

Chapter 4

The Social Incorporation of The Negative Myth Of the Jews in Christendom

This chapter will summarize the way in which the negative myth of the Jew, developed in the patristic *adversos Judaeos* tradition, was incorporated into the legal status of the Jew in Christendom. This inferiorized legal status, legislated as a direct interpretation of the Church's doctrine about the Jews, was then passed on to the Middle Ages. This legacy gradually resulted in a loss of all civil rights, as well as an economic role that made the Jew both hated and vulnerable to violence from below and arbitrary action from above, until finally one arrives at that state of total vilification, rightlessness, and ghettoization that was to characterize Jewish life in Western Christendom from the later Middle Ages to the Emancipation. This medieval heritage lasted for the Jew up to our own century, for the Emancipation was not completed in western Europe until 1870, and in Germany full citizenship only came with the Weimar Republic, while traditional ghetto life continued in eastern Europe until Nazism swept away this world in the Holocaust. As the social status and its theological rationale, fashioned for the Jew in Christendom, were dissolving in modern Europe, hatred of the Jew was reasserted in the form of racial anti-Semitism, to become the theoretical argument for the "final solution to the Jewish question" which broke apart the limits of the Christian anti-Judaic theory. This chapter can be no

more than a superficial sketch. But for the Christian for whom Jewish history since 70 C.E. is a blank, it may give some guidelines for understanding the links between Christian anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism.

The Nazis, of course, were not Christians. They were indeed anti-Christian, despite their ability to co-opt the Church qua "German Christianity." Nevertheless, the Church must bear a substantial responsibility for a tragic history of the Jew in Christendom which was the foundation upon which political anti-Semitism and the Nazi use of it was erected. This chapter will show the stages by which this tragedy unfolded from its original root in the patristic theological image of the Jew. This story cannot be traced in conclusive detail here, for to do so would itself be a book of many volumes and not simply a chapter. Rather, this chapter only offers a sketch that will clarify the way in which the theological doctrine of the Jew interacted with legal, economic, political, and social factors to structure Jewish life in Christian history to its terrible consequences, giving references to the sources and many detailed studies where aspects of this history are pursued in greater depth.

1. *The Jews in the Christian Roman Empire from Constantine to Justinian*

The anti-Judaic arguments, which were examined in the previous chapter, grew to a fixed standpoint between the apostolic period and the fourth century. These arguments were repeated over and over again in every Christian sermon, biblical commentary, or theological tract that touched on the Jews in some way. And since the Church continued to claim Jewish history and the Jewish Scriptures as its own history and scripture, and to understand itself as the heir to the election of Israel, it was difficult to preach or teach anything without touching on the Jews in some way. In the first third of the fourth century, Christianity was transformed from a persecuted faith into the established religion of the empire. What had previously been the hostile tradition of an illegal sect toward its parental faith now became the official creed of the civil religion of the Christian

Roman Empire. In less than fifty years, Orthodox Christianity elevated itself from a position of toleration to that of the exclusive religion of the empire. By the reign of Theodosius I (378–95), the faith and practices of pagans and heretics became illegal. Their temples and churches were destroyed or confiscated. Their very existence was proscribed.¹

In regard to the Jews, however, the situation was more complicated. Judaism was the only dissenting and non-Christian faith that was to remain legal in Christendom. Its status, both as a pariah religion and as a religion tolerated minimally in this pariah status, was unique. This peculiar status resulted from a combination of the earlier position of Judaism in pagan Roman law and the relation of Judaism to Christianity in Christian theology. As a result of the final compromise between the polytheistic empire and this stubborn monotheistic people, pagan Rome had given Judaism a special protected status. With Caracalla, the Jews became full Roman citizens. Their right to worship and to govern their own communities through their own religious institutions was guaranteed. Their exemption from government service involving pagan worship gave them a privileged status in relation to other groups, although remnants of their humiliation in the Hadrianic laws remained in the form of the *fiscus Judaicus*, the exclusion from Jerusalem, and the prohibition against circumcizing non-Jews. Economically, the Jews occupied variegated roles and were not set apart from the rest of the community by special occupations. The Syrians, not the Jews, were the chief merchants who traveled the trade routes from East to West in the late imperial period until the advent of Islam. Jews occupied an economic range from wealthy to poor, but fell mostly into the lower middle class. They were by no means exclusively an urban group in the Diaspora. Jewish agriculturalists were normal in Spain and Africa. In the legislation that was soon to be decreed against them in the Christian empire, economic grievances are never cited as a motivation.² It is solely the theological image of the Jew and the desire of Church and state to reflect this in social segregation that is reflected in these laws.

Christian theology, while it decreed misery for the Jews as their historical status before God, did not advocate extermina-

tion. On the contrary, the official view of the Church guaranteed the ongoing existence of Judaism. Although the vituperations of clerics and theologians often fell into language that suggested that the Jews should be killed, the official theory excluded the "final solution" as an option here and now. Judaism was to exist until the end of time, but as an empty religion that had lost its elect status and inner spiritual power. It was to continue to exist in a pariah status in history, both to testify to the present election of the Church and to witness the final triumph of the Church. At the return of Christ, Jews would either finally acknowledge their error or else be condemned to final damnation. The Church should seek the conversion of Jews here and now, but also prevent the influence of Judaism on Christians. The Church felt called upon to enforce this status of reprobation in the form of social "misery," but the "final solution" could not be executed by men, but lay in the hands of God at the time of the final eschatological drama. The legislation of Christian emperors and Church councils on the status of the Jew in Christian society reflects the effort to mirror this theological theory in social practice.

Between 315 and 439 C.E. (from the reign of Constantine to the promulgation of the Theodosian Code), this view of the Jew was enforced through a steadily worsening legal status. The laws of the Theodosian Code, in turn, were incorporated in revised form into the Code of Justinian in a way that further depressed Jewish status. The Theodosian Code also was passed on to the West in shortened recensions, as well as by the incorporation of its laws into canon law. The Theodosian Code thus laid the basis for the position of the Jew in the Byzantine Empire, and also for the further developments of medieval Christendom. The rule of thumb for this development, as J. E. Seaver and James Parkes have summarized it, is as follows: the trend was always one of worsening status (until this trend was actively reversed by a counterdevelopment in the Enlightenment); a right, once lost to the Jews, was never permanently recovered, while the restrictions decreed against them were constantly reaffirmed and extended.³

One of the first things to concern the newly Christianized emperor Constantine (a matter which was to be constantly

reiterated in later laws in Christian history and in the Nazi anti-Semitic legislation) was the prohibition of Christian slaves (or servants) to the Jews. First this took the form of prohibiting the Jew from circumcizing his slaves.⁴ This was a remnant of Hadrianic law, but it was now reasserted to prevent the Jew from proselytizing among the servant class. It was normal for the Jewish family to incorporate their servants into the family religiously. Christianity itself had risen to a large extent through this route. But this prohibition against making slaves Jews soon grew into a prohibition against Jews owning any Christian slaves.⁵ This was a law which bishops in the West were particularly concerned to enforce, even after the fall of the Western Roman Empire.⁶ The reasons for the large amount of attention paid to this restriction by the Church had nothing to do with a rejection of slavery as such. The Church never took a stand against the legitimacy of slavery as an institution. It was concerned to cut off this potent form of Jewish influence upon Christians. Theologically, it also regarded it as intolerable that the reprobate people, the Jews, should hold in bondage those who had been freed by Christ. But this theological view was never held to imply that Christians should not hold other Christians in bondage. The issue had to do with the reprobate status of the Jew vis-à-vis Christianity. This opposition to Jewish lordship over Christians also meant that a slave could seek emancipation through conversion. Slaves were quick to follow this route to their own freedom, raising the question of compensation of the Jew for this economic loss.⁷

This prohibition of Jewish lordship over Christians had a severe effect on Jewish economic life. In a slave economy, it was impossible to operate any large-scale manufacturing or agricultural enterprise without slaves. Jews would then be eliminated from business enterprises or agriculture through their inability to hold slaves in a Christian society run by a slave (and later a serf) labor force. Jews did continue to be active as slave traders, especially after the advent of Islam, but their traffic was restricted to non-Christian slaves which they brought from pagan or Moslem areas to Christian lands. In a world that was devolving economically to a feudal, agricultural form of life, this legislation made it almost impossible for Jews to participate in

the development of latifundia as landholders. Jews were not immediately eliminated from agriculture, but these laws began a trend that was eventually to bias Jewish economic life toward trade and exclude them from their normal participation in landholding and farming. These laws also interfered in Jewish home and religious life. Non-Jewish servants were commonly used for services such as lighting lamps in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The Apostolic Canons explicitly forbade Christians to perform this service for the Jews.⁸

Another, related, area of legislation prohibited Jews from all proselytizing. At the same time, Jews were strictly forbidden to impede the conversion of Jews to Christianity.⁹ It became a crime to become a Jew or to aid in the conversion of anyone to Judaism. The convert to Judaism had his goods confiscated. Later, he lost his testamentary rights. Some laws threatened capital punishment for proselytizing.¹⁰ In a law decreed in 383 C.E., legal suits could be brought against a proselyte or proselytizer up to five years after his death to confiscate the goods inherited by his heirs.¹¹

The question of the right of a Jew to return to Judaism when he had been forced to flee to the sanctuary of the Church by persecution also was to become a hotly contested issue. Honorius, in 416 C.E., decreed that a Jew who had fled for sanctuary could return to Judaism.¹² But this right was to be dropped by Justinian.¹³ The fixed position of the Church was to forbid a return to Judaism by those who had been forcibly baptized, on the grounds that baptism was valid *ex opere operato*.¹⁴ The forced convert was classified as an apostate if he attempted to return to Judaism, even though the Church generally disapproved of forced baptism, at least officially. Thus, the legal basis was laid in canon and imperial law for the "Marrano," or forced convert, who was forbidden to return publicly to Judaism and had to live his faith secretly, a phenomenon that was to appear continually in Christian history and in great numbers at the end of the Middle Ages. Any effort by the Jewish community to harass the converted Jew, to withhold his testamentary rights, or to persuade him otherwise to return to Judaism was severely proscribed in imperial legislation.¹⁵

Another area of continued concern to both the imperial and

the ecclesiastical legislator was intermarriage between Christians and Jews. Here, too, the main purpose seems to have been the desire to prevent Judaizing by the Christian partner. In 339 C.E., Constantine promulgated the first of such laws prohibiting Jews from taking to wife women from the weaving factories.¹⁶ Theodosius I passed a blanket decree which made it a crime of adultery for any Christian man or woman to marry a Jew or Jewess.¹⁷ Capital punishment was to be exacted for this crime. The Church also added excommunication to the crime of cohabitation between Christians and Jews.¹⁸

By the late fourth century, new types of laws began to be added which drastically reduced Jewish social standing. Jews were excluded from all civil and military rank and were gradually excluded from holding any type of public office.¹⁹ Later, they were also excluded from acting as lawyers or judges.²⁰ Their right to testify in court against Christians was also to be a subject of continual restrictions.²¹ This demotion of the Jew from all civic status in the imperial *cursus honorum* was summarized in the Theodosian Code by the principle that a Jew is not to hold any authority over a Christian. For those who are "the enemies of the Heavenly Majesty and the Roman Laws" to "become executors of our laws" or to have authority to judge or decide against Christians is termed "an insult to our faith."²² We can see this same principle as it operated to forbid the right of the Jew to have Christians as servants. Politically and socially, the Jew was demoted to the bottom of Christian society, while his ability to prosper economically was also being restricted.

In 415 C.E., this demotion of the Jew from all rank or honor in the empire was completed by the abolition of the office of patriarch as a publicly recognized dignitary.²⁴ Earlier, the *aurum coronarium*, or patriarchal tax, was diverted to the imperial coffers. This patriarchal tax was collected by *apostoli* of the patriarch and was the chief means by which Judaism maintained unified communication throughout the Diaspora. These acts disrupted this ancient means of centralized communication of Jewish religious law. At the same time, the diversion of the *aurum coronarium* to the emperor's treasury renewed the *fiscus Judaicus*, or head tax, which had been levied on every Jew by Hadrian, when he similarly diverted the temple tax to the impe-

rial treasury after the Jewish Wars. The *fiscus Judaicus* had disappeared sometime in the third or fourth centuries, and may have been abolished by the apostate emperor Julian during his brief reign.²⁵ The Jews, as the only group on whom this special tax was levied, were thus marked out for special economic exactions for the personal treasury of the emperor, a practice that was to continue in the Byzantine Empire and to have a special role in medieval Christendom.

The Jews were also marked for special economic exploitation in other ways in this early imperial law. One of the first anti-Judaic laws under Constantine forced them to accept the role of *decurion*, from which they had previously been exempt. This office of local tax collector was an especially ruinous one in a failing economy, and one which was rapidly driving the middle class of the cities bankrupt. Christians fled from this office by becoming priests and monks. Imperial legislation now forced Jews to accept this office, although, at first, Jewish clergy were exempt from it in the same way as Christian clergy.²⁶ But gradually this privilege was eroded and Jews of whatever position were forced to accept the decurionate.²⁷

Other laws aimed specifically at the interference with Judaism as a religion. In 423 C.E. Jews were forbidden to build new synagogues or repair old ones, a decree that was repeated in the novella promulgating the Theodosian Code.²⁸ This, too, was a law which was to be reaffirmed again and again, as late as the eighteenth century. After the riots connected with Purim in the early fifth century at Inmester, the right of the Jews to celebrate this festival in the traditional noisy public manner was forbidden. For the first time, we have the idea proclaimed that Jewish rituals aim at sacrilegious mockery of the Christian religion.²⁹ It was further decreed that Jews must observe Christian laws on marriage, divorce, and consanguinity, a law which hampered considerably traditional Jewish marriage laws.³⁰ Even the right to conduct religious affairs through their own religious courts began to be restricted in laws which demanded that Jews submit religious questions to Roman law courts.³¹ In 425 C.E., Jews were ordered to observe Christian times of feasts and fasts.³² The practice of forcing the Jewish community to listen to Christian conversion sermons also began in the fifth century.

The Church not only incorporated these imperial laws into canonical legislation, it also added other laws of its own, especially in the areas of sexual relations, sociability, and religious fraternizing. Intermarriage or sexual relations were the subject of continual ecclesiastical prohibitions, beginning with the Council of Elvira, circa 314 C.E.³³ Many kinds of social relations, such as the giving or receiving of gifts or hospitality, invitations to dinner of Jews by Christians or acceptance of Jewish invitations, even, in one canon, the lending of money at interest by clergy, were forbidden by Church councils in this period.³⁴ But the Church was primarily concerned to rule out any kind of religious fraternizing between Christian and Jews, particularly the participation of Christians in Jewish observances or customs. Despite the Church's efforts in this direction, religious fraternizing continued on the popular level to a remarkable extent late into Byzantine times. Although official antagonism stirred popular hatred in some sectors of the population, it is important to remember that for other groups the line between the two faiths continued to remain blurred. In the early fourth century, the Council of Elvira forbade Christians to have Rabbis bless their fields, a practice which also points to the continuing agricultural character of Jewish life in Spain. Other canons forbid Christians, especially the clergy, from attending Jewish feasts or fasts, celebrating Easter together with the Jewish Passover, attending or praying in synagogues, accepting unleavened bread or other religious gifts from Jews at the times of Jewish festivals, and observing the Sabbath. As we saw earlier, Christian servants were forbidden to light lamps for Jewish synagogues. Christians were to rest on Sunday and work on the Sabbath, and the Judaizing practice of not reading from the Gospel on the Sabbath was prohibited.³⁵

The changing attitude of the Church toward the Jews can also be seen in baptismal forms. In the first centuries of the Church, Jews were regarded as monotheists who were already halfway to the Christian faith. Hence the catechumenate was shorter for Jews than for pagans, and their baptismal vows excluded the abjuration of previous demonic worship. But sometime in the fifth century or thereafter, new baptismal forms were introduced that regarded the Jews as more demonic and less open to Chris-

tian truth than other converts. This reflected also the experience of the Church with judaizing converts whose conversion stemmed from force or expediency. The catechumenate for Jews is made longer. At their baptism, Jewish converts are made to call down fierce curses upon themselves, if they do not totally renounce all Jewish religious customs, and to curse the Jewish people and their history in the language of Christian theological vituperation.³⁶ In these baptismal abjurations, we also find the idea that the Messiah expected by the Jewish people is actually the Anti-Christ. The Jewish convert is to renounce this "Anti-Christ, whom all the Jews await in the figure and form of Christ," and to embrace the true Christ.³⁷

These anti-Judaic laws, as well as the theological anti-Judaism that continued to be preached by the teachers of the Church, resulted in outbreaks of violence against the Jewish community that went beyond the limits of the law. This reality is reflected in a continual need in imperial law to legislate against vandalism, synagogue burning or confiscation, interference with Jewish celebration of the Sabbath or other religious observances, and even pogroms.³⁸ Imperial officials occasionally displayed an unseemly zealotry in curtailing legal, economic, or religious activities by Jews.³⁹ But the chief offenders in this regard were fanatical monks, who stirred up mobs of Christians to pillage synagogues, cemeteries, and other property, seize or burn Jewish religious buildings, and start riots in the Jewish quarter. Bishops also could be found who approved retroactively and even led in this violence and who decreed the forced baptism of local Jewries. Imperial legislation continually admonished against such violence, and demanded compensation for it from the Christian community. But the secular rulers often ran into opposition from the bishops in their efforts to enforce these protective laws.

In the middle of the fourth century, Bishop Innocentius of Dertona in northern Italy destroyed the local synagogue and erected a church on the site. He offered the Jewish residents the option of baptism or expulsion.⁴⁰ These incidents of violence and forced baptism were rife in Syria in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Around 413 C.E., a band of forty monks, led by one Barsauma, swept through Palestine, destroying syna-

gogues and temples. They completed their mission by massacring the Jews who had been allowed to weep at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.⁴¹ Although the emperors continually legislated against this violence, their ability to check it became increasingly feeble in the course of the fifth century. They themselves were unwilling to attach any real sanctions to these protective laws similar to the severe sanctions that were typically attached to the anti-Judaic laws. The perpetrators were merely exhorted to make reparations, but punishment of the culprits themselves was not specified. The opposition of prominent churchmen to any reparations to the Jewish community for violence or synagogue destruction also helped to weaken the force of the imperial laws protecting the Jews.

The most famous of these incidents took place in 388 C.E., with the destruction of a synagogue in the frontier town of Callinicum by a mob at the instigation of the bishop. Theodosius ordered the bishop to provide the monies to restore the synagogue. Saint Ambrose, incensed by this order, wrote a long rhetorical letter exhorting the emperor to rescind it. Although Ambrose admits that he had never personally had the opportunity to burn a synagogue, he declares that he would be happy to do so "that there might not be a place where Christ is denied." For a bishop to rebuild a synagogue would be tantamount to apostasy, for it would mean contributing the patrimony of Christ to the maintenance of "vile perfidity." The synagogue is referred to by Ambrose as "a haunt of infidels, a home of the impious, a hiding place of madmen, under the damnation of God Himself." The misfortunes that befell emperors Julian, when he tried to restore the temple in Jerusalem, and Maximius (whose fall Ambrose attributes to the fact that he forced the Christian community in Rome to rebuild a synagogue they had destroyed there) are cited as examples of divine wrath upon emperors who restore Jewish houses of worship. Fearing the wrath of the Church, Theodosius modified this order to a simple restoration of the sacred articles stolen from the synagogue, the actual rebuilding to be financed by the state. But this was not acceptable to Ambrose, who insisted that there be no reparations and no punishment of the culprits at all. When the emperor refused to respond further, Ambrose seized the occasion of the emper-

or's presence at the Divine Liturgy in the cathedral at Milan to confront him. Coming down from the altar to face him, the bishop declared that he would not continue with the Eucharist until the emperor obeyed. The emperor bowed to this threat of excommunication, and the rioters at Callinicum went unadmonished.⁴²

In a similar fashion, the pillar saint, Simon Stylites, intervened to prevent Theodosius II from restoring the synagogues of Antioch when they were destroyed by rioters in 423 C.E.⁴³ Increasingly violent pogroms and street fighting between Jews and Christians led to the expulsion of the Jews completely from major urban centers in the fifth century. In 414 C.E., the Jews were expelled by Bishop Cyril from Alexandria, a city which had been the center of Diaspora Jewry for seven hundred years.⁴⁴ In 418 C.E., Severus, bishop of Minorca, accomplished the forced baptism of all the Jews on that island.⁴⁵ Rioting between Christians and the embattled Jewish community took place repeatedly in Antioch in the fifth and sixth centuries, with massacres of Jews. Finally in 610 C.E., the attempt of Emperor Phocas to force the conversion of the remaining Jews resulted in a revolt by the Jews. This revolt was quickly suppressed, many Jews were killed, and the rest were expelled from the city, bringing to an end what had been a second great center of Diaspora Jewry since Hellenistic times.⁴⁶ Deprived of all social status by imperial law and left largely unprotected against popular violence, the Jewish community in the Eastern provinces sank into ignominy and looked to the Persian and then to the Moslem empire for deliverance.

In the laws of the Christian emperors enforcing a status of reprobation on the Jewish community, one notes a language of clerical vituperation. The synagogue is referred to in one early law of the Theodosian Code by a Latin slang word meaning "brothel," a word which never before had been used for a place of religious worship in Roman law.⁴⁷ The Jews are referred to constantly in the laws as a group hated by God, to be regarded by Christian society as contemptible and even demonic. The laws bristle with negative and theologically loaded epithets. Judaism is called a *feralis secta* and a *Synagoga Satanae*. Their meetings are *sacrilegi coetus*.⁴⁸ The very name of Jew is "foul"

and degrading." To marry a Jew is adultery and to be under their authority is "an insult to our faith." It becomes common to speak of Judaism in the language of pollution, contagion, and disease. The Third Novella, which promulgated the Theodosian Code, calls it a "desperate illness" that is beyond curing. Judaism is called "dangerous," "abominable," "evil teachings," "madness," while Jews themselves are described by such terms as "sly," "shameful," "foul," "insolent," "detestible," "blind," and "perverse."⁴⁹ Jews are said to be the "enemies of the Heavenly Majesty and the Roman Laws" and to break the laws against judaizing is equivalent to a crime of *lèse majesté*. In short, the Christian emperors do not legislate as secular rulers. Nor do they act simply as tools of the Church, although churchmen sometimes pushed them further than they wanted to go. Still less are they simply cynical exploiters of the situation for political or economic advantage. Indeed, there was little advantage to be reaped by a weakened empire in such persecution. Rather, the emperors speak here as exponents of the Christian theological view of the Jews, acting in their own right as priest-kings of the Christian theocratic empire.

2. *The Jews in Byzantium and the West from the Sixth Century to the Crusades*

The *Corpus Juris Civilis* issued by Justinian in 529 C.E. discarded over half of the more than fifty laws dealing with the Jews found in the Theodosian Code.⁵⁰ The Justinian Code further depressed the status of the Jews by discarding many laws protecting their civil and religious rights, while retaining and extending their restrictions. The immunities of synagogue officials, the rights to internal discipline of Jewish religious courts over members of the synagogue, and the right of a Jew who fled to the Church for sanctuary to return to Judaism were dropped. Restrictions against owning Christian slaves and exclusion from all public office or honors were strengthened. All the old restrictions against building or repairing synagogues, conversion to Judaism, and the duty to serve on the *decurion* were reaffirmed. The death penalty and confiscation of property were

decreed for circumcizing a slave or child not of Jewish parentage, and this could be applied even to those who attempted to convert others to Judaism.⁵¹ Justinian added other specifically religious laws, such as that which ordered that the Jewish Passover is never to fall ahead of the Christian Easter, and a remarkable demand that the scrolls of the Law be read in the vernacular, rather than Hebrew, and without the rabbinic commentary, in the synagogue service. This latter law was a direct effort to make the synagogue service itself open to Christian proselytizing by eliminating the rabbinic interpretation of the Scriptures and hence, presumably, making the reading of the Old Testament open to the Christian exegesis. Since Christianity was convinced that its own christological exegesis of the Jewish Bible was self-evident, it was clear to Justinian that once the "blindness" of the rabbinic commentary was removed, the Jews would be able to hear directly the Christian meaning of their own Scriptures. The synagogue seems to have found ways of circumventing this law, which would have eliminated Hebrew and the rabbinic tradition from their liturgy, but it represents a remarkable effort by the Christian emperor to regulate directly the content of Judaism itself.⁵²

Justinian's principle, in his legislation on the Jews, is a reflection of the Christian theological view. The Jew is never to enjoy the fruits of any office or labor, but only the penalties thereof.⁵³ He is to present to Christian society the living proof of the social results of divine reprobation, both to testify to the truth of Christianity, and ultimately to convince the Jews themselves of this truth. Nevertheless, the Jews remained Roman citizens, even though in this restricted condition. Although they were to enjoy no prosperity or social standing in Byzantine society, violence against them was prohibited and their religious institutions were protected. However, Justinian dropped the important law in the Theodosian Code that directly declared that Judaism is a legal religion. This had the effect of making the legitimacy of Judaism a matter for the emperor himself to decide at will, rather than a clearly articulated legal principle.⁵⁴

The position of the Jew in Byzantine society from Justinian to the Crusades represents a case of the Christian theological view enacted into public social policy. The reprobation of the

Jew was institutionalized as exclusion from the *cursus honorum* of Byzantine public life and an economic structuring into the lower class. However, this situation differed considerably from the vilification that was to become the lot of the Jew in the Western Middle Ages, even though the vituperation toward the Jews found in imperial law and theology made this hateful image the official stance of Byzantine church and state. Nevertheless, the violence and popular hatred, the ghettoization and paranoia typical of the late medieval world of the West did not occur. The reasons for this seem to have to do primarily with the fact that in Byzantium the political institutions and economic life of the Roman Empire did not fall, but remained in force. This meant that a centralized enforcement of law and order remained intact. Although the emperors lost control over popular violence toward the Jews in the fifth century, by the time of Justinian imperial control was restored. The emperors were able to enforce the laws which protected Jewish religious institutions and prevented violence against their persons. Although sporadic violence and synagogue burnings continued to take place now and again in Byzantine times, by and large the emperors could prevent this. Pogroms did not become the typical pattern of Jewish life in the East, as they were to become in the West. Moreover, as Roman citizens, the Jews' right to a place in Byzantine society, however restricted, was guaranteed, whereas in the West, where the tradition of Roman law fell into confusion after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the citizenship of the Jews was forgotten.

Equally important was the fact that in Byzantium the city and a money economy did not disappear, as they did in the feudal West. The official apparatus for a moneyed economy remained in the hands of state institutions, and so the Jew was not structured into a peculiar relationship to commerce in a primarily agricultural and nonmoneyed economy, as was to happen in the West. Religious anti-Judaism was not translated into economic anti-Semitism. The Jew did not become peculiarly associated with trade or money, but remained scattered throughout all economic roles, even farming, although his inability to own slaves prevented him from being a large landholder. Economically, the Jew remained an ordinary person mingling with his

fellow citizens in various occupations in the lower echelons of social life. Although singled out as an object of theological hate by official Byzantine institutions, economically this merely meant that he could seldom rise above lower middle class. But he also could not become a special target of envy to his Christian fellow citizens.

The Byzantine emperors erred from the limitations of their own theory chiefly on the side of zealousness toward the conversion of the Jew. Part of the reason for this was political. With the fall of the eastern provinces of the empire to the Arabs, the centers of Jewish religious life were cut off in Moslem lands, and the Jews were suspected of political disloyalty to the Christian empire. This had also been true earlier when the great religious centers of Judaism were in Persia in the Sassanid Empire. Although both the Sassanids and the Moslems were not without their own efforts to enforce a monolithic religious policy for their empires, and treated members of dissenting religions as inferior, by and large the Jews were better treated in these empires than they were in the Christian empire. A wider range of employment was open to them, and the special theological vilification of the Christian tradition was absent. The Jews thus were seen as potential partisans of an Eastern attack against the empire, although this seldom materialized in active disloyalty.

But the emperors were also sincere Christians who regarded the conversion of the Jews as an especially salvific activity. This theological motivation, together with a mistaken notion that the empire would be stronger by being monolithic religiously, caused successive emperors to rescind the legality of Judaism and to order all the Jews to become Christians. Heraclitus in 632, Leo III in 721, Basil I about 870 (and his son Leo IV), and Romanus I in 932 passed such laws ordering all Jews to become Christians. But these efforts always ended in failure, and the efforts to enforce these laws were allowed to become dead letter after a short while. These efforts at forced conversion, however, gave the Byzantine Jew a taste of the political insecurity which was to become the typical situation of the Jew in the West.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, when the Western Crusaders seized Byzantium in the fourth Crusade and instituted Western practices, such as forcing Jews to spit on their own circumcision, this

was a kind of personal attack on the Jew that was foreign to the Byzantine tradition. In the Eastern Christian empire, where the institutions of public life remained intact, the theological doctrine of reprobation was institutionalized, but its limits were also enforced, and it was not allowed to descend to the same extent into personal Jew-baiting.⁵⁶

In the West, however, these institutions of public life collapsed. Whereas in Byzantium, anti-Judaism was institutionalized in the form of both negations and the limits of these negations, in the West anti-Judaism became erratic and personal. This pattern took some six centuries to emerge in its distinctive form. However, we can summarize here several overall trends. The memory of Jewish citizenship was buried in the recensions of the Theodosian Code made for the barbarian empires, as indeed was the concept of citizenship generally. The collapse of a moneyed economy resulted eventually in the structuring of Jews into a special economic role, while the collapse of law and order meant that Jews could escape the limits of the social ignominy forced on them by imperial law to a somewhat more affluent life, but were also left unprotected against the personal revenge that came to be wreaked upon them by those indoctrinated by the Church's view of the Jew.

Theodoric the Ostrogoth took over the anti-Judaic laws of the Theodosian Code, but was not particularly interested in the matter.⁵⁷ Gregory the Great, reigning as Roman pontiff at the end of the sixth century, represents a perfect model of the anti-Judaic theory, as this had been embodied in Christian Roman law and carried on by the Church through Roman law. In contrast to the view of medieval Christians and even medieval popes, Gregory the Great is often cited as a "friend" of the Jews, but this is a misunderstanding of the context in which he himself worked. It is true that Gregory opposed forced baptism and synagogue burning, but he did so as an executor of Roman law which protected Jewish religious institutions and forbade violence.⁵⁸ As a churchman, Gregory also knew that the forced-baptized Jew does not make a good Christian but attempts to remain a Jew secretly. It was on these grounds that Gregory decreed that the Jews are not to be forced to the baptismal font by threats, but are to be converted by sweetness and persuasion.

But the pope was not above adding to the spiritual persuasion economic suasions, such as the promise of drastically reduced rents on the Petrine patrimony to those Jews who accepted baptism.⁵⁹

In his letters and decrees, Gregory shows himself the ecclesiastical heir of the emperors, who forbids violence to persons and property. But in his biblical commentaries, he manifests himself as the heir of the Christian *adversos Judaeos* tradition, where the Jew, theologically, is portrayed as the demonic unbeliever whose trail of perfidity and apostasy leads naturally to the killing of Christ and divine reprobation in history.⁶⁰ These two are not really in contradiction, however the tone of the two types of writings may appear to differ, for the theory behind Christian imperial law was essentially a social mirror of this theological view. Gregory himself clearly enunciated this theological view, as it had been translated into social policy, when he pronounced his famous "principle" on the Jews, namely, that "just as license must not be granted to the Jews to presume to do in their synagogues more than the law permits them, so they should not suffer curtailment in that which has been conceded to them."⁶¹ This principle was to be republished by Pope Calixtus III in 1120 in the *Constitutio pro Judaeis* and was to be repeated by subsequent popes some fifteen times in the following three centuries, as the foundation of papal policy.⁶² Gregory, in his own times, stands forth as the perfect marriage of Christian Rome and the Church. As an imperial churchman, he expressed his theological view of Jewish reprobation in the enforcement of social restrictions against any eminence or authority of Jews in Christian society. But, at the same time, he protected them to the limits of guaranteeing that they would be able to continue to worship as Jews (until they saw the error of their ways) and should not suffer violence to their personal lives or religious institutions. This theory and its social expression, narrow enough in its Christian imperial form, was to appear as a model of enlightenment, compared to the vilification that was to characterize medieval society later.

In Visigothic Spain, the treatment of the Jews took an erratic course. The Arian Visigoths received the anti-Judaic laws of the Theodosian Code in a recension, but were not especially con-

cerned with the matter. But this changed completely when the Visigothic kings were converted to Catholicism. Then all the anti-Judaic laws of the imperial code were revived and the ecclesiastical laws against the Jews were also enacted into civil law. For one hundred twenty-five years (586–711), kings and bishops united in a continuous effort to convert the Spanish Jews by force. In addition to the full force of all the earlier imperial and church laws, the Visigothic kings decreed the abolition of Judaism as a legal religion. Jews who attempted to remain Jews were regarded as apostates, and every method was used to search out those who continued to try to retain Jewish practices. Jews were even ordered to destroy by fire and stoning other Jews who Judaized.⁶³ The Church itself disapproved of these extreme measures, and they obviously went far beyond any animosity toward the Jews among ordinary Christians. The kings finally ended up attacking the entire Christian populace, including the priests, in an effort to coerce an unwilling people to enforce these laws against the Jews.

Jews were a large, prosperous, and politically powerful group in Spain at this time, while the Visigothic monarchy was weak, faction-ridden, and continually plagued by fears of conquest from the East. In this context, the Jews were seen as a politically subversive element. In a final effort to set the Christian populace against the Jews, the kings ordered the Jews to surrender all property and to engage in no means of economic livelihood. Driven to desperation, the Jews entered into a plot with their coreligionists in Africa to deliver Spain to the Moslems. This plot was discovered, and the Jews were all reduced to the status of slaves *in perpetuum*. Their property was confiscated and their children taken from them to be raised as Christians. But shortly thereafter, the Moslems invaded Spain and delivered the Jewish populace from this final nadir.⁶⁴

With the Arab conquest, a new era began for Spanish Jewry that was to last for six hundred years. Moslems were by no means without their own laws which inferiorized both Jews and Christians. But relatively speaking, Jews had broader opportunities for advancement in Moslem than in Christian lands. Neither mass massacres, mass expulsions, nor forced conversion took place in orthodox Moslem areas. The Jewish community

in Moslem Spain was to rise to unusual creative brilliance, although not always without jealousy from other groups. The eminence of the Jewish community in Spain is illustrated by the fact that in 932, when Romanus I again reiterated the laws of forced baptism against Jews in Byzantium, he was persuaded to call off this persecution by the intervention of the brilliant Jewish courtier-scholar, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, chief minister at the court of the caliph 'Abd al Rahman III at Cordova.⁶⁵ For many centuries, the Jews of Spain profited by the religious competition that made it unwise either for the Moslems in the south or for the Catholic kingdom to the north to alienate them and drive them into the other camp by enforcing a monolithic religious policy. As the Catholic kingdom spread southward, it appeared to have learned this lesson even better than its southern rival and extended the benefits of an open society to its Jewish subjects, causing them to prefer the Catholic king to an embattled Moslem rule, which became narrower in its religious policy as its last footholds in Europe were being eliminated in the thirteenth century.

But unfortunately, the lessons of Visigothic Spain had not really been learned by the Catholics. Their efforts to create a monolithic Catholic Spain were merely held in abeyance until the Moslem rival was eliminated. Then Catholic Spain turned on the Jews and from the fourteenth century reinstated all the traditional restrictions. At the end of the fourteenth century, this uniquely assimilated and cultured Jewish community found itself faced with the full force of bloody pogroms, decrees of forced baptism, and the instruments of the Inquisition to search out the secret Judaizers. Hundreds of thousands of Jews accepted baptism. Some of these remained secretly Jews, while those who refused baptism were subject to massacre and confiscation of property. Finally, in 1492, Torquemada persuaded the king to formally expel all Jews who were not baptized, so the Inquisition could settle down to its work of hunting out the secret Judaizers. In Portugal the same tragedy was repeated, only here they were not allowed to leave, but were given only the option of forced baptisms or death.

Spanish Jewish history ends with a phenomenon which approaches racial anti-Semitism. Here we see a formally Chris-

tianized Jewish community which is nevertheless hunted down by the Inquisition for being secretly "Jewish." The "laws of purity of blood," which became general in Spanish society by the sixteenth century, were purely racial. They excluded the Jew from public and Church leadership, regardless of whether he was a secret Judaizer or the most sincere Catholic. Those who aspired to positions in public life or the Church had to display their geneological charts to the Inquisition to prove that they had no hidden Jewish ancestry. Such laws remained on the books in Catholic religious orders, such as the Jesuits, until the twentieth century. They are the ancestor of the Nazi Nuremberg laws. They also present us with the ambivalence of the Christian demand for the Jew's "conversion." The individually converted Jew could be assimilated. The mass converted Jewish population, however, was still perceived as a separate "Jewish" community in an ethnic sense. All the diabolism attributed to "Judaism" was still popularly perceived as attached to the "Jew," in this way. Moreover, baptism, even if forced, automatically canceled all the anti-Judaic legislation and thus overthrew the barriers to Jewish advancement in Christian society. Thus, in Spain in the sixteenth century, we have a dress rehearsal for the nineteenth-century European experience. The Jewish community, made to assimilate *en masse*, then is perceived as a shocking invasion of Christian society, and barriers previously thrown up against them on religious grounds are now reinstated on racial grounds.⁶⁶

In Frankish Gaul, however, a different pattern of development took place. For centuries, it appeared as though the anti-Judaic pattern was to make little serious inroads in these lands of the German heirs of the Western Roman Empire. At first, some of the newly converted Merovingian kings attempted to imitate the policy of forced conversion of their Visigothic cousins. Chilperic in 582 and Dagobert in 629 offered the Jews the options of baptism or expulsion, and many fled to more tolerant regions, such as Marseilles.⁶⁷ But these efforts were ineffectual. With the rise of the Islamic empire, the role of the Jews in Gaul took on a new character. The Syrians, who had monopolized trade, were now cut off as Christians in an Arab land. In Gaul, economic institutions had deteriorated to the

primitive level. The Jews remained the one go-between who could carry on some modicum of international trade between Europe and the Near East. Thus, in this period, they become uniquely identified as merchants. This does not mean that they completely monopolized trade in Gaul, any more than they ever monopolized moneylending later. The Byzantines also were important traders between East and West. But the Jews, with their base in communities of coreligionists scattered from England all the way to China, had a unique opportunity to provide the catalyst for the revival of trade at the very moment when it was fading to its lowest ebb in the West. In this role, they became favored and protected by the Frankish kings, who gave them special charters to reside in Gaul and carry out trade between Gaul and the East.⁶⁸

In Gaul, therefore, it became primarily the Church which attempted to maintain the old theory of Jewish reprobation and to insist on all the old laws that restricted Jews from office holding, possession of Christian slaves, or any other type of eminence or authority over Christians, while the Carolingian kings found it inexpedient to adhere too closely to these laws of the Christian state. In this situation, the institutionalization of Jewish reprobation was eased. The Jewish community was able to emerge into prosperity and favor, and even to make Judaism itself attractive enough to win converts, among them the minister to the court of Louis the Pious⁶⁹ and a prominent ninth-century Italian bishop.⁷⁰ The discipline and communal ethics of Judaism contrasted favorably with the corruption of the Church. But this meant that the Church, in attempting to maintain a theory of Jewish reprobation that was falling into legal neglect, appealed much more directly to the possibilities of envy and hatred in the Christian population. It indoctrinated in its sermons a viewpoint that it temporarily could not enforce.⁷¹ With the development of liturgical drama at the turn of the millennium, the possibilities of inculcating hatred for the Jew through popular representation of him as the enemy of salvation was greatly extended.⁷² The Jewish community prospered in the towns of France and Germany at the end of the Dark Ages, thanks to its ability to play the middleman in reviving com-

merce. But the theological image taught by the Church to the Christian populace was preparing a terrible revenge for this temporary escape from repression.

3. *From the Crusades to Emancipation: The Age of the Ghetto*

In the high Middle Ages, the Church's struggle to reassert the theologically required status of "misery" upon the Jews was rewarded a thousandfold. The medieval period ended with the Jewish community reduced to political servitude, social ignominy, and ghettoization, economic ruin, vulnerability to violence from below, and arbitrary exploitation and expulsion from above, until finally the Jewries of England, France, Spain, Portugal, and much of Germany had been disseminated, expelled, or forced to practice their religion in hiding. Above this whole development, there reigned the theological image of the Jew, both shaping developments and then serving as the explanation and excuse for them, the image itself growing constantly more evil, until it culminated with the virtual identification of the Jew with the Devil. How this development took place is an exceedingly complex story with many of the connecting points of different factors uncertain, although the overall trend is ever downward. We can do no more than make the barest summary of the various elements here.

The great turning point of Jewish status in the Western Middle Ages, a turning point itself expressive of the success of the Church's indoctrination of popular religious hatred for the Jew, was the Crusades. Like a great underground stream of enmity, the Crusades burst upon the prospering Jewish communities along the Rhineland from the lower levels of medieval society, catching both ecclesiastical and secular leaders by surprise and leaving them quite helpless to protect the victims. Although the Church and all Christian society agreed in principle that the Jews were a vile people hated by God, the social consequences of this in massacres ever eluded their understanding. The fine points of the Church's theory that the Jews, though damnable,

are to be physically preserved to the end of time, although in a state of "misery," to witness the triumph of the Church, eluded the comprehension of the mobs. The Church, in turn, proved incapable of understanding that the mob merely acted out, in practice, a hatred which the Church taught in theory and enforced in social degradation whenever possible. Moreover, the Church offered neither political rights nor means of livelihood to the Jews. Therefore, the Church's theory that the Jews should be physically "preserved," but in a state of "misery," itself contained the basic contradiction that the Church could offer them no concrete protection or means of existence in practice. These had to be won by the Jews themselves by allying themselves with secular princes to contravene the Church's laws against usury, thus placing themselves in the additional jeopardy of being defined as sinners, heretics, and doubly carnal men.

The mobs that pillaged and massacred the Jewish communities along the Rhine in 1096, and again in each successive Crusade, were generally not the armies of nobles recruited by the Church, but the armies of the poor that arose spontaneously to take the cross, led by popular religious fanatics.⁷³ The Church did not oppose this popular "enthusiasm," and indeed encouraged it by its teaching that anyone who takes the cross automatically has all his debts in moratorium. But popular fanaticism added to this other ideas, such as the claim that anyone "who kills a Jew has all his sins forgiven" and that "it is preposterous to set out on a long journey to kill God's enemies far away, while God's worst enemies, the Jews, are dwelling at ease close at hand."⁷⁴ Although religious rather than economic motives dominated the minds of the mobs, the fact that many of the Crusaders, individually and as expeditions, were in debt to Jews doubtless had an additional effect. The Crusades also opened the door for European international trade. The Crusader's path was converted into the path of commerce. The trade routes which had been pioneered by Jewish traveling merchants since the rise of Islam now became unsafe for Jewish merchants, for Jewish caravans found on the routes to the East would automatically be slaughtered by Crusaders. So the rise of the Crusades corresponds to the expropriation and retreat of the Jew as

merchant, who had kept the trade routes between Europe and Asia open during the Dark Ages.⁷⁵

The pogroms of the Crusades were met with stoic heroism by the Jewish communities of the Rhineland. Refusing the baptism offered at sword's point by the Crusaders, they regularly submitted to death or committed mass suicide rather than be baptized. A martyr ethic was forged in European Jewry. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity was regarded as polytheism and its view of Jesus' divinity as idolatry. To resist baptism was comparable to the witness of the ancient martyrs of Israel, who resisted to the death the assaults of paganism at the time of the Maccabees. Jews died uttering the *Shema'* as witnesses to the unity of God's Holy Name.⁷⁶ This resistance of the Jews to baptism was inexplicable to Christians. Christian theology had deprived Jews of inner spirituality and defined them as people of mere legalism and "carnality." This encounter with Jewish faith then could not bring about repentance in Christians. It resulted instead in a compensatory wave of new anti-Judaic myths to justify this gratuitous slaughter of an unoffending group of people. The myths of ritual murder, well poisoning, and host profanation arose in the wake of Crusader violence to provide an image of the Jew as an insidious plotter against Christianity and to justify fanaticism.⁷⁷ These libels had not existed before. They arose as a reaction and an attempt to justify the violence of the Crusades, after the fact.

The Crusades also showed the Christian masses the vulnerability of the Jewish community, something they had not realized before. Now they saw that this prosperous group, seemingly under the protection of powerful princes, actually could be attacked by any mob with impunity. The weak forces of law and order were helpless against such mob violence. After this lesson had been learned, the pogroms never ceased for many centuries. The Crusades also helped to redefine the political status of the Jew. It was a crime to kill a Jew, placed under the king's peace. But since the prince protected the Jew, the Jew himself was now forbidden to bear arms. In a chivalric society, this worked to redefine the status of the Jews as serfs. But this result was itself dependent on the theological view of the Jews.

Clergy were unarmed and protected as sacred persons "for their honor." But the Jews, being ignominious persons, could not be defined as protected for this reason. So there remained only one other option in feudal law. This was that the Jews were unarmed and protected because they were serfs, not free men.⁷⁸

This political redefinition of the Jews as personal serfs of the prince only became clearly defined when it interacted with ecclesiastical law, which, in the early thirteenth century, was systematically working to reduce all Jewish social privileges. The basic theory that underlay Church law on the Jews was the doctrine of *Servitus Judaeorum*, or the perpetual servitude of the Jews, i.e., their reprobate place in history as punishment for killing Christ. Through interaction with this idea, which was the theoretical principle of canonical anti-Judaic legislation beginning with the Epistle of Innocent of 1205, German law came to define the Jews as persons without citizenship or civil rights who are classed in the unique status of *servi camerae* or "serfs of the royal chamber."⁷⁹

This idea has often been traced to the earlier status under German law of the Jewish merchants as "strangers," who are given rights of residence for trade only by special charter by the prince and are regarded as persons to be protected by the prince, since they have no other "lord."⁸⁰ This helped to shape the special relation of the Jews to the princes. But this did not itself create this special status, for the special charters were normal procedure for all foreign merchants, and not just Jews. In a corporative society, there was no general concept of citizenship in which everyone is "equal" before the law. Each group is equal only to its peers. Groups then have specific contractual relations to each other. It was thus inevitable that the Jews would be seen as a special corporate group. But their status in relation to other groups long remained undefined. It was only with the interaction between their status as a special group, that is, to be protected by the prince, and the ecclesiastical theory of *Servitus Judaeorum*, that the political status of the Jews became redefined as that of the king's serfs and their previous status as free men was lost. Now, for the first time, a special political status was created for the Jews qua Jews regardless of occupation. The defining principle for this was exclusively religious.

It was as Jews religiously, not as a distinct racial, ethnic, or national group, that they were so distinguished. This status disappeared as soon as a Jew was baptized.⁸¹

The canonical legislation of the Church in the thirteenth century effected a systematic social degradation of the Jew. The Church struggled to reimpose all the old canonical and imperial anti-Judaic legislation back to Constantine. But it went beyond this in forbidding even Christian servants or nurses to the Jews under pain of excommunication.⁸² The Church's basic position was that the Jew should occupy no place of eminence or power in Christian society which would ever put him in a position of authority over a Christian, however modest. The basic principle for this, as we have indicated, was that of the *Servitus Judaeorum*, as the reprobate status of the Jew in history. The imagery of Sarah, as the Church, whose children are free, and Hagar, as the Synagogue, whose children are in bondage, was the standard one for popular imagery, Church sculpture,⁸³ and sermonizing, as well as canonical legislation. It is an expression of the salvation wrought by Christ for Christians (and his corresponding reprobation of those who rejected him) that the "sons of the freed woman" (the Church) are never to serve the "children of the slave woman" (the Synagogue), but rather are always to be served by them.⁸⁴ This meant that any position of authority of the Jew in society, from minister of state to employer of a nurse in his home, was to be challenged by the Church on theological grounds. The Jew is always to be under, not over, Christians.

In addition to this theological degradation of the Jew to the status of servitude, Christian society was to be rigidly protected from Jewish "contamination." Any social contact, living together, eating together, sexual relations, personal conversation, especially on religious matters, was to be prevented, lest Jewish "unbelief" contaminate Christian faith. This notion of "Jewishness" as a kind of contagion that one might catch by any kind of association was to become a virulent source of notions such as "well poisoning." It also provided the stock imagery of racial anti-Semitism, which was always to depict the presence of the Jew as a kind of dangerous or insidious "contagious disease."

The final expression of the Church's effort to segregate the Jew from any social contact with Christian society was the

ghetto and the wearing of Jewish dress, conical hat, and "Jew badge" (usually a yellow circle, symbolic of the Jew as betrayer of Christ for "gold," an image which fused religious with economic anti-Semitism). These regulations were passed at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), although the Church only succeeded in enforcing them universally after the Council of Basel (1434).⁸⁵ These marks had the effect of making Jewish ignominy visible and singling the Jew out for physical attack as never before, destroying further the ability of the Jew to travel the open roads as a merchant. Other canonical rules, such as those that insisted that the synagogue must be a low and miserable building, that Jews must not enter churches or come into the streets on holy days, especially during Passiontide, or work on Sunday, were intended to enforce the visible superiority of Christianity.⁸⁶ But it also reinforced the popular idea that Jews secretly desired to mock and profane Christian symbols, even though the popes officially tended to discount the myths of ritual murder and host profanation. Finally, the Talmud itself was declared illegal. Successive inquisitions condemned it, despite the defense put up against Christian accusations by talmudic scholars.⁸⁷ The Talmud and Jewish works were burned publicly in France in the mid-thirteenth century, bringing to an end an important center of talmudic scholarship. Like Justinian, the Church seems to have believed that without the rabbinic exegesis, the Jews would quickly come to acknowledge that the christological exegesis of the Church was the correct one.

The final element that shaped the status of the Jew in medieval society was the economic one. Deprived of normal participation in agriculture, first by their inability to hold Christian servants and then by outright prohibition of landowning; trade constricted by the new dangers of hostility; and most crafts closed off by the religious character of trade guilds—the Jew had no place in medieval economy except moneylending. Unfortunately, moneylending had no place in the Church's concept of economy. In the face of a reviving commercial society, the Church clung to a fundamentally agricultural concept of economics which had no place for monetary processes. Moneylending was thought of as a charity extended to the poor, not as an enterprise that generated new wealth. Interest-taking was,

therefore, forbidden. The Church clung to this outdated notion until the sixteenth century and exerted every ounce of its moral energies in attempting a futile battle against the rise of a money economy. More and more stringent penalties were attached to usury until finally usury was defined as a heresy and placed under the Inquisition. In practical terms, this effort was a total failure, since the Church itself was a part of this rising money economy, and so its own officials constantly evaded these laws. The result of the Church's crusade against usury, therefore, had as its chief effect the attachment of an enormous stigma to the moneylender and the forcing of this necessary practice into subterfuge, where interest rates became far more exploitative than would have been the case if a monetary policy had been regularized.⁸⁹

This stigma which the Church placed upon usury ended by attaching itself primarily to the Jews. This was not because the Jews were the only usurers, or because the Church made any exception for the Jews to its general prohibition. Agents of the Church, tax collectors, and merchants were the three groups that possessed liquid capital in a still largely agricultural society, and all engaged in usury. The Church could control the first two better than the third. But among the merchant group, the Italians, who retained Eastern contacts and traditions of an urban economy from Roman days, soon rivaled the Jews.⁹⁰ The Church condemned all usurers, Jew or Christian, and attempted to cut off Jewish usury by excommunicating Christians who dealt with them. But the princes, who needed money for their operations, opposed the Church and protected Jewish usurers. In popular thought, Jewish usury was excusable, either because the Bible allowed one to give money at interest to the "stranger," or else because the Jews were damned anyway, so it made no difference if they sinned. However, the Jews had come to be understood as property of the prince, which automatically meant that their money was his personal property also. To rob a Jew was to rob a prince. To kill or convert a Jew was to deprive a prince of his property. The moneymaking capacity of the Jews became the personal assets of the princes. On these grounds, the princes protected Jewish usury, granted Jews rights of residence, prevented mobs from attacking them, and even prevented the

Church from converting them! The Jews were changed from free economic actors into subjects of the economic policy of the princes. They became the personal usurers of the princes.

This role as royal usurers of the princes allowed the Jews to survive, but only on the most precarious basis. Socially, they were degraded as figures of ignominy in every town. Protected from attack by the princes, they became the objects of boiling hatred which the exploited classes felt against both the political power and the economic exactions of the rulers. Since the Jews were the buffers and expressions of both of these kinds of power between the princes and the people, this hatred became diverted on to the Jews. The Jews themselves had no intrinsic political rights. Their very rights of residence depended on the grants of kings who admitted them in defined numbers to serve as their economic tools, but revoked this right of residence, confiscated their property, revoked debts owed them, and expelled them, whenever it suited their purposes. As economic tools of the prince, they survived by exacting from the people the money he needed for his activities and, in turn, became the objects of the hatred which the people felt at this economic extortion. While this role lasted, leading Jews appeared wealthy to the people, but their wealth was ephemeral, most of it flowing into the coffers of the king. At any point, they could be ruined and expelled when popular protest, often taking the form of charges of ritual murder and other religious charges, made things too hot for the prince, forcing him to accede to the demands of townsmen or nobles against whom the feudal prince struggled for power. The Jews were caught in the middle of this power struggle and ultimately became its victims.⁹¹

The expulsions of the Jews from Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century reflect the mingling of religious fanaticism with a new concept of nationalistic absolutism. The expulsions of the Jews from England in 1290, from France in 1390, and from most German cities in the mid-fourteenth to sixteenth centuries also had economics as their sub-theme, although the charges brought against them usually featured trumped-up accusations of ritual murder, host profanation, and the like. Luther, who began his reformation with pro-Jewish sentiments, ended by turning against them when they failed to convert. His work "The

Jews and Their Lies" was a compendium of the most virulent medieval anti-Semitism and ended by calling for the expulsion of the Jews from Germany. It had great influence in promoting such expulsion. This tract was revived in modern times as a textbook for modern anti-Semitism. The Jews fled eastward, piling upward against the Russian wall in Poland. By the end of the Middle Ages, Western Jewry was ruined. Most major areas had no professing Jews, although huddled communities of Marranos clung to the memories of the old ways in secrecy. Where Jewries survived, they were broken economically, socially degraded, reduced to pawnbroking and dealing in second-hand goods to make a bare living at the dregs of society.

As the Jewish role as moneylender was being broken in a Christian society (which was also expropriating this role for itself, often in a much more exploitative way), religious fanaticism grew all the more virulent. The late Middle Ages became not only the age of the ghetto, but the age of the Devil. The outbreak of the Black Plague in the mid-fourth century, which took the lives of a third of the population of Europe, and other factors unhinged the mind of Europe. Everywhere witches, devils, and death danced together through a cloud of sulfur and ashes, and the mingled figure of all these evils was stamped by the mythical face of "the Jew." The fact that Jews were prominent as physicians, especially to the princes, and the more hygienic character of Jewish life occasionally spared it somewhat from the ravages of the plague, only added to the paranoia. It was believed that a conspiracy of Jews and lepers had poisoned the sources of water with magically cursed bags of excrement and menstrual blood, which, through secret tunnels, flowed through all the wells of Europe. Again we see the image of the Jew as an insidious disease secretly poisoning the life systems of Christian Europe, an image which was to be revived in such potent form in racial mythology. All over Europe, pogroms broke out against the Jewish community, adding the corpses of the slaughtered to those dying from the plague.⁹² The image of the Jew deteriorated in the minds of Christians to that of a deformed monster, with horns, tail, cloven hoofs, and sulfuric odor to betray his fundamentally diabolic character. At the moment when drama, woodcuts, and printing were enormously

increasing the range of popular communication, it was this image of the Jew that was stamped on the popular minds of Europeans, and it remained the basic image of the Jew up to its use by Nazism.⁹³

4. *From the Enlightenment to the Holocaust: The Failure of Emancipation*

For the Christian, the "Middle Ages" is thought of as a period of about a thousand years, lasting from about the sixth century to the Renaissance and Reformation. From the perspective of Jewish experience, this medieval period looks quite different. The "Middle Ages" for Judaism coincides with Christendom itself! Legal disabilities of Jews in Western society lasted from Constantine to the nineteenth century, when the liberal revolutions dissolved the legal structures of Christianity as the established state religion. The age of the ghetto lasted, for Jews, into the nineteenth century in western Europe and into the twentieth in eastern Europe. The French revolutionaries disbanded the anti-Judaic laws in France in 1789, and Napoleon carried this revolution with him during his wars of conquest. But during the reaction and restoration, anti-Jewish restrictions were reinstated in many places. It was only between 1848 and 1870 that the ghetto was disbanded and full citizenship attained generally in western Europe. All disabilities were not dropped in Germany until the Weimar Republic! In eastern Europe, the pogroms of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries mingled the old religious with the new racial charges against Jews. The ghetto was dissolved with the Russian Revolution, but for much of eastern Europe, the world of the ghetto was swept away, not by emancipation but by the Holocaust!⁹⁴ When looking at European history from the perspective of the Jews, we must adjust fundamentally our sense of periodization. What for Christians is the "medieval world," abandoned centuries before Nazism, contained no such "breathing space" for Jews. The medieval world, for Jews, lasted until the revival of anti-Semitism in racial form.

When we realize the continuation of the medieval status of

the Jew down into the modern period, the imagined discontinuity between medieval anti-Judaism and Nazism narrows to uncomfortable proximity. We begin to realize that what Nazism revived was not a long-dead set of attitudes and practices, but a world only recently dissolved in the West, still maintained in the East, whose myths were still live, glowing embers easily fanned into new flames. Moreover, the very processes of the emancipation, the arguments on which it was based, the price it demanded of Judaism revived anti-Judaism in new forms, translating the basis for contempt from theological to nationalist and then racial grounds. Where the Middle Ages was intolerant of the religious alien, the modern state was intolerant of the person of alien national identity. It had no place for Jewish self-government, such as was possible in the medieval corporate state. The Jew in the modern state became the representative of the "outsider" to nationalist identity. But the same stereotypes, the same set of psychological attitudes were preserved in this change of theoretical grounds. Philosophical liberalism provided the theoretical basis for emancipation, but at the same time suggested the basis for this transition from religious to nationalist anti-Semitism. Protestant theology and biblical studies absorbed and deepened this cultural anti-Semitism.⁹⁵

Emancipation began earliest in the home of European rationalism, England. The expulsion of the Jews in the thirteenth century meant that their readmission in Cromwell's time allowed for the building of different relationships. Puritanism regarded the Jews as the people of the Old Testament, but its own revival of Hebrew prophetic religion gave the Jewish tradition in Christianity a much more positive evaluation than was the case with Lutheranism, with its antithesis of Law and Gospel. The laws of the ghetto were not revived for returning Jews, who were allowed to live anywhere. Insofar as they suffered disabilities, they were the same as were suffered by all dissenters from the established Church, and so linked them with Catholics and dissenting Protestants.⁹⁶ Efforts to remove disabilities upon the Jews began in England among rationalist thinkers in the seventeenth century. The American colonies, that were founded in this English Protestant tradition and later fused this tradition with the herit-

age of the Enlightenment, were able to make a fresh start, carrying with them the relatively more liberal traditions of England toward the Jews.

In eastern Europe the pogroms in Poland in the mid-seventeenth century and the continual oppression of Russian Jews from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries drove eastern Jewry again westward, seeking admission to areas where they had previously been expelled. The great pogroms of late nineteenth century Russia drove a large community to America. But in western Europe, in those places where Jews were allowed to reside or were readmitted, the laws of the ghetto remained fully intact until the mid-eighteenth century and only slowly began to dissolve thereafter. The first to emerge from the ghetto were the "court Jews," the wealthy Jews who were given additional privileges of residence, extra-ghetto housing, the right to discard the Jewish dress, to marry, to pass on their privileges to their children, all restricted for ordinary Jews. In turn, they acted as special financial agents for princes, especially in German principalities. This role of the court Jew was simply a continuation of the traditional status of the Jews as "serfs of the prince," put to extended use in the age of absolutism. These very rights granted to court Jews illustrate the disabilities of most Jews, for they were simply rights of ordinary existence, which the court Jew had to purchase as special privileges by bribery and regular payment of protection money.⁹⁷

The court Jew was also the emissary between the Jewish community and the gentile world. Whole Jewish communities often slipped into an area under the cover of the privileges of the court Jew. The court Jew protected the Jewish community and sought to win for them extended rights of residence and means of existence. But he also exploited them, made them dependent on him, and sought to differentiate himself from them in order to prove to the world of the court that he was "different" from the "other Jews." Thus the court Jew prefigures the identity conflict that emancipation was to bring to the Jew. On the other side, there were the Jewish vagabonds, with no rights of residence or means of existence, who eked out a precarious existence as peddlers and often were pushed into the underworld of robbers. This wide range of status created intense problems of

discipline and self-image for the Jewish community which was held collectively responsible for any crime done by any Jew.

The chief occupation allowed Jews was still moneylending. Court Jews translated this into a new, creative role as agents of the financial and organizational needs of the growing modern state. For a third time in European history, Jews pioneered a new development needed for the expansion of society, turning a necessity into a virtue. But Christian society, in turn, turned this virtue into a vice by stigmatizing this role as "carnal" and conspiratorial. Jews as bankers, diplomats, and agents of international communication between states played these roles for their masters, the princes, who were its primary beneficiaries, while the court Jew himself often ended his life on the gallows as the victim of jealousy.⁹⁸ Some Jews grew rich and were able to buy their way out of the ghetto, while their children made haste to depart from the financial and commercial life to more "respectable" professions. The role of the court Jew gave birth to the Jewish banker-diplomat, which found its apex in the House of Rothschild. But this also became the basis for the revival of economic anti-Semitism. No myth was more widely believed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than the myth that "the Jews" controlled international banking and trade and were the secret government of the world. But this attack on "Jewish money" took place at a time when this development had been almost entirely expropriated by non-Jews. Just as in Crusading times and in the late Middle Ages, the attack on this pioneering Jewish development took place when the actual role of the court Jew was at an end; vilification and ruin were heaped on Jews whose role had already been replaced.⁹⁹

However, even the liberalism with which Jews allied themselves in their struggle for emancipation harbored fundamental ambivalences toward Jews. The price of emancipation was also seen as one of cultural assimilation. Most liberals actually thought of this as paving the way for Jewish conversion to Christianity. All liberals took it for granted that ghetto Judaism represented a bad moral, spiritual, and intellectual condition. Talmudic Judaism, as the religious basis of the self-governing Jewish community, must be relinquished. The price of emancipation was the destruction of Jewish self-government and auton-

omous corporate identity. It was this autonomous corporate identity, possible in the medieval corporate state, which had allowed the Jews to keep a sense of peoplehood within Christian society. It was this sense of autonomous corporate identity and peoplehood which the modern nationalist state could not tolerate and which became the basis of modern anti-Semitism. Now Jewish identity in an ethnic sense was seen as intrinsically evil. It must be dissolved so the Jew could become a "German," or else it was seen as indissolvable, and so the Jew must be expelled. In any case, the Jew must pay for emancipation by ceasing to be a Jew in a corporate sense.

To be sure, the Jews themselves wanted emancipation too. They wanted full access to modern cultural and economic life and were ready to pay for this by sacrifice of their political autonomy. However, the narrowness from which the emancipated Jew fled in the ghetto had little to do with that "materialism" of Christian anti-Judaic polemic. Indeed, the classical spirit of the ghetto resembled nothing so much as a rather austere monastery, resolutely turned away from the Christian world, where men in long black garb studied with profound reverence every word of Torah, seeking to penetrate every time and place of daily life with the fire of the Divine Presence.¹⁰⁰ But Christian liberals had no knowledge or perception of any such riches underneath the outwardly alien image of the ghetto. Indeed, it is fair to say that Christianity throughout this whole history never really engaged in dialogue with Judaism itself or entered into Jewish history or perspective, but only used it as a foil and antithesis to Christianity. This anti-Judaic left hand of the Christian redemptive self-image continued to be basically the stance of nineteenth-century liberal theology and philosophy. Talmudic Judaism, even the Old Testament, was seen as a retrograde, bigoted, immoral, and fossilized religion, without inward spiritual or ethical principle, which had to be overcome, both here and now and in world history, in order for mankind to "progress."

This view also penetrated to the liberals' understanding of Christianity, leading them to deny that Christianity and Jesus were in any way intrinsically "Jewish." Christianity was seen as the universal religion of nature or reason, which arose as the

antithesis and negation of Judaism. It was this universal, natural religion which was the basis on which the Enlightenment sought the unity of all men beneath their religious differences. The Christian rationalists identified this with the "essence" of Christianity. The anticlerical deists rejected Christianity also for the religion of reason which must supersede it. But, in either case, what was hated in biblical revealed religion was stereotyped as "Jewish," while all positive values of spirituality, rationality, and universality were the characteristics of Christianity or philosophy that were antithetical to "Judaism." Jews were offered an ideology of emancipation which was itself based on a rationalist version of anti-Judaism.¹⁰¹

Jewish liberals responded by proposing Judaism itself as a better candidate for the religion of reason, a religion based on ethics which did not demand the conversion of others. Out of this fusion of Judaism and rationalism grew Reform Judaism. But no Christian liberal took seriously this viewpoint, or bothered to examine the possible credibility for this view in talmudic tradition. For them, rabbinic thought was a closed book and Judaism the antithesis of every value of mind or depth of spiritual feeling.¹⁰²

For liberals, what was "wrong" with the Jews was regarded as cultural. Jews could be emancipated if they ceased to be Jews culturally, becoming secular or, as most liberals secretly expected, Christian. For conservative Christians, what was wrong with the Jews was intrinsic to Jewish "character." Bigotry, immorality, legalism, carnality, materialism, and lack of inner spiritual or ethical principles were regarded as intrinsic traits that expressed the "nature" of the Jews. In the seventeenth century, a tradition of anti-talmudic scholarship was developed which distorted and gathered out of context negative statements throughout Jewish tradition on Gentiles and idolators. Out of this was created a polemical caricature of Judaism that was presented as its teachings against Christians. This anti-talmudic tradition was exemplified by J. A. Eisenmanger's *Judaism Revealed* (1700). Here, Judaism was represented as a religion of bigotry and immorality, filled with hatred for Christians and giving license for any kind of immoral dealings with them. These views were reprinted continually from the eighteenth century to

the Nazi era and became an integral part of the arguments for and against emancipation. Liberals believed that the Jews would get over these evil traits by dissolving the identity created by rabbinic thought. Conservatives believed that they could never get over these traits because it was their unchangeable "nature." But both sides took the basic stereotypes of Judaism for granted.¹⁰³

Emancipation did not depend on who won these arguments, but on the processes of secularization that shaped the modern state and which could not tolerate self-governing groups apart from the monolithic organization of the nation-state.¹⁰⁴ It was on these grounds that the Jews had to either be drawn into a secular definition of citizenship, based on nationalism, or else be regarded as incapable of assimilating into this national identity and eliminated by expulsion (or extermination). It was here that liberal philosophy and theology also played an ambivalent role. Their definition of religion, either as the universal, natural religion of reason, or else as profound inwardness, made Judaism the antithesis of the concept of "religion." Since Judaism was not a religion, according to either Christian rationalist or Christian romantic theories, Judaism came to be defined in this tradition of thought in nationalist, quasi-racial terms. Judaism was said to be, not a religion, but the laws of a nation. Jews were not a religious group, but a foreign nation. The antithesis of Judaism and Christianity was translated into an antithesis between Jews and Europeans, or Jews and Germans.¹⁰⁵ But the fundamental stereotypes of Judaism as the antithesis of Christian salvific values persisted underneath this secular translation. Now the Jews were unassimilable because they represented a perverse and alien "foreign essence" which was the opposite to all that was spiritual, noble, and true in the "Germanic spirit." The German spirit was that of "*Innigkeit, Gemütsleben, Glaube, Idealismus,*" while the "Jewish spirit" was that of "*Skeptizismus, Sarkasmus, Spott, Materialismus.*"¹⁰⁶ It was not until the advent of racist anthropology in the late nineteenth century that this view received its full-blown racial theory. But the grounds for a secular translation of anti-Judaism into racial anti-Semitism were laid in the philosophy of

the Enlightenment and then deepened in the philosophers of Romanticism.¹⁰⁷

Since the emancipated Jew left the ghetto by accepting, in large measure, these stereotypes of talmudic faith and taking for granted the possibility of a neutral national culture and society where he could become "like the others," this meant that he was largely unable to correct these stereotypes, having made haste to bury any deeper understanding of the roots of the world he was leaving. The emancipated Jew thus became a self-contradiction who must prove his right to be accepted "as a Jew," by proving that he was not at all "like the Jews." Accepting the ideology of the secular national state at face value, he remained baffled by his own continuing rejection, unable to overcome the ways in which all positive values were still regarded implicitly as "Christian," while he, as a Jew, was still assumed to possess the characteristics of "evil Judaism" under his apparently assimilated exterior. The emancipated Jew thus became an unwilling Marrano. It was not that he secretly practiced talmudic Judaism, while feigning assimilation; now he actively sought assimilation on secular grounds, but still had projected upon him, by Christian society, all the alien features of the ghetto which are presumed to be still hiding under his good bourgeois appearance as his "real" identity! The ghetto Jew of Christian mythology remained the screen through which western Europe continued to view the emancipated Jew. In vain did the Jew escape the ghetto and dissolve its life, because the myth of the ghetto Jew remained firmly fixed in the minds of Christians as his real "nature."

The processes of emancipation coincided with traumatic changes in European society in the revolutionary era which dissolved the old Christian order for secular, liberal industrialized society. Thus the processes through which Jews entered mainstream society also created a traumatic reaction in those classes—clerics, landholders, and lower-middle-class artisans—who were deeply threatened by the new secular industrial society. The secular Jews were hardly the creators of these new forces. Indeed, they formed only about one percent of the population in Germany and France, and only a small part of them were

actually secularized, and even fewer were leaders in the commerce and culture of the new society. Yet they were concentrated in urban areas and in professions that made them highly conspicuous. As the beneficiaries of secularism, the secular Jews became the symbolic representatives of the dissolution of Christendom. Secular Jews came to be fantasized as a kind of "insidious disease," flowing into the veins of "Christian Europe," sapping its spiritual, moral, and economic energy. They were imagined to be the creators and secret managers of all the forces represented by the new secular industrial state. The traditional stereotype of the Jew as "carnal man," which mingled religious and economic anti-Semitism, ever conspiring against both the faith and the wealth of Christendom, was brought into play to create the new myth that everything which these threatened groups hated in the new society was intrinsically "Jewish."¹⁰⁸ Even socialists, especially Christian socialists, bought into this myth by identifying the Jews with capitalism, while conservatives identified Jews with the forces of scepticism, secularism, and democracy that were dissolving the old order, religiously and socially. Contrary as these two positions may appear, they often made common cause with each other in the anti-Semitic parties that arose in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁹ The infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a chief instrument of this myth. Produced by the Russian secret police in the late nineteenth century, its roots lay in Russian anti-Judaic mysticism. It built the ancient Christian claim that the Messiah whom the Jews expect is the Anti-Christ into a fantasy wherein a Jewish secret government, in existence since the time of Christ, plots the overthrow of Christendom and the establishment of the reign of the Devil over the world in the last age of world history. The *Protocols* thus provided a clear link between Christian anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism.

Nazism arose as the final repository of all this heritage of religious and secular anti-Semitism, making Jews responsible for capitalism and communism simultaneously! The racial theory was new, but the stereotypes of hatred were old. The mythical Jew, who is the eternal conspiratorial enemy of Christian faith, spirituality, and redemption, was being shaped to serve as the scapegoat for all the things in secular industrial society which the

middle class had created and now feared and hated for their dissolution of traditional religion, culture, social hierarchy, and life style. But the middle class could not challenge this new society without challenging the basis of their own wealth, and conservatives did not want to liquidate the economic affluence of this society—only its social results. So the way to be against modern society without upsetting bourgeois power was to do so in a purely ideological way, diverting all the pent-up fear and unrest of the dissolution of Christendom onto the Jews. European society was primed to undergo a gigantic “purge” of the dangerous infection that it felt was threatening its inner health, wealth, and wisdom. The mythical Jew had long been fashioned in Christian history to serve as the symbol of this “disease” from which the Christian must purge himself in order to save himself. Under the slogan “the Jews are our misfortune,” mass paranoia again gripped the soul of the European heartland, but in the language of racism and deliberately engineered by gangsters of mass communication.

In 1933, when Hitler came to power, there began the systematic reassertion of anti-Jewish laws which reversed the gains made by the emancipation. Jews quickly were again reduced to persons without rights, citizenship, or means of existence. First, Jews were excluded from all civil offices, including teaching and judgeships. Then, they were expelled from the army; then, from the legal profession and, as much as possible, from medicine. Then, they were denied citizenship altogether and forbidden to intermarry with Aryans or employ them in their homes. Finally, the Crystal Night of 1938 saw a coordinated attack on Jewish businesses, homes, and synagogues throughout the Reich. Nazi propaganda flooded every means of communication. Even little children were held up for ridicule and abuse in school. Jews again were forced to wear the yellow badge and began to be rounded up for places of detention. The Talmud and Jewish learning again went up in flames. The Jews were being marked down for final elimination, although the decision to exterminate them, rather than expel them, only came about when all doors to Jewish emigration were closed with the war.¹¹⁰

The Christian background to the Aryan laws is illustrated by an incident reported in Hitler's *Table Talk*. Here, he reports

that two bishops came to confront him on the issue of Nazi racial policy. Hitler replied that he was only putting into effect what Christianity had preached and practiced for 2000 years.¹¹¹ Even the Confessing Church proved peculiarly unable to confront the issue of anti-Semitism itself, theologically or practically. It took its stand instead on opposition to German Christianity in the name of "pure doctrine."¹¹² Even the great figure of the resistance, Bonhoeffer, displays an element of this myopia. In his lectures of 1934, one of his few references to the Jewish issue, Bonhoeffer remarks that the Jews should never be expelled from Europe. They must remain, for Christians, as a negative witness to Christ, the exemplification of divine wrath. He is oblivious to the fact that it is this very myth that lies behind the history that shaped anti-Semitism.¹¹³ For most churchmen, Protestant and Catholic, the fact that the Nazis declared themselves anti-communist, anti-liberal, and anti-Semitic was enough to guarantee that they were on the side of Christianity and the restoration of Christendom, despite their worship of Wotan.¹¹⁴

But nationalist, racial anti-Semitism contained a crucial element that went beyond the framework of Christian anti-Judaism. It was now Jewish *peoplehood* that must be destroyed before the monolithic nationalism of the modern state. This meant that the massacres conducted in the name of racial anti-Semitism now came from the state itself, whereas, in Christendom, violence had always come from the mob, while the state had been the protector of Jewish continued existence. This perhaps helps to explain the paralysis of the European Jews before the phenomenon of Nazism. Pogroms from the mobs were well known. But state-engineered genocide was heretofore unknown. Christian religious anti-Judaism had demanded the misery of the Jews and the containment of Jewish "unbelief," leaving the "final solution" in the hands of God. Racial anti-Semitism could stop at no such limitation. A disease of the body, unlike that of the will, cannot be cured by conversion. Hence, even assimilation was viewed as a trick by which the "Jewish disease" infiltrated the Aryan bloodstream. Master of its own eschatology and creator of its own millennium, the Third Reich took in hand that Last Judgment which Christianity had re-

served for the returning Christ. In Hitler, the Führer empowers himself with the ultimate work of Christ to execute the "Final Solution to the Jewish question."

Today, European Jewry is gone, swept away by the Holocaust. To be sure, some Jews continue to live in Europe. But European, especially German, Jewry, as a cultural phenomenon, which made such brilliant contributions to modern culture and scholarship, has been destroyed. In North America, the promise and the ambivalences of the emancipation are still intact. In Russia, the condition of ghetto Jewry mingles with the totalitarianism of the modern revolutionary state. It is in Israel that the myth of Christian anti-Judaism comes to an end. Here, the dispersion is overcome, and the Jewish people regathered into the ancient homeland, contrary to that Christian theory that denied this possibility. The Zionist messianic vision of the Return confronts the Christian doctrine of eternal misery and dispersion of the Jewish people to the end of history. Yet, the hope for a people "at ease in Zion" still eludes the Jewish state, as it struggles with the effects of Western imperialism which, now, set one victimized people against another.