<sup>25</sup> Geert Wilders, “Genoeg is genoeg”.

<sup>26</sup> “Fitna the Movie,” *youtube.com*, 30 December 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <https:// goo.gl/guF0Nj>

<sup>27</sup> Martin Bosma, *De schijn-élite*, 256.

criticism against the Dutch government: his party created a “resistance app,” and he launched a “petition for resistance.”<sup>28</sup> When in 2015 he finally succeeded in forming a faction in Europe, he announced his success during a press conference as the “liberation of Europe” and coined the day it happened “D-Day.”<sup>29</sup> In short, by claiming to be the heir of Hitler’s enemies, the PVV claims to be the true ally of the Jews.

But there is a third reason for his admiration of the Jewish people, a reason that directly relates to the nationalism of the PVV. Wilders phrased this reason quite clearly in a speech he delivered in Los Angeles in 2009. In the speech, he justifies his national pride by referring to the Jewish historical experience of having founded a state. It was tellingly titled, “The Resurgence of National Pride and the Future of Europe” and ended with the following passage:

The Jewish people did exactly the opposite of what the Europeans did after the Second World War. They drew the right conclusion. They realized that without a nation-state of their own there could be no safety for their people. Without a nation-state, without self-governance, without self-determination, there can be no security for a people nor preservation of its identity. This was the insight that led the Zionists to strive for the reestablishment of the state of Israel. Theodore Herzl said that there had to be a Jewish state in order to ensure—I quote—“a new blossoming of the Jewish spirit”—end of quote. Indeed, a soul needs a body. The spirit of a people cannot flourish outside the body of the nation-state. The nation-state is the political body in which we live. We must preserve and cherish it. So that we can pass on to our children our national identity, our democracy, our liberty. My friends, what we need today is Zionism for the nations of Europe. The Europeans need to follow the example of the Jewish people and reestablish their nation-state. And that, my dear friends, is why every patriot, apart from being a democrat, by definition also has to be a true friend of Israel. A patriot cannot be anti-Semitic. My friends, the great Zionist leader Ze’ev Jabotinsky said about the Jewish people: “We do not have to apologize for anything. We are a people as all other peoples; we do not have any intentions to be better than the rest. We do not have to account to anybody. We are what we are, we are good for ourselves, we will not change, nor do we want to.”—end of quote. And so it is. For all the peoples. We do not have to apologize for being good to ourselves. We do not have to change if we do not want to change. Let

<sup>28</sup> “Tekenen verzet aan,” [www.tekenverzetaan.nl](http://www.tekenverzetaan.nl), accessed 5 August 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Frans Boogaard, “Wilders vergelijkt start extreemrechtse fractie met D-day,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, 17 June 2015, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/RQflmE>

us fly the flags of all the free and proud nations of the world over embassies in Jerusalem, the only true capital of Israel and the cradle of our Judeo-Christian civilization. Israel deserves our support. Not only because it is the front line against the totalitarian threat of Islam, but also because it shows how important it is for a people to have its own homeland.”<sup>30</sup>

Wilders’s case is not devoid of historical irony. Herzl thought the Jews needed a nation-state only because in his eyes all the other nations also had such a state. Now Wilders justifies his disappointment that non-Jewish states have neglected the spirit of their nation-states with recourse to this very Zionism. But if European states had indeed neglected their national identity, Herzl’s motivations of having a Jewish state would have been considerably weakened. It could well be argued that if there had been so little national pride in Europe as according to Wilders is the current state of affairs, Herzl would have never developed his political Zionism.

We see that Wilders’s new nationalism is not based upon the traditional exclusion of the Jews, but rather their inclusion. For Wilders, who thinks in strong dichotomies of “us” and “them,” the Jews are on the “us” side, the good side. And by putting them there, he is using them for his definition of the wrong side, the “them,” which is primarily the Muslims, but includes his other enemies such as the “socialist elites” and cosmopolitan Europeans. It is noteworthy that all three groups were in the past frequently put together with the Jews and are now suddenly placed at the other—good—side of the nationalist fence.

Does this make Wilders a philosemite? Is his love for the Jews authentic? This may or may not be. What *is* clear, however, is that Wilders thus uses the Jew as legitimization for the ideological foundations of his policies. But this use legitimizes him on another level as well: it also helps to present his party as a decent, respectable party that has to be distinguished from other—racist—parties with a similar nationalist agenda, but which do have antisemitic and neo-Nazi sympathies. Indeed, Wilders’s attitude toward the Jews makes it difficult or even impossible to incorporate him in lists of extreme right and neo-Nazi parties. When a report on polarization and radicalization in the Netherlands was issued in 2009, commissioned by the Dutch government, an alternative—“nieuw rechts radical” (new radical right)—for the commonly used expression “extreme right”

<sup>30</sup> Geert Wilders, “The Resurgence of National Pride and the Future of Europe,” Geert Wilders Weblog, 9 June 2013, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/BvTfhS>

had to be developed precisely for this reason.<sup>31</sup> But we can best see how Wilders's appropriation of Jewish causes makes his party respectable at those moments when the PVV takes stances that do not comply with the party's admiration for Judaism and Israel. This has, for example, been the case with the debate on ritual slaughter.

Besides considering itself an animal rights party, the PVV considers halal slaughter one of the excesses of Islam. In 2007, for example, it asked parliamentary questions about the fact that there was a halal meal on the menu of the restaurant of the Dutch Parliament,<sup>32</sup> and in 2011 it voted for a law banning ritual slaughter, resulting in a parliamentary majority for this law. In practice, this ban entailed also a ban on kosher slaughter and thus seemed to contradict the PVV's support for Jewish causes. The vote indeed produced controversy: it was cited by several dissident MPs of the PVV as a reason for wanting to leave the party. One such politician called the ban (which eventually did not come about) an "anti-Jewish measure."<sup>33</sup> Another traveled to the United States to warn Jewish organizations in the United States he believed were inclined to support the PVV that "Wilders legitimizes antisemitism."<sup>34</sup> Arie Slob, the leader of a small Christian party, tweeted that thanks to this vote the PVV had no rights any more to base itself on the Judeo-Christian tradition. These were principled attacks on the PVV, aimed not at its policies but at its justification as a party, and they could only be made because of its otherwise exceptionally affirmative attitude toward Judaism.

Something similar has happened in preparations for the European elections of 2014, when Wilders approached leaders of other parties in Europe from which he previously had held his distance because of their tainted, neo-Nazi roots. His goal was to establish a European fraction, for which he needed to collaborate with seven like-minded parties. He openly talked to politicians whose parties had in the past been associated with the extreme right, such as Vlaams Belang leaders Filip Dewinter and Gerlof Annemans in Belgium, FPÖ leader Heinrich Strache in Austria,

<sup>31</sup> Hans Moors, Lenke Baloch, Jaap van Donselaar, and Bob de Graaff, *Polarisatie en radicalisering in Nederland* (Tilburg: IVA, 2009), 19.

<sup>32</sup> "Halal bol schiet PVV in verkeerde keelgat," NRC, 19 December 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/5ULQxt>

<sup>33</sup> "Hernandez: Wilders heeft me gewoon in de steek gelaten," *Frontbencher.nl*, 4 September 2012, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/ys4iFW>

<sup>34</sup> "PVV legitimeert antisemitisme," *www.nu.nl*, 21 August 2012, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/OR7YYk>

and Front National leader Marine le Pen in France. After each meeting, he tweeted how impressed he was by these people. This led to articles in Dutch mainstream media such as an article by René Cuperus, who argued that “Dutch Populism has lost its innocence definitively” and that the “PVV has trodden outside the footsteps of Pim Fortuyn,”<sup>35</sup> or an article on the well-read website Geenstijl, where in discussing Wilders’s meeting with Filip Dewinter it was pointed out that “the ghost of antisemitism”<sup>36</sup> is present in Dewinter’s party and that Wilders had had himself photographed between Gerolf Annemans and Filip Dewinter, two people who had commemorated Flemish SS soldiers who had been killed. Now too there was criticism from politicians who had left the PVV, who argued that this was the reason they left. In short, to these people the PVV had lost its respectability because it had compromised its pro-Jewish views.

But even if these voices were right that Wilders had crossed the Rubicon in approaching these parties, it should be taken into account that his appropriation of Jewish themes had gained ground within these parties as well. The pro-Israel stance and the reference to Judeo-Christian values are rapidly becoming an integral part of the common values of nationalist-populist movements in other European countries. This is particularly striking as most of these movements, unlike the PVV, had pasts tarnished with Holocaust denial, antisemitism, and neo-Nazism.

A good case in point is Marine Le Pen, the leader of the Front National in France and the successor of her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Jean-Marie Le Pen had been and has always been under attack because of statements arguing that the Nazi gas chambers were “a point of detail”<sup>37</sup> in history, claiming that Chirac had signed a pact with the Jewish organization B’nai B’rith to keep Le Pen out of government, and that Vichy France bore no responsibility for the deportations of the French Jews.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> René Cuperus, “Nederlands populisme verliest onschuld,” *Volkskrant*, 8 June 2013, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/zXixqM>

<sup>36</sup> Bas Paternotte, “Wilders, Dewinter, de joden en de SS,” *Geenstijl*, 23 June 2013, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/jCcVLQ>

<sup>37</sup> “Jean-Marie Le Pen récidive sur le ‘point de détail’,” *LeMonde.fr*, 2 February 2015, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/IVntYJ>

<sup>38</sup> “Le Pen dénonce un ‘pacte’ entre l’UMP et une organisation juive,” *L’Express*, 2 December 2012, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/n3muB4>; “Quand Jean-Marie Le Pen défend Vichy et le maréchal Pétain,” *LeMonde.fr*, 26 April 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/3EAwJq>

Although her father was for a long time active in the party, as are others who questioned the Holocaust, such as MEP Bruno Gollnisch, Marine Le Pen worked hard to repair the antisemitic reputation of the Front National. In 2011, she gave an interview in the French magazine *Le Point* where she said that the Holocaust was the height of barbarism, she tried to arrange an official visit to Israel,<sup>39</sup> and she traveled to the United States to talk to Jewish community leaders and the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations. Her partner Louis Aliot did go to Israel to campaign among French Jews<sup>40</sup> and said that both the Front National and Jews defended common Greek-Roman and Judeo-Christian values.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, she tolerated her father in her party until 2015, when after yet another antisemitic remark she finally felt forced to commit the political patricide she seemed to have hoped to avoid and threw him out of the party he had founded.<sup>42</sup>

A similar development can be seen with Filip Dewinter, the leader of the Vlaams Belang and before that of the Vlaams Blok, which has a reputation for commemorating the Flemish nationalists who during the Second World War openly collaborated with the Germans. Filip Dewinter was himself filmed in 1988 during a neo-Nazi rally near the cemetery in Lommel, meant to commemorate Flemish SS soldiers buried there. However, this party is also trying to change its tone. In 2003, Filip Dewinter gave an interview to the Jewish newspaper *Mishpacha*. Here he said that certain religions, including the Jewish religion, define our national identity. “We think of them [the Jews] highly, our problem is with the Islamic community.”<sup>43</sup> In 2010, he traveled to Israel to speak at a right-wing conference. There he said:

<sup>39</sup> Marine Le Pen: les camps nazis, “summmum de la barbarie” *LePoint*, 3 February 2011, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/wi8QO6>; Hans-Georg Betz, “Mosques, Minarets, Burqas and Other Essential Threats: The Populist Right’s Campaign against Islam in Western Europe,” in *Right Wing Populism in Europe*, ed. Ruth Wodak, Majid Khosravinik, and Brigitte Mal (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 77.

<sup>40</sup> Yair Ettinger, “French National Front Heads to Israel to Stump for Support Ahead of Election,” 13 December 2011, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/fVfkfA>

<sup>41</sup> Hans-Georg Betz, “Mosques, Minarets, Burqas and Other Essential Threats: The Populist Right’s Campaign against Islam in Western Europe,” in *Right Wing Populism in Europe*, ed. Ruth Wodak, Majid Khosravinik, and Brigitte Mal (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 78.

<sup>42</sup> Kim Willsher, “Jean-Marie Le Pen suspended after Front National disciplinary hearing,” 4 May 2015, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/3DXHDW>

<sup>43</sup> “Vlaams Blok werft stemmen onder Antwerpse joden” *Nederlands Dagblad*, 16 May 2003, accessed 5 August 2015, <https://goo.gl/MoIQyE>

Israel lives and exists on the front line of the clash of civilizations. The Israeli-Arab conflict embodies the battle between Western civilization and radical Islam. The battle between those who love freedom and those who want to subjugate the world to Muslim theocracy. (...) There is much to learn from the courage and the perseverance of the Jewish People, the people of Israel. A people and a nation that realized the dream of a state. A people and nation that are taking the blows meant for all of us, for decennia. (...) Israel is the outpost of our civilization.<sup>44</sup>

And then there is Heinz Christian Strache of the FPÖ, the Austrian Freedom Party, which in the past was led by Jörg Haider. As a university student, Strache, whose grandfather served in the Waffen SS, had close ties with neo-Nazis. But in 2010 he went to Israel with a group of other right-wing leaders including Filip Dewinter. They visited Yad Vashem and signed there the so-called Jerusalem Declaration, in which Israel's right to defend itself was underlined, as was the Judeo-Christian culture in the name of which it had this right.

How seriously do we have to take this turnaround? To Wilders it is highly relevant: in the speech he gave in Los Angeles, he announced his intention to meet like-minded politicians: "In the coming weeks and months, I will try to see as many patriot leaders in Europe as possible. And I always ask them for their views on Israel. Because Israel is the litmus proof."<sup>45</sup> As we saw, Wilders tweeted after every meeting how impressed he was by the particular party leader with whom he spoke. It appears, therefore, that they all passed his test. It has, however, not convinced every one of the sincerity of Wilders's new friends, and it also shed further doubt on his own sincerity in categorically rejecting antisemitism.

Especially for parties that have antisemitic roots, rejecting antisemitism is difficult. It means that they need not only to change their rhetoric but also to admit past mistakes and even dispose of their founders. In his attempts to befriend the Jewish community, Filip Dewinter may have steered his party away from neo-Nazi tendencies, but he has never admitted that his party is rooted in them, let alone apologized for them. We already saw that Marine Le Pen waited a long time before she threw out her father,

<sup>44</sup> Filip Dewinter, "Toespraak Filip Dewinter—Colloquium 'De strijd tegen radicale islam en moslimterorisme: een kwestie van zelfverdediging,'" *Filip Dewinter zegt wat u denkt*, 7 December 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/7jtqV7>

<sup>45</sup> Geert Wilders, "The Resurgence of National Pride and the Future of Europe" Geert Wilders Weblog, 9 June 2013, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/BvTfhS>

and Bruno Gollnisch is still an MEP of the Front National. As for Hans Christian Strache, he continues to be accused of antisemitism. In 2012, he posted a cartoon on his Facebook page featuring a man symbolizing the banks, depicted in classic antisemitic fashion: ugly, with a large nose and little Stars of David as cufflinks. Another scandal happened when he visited Yad Vashem and covered his head with a *Biertönnchen*, a particular kind of hat belonging to his fraternity that had a history of strong antisemitism.<sup>46</sup> In Germany, the Pegida movement managed to gain momentum as long as it remained free from antisemitic tendencies, but it fell into a crisis the moment a picture of its leader disguised as Hitler turned up in the press.<sup>47</sup>

Obviously, such incidents cast serious doubts on the question of how wholeheartedly the rejection of antisemitism is within these parties. On several occasions, Jewish organizations in European countries such as France and the Netherlands, but also in Israel and the United States, voiced concern about parties like the PVV and the Front National.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, the support of nationalist-populist movements for Israel and the fight against Islamization in the name of the Jewish-Christian heritage makes other Jews sympathize with them. Israeli politicians of Yisrael Beiteinu and the Likud have set up meetings with Wilders, Strache, Filip Dewinter, and other nationalist-populist leaders.<sup>49</sup> In Austria, David Lasar is a Jewish active member of the FPÖ, sitting on its behalf in the Wiener Landesregierung.<sup>50</sup> In the Netherlands, Gidi Markuszower, who was active in several Jewish organizations, including as treasurer of the Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap (the national organization of the orthodox Ashkenazy Jewish Communities in the Netherlands) and as a board member of the Centraal Joods Overleg (an organization that negotiates with the Dutch government on issues concerning the Jewish community such as restitution funds), even assumed a seat in the Upper Chamber (Senate) of the Dutch Parliament for the PVV. He accused the Jews critical of Wilders of “treason” and “having a degree in ostrich

<sup>46</sup> Hans-Georg Betz, “Mosques, Minarets, Burqas”, 80.

<sup>47</sup> “Pegida-Chef posierte als Hitler!,” *Bild*, 21 January 2015, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Jigal Krant, “Een rode kaart,” *NIW*, 27 March 2014, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/agDDqO>; “Republicans Slammed for Invitation to Anti-Islam Dutch Politician,” *Forward*, 28 April 2015, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/pELNg6>; Adar Primor, “The Unholy Alliance between Israel’s Right and Europe’s Anti-Semites,” *Haaretz*, 12 December 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/hPbGZH>

<sup>49</sup> Charles Hawley, “The Likud Connection: Europe’s Right-Wing Populists Find Allies in Israel,” *Spiegel Online*, 29 July 2011, accessed 29 September 2015, <http://goo.gl/UXsF44>

<sup>50</sup> “Lebenslauf David Lasar,” *Wien.at*, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/xOx3do>

politics” because they are afraid and “hope things will turn around, as Jews have often hoped, until they woke up found themselves in line for Auschwitz.”<sup>51</sup> A poll in France revealed that 13.5% of French Jews voted for the Front National in 2012, at a time when Jean-Marie Le Pen was still its honorary president and active as an MEP.

In the end, whatever the answer or the question of the sincerity of the right-wing nationalist turn toward the Jews should be, it is clear that it is expedient to them. And here lies the biggest significance of the fact that Jews, who were perceived in the past as cosmopolitans with international loyalties and were always a natural antagonist of national movements in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have become their justification in the twenty-first century. Although every diminishment of anti-semitism should obviously be welcomed at any time, I do not think this development has changed the nature of nationalism as an inherently intolerant movement set on self-justification through exclusivist agendas toward minorities considered to be foreign. And in spite of the important historical developments such as the foundation of Israel, I also do not think Jews have changed either. There were nationalist tendencies in Jewish culture, as well as cosmopolitan tendencies both before this change and after it. What did change—perhaps due to a process of ongoing popularization of the media—was that extreme right-wing parties became or were overshadowed by populist right parties: the leaders of the latter have an acute awareness of popular perceptions and tend to formulate their political agenda and ideology in a way that connects to such tendencies. In doing so, they realized that in their age, nationalism is more likely to find popular resonance if it aligns itself with Jewish causes instead of opposing them. They are becoming aware that modern European nations define themselves in new ways, in which the traditional fear of “Jewish” cosmopolitanism has been replaced by a collective memory in which Jews are to be embraced and appropriated rather than being feared. These new footings of national self-identification include the liberation from Nazism and as such the liberation *of* the Jews. They also include fear of Muslim culture, which is perceived as much more foreign than the familiar European presence of Jews and therefore as contesting a contrived Judeo-Christian-humanist culture. In other words, what the new parties show is that popular attitudes toward Jews have changed. After all, a change of attitude toward the Jews has proved itself as a necessary requirement for electoral success.

<sup>51</sup> Pauline Wieseman, “Je eigen groep afvallen is verraad,” *Trouw*, 10 July 2010, accessed 5 August 2015, <http://goo.gl/JspF7g>

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