

# THE ANTI-SEMITIC MOVEMENT IN EUROPE

by Antoine De Ghequier (1889)

*The Hebrews, the chosen people of old, possessed even in pre-Christian times an ineradicable propensity to worship Mammon. The selling of the birthright was a bargain, and they have bargained ever since.*

The anti-Semitic movement, though hardly ten years old under that name, has thrown a mass of publications on the market among the authors of which we encounter the learned Catholic priest, the professor of theology, the lawyer, the atheist, men of all creeds and of no creeds, and hence also a correspondingly great disparity of opinions as to the intrinsic merits of the whole question. Mr. August Trefort, the late Minister of Education in Hungary, condemns, for instance, the movement not merely as unchristian and uncatholic, but as anti-social and communistic. He says, with a great deal of force, "An appetite after Jewish property will necessarily be followed by an appetite after the property of the Catholic bishop and the Catholic count."

Dr. Eugen Dühring, an exceedingly learned scientist, though an avowed atheist, asserts that

“the Jewish question would exist even if all the Jews turned their back upon their own religion and embraced one of the prevailing creeds, or if religion were abolished altogether.” This much, however, is quite certain, that the large majority of writers take great pains to emphasize the non-religious character of the agitation. The word *anti-Semitic*, in point of fact, has been chosen by the leaders of the movement for the express purpose of indicating the absence of the religious element as one of the causes of its existence.

When we bear in mind that the Jews are the only representatives of the Semitic race in Europe, it is, of course, at once apparent that anti-Semitic means anti-Jewish and nothing else. It seems to us, however, that the studied effort to eliminate altogether the religious element from the discussion, and to represent the movement either as purely social, or purely political, or purely economic, leads to much confusion of ideas. It is quite true that nothing even faintly resembling a religious persecution forms part of the issue, but it is equally true that the Jewish faith, in its effect upon society, morality, and political economy, furnishes the one and only key to any real understanding of the whole difficulty. On that ground, and on that ground alone, can it be truthfully said that sooner or later the anti-Semitic

question is bound to become an international question.

I

After these few preliminary remarks we will now proceed to look at some facts and figures. The total number of Jews, according to the most reliable statistics, does not exceed six or seven millions. The bulletin of the Geographical Society of June, 1885, gives the following distribution: Europe, 5,407,600; Asia, 245,000; Africa, 413,000; America, 300,000; Australia, etc., 12,000 -- total, 6,377,600. It appears, therefore, that the actual number of Jews scattered among the 328,000,000 of Europe's population forms a very small percentage of the inhabitants of that continent. And the distribution of the Jews in Europe, according to more recent statistics, assigns to Russia 2,798,000; Austro-Hungary, 1,644,000; Germany, 562,000; Romania, 400,000; European Turkey, 70,000; Netherlands, 82,500; France, 49,500; England, 46,000; Italy, 35,400; all other countries, 26,300 -- total, 5,713,700.

These figures confront us with really startling facts. In the first place, no more than about six hundred thousand Jews live among forty-one millions in the German Empire, and yet a strong anti-Semitic movement exists there, where they

form, indeed, a numerically insignificant fraction of the whole population. In the second place, in Germany, the strongest and, in point of education and culture, perhaps the most advanced commonwealth of Europe, the movement has gained more strength than anywhere else. In Austria the case as regards the absolute percentage of Jews is less startling, for we notice a million and a half leavening the thirty-nine millions of its peoples. Still, while they are even there a decided minority, the movement lacks neither intensity nor force, and if there is any justification for it at all it would at all events be less surprising in Austria than in Germany, for the following reason.

The Jews of Russia, numbering nearly three millions, live almost exclusively in the southeastern European provinces of the great Slav despotism, contiguous to the frontier of Austro-Hungary. Since the Russian government has taken measures to prevent this centralization and to distribute them in more equal proportions over the vast dominions of the czar; since, moreover, they are restricted, under Russian rule, in their choice of a calling in life; and last, but not least, since only five per cent, of their children are admitted into the higher schools, which percentage applies also to the children of baptized Jews for several generations, they find themselves, as it were, pushed across the

frontier and thus threaten a considerable increase in the contingent of Jews in Austria.

This danger, and it is an imminent danger, renders the anti-Semitic problem in Austria at once more serious and less incomprehensible than elsewhere. In Galicia (Austrian Poland) the Jews even now form one-ninth of the population of the province, viz., over 450,000 in five millions; in Lemberg and Cracow, the two largest cities, over thirty percent. In Hungary, where a hundred and fifty years ago hardly any Jews were found, they began to swarm in as soon as the edict of toleration was issued in 1782. In 1785 over 75,000 were already counted, and at present over 600,000 are credited to Hungary and the dependencies of the Hungarian crown. The rest of Austria contains about one-half a million.

With these figures before us it would seem as if the outright numerical preponderance of other nationalities would suffice to render the need of any anti-Jewish movement almost absurd. Anthropological and biotic considerations will, however, offer evidence of a character which bids us form a very different opinion.

II

The Jews and the Gypsies have often been compared as the two races which furnish in anthropology the most interesting objects. The purity of race, the sameness of feature, of form, of structure, of character, appears traceable much longer in them than in any other known race. The Jew of today is the Jew of a thousand, of two thousand years ago; he is the identical Jew that left the first historical record of the race behind. So, too, with the Gypsy. But apart from this continuity of race, from the tenacity of inherited custom and an aversion to learn agricultural pursuits, there is nothing common between the Jew and the Gypsy.

The former knows how to accommodate himself to surroundings and circumstances; the latter remains in proud, stolid self-consciousness, ever the same. The Jew, active, seeks gain everywhere and in everything, and strives with untiring energy and at every sacrifice after wealth; the Gypsy, lazy and inert, gives no thought to the tomorrow. The Jew endeavors to acquire civic rights and to found hearth and home; the Gypsy remains hopelessly nomadic. The Jew learns with facility the language of the country he lives in, the Gypsy preserves his Romance language; the Jew hopes for a universal reign, the Gypsy knows that no future awaits him.

Biotically the Jew is likewise a unique phenomenon. Climates which to Aryan races would be destructive do not seem to affect him. The Jews acclimatize better than any other nation, and, where prosperous, they propagate more rapidly and show greater longevity, irrespective of climate, than Aryan nations. At the same time they thrive best where they are comparatively few; for in Russian Poland and Galicia, where they are most numerous and hence compelled to live among themselves, the Jew lives in filth, in squalor, and in poverty. Trading among themselves evidently does not pay; like parasites, they need others, not of their faith, to prosper on.

But there is one trait of character in the Jewish race which is historic and undeniable, and which, more than any other factor, explains the anti-Semitic movement. The Hebrews, the chosen people of old, possessed even in pre-Christian times an ineradicable propensity to worship Mammon. The selling of the birthright was a bargain, and they have bargained ever since. The Mosaic law and the prophets bear witness to this trait of character. And when in the fullness of time the God-Man came upon earth to convert the Jew into a Christian, what does history tell us? He walked among them doing good; he was explicit in his teaching that God and Mammon were two masters whom no one could serve at the same time; he bade

them seek the kingdom of heaven first -- and what was the result?

They who were taught by the divine lips of our Saviour not only rejected Christianity as a nation, but they crucified its Founder and cried: His blood be upon us and upon our children. That curse has followed them ever since. The history of the Jews from the beginning of our era is the literal fulfillment of the punishment that overtook them then and there in verification of the prophecies. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was followed by the dispersion of the Jews. They ceased to exist as a nation with a home. They became homeless wanderers all over the globe; ever since they are the ubiquitous and perpetual living witnesses of the truth of Christianity. Doomed to be strangers whithersoever they should go, they are still strangers wherever they are found now.

### III

Popular phraseology has stigmatized the homeless nation as the "wandering Jew." The Jew of today is still the carnal Jew who looks for a temporal Messiah to raise his people to the summit of human greatness and reward his followers with earthly goods. Unable to form a nation in a political sense, the Jews form now everywhere a nation within a nation, with a more clearly defined object



in view, better organized, and more compact than any Aryan race.

All nations by an intuition have but one way of naming Jews. They may be born in England, in Germany, in France, in the United States, or anywhere else; we never hear or read about Jewish Englishmen, Jewish Germans, Jewish French, Jewish Americans, but only of English Jews, German Jews, French Jews, American Jews. Thus the common sense of all nations has known how to describe a phenomenon that discloses to us a means of understanding what the anti-Semitic movement means.

Nor is this all. Let it not be forgotten that a money-consideration induced Judas Iscariot to betray our Lord; for if the accusations of the world against the Jews during nineteen centuries had to be expressed in one word, no better condensation could be made than "money." Money! Money! Money! is the reverberating echo of every century. As a people they were never given to agricultural pursuits. The petty money-lender, the usurer, the pawnbroker -- they are, not only proverbially but in reality, mostly Jews.

Any occupation which implies bodily labor or promises no return strictly in money they shrink from with a sort of instinctive aversion. In sculpture, in painting, in art Jews are rarely found, and hardly ever attain to prominence; and when it

comes to the art of war, since Christendom began history has forgotten to record the great general who was a Jew. *Sint ut sunt ant non sint* (may they be as they are, or cease to be) applies to them with singular appropriateness. Nor have they been able, in a moral sense, to rise above the level at which they were in Roman times.

If the great Roman historian Tacitus calls them *proiectissima ad libidinem gens* (a nation very prone to lust) he expresses with classic brevity merely wherein the most prominent vice of the modern rich Jew consists. And if he says, "Among themselves they maintain strict fidelity and a ready generosity, but towards all others a fierce hatred," he characterizes their clannish holding together, their unscrupulousness in the acquisition of wealth, their propensity to consider the faults and weaknesses of non-Jews as legitimate pasture-ground.

Historians now explain the persecutions of the Christians in the early centuries by pointing out how easy it was in those days to ascribe the crimes of the Jews to Christians, because Christianity originated in Judea. Be that as it may, many of the so-called religious persecutions of mediaeval times are at any rate reducible to a rough sort of self-defense against the nefarious practices by which the Jews, even as a suppressed social element, knew nevertheless how to make themselves hated.

## IV

Hungary of the present day offers an example well worth the earnest consideration of the civilized world. The village innkeeper is invariably a Jew. In him the poor peasant finds a man who generously gives him credit, who caters to his passion for intoxicating drink, who in lieu of money is satisfied with a portion of the harvest of his fields -- a man who, as the debt increases, takes only a mortgage on land and property. He looks upon the Jew as a benefactor. But some day he awakes to discover that he has not only become the slave of a destructive vice, but that he is bankrupt and his family ruined, and that the land he once owned has become, at fifty percent, of its value, the undisputed legal property of his former benefactor.

Nor is the peasant the only one who falls a prey to the insinuating arts of the Jew. Many noblemen could tell sad tales. That the Jews have accomplished the ruin of Poland is a historical fact. They own the noble's land, the castle, the silver, the plate, the furniture in it, and if the owner still lives there he does so only on sufferance.

The life-blood of the nation that gave them shelter and food being sucked out, the Polish Jew is reduced to thrive upon the Polish Jew -- not a lucrative business, judging from the condition in

which he is encountered there. Appearances indicate that the fate of Poland awaits Hungary. Already do the commerce and trade of this rich country lie in the hands of Jews to a very large extent, while the press is nearly altogether in their hands.

This picture, which is by no means overdrawn, explains to us why it was that the murder of the girl Esther at Tisza-Eszlar in Hungary in 1882, and the subsequent sensational trial, revived the false accusation of ritual murder which had been framed in previous centuries against the Jews and led to violent outbreaks, such as the burnt ruins of Duna-Szerdahely, the revolts in Cracow, the troubles among the students in Gratz and in various parts of the monarchy.

The official statistics of crime in Prussia throw upon this subject a strange light. Between 1870-1878, 6,430 cases of perjury were tried by jury before the Prussian courts. Considering the percentage of Jews in the population, the proportionate figure would have been 85; but instead of 85, 219 of the accused were Jews. For falsification of documents 6,378 cases were tried; 82 should have been the percentage of Jews, while their actual number amounted to 289. Fraudulent bankruptcy furnishes the most significant item: of 1,129 cases, 268 concerned Jews, as against 15, which should have been their proportion.

In crimes which require a certain amount of courage Jews rarely appear on the docket. It is permissible, therefore, to draw the inference that the criminality of the Jews extends principally over such offences the perpetration of which requires cunning, perversion of truth, and calculating unscrupulousness, where the possibility of escaping the law is not excluded, but depends on the degree of ingenuity of the transgressor. The acquisition of money and the acquisition of power go hand-in-hand. The Jews, therefore, possessed themselves at once of that most powerful instrument for directing public opinion, the press.

The Austrian press goes under the name of *Rabbiner presse*, because all important papers are owned or controlled by Jews and devoted to the promotion of the interests of the Jewish race. The German and the French press are almost in the same position. The late Sir Moses Montefiore is credited with the utterance, "Until all newspapers of the world are in our hands, our reign remains a phantom of the brain." It is a handful of Jews that shapes public opinion in Europe and directs it into channels suitable to their own purpose.

V

The revolutions of 1848, the divorce between religion and education, and the elimination of religion from the school, the rise of Socialism in its various forms -- all this has not taken place without the active stirring-up of public feeling, without the systematic misrepresentation of the truth, without the persistent and able advocacy of false doctrines by means of a press in the hands of Jews. The Jews are the allies of the Freemasons; their ulterior objects are the same. For this reason has Catholicity been singled out by the Jews as the most implacable enemy of "progress," just as Freemasonry also wages against that stronghold of truth an uncompromising war.

The opinion is not infrequently entertained that the attitude of the Church of Rome towards the Jews must be blamed for the transmission of the peculiar characteristics and propensities of Jews, and that the prohibition of marriage between Jew and Christian preserved the nationality of the Jews. But this is not the case. Granting that the action of the church has lessened the mingling of Jews with other nations, the principal and only cause of the purity of the Jewish race consists in the religious aversion of the Jew to seek a wife outside of his own race. Judaism is essentially

exclusive, for, even where no barriers are erected between Jew and non-Jew, the statistical evidence shows in an overwhelming manner that the Jew does not amalgamate with other nations.

What the Jews consider their own mission is no secret. When Cremieux, the grand-master of the French Freemasons, formed in 1860 the *Alliance Israelite*, the circular sent out on that occasion contained the following passages:

- “The Alliance is neither French, nor Swiss, nor German, but Jewish and universal.”
- “Our nationality is the religion of our fathers.”
- “We live in foreign lands and cannot take interest in the changing fortunes of these lands.”
- “Catholicity, our enemy of centuries, succumbs struck on the head.”
- “The day is not far distant when the riches of the earth will belong exclusively to the Jews.”

These are the objects of the organization called into life for “beneficial purposes.” The organ of the Jews in Vienna, *Die Neuscit*, in its issue of September, 1883, contains the following:

We, the professors of Judaism, who on account of our experience and our history, on account of our trials and sufferings, are far in advance of all other peoples in ethics, we have to educate them, that at least a part of the Christians may be lifted up to the moral plane on which the Jews have for a long time already been.

There is no uncertain sound in these words.

## VI

From what has been said so far it is self-evident that the Jewish question, culminating in the anti-Semitic movement, offers very grave problems, socially, politically, and economically. No nation, no government can stand idle and see the wealth of the people gradually but surely concentrating itself in the hands of a race hopelessly alien, and they cannot allow the ruling power to be used for furthering the advantages of a foreign element; they cannot tolerate this foreign element to become master, and those who gave to it food and shelter to become slaves. Yet if the Jews are dangerous corrosive elements of civilized society, they are so because of their religion, as we stated in the beginning.



When Schopenhauer (in *Parerga*, §133) says:

It is an error to consider the Jews as a religious sect, but when, to favor this error, an expression borrowed from the Christian Church is applied, viz., 'the Jewish Confession,' it becomes an expression not only totally incorrect but calculated to mislead. Jewish nation is correct. Their religion is the tie that binds them together, the *point de ralliement* (focal point), the battle-cry, the sign of recognition,

he really asserts what we contend for, and agrees practically with H. Naudh, who observes (in *Die Juden und der deutsche Staat*):

The state dare not ignore the moral code of a foreign, peculiar religion. Their religion is a direct declaration of war against all other nations and is peculiar to the race. To be a Jew means to put one's own advantage against the whole world in a hostile manner, to recognize no moral law towards others, except the gain of Israel. If the German state, therefore, is the personification of the German nation, then the Jews living in Germany are as little part of the German state as the

tapeworm of the patient in whom he lives. They are German-speaking Jews, but they are not Jewish Germans.

Here the religious element appears positively asserted as the one cause that necessarily alienates the Jew from all other nationalities. In that sense is also to be understood the following passage from Ernst Freiherr v. d. Brüggen's work, *Russland und die Juden*:

Towards the Christian, the Christian society, and the Christian state there exists no moral obligation for the Jew. A Jew who has stolen is hardly less esteemed on that account by his own, except he is caught and loses the gain. Honor is weighed against gold; he who has money has esteem, nobody asks after his honor. In its position and influence the Jewish people display the character of an aristocracy of birth that does not rest upon ownership of land and privileges, but upon movable capital (money) and intelligence (more correctly, smartness and unscrupulousness). The spirit of union among this aristocracy is immense, their energy in protecting the common interests of the race worthy of admiration. The

Jewish question is, therefore, not one of religious toleration. Whoever holds that opinion is either ignorant or uses toleration as a pretext. It is not faith but civilization that separates us from the Jews. The Jewish question is a question of civilization.

## VII

If the absence of morality in Jews towards non-Jews, and their union against all other nations, render them dangerous, then, we take it, the faith inculcating these principles is the kernel of the question. Now, Judaism rests in our days upon the Talmud, whose compilation was made early in our era, about 350. It divides itself into two parts, the Mishnah, containing the Mosaic tradition, and the Gemara, containing the explanation and interpretation of the former.

Comparatively little has been known about the Talmud until modern research dove into the mysterious depths of this code. The Shulchan Aruch, an extract from the Talmud, is better known and more accessible to the student. It is, of course, impossible to do more than faintly outline this moral code. The concurrent testimony of all who have investigated this subject, even Dr. Kopp (a lawyer of no mean ability, who in the famous

lawsuit of Dr. Rohling, a Catholic priest, against Dr. Bloch, a rabbi, acted as counsel of the latter), justifies the assertion that the ideas of moral and immoral, right and wrong, in the Christian sense are altogether wanting.

What is unlawful towards a Jew is not unlawful towards the *goyim* (non-Jews). If some fervent anti-Semites have been carried away by their zeal to torture the only passage in the Talmud that possibly could be taken as a formal approval of ritual murder into such a meaning, they have hardly advanced their cause, for the theory of bloody rites among the Jews appears pretty well exploded. But that the Jewish creed of today presents us with a code of superlative and exclusive egoism, having in view the attainment of universal sway by means of grasping the wealth of all nations in the firm grip of this race, no one can deny.

Dr. Adolf Wahrmund states very concisely, "The Jews consider themselves the representatives of humanity *par excellence*," and the same opinion is reiterated in many different forms by the ablest writers on both sides. It is, after all, but the old story, *though you may drive out nature with a pitchfork, she will always come back*. As long as the Jew remains Jew in his heart, in his conviction, in his aspirations, the formal change of religion effects no real change.

## VIII

The facts with which our times have to deal bear out all that we have said. Whether we look at Wall Street in New York, or the Paris Bourse, the markets in Berlin, Vienna, and elsewhere, we observe everywhere the typical faces of the Jews among those who raise and inflate values and tighten or loosen the money markets of the world. The aggregate money power of the Jews all over the world is something incredible. In all the leading banking institutes of the world Jews hold the reins.

The power of the Rothschilds, the Bleichroeder, and a host of others is so great that modern governments are practically dependent upon them in their foreign policy. Such a state of affairs is quite serious, and it promises to become more so. The United States also offers a lesson worth studying in this respect. In 1832, 12,000 Jews are enumerated, 78,000 in 1870, and in 1877, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites reports their number as 300,000, of whom 50,000 live in New York. In 1844, New York possessed four synagogues: in 1873, the number had grown to forty-four. When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, commenting upon the inscriptions on the tombstones in a Jewish cemetery of Rhode Island, wrote,

The very names recorded here are strange,  
Of foreign accent and of different climes:  
Alvarez and Riviera interchange  
With Abraham and Jacob of old times,

he was probably not aware how much he said in these words of the ubiquitousness and continuity of the Jew. The tone of a press acknowledged to be in the hands of the Jews offers, of course, no light upon this subject. But the fact that in the parliaments of Germany and of Austro-Hungary anti-Semitic parties are forming indicates that the masses, as such, have taken hold of the movement. Their dumb sense of suffering from something from which the government ought to protect them begins to take shape and form.

In some districts an anti-Semitic credo is exacted from the candidate before he can obtain a single vote. As yet the power of the Jews in both parliaments, where they furnish the most skilful leaders and advocate apparently only the cause of the masses, is unshaken. But their efforts to deceive the credulous meet no longer with the same success. Leagued, as the Jewish cause is, to that of the Freemasons, the governments are confronted by a task so great and so delicate that its difficulty cannot be overrated.

## IX

Were the Jews surrounded on all sides by people whose lives practically demonstrated the elevating, purifying, and sanctifying influences of genuine Christian virtue and genuine Christian faith, their conversion would offer little difficulty. But in the modern so-called Christian state it is difficult to see how any legislation can be enacted against the Jews as Jews. For on what basis can it stand? Will you persecute the Jews because they know how to trade on the weaknesses and faults of those not of their faith? Because they are rich and getting still richer? Because they know how to acquire and to hold power? It is plain how difficult a question is here offered for settlement.

Again, the Jews have not been free until this century. That love for fellow-man which Christ so much enjoined upon his followers has not been for centuries extended to them. Almost the only protectors they found in the middle ages were the popes, who offered them an asylum and shelter until the storm blew over. Besides, there are Jews who in uprightness of character, in integrity, in charity and purity of life offer examples worthy of imitation to many so-called Christians. They acquire knowledge, and many a Jew is in point of culture and learning above his Christian fellow-man.

Many Jews are aware of and deeply deplore the failings of their own nation, and, though Jews by feature and descent, are in no sense Jews any longer. All this complicates the problem. Nor is it surprising that the Jews are the main supporters of Freemasonry; the social outcast reached naturally out for an institution where he was not treated as such, and where he found, or, at all events, hoped to find, that social equality for which he struggled in vain for centuries. As far, then, as the Jews are Freemasons they are necessarily, in any state where they are, a living menace to society, to state, to government, as they are to the human race itself. But where they are simply Jews, inoffensive citizens of another creed, offensive only because of their national inability to live otherwise than as parasites, there in a truly Christian state an anti-Semitic movement appears in the light of an anomaly.

For a Christian government conscious of its duty to do in a social way what God's church has been, is doing, and will continue to do in a spiritual way, namely, to "gather all into one fold," should not find that task fraught with insuperable difficulties.

*Originally published in the March, 1889 issue of Catholic World.*