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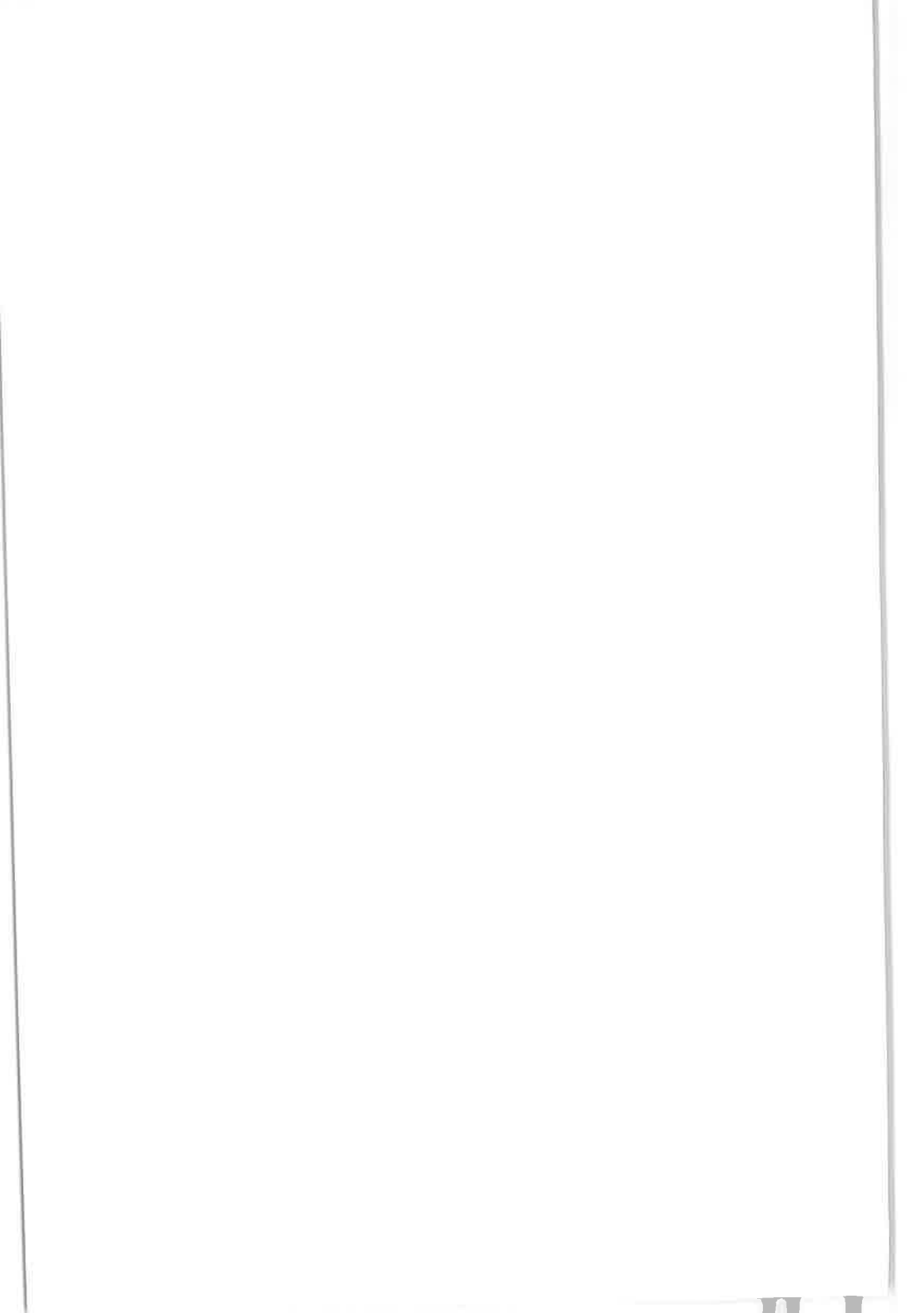
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*Antisemitism  
in the  
New Europe*

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ROBERT S. WISTRICH

Oxford Centre for  
Hebrew and Jewish Studies



## THE FRANK GREEN LECTURE SERIES

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IN a recent editorial *The Times* observed: 'every age perceives decline, degeneracy and moral entropy, and harks back to an idealised golden era of manners and prosperity.'<sup>1</sup> It aptly reminded the doom-mongers of 1993 that there was nothing new about the present wave of moral panic, the fears of long-term unemployment, the racial insecurities, and prevalent myths of decadence or national decline. Moreover, it advised that disenchanted Britons might take some comfort from the fact that the current malaise and mood of cultural pessimism transcended national boundaries—indeed one can say that it is truly *communautaire*. 'For every poll revealing British gloom there is another to show that Gallic *morosité* and German *Angst* are yet more pronounced.'<sup>2</sup> Certainly we already seem a long way from the euphoric hopes expressed only a few years ago with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Communism, the triumphant surge of democratic aspirations, and the widespread optimism about an ever-closer European union growing out of the new single market.

Economic recession, signs of social and political disintegration, an alarming moral vacuum, the revival of radical right-wing movements feeding on racism and xenophobia, the horrific 'ethnic cleansing' in ex-Yugoslavia, and the resurgence of an inward-looking nationalism are among the more obvious symptoms of the present mood. Wherever we choose to look, there are signs of what the French Jewish sociologist Émile Durkheim analysed a century ago as social *anomie*: a loss of moral and communal cohesion, a sense that the institutional pillars of society—religion, the family, the legal and educational systems, the state itself—have been either corrupted or eroded, or have ceased to provide guidance on what is right or wrong. There is a deep disillusionment with established political parties and parliamentary government, under-

<sup>1</sup> 'Present Imperfect', *The Times*, 24 Feb. 1993.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

mined as they are by financial scandals, sheer greed, abuses of power, and remoteness from the ordinary citizen. Above all there is a growing feeling across Europe that traditional standards and social discipline are collapsing, whether we are talking about literacy, civility, sexual norms of behaviour, religious toleration, or elementary respect for our fellow men and women.

This context of an incipient brutalization and moral nihilism in our highly developed modern societies affects us all. But it ought, I believe, to be of special concern to Jews, whose secure future in Europe and elsewhere is bound to be closely tied to the fate of liberal democracy, and in particular to the barometers of social stability, religious pluralism, and a culture of civility. It is precisely these values which are most under threat today. We live in an age of rapid technological change, social and economic upheaval, mass migrations across continents, and the breakdown of traditional moral restraints. It is against this background of a fundamental crisis of civilization that we need, in my view, to see the threat posed by the resurgence of antisemitism in contemporary Europe and beyond. For it is, I suspect, no accident that Jews should once again find themselves targeted in a period of rising nationalism, ethnic conflict and violence against foreigners; that they should become a focus for religious fundamentalism, millenarian prophecies of doom, irrational sexual anxieties, and general moral confusion.

Indeed, modern antisemitism itself emerged during the late nineteenth century in a remarkably similar climate of opinion and at a time when liberalism was increasingly on the defensive. The recently emancipated Jews of Europe were frequently identified, by both enemies and friends, with the classical liberal credo of *laissez-faire* individualism: with the Stock Exchange, the press, cultural innovation, greater sexual freedom, radical politics, and the promotion of free-thinking secularism.<sup>3</sup> Then, as now, the theory and practice of antisemitism were closely connected with a wider counter-emancipatory agenda in which hostility to Jews was part of an integrative chauvinist ideology that helped to cement the nation against its common enemies.

In *fin-de-siècle* France, for example, the leading ideologue of *Action Française*, Charles Maurras, singled out the Jews along with the

<sup>3</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (London and Toronto, 1982).



*métèques* (foreigners), freemasons, and Protestants as one of the 'four confederate states' who were subverting the French national spirit.<sup>4</sup> At the time of the Dreyfus affair, his radical right-wing royalist movement saw itself as defending France and 'Frenchness' (*la francité*) against the subversive cosmopolitan, internationalist forces of 'Jewry', applied to the Republic. The myth of '*une France française*', pure and homogenous, cleansed of Jews and foreigners, would be vehemently propagated by the French radical Right between the wars and climaxed in the 'national revolution' of 1940.<sup>5</sup> Under Vichy, as we know, Jews were ruthlessly excised from the French national community by an indigenous legislation that was originally undertaken without German prompting.<sup>6</sup>

Today we have again a radical Right movement in France which embraces a similarly racist ideology to that pioneered by Drumont, Barrès, and Maurras in the 1890s and ultimately implemented between 1940 and 1944 with such disastrous results.<sup>7</sup> This movement, led by le Pen, defends the memory of Marshal Pétain, casts doubt at every opportunity on the reality of the Holocaust (a mere 'detail in the history of the Second World War'), and attacks the so-called 'Jewish International' with increasing frequency in its publications. French Jews, who constitute 1 per cent of the population, are alleged to control the mass media (press, television, radio) and the financial system and to have excessive influence in French politics.<sup>8</sup> In the coded language of the Front National—which today represents about 15 per cent of the French electorate—it is indeed Jews who incarnate those 'cosmopolitan' ideas of anti-France which have to be uprooted. Exactly as they did a hundred years ago, French Jews still belong, in the discourse of the Right, to *l'étranger*.

<sup>4</sup> See Stephen Wilson, *Ideology and Experience: Antisemitism at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (London and Toronto, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Birnbaum, *Un mythe politique: La République juive de Léon Blum à Pierre Mendès-France* (Paris, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> For the continuities in French Fascist thinking, see Ze'ev Sternhell, *La Droite révolutionnaire: Les Origines françaises du fascisme* (Paris, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> James G. Shields, 'Jean-Marie le Pen and the New Radical Right in France', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 20/1 (1986), and the analysis of Pascal Perrineau, 'Le Front national: 1972–1992', in Michel Winock (ed.), *Histoire de l'extrême droite en France* (Paris, 1993), 243–98.

True, the main focus of the Front National's electoral campaigns is currently directed at the themes of North African Arab (and also Black African) immigration, rather than against the 600,000 French Jews. The four million Muslims in France are the more visible 'fifth column', the more obvious target for an indigenous racist attack on creeping 'colonization', and represent the more immediate threat of a dilution of the French *ethnie*. Arabs and Africans living in virtual ghettos can more readily be linked with key social problems of law and order, drugs, prostitution, the fear of Aids, unemployment, and urban decay. Such widespread anxieties and the general antipathy towards Third World immigration, in France and right across Europe, are undoubtedly the fuel on which new national populist movements like the Front National run. It is their main electoral banner and it has a certain potency because it is responding to real social and political problems as well as appealing to those primary nationalist or protectionist reflexes that so often revive in times of economic crisis.<sup>9</sup>

But the fact that Jews are only secondarily the focus of this essentially anti-immigrant xenophobia should not lead one to undue complacency. Nor should the obvious disparity between Jews and Third World immigrants in levels of integration and assimilation or in social, economic, and political status within their host societies encourage illusions about the real nature of the new populist nationalism. Not only is racist exclusivism ultimately indivisible in its hatred of the other, but historically its hard-core ideologues in France, Germany, Austria, Russia, and eastern Europe always have been and still are anti-Jewish. Declarations to the contrary are mostly tactical and to be taken with a pinch of salt.

Indeed, what is most remarkable in the organicist philosophy of contemporary ethnic nationalism in Europe is its *continuity* with the 'blood and soil' doctrines of the 1890s.<sup>10</sup> Antisemitism takes its place today, once again, as an integral component of the same irrationalist, anti-liberal, anti-socialist, and anti-egalitarian cocktail of catch-all national populism which emerged in Europe a century ago. Fifty years

<sup>9</sup> James G. Shields, 'The Front National and the Politics of Discrimination in France', *Analysis*, 2 (IJA Research Report, June, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> See the lecture (in Hebrew) by Ze'ev Sternhell, 'Hayemin be tsarfat veba'antishemitut', published by the Study Circle of World Jewry, Shazar Library (Jerusalem, 1987), 9-27.

later, during the Great Depression, it proved its value as a battering-ram against the liberal democratic order, as a means of mass mobilization and of overcoming class contradictions during the Fascist and Nazi era. Today, in the 1990s, half a century after the greatest massacre of Jews in European and world history, antisemitism has resurfaced, though in a somewhat muted key, in a Europe that has still not managed to come to terms with its own terrifying genocidal heart of darkness.<sup>11</sup>

This pattern of eternal recurrence in European society cannot, of course, be dissociated from the special status of Jews as the perennial outsiders of Christendom. The 'wandering Jews' who had been cursed by the Church and its theology in the Middle Ages as Christ-killers, and by the ignorant populace as profaners of the Host, practitioners of ritual murder, and perpetrators of other diabolical crimes, were to discover that these ancient stereotypes could not easily be shaken off, even in an enlightened, secular, and modern Europe. The image may have shifted; it has certainly been secularized and modernized, but the Jew still remains—the prototypical other, the archetypal stranger and cosmopolitan nomad, the rapacious capitalist and dangerous bolshevik—always seeking world domination. Nothing has fundamentally changed for present-day nationalists, xenophobes, and antisemites in contemporary Europe, obsessed as they are by the looming threat of the multi-ethnic, multicultural society and the spectre of world government. The Third World migrants, the guest workers, the refugees and asylum-seekers, or the Gypsies may be the current embodiment for them of the traumas of modernity;<sup>12</sup> but it is ultimately the myth of the Jew as the organizer, manipulator, and wire-puller of an international conspiracy which gives meaning to their nightmares of racial degeneracy.<sup>13</sup>

This is a crucial ideological dimension which is frequently ignored by

<sup>11</sup> For further amplification, see Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> Tony Allen Mills, 'France: The Mob Returns as Militancy and Racism Grow', *Sunday Times*, 29 Nov. 1992.

<sup>13</sup> For examples from publications like *Minute*, *Le Choc du Mois*, and *National Hebdo*, see *L'Événement du jeudi*, 17–23 May 1990, pp. 18–19. Also the informative analysis by Jean-Yves Camus, 'Political Cultures within the Front National: The Emergence of a Counter-Ideology on the French Far-Right', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 26/1 and 26/2 (1992), 5–16.

the Western mass media. All too often the television cameras are seduced by the sight of the so-called 'neo-Nazi' skinheads rampaging in the streets of Germany and other European countries. The insignia, the marching, the shouts of 'Sieg Heil!', the uniforms, and the slogans are instantly recognizable. It chillingly reminds us all of blackshirt anti-semitism in the 1930s and 1940s, of Fascists and Nazis, something we already know about and therefore believe we can deal with. But this extreme fringe, however ugly, shocking, and despicable in its assaults on Gypsies, Turks, and Vietnamese in Germany, or in its desecration of Jewish cemeteries, is little more than a low-level threat.<sup>14</sup> In itself it cannot bring down a stable democratic system like that of contemporary Germany and it certainly cannot be compared with the army of Nazi brownshirts that virtually ruled the streets in the last years of the Weimar Republic. Nor is the more respectable radical Right in Germany, which until recently was threatening to break into the 10 to 15 per cent band of electoral support, truly comparable to the National Socialists. Franz Schönhuber, the leader of the Republikaner party and the Bavarian replica of le Pen, may be a Waffen-SS veteran but he is no Hitler<sup>15</sup>

What is more worrying, however, are the underlying attitudes to foreigners and Jews which are capitalized on in such populist movements and are much more prevalent in the general population than we like to think.<sup>16</sup> According to recent sociological surveys, for example, probably about eight million Germans could be classified as antisemites (in

<sup>14</sup> The xenophobic attacks in Germany received very extensive coverage in the British press. For example, *Sunday Times*, 29 Nov. 1992, p. 16; *Daily Telegraph*, 26 Nov. 1992; *The Times*, 28 Nov. 1992, p. 10, and 14 Dec. 1992, pp. 6-7. For further comment, see also the *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 Dec. 1992, pp. 6-7; *Newsweek*, 21 Sept. 1992, p. 26; 'Faultless to a Fault' and the sociological/psychological analyses in *Der Spiegel*, 2 (1993), 36-48.

<sup>15</sup> See Uwe Backes, 'The West German Republikaner: Profile of a Nationalist, Populist Party of Protest', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 24/1 (1990), 3-16, and the interview of Schönhuber by Anatol Lieven, 'Rabble-rouser in a Suit', *The Times*, 24 Nov. 1992.

<sup>16</sup> A good example of how these attitudes to foreigners and Jews break down across generational, class, educational, and political divides can be found in the survey, 'Mit Gestrigen in die Zukunft?', *Der Spiegel*, 15 (1989), 150-60, and 'Arbeitslose Ausländer abschieben?', *ibid.* 16 (1989), 151-63. Of those polled, supporters of the Republikaner party predictably emerge as the most anti-foreigner, antisemitic, and positive about the Nazi era. Their attitudes have more resonance than the core of their electoral support; this is also true elsewhere in Europe.

France the figure is still higher—24 per cent of respondents in a survey declared there were ‘too many Jews’ and 70 per cent that there were ‘too many Arabs’).<sup>17</sup> This is remarkable, given that there are only 40,000 Jews in Germany today, whereas there were four-and-a-half million *Ausländer* (including two million Turks) in West Germany alone before 1990. It is not particularly convincing to mechanically attribute such persistent anti-Jewish prejudice to the massive economic dislocations and lack of democratic traditions in the eastern part of Germany. For comparative surveys of East and West Germany show that West Germans are more prone than their compatriots in the ex-GDR to draw a line under the Nazi past and to regard Jews as having an exploitative, manipulative attitude towards the Holocaust.<sup>18</sup> Racism, Holocaust denial, and strikingly hostile attitudes to Zionism are even more frequent in stable, democratic, and prosperous western Germany than they are in the almost bankrupt east. The core areas of support for the Republikaner party also remain most solid in places like Bavaria, where the movement originated a decade ago, rather than in the ex-GDR.

Germany’s pivotal historic role in the dissemination of modern anti-semitism and its decisive economic weight in the new Europe make media concern with its recent wave of racist xenophobia understandable, but none the less deceptive.<sup>19</sup> For, despite some worrying trends,

<sup>17</sup> Survey material is of course questionable on all kinds of grounds and to be treated with caution. However, it is more likely to *underestimate* the amount of antisemitism or racism in a particular population, given the stigma attached (or believed to be attached) to such views and the reluctance to admit to them at all. For West Germany, a detailed survey from 1976 already suggested that 15–20% (i.e. close to 10 million) of the population were ‘ausgeprägte Antisemiten’, 30% latent antisemites, and 50% without prejudice. See Alphons Silbermann and Herbert A. Sallen, ‘Latenter Antisemitismus in der BR Deutschland’, in *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 28 (1976), 720. For an updated, comprehensive view of the data on the eve of German unification, see Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb (eds.), *Antisemitismus in der politischen Kultur nach 1945* (Opladen, 1990), 108–30.

<sup>18</sup> For the comparative dimension between the western and eastern parts of Germany made possible by unification, see the data and interpretations in Jennifer L. Golub, *German Attitudes Towards Jews: What Recent Survey Data Reveal* (New York, 1991), and the thorough breakdown in David A. Jodice, *United Germany and Jewish Concerns: Attitudes Towards Jews, Israel and the Holocaust* (New York, 1991), 5–6, 15–16, 23–5.

<sup>19</sup> See the remarks made by Nicolaus Sombart, ‘Les Nouveaux démons allemands’, *L’Express*, 1 Jan. 1993, pp. 36–9.

the main danger to Jews today does not come primarily from Germany, where levels of antisemitism are in fact now lower than those in France, Austria, and most of eastern Europe, not to mention the United States.

The comparison with Austria is particularly instructive. Though Austria has seen no neo-Nazi street violence on the German scale in recent years, its underlying antisemitism appears to be significantly more pervasive. This was true before, during, and after the Waldheim affair. In 1992, for example, between 20 and 30 per cent of Austrians were found to be negatively disposed towards Jews (one in five preferring to have no Jews at all in the country);<sup>20</sup> a majority of Austrians still oppose the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, and 50 per cent feel that Jews were partly responsible for their own persecution.<sup>21</sup> Attitudes are particularly hostile in areas like Carinthia (traditionally a bulwark of German–Austrian border nationalism) and in the Burgenland.<sup>22</sup>

It is significantly from Carinthia that Europe's most charismatic national populist leader, Jörg Haider, comes—a young man with an impeccable Nazi family background and an admirer of the Third Reich's 'orderly employment policy'.<sup>23</sup> Haider, whose singularly misnamed Freedom party won 23 per cent of the vote in Vienna (never a strong supporter of Austria's German nationalists) in November 1991, has essentially built his career on exploiting fears of a mass influx of immigrants from the east.<sup>24</sup> The emergence of the new democracies in eastern Europe with their fragile economies, and the exodus of refugees

<sup>20</sup> These figures come from a public opinion poll carried out by the Director of the Gallup Institute of Austria and a Professor of Public Opinion and Communication at the University of Vienna, Dr Fritz Karmasin. See his *Austrian Attitudes towards Jews, Israel and the Holocaust* (New York, 1992), which also appeared in the Working Papers on Contemporary Antisemitism series, sponsored and published by the American Jewish Committee. Among the more sobering data in this poll, 53% of Austrians agreed that 'it is time to put the memory of the Holocaust behind us' (28% disagreed); 32% believed that Jews were 'exploiting the memory of the Holocaust for their own purposes' (36% disagreed); and 56% felt that the Austrian government should not prosecute Nazi war criminals (38% were in favour of prosecution).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 17, 36, 42. Also Jennifer Golub, *Recent Trends in Austrian Antisemitism* (New York, 1991), 8.

<sup>22</sup> See John Bunzl, 'National Populism in Austria', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 26/1 and 26/2 (1992).

<sup>23</sup> On Haider and his movement, see T. Busch, R. Fasching, and C. Pillwein, *Im-rechten Licht: Ermittlungen in sachen Haider-FPO* (Linz, 1990).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

from war-torn Yugoslavia have intensified these popular anxieties. Like his counterparts in France, Germany, and Belgium, Haider has put forward a detailed plan designed to bring immigration to a complete halt. In his party's propaganda, migrants are usually stigmatized as potential criminals or parasites and their presence is seen as directly threatening an ethnic transformation (*Umvolkung*) of Austria.<sup>25</sup>

The Freedom party, it should be noted, openly emphasizes German ethnicity (using the revival of east European nationalism as a pretext), and praises the virtues of racial separatism. The unification of Germany has undoubtedly strengthened its long-standing emotional commitment to *Deutschtum*, and to the idea of *Anschluss*, which in Austria goes back more than a century. In many ways Haider appears to combine aspects of the illiberal, pan-German programme pioneered by Georg von Schoenerer with the populist anti-corruptionism of Karl Lueger, the two principal Austrian antisemitic leaders of the late nineteenth century who also inspired the young Hitler.<sup>26</sup> Haider is generally careful to disguise his antipathy to Jews, but there can be little doubt that the Freedom party contains the largest concentration of hard-core antisemites in a country where even the two mainstream parties—Socialists and Conservatives—have periodically flirted with antisemitism.<sup>27</sup>

If the Austrian case illustrates the potency of history, tradition, and long-standing prejudice, counter-examples like Italy and Hungary suggest that there is no single, uniform pattern to contemporary antisemitism. Italy, for instance, where Jews have lived continuously for over 2,000 years, has a tradition of relative tolerance towards Jews, especially since the Risorgimento. Even under Fascism, Jews were reasonably well treated for about sixteen years, until the race laws of 1938

<sup>25</sup> H. Goldman, H. Krall, and K. Ottomeyer, *Jörg Haider und sein Publikum: Eine sozialpsychologische Untersuchung* (Klagenfurt, 1992), 140.

<sup>26</sup> For Hitler's Austrian connection, see Robert S. Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition* (London and New York, 1990), 55–67.

<sup>27</sup> For the consistently high scores of Freedom party members on a range of issues indicating anti-Jewish prejudice, see Karmasin, *Austrian Attitudes*, 13–47. For antisemitic manifestations in the Austrian Socialist party and also among Conservatives during the Waldheim affair, see the articles by Robert Wistrich and Richard Mitten in Robert S. Wistrich (ed.), *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century: From Franz Joseph to Waldheim* (London and New York, 1992), 234–74.

deprived them of their rights.<sup>28</sup> But for the past decade Jews in Italy have been increasingly unnerved by a climate of hostility fuelled by both the radical Right and Left. In addition to the xenophobic, neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano and the small groups of violent 'Naziskins' who threaten Blacks, Jews, and 'Zionists', in Rome and elsewhere, there is also a strain of militant Catholic anti-Judaism and a particularly virulent anti-Zionism on the Left. A survey in *L'Espresso* in November 1992 showed that 56 per cent of Italians thought Jews had a 'special relationship with money' and 42 per cent felt Jews should stop dwelling on the Holocaust (10 per cent even believed it to be a myth), while one in ten respondents actually indicated that Jews should leave the country. Most surprising of all, given the exceptional assimilation of Italian Jewry, was the fact that one-third of those interviewed did not see Italian Jews as being Italians at all!<sup>29</sup>

Hungary, too, has exhibited a surprising degree of political anti-semitism which has alarmed its highly assimilated Jewish community (with 80,000–100,000 members the largest in east-central Europe).<sup>30</sup> Hungarian Jews have traditionally been very patriotic and, at least until 1918, were more shielded against antisemitism than Jews in neighbouring countries.<sup>31</sup> However, since the abortive Communist revolution of Bela Kun (and still more since 1945), Jews have been linked by the conservative and radical Right with Marxism and Bolshevism.<sup>32</sup> (The Communist dictator of Hungary between 1948 and 1956, Rakosi, was for example a 'non-Jewish' Jew, as were virtually all his closest associates.) But in the Kadar years the Hungarian Jews did not suffer unduly, either from overt antisemitism or the compulsory 'anti-Zionism' which was a *sine qua non* of the official Communist world.

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Steinberg, *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust 1941–43* (London and New York, 1991), 220–39.

<sup>29</sup> See the report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 Nov. 1992. Also the assessment of Italy in *Antisemitism: World Report* (London, 1992), 23–5.

<sup>30</sup> 'Political Antisemitism "Comes Out"', *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 Feb. 1993, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> For the Hungarian–Jewish symbiosis at the turn of the century, see e.g. John Lukács, *Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture* (London, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> See Paul Lendvai, *Antisemitism without Jews: Communist Eastern Europe* (New York, 1971), which points to the heavy Jewish representation at the apex of the Hungarian Communist dictatorship, but also notes their prominence among the dissidents. It is noteworthy that there was no major antisemitic backlash in 1956 with the collapse of Stalinism during the Hungarian revolution.



This began to change again after the 1990 elections, which brought to power the conservative Magyar Democratic Forum. Its vice-president, Istvan Csurka, has resolutely revived the 'Jewish question', claiming that Hungary is being smothered by a conspiracy of 'Jews, Bolsheviks and world bankers'.<sup>33</sup> He has openly attacked the Hungarian president, Arpad Göncz, as an agent of Israel and world Jewry, and contemptuously denounced the liberal consensus policies of Prime Minister Antall.<sup>34</sup> Csurka, a prominent playwright and novelist, editor-in-chief of *Magyar Forum*, and a militant right-wing Christian nationalist, demands the rule of those who possess a 'völkisch-national backbone', who belong to the 'Magyar ethnicum' and to the Christian middle class.<sup>35</sup> His ideology of a Hungarian Hungary based on 'the holy concept of the PEOPLE' is specifically directed against Jews (virtually a synonym for liberals and bolsheviks in his eyes).<sup>36</sup> Csurka uses a language reminiscent of the semi-Fascist Horthy era (and even of the Hungarian Nazis in the late 1930s) in encouraging the irredentism of Hungarian minorities in Transylvania, Slovakia, and elsewhere. Moreover, like other antisemites in Russia and eastern Europe, he consistently blames the Jews for Stalinist Communism and regards the liberal opposition (i.e. the Free Democrats) as essentially a front for the left-wing bloc, which wishes to restore the power it had after 1945 and which, he alleges, has always been a pawn of Jewish influence. This populist rhetoric appeals to all those Magyars who felt their advance was blocked under Communist rule, to the less educated, and to rural conservative Hungary, traditionally suspicious of urban, cosmopolitan Budapest, of its Jews and its liberal or Marxist intelligentsia. There is no doubt that, as a result of Csurka's antisemitic manifestos and his

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Stephen J. Roth, 'Antisemitism at the Centre of Hungarian Politics: The "Csurka Affair"', *Analysis*, 5 (Nov. 1992), 1-7. Also the comments in *Profil*, 38 (Vienna, 14 Sept. 1992), 90.

<sup>34</sup> For the attacks on Göncz, see Andras Gervai's report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 Sept. 1992. For Prime Minister Antall's attempt to defuse and minimize the Csurka affair, see his interview in *Newsweek*, 28 Sept. 1992, p. 56. The antisemitic manifesto is described as 'the unfortunate consequence of the peaceful transition' and the disappointment of victims of Communism at the lack of retribution. Antall's defensive refusal to deal with the antisemitic content of Csurka's challenge is, I believe, a sign of weakness.

<sup>35</sup> Roth, 'Antisemitism'.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

influence over masses of Hungarians, the 'Jewish question' has returned to public life and even to street politics.<sup>37</sup>

Opinion surveys none the less suggest that there is probably less anti-Jewish prejudice in Hungary than in Poland and Slovakia. Hungarians do tend to regard Jews as exercising too much economic influence, but they are more likely, despite Csurka, to accept them as an integral part of the nation.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, as is the case elsewhere in eastern Europe, their negativity towards other elements in society—Gypsies, former Communist officials, Russians, Arabs, or Blacks—is probably still greater than it is towards Jews.<sup>39</sup> The danger, however, is that *political* antisemitism in Hungary appears to have captured a section of the ruling coalition, so that the government is in part already hostage to it. This helps to explain why the Hungarian government, the prime minister, and the Magyar Democratic Forum have reacted so tamely to the new antisemitism.

In neighbouring Poland, Slovakia, and Rumania, antisemitism has, since 1989, also been used in political campaigns and has erupted from below, following the collapse of Communism. The Slovak separatist movement which has now achieved its historic goal of breaking up the Czechoslovak state, has been the main vehicle for popular antisemitism, though it also tenaciously persists among the Catholic clergy and in the rural population. In March 1991 thousands of Slovak separatists rallied in Bratislava on the 52nd anniversary of the founding of the first 'independent' Slovak state, originally sponsored by the German Nazis.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Csurka's position is by no means that of an outsider and has indeed been strengthened within the ruling coalition. At the end of Jan. 1993 at the Democratic Forum Congress, Csurka was re-elected with 536 out of 700 of the delegates' votes. His supporters held about half of the seats on the new Forum presidium. See the report by Jürgen Elsässer, 'Antisemitismus als Regierungsprogramm', in *Illustrierte Neue Welt* (Vienna, Feb. 1993), 14.

<sup>38</sup> Renae Cohen and Jennifer L. Golub, *Attitudes Towards Jews in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia: A Comparative Survey* (New York, 1991), 2–3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 16, 18–19, for the comparative data. It should be said that all over the continent, but especially in Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Germany, prejudice against and harassment of Gypsies is increasingly palpable. Some of the stereotypes are remarkably reminiscent of east European antisemitism between the wars. In that sense, the Gypsies are the 'Jews' of contemporary Europe, without the protection afforded to Jews today by having their own state and an influential American diaspora to intervene on their behalf.

<sup>40</sup> See Zora Bútorová and Martin Bútorá, *Wariness Toward Jews and Postcommunist*

They chanted anti-Czech and antisemitic slogans, even physically assaulting President Havel. The Jewish-born leader of the Slovak counterpart of the Czech Civic Forum (called Public Against Violence), Fedor Gal, was denounced at this time as a cosmopolitan and a Zionist, and eventually driven out of Slovak politics.<sup>41</sup> In such an atmosphere it is not surprising that the remnants of the Slovak Jewish community feel apprehensive. They are living in a society where the ruling nationalists can positively identify with Father Josef Tiso (responsible for the genocide of Slovak Jewry during World War II) as a great patriot deserving a national memorial.<sup>42</sup>

A similar problem exists in Rumania, where Hitler's ally, the wartime dictator Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was responsible for the mass murder of Jews in Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, was recently honoured by parliament in a silent tribute.<sup>43</sup> Today, Rumania's small Jewish community of less than 20,000 is probably under greater threat than at any time during the Communist dictatorship. According to the country's chief rabbi, Moses Rosen, 'there are numerous and vociferous anti-semitic attacks, but a deafening silence on the part of many of those

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*Panic in Slovakia* (New York, 1992). This is a perceptive account of the revival of anti-semitism in Slovakia since 1989. See also the results in the Times Mirror Centre for the People and the Press survey, entitled *The Pulse of Europe: A Survey of Political and Social Values and Attitudes* (Washington, DC, 1991). Slovak antisemitism comes close to that of the Poles in its intensity. For example, the survey of the Centre for Social Analysis in Bratislava (Jan. 1992) found that 33% of the population in the Slovak republic definitely did not want Jews as neighbours (the figure for the Czech republic was 17%, and other results confirm that Slovak hostility to Jews was invariably greater than that of Czechs). These figures are in *Aktuálne problémy slovenskej spoločnosti: Správa zo sociologického prieskumu* (Topical problems of Slovak society, a report on a sociological survey) (Bratislava, 1992).

<sup>41</sup> Jennifer Golub, *Antisemitism in the Postcommunist Era: Trends in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia* (New York, 1991), 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 10. The data from the Jan. 1992 Slovak survey, mentioned in n. 40 above, show that 29% of adults in Slovakia view Tiso as a positive figure; for another 29% he is a vague, indistinct character, and 42% have a critical attitude towards him. For 33% of Slovak citizens, the wartime puppet Slovak state had more positive than negative features (39% disagreed and 28% had no evaluation)—results which show a frightening absence of critical or reflective historical self-consciousness.

<sup>43</sup> See Zev Barth, 'Rumänen hören erstmals die Wahrheit', *Illustrierte Neue Welt* (Aug./Sept. 1991), 3. Robert S. Wistrich, 'Tudaeus ex machina: Die Wiederkehr eines alten Feindbildes', *Transit*, 5 (Vienna, winter 1992/3), 140–9.

democratic political forces from which a fighting response to anti-semitism was expected'.<sup>44</sup> There are a number of antisemites in the Rumanian parliament and their arguments are widely reported in the Rumanian press. Among them is the myth of a numerical preponderance of Jews in the Rumanian Communist party. Significantly, even a totally assimilated Jew like the ex-prime minister, Petre Roman (the last practising Jew in his family was his paternal grandfather), has been a frequent target of nationalist antisemites for allegedly disguising his true identity.<sup>45</sup> So, too, has the chief ideologue of the National Salvation Front, Silviu Brucan.<sup>46</sup>

This tradition of visceral, xenophobic antisemitism (religious, nationalist, and political) goes back to the mid-nineteenth century and reached its peak in the brutal pogroms of the pre-war Rumanian Iron Guard. Today, it has been revived in weeklies like *Romania Mare* (Greater Rumania) and *Europa*, which enjoy a wide circulation and are virulently antisemitic as well as anti-Hungarian.<sup>47</sup> As elsewhere in eastern Europe, this renewal has been exacerbated by the hardships of transition to a market economy. It is also promoted by an unholy alliance of former Communists, secret police personnel, and nationalists ready, when necessary, to manipulate antisemitism as a means of preserving their power and privilege.<sup>48</sup>

In ex-Yugoslavia, which has generally experienced far fewer manifestations of antisemitism than other east European countries (whether before or during Communist rule), the Jewish dimension in the present

<sup>44</sup> The remarks of Rabbi Rosen were noted by Zev Ben-Shlomo in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 Sept. 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Roman headed the provisional government following Ceaucescu's overthrow in December 1980. See *Antisemitism: World Report*, 59.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Newsweek*, 7 May 1990, pp. 22–3, for the opinions of the National Peasants party on Brucan and other 'Jewish Communists' blamed for the 'genocide' of the Rumanian people during the post-war period of Communist rule!

<sup>47</sup> *Antisemitism: World Report*, 57–9. It is worth noting the close connection in east-central Europe between antisemitism and other inter-ethnic hatreds dating back to the interwar period and indeed to the 19th century. For many Rumanians (and Slovaks), Jews are historically seen as Magyarizers—thus anti-Hungarian and anti-Jewish feelings frequently go together. This is also true of anti-German sentiments among Poles, Czechs, or Slovaks—which are often related to fear of Jews as 'Germanizers', or agents of German influence.

<sup>48</sup> *Antisemitism: World Report*, 60.

civil war has remained rather muted.<sup>49</sup> The tiny Jewish population of 5,000–6,000 (evenly split between Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina) has not been targeted by any of the warring parties, despite the existence of extremist nationalist movements like the Serbian People's party and the Croatian Party of Rights. This is all the more remarkable since the president of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, has frequently been described as both an antisemite and a historical revisionist (though whether he is either is debatable). Certainly his book, so appropriately entitled *Wanderings of Historical Truth*, greatly minimizes the number of Jews and Serbs killed at the hands of the pro-Nazi Croatian Ustashe regime<sup>50</sup> (Tudjman, a conservative nationalist, was himself an opponent of that regime and has sought to distance himself from the legacy of Croatian Fascism). Whether through ignorance or malevolence, he claims in this book that Jews participated in liquidating Gypsies at the notorious Jasenovac concentration camp and that they initiated the mass murder of Serbs, partisans, and Communists. Tudjman unhesitatingly quotes, without criticism, the comments of inmates who referred to the 'craftiness' and 'underhandedness' of the Jews, their alleged superiority complex (as a 'chosen people') and their religious commandment to 'exterminate others and take their place'.<sup>51</sup> During the 1991 election campaign Tudjman allegedly stated: 'Thank God, my wife is neither a Serb nor a Jew', though this, too, has since been disputed as disinformation spread by Serbs.<sup>52</sup>

Antisemitism in Serbia has traditionally been weaker than it has in Croatia, though the Serbian Orthodox Church is not entirely free of encouraging it. Naturally, given the 'ethnic cleansing' of non-Serbs in

<sup>49</sup> On the pre-war situation, see Harriet Freidenrich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia* (Philadelphia, 1979).

<sup>50</sup> Also trans. as *Wastelands: Historical Truth* (from the 2nd edn., 1989) by Vida Janković and Svetlana Raicević, pp. 160–1, 316–20. Tudjman puts the word 'holocaust' in inverted commas when implicitly criticizing world Jewry's efforts to prevent Kurt Waldheim's election as president of Austria.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Tudjman quotes the report by Vojislav Prnjatović, an inmate of Jasenovac, as 'a fairly true picture' of life in the camp. He says that Serbs suffered from the Jews as well as the Ustashe. The remarks about Jews massacring non-Jews are quoted from another former inmate, Ante Ciliga, but there is no distancing from the source's opinions. See Jennifer Golub's summary in *The Jewish Dimension of the Yugoslav Crisis* (New York, 1992), 4–5, for further details.

<sup>52</sup> *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 Sept. 1991.

Bosnia and Croatia and the creation of concentration camps by the Serbian leadership during the Yugoslav war, there is cause for Jewish concern,<sup>53</sup> not so much for Serbian Jews, who are relatively well protected by the desire of the Milosevic government to win Jewish good will abroad, as for the Bosnian Muslims, targets of a terrifyingly brutal Serbian policy of genocide. For many people, but especially Jews, the civil war in Yugoslavia has for the first time in post-war Europe evoked images of the Holocaust.<sup>54</sup>

The case of Poland is entirely different. Before 1939 Poland had the largest Jewish community in Europe; it was also a hotbed of religious, economic, and nationalist antisemitism.<sup>55</sup> The German destruction of three million Polish Jews, the shifting of Poland's borders westwards, and the removal of most of its other pre-war minorities, as well as its incorporation into the Soviet bloc, totally transformed the nature of the 'Jewish question' in Poland.<sup>56</sup> The Communists manipulated antisemitism for political ends in 1956, in 1967–8 (through a shameless anti-Zionist witch-hunt that purged most of Poland's remaining Jews), and again in 1980–1 against the rising Solidarity movement. The Catholic Church has on the whole been more ambiguous in its attitudes, though Cardinal Jozef Glemp (primate of Poland), in a notorious sermon in August 1989, seriously inflamed passions. He brazenly accused Jews of anti-Polonism, of controlling the mass media, of introducing vodka and Communism into Poland, and of physically threatening the Carmelite nuns in Auschwitz.<sup>57</sup> Such incitement undoubtedly

<sup>53</sup> For some of the problems facing Yugoslav Jewry as a community whose survival is threatened, see Michael May, 'Eine Gemeinde kämpft ums Überleben', *Illustrierte Neue Welt* (Aug./Sept. 1991), 11, and Sheldon Teitelbaum, 'A War within a War', *The Jerusalem Report*, 2 (Jan. 1992), 33.

<sup>54</sup> For a vehement rejection of such comparisons see, however, Alfred Sherman, 'False Parallels', *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 Dec. 1992.

<sup>55</sup> Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Zarys Dziejów Żydów w Polsce w Latach 1918–1939* (Outline of the history of the Jews in Poland, 1918–1939) (Warsaw, 1990) for a concise account. There is more detail in Paweł Korzec, *Juifs en Pologne: La Question juive pendant l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris, 1980).

<sup>56</sup> L. Hirszowicz, 'The Jewish Issue in Post-war Communist Politics', in C. Abramsky *et al.* (eds.), *The Jews in Poland* (Oxford, 1986), 199–208.

<sup>57</sup> On Glemp's homily and the reactions to it, see David Warszawski, 'The Convent and Solidarity', *Tikkun*, 4/6 (Jan./Feb. 1990), 29–31, 92. Also Władysław T. Bartoszewski, 'Polish Responses to the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz', *IJA Report*, 5 (1990), 9–10.

increased popular antisemitism in Poland and encouraged the time-honoured Polish tendency to scapegoat Jews in times of economic crisis.

During the 1990 local elections antisemitic campaign literature was widespread among the smaller political parties and, in the presidential campaign of the same year, the Wałęsa camp spread rumours that his liberal Catholic opponent, Prime Minister Mazowiecki, had Jewish ancestry.<sup>58</sup> Wałęsa himself claimed that Jews provoked antisemitism by hiding their Jewish origins. In this way he tried to undermine opponents like Adam Michnik and Bronisław Geremek (both of Jewish descent and both former advisers to Wałęsa, though they had shifted their support to Mazowiecki).<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless in January 1991 Wałęsa, by now president of Poland, agreed to form a task-force to fight antisemitism and, when he addressed the Israeli Knesset in May, he asked forgiveness for Poland's history of Judaeophobia.<sup>60</sup> The condemnation of antisemitism as 'contrary to the spirit of the Gospel' by Poland's Catholic bishops in December 1990 was another important step towards conciliation. The gradual defusion of the controversy over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz has also helped somewhat to improve the atmosphere between Poles and world Jewry.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless the antisemitism that has its roots in Polish nationalism, Catholicism, and anti-Communist feelings is unlikely to go away soon, despite the smallness of Poland's Jewish community, which numbers between 7,000 and 10,000 people. There are still many right-wing nationalist groups (e.g. Bolesław Tejkowski's Polish National Community, Stanisław Tyminski's Party X, and Professor Giertych's Polish National party) which disseminate antisemitism as part of their general attack on liberal, democratic, and leftist political currents.<sup>62</sup> Though they have not so far done well in elections, their antisemitic assumptions are widely shared by many ordinary Poles, who still believe that Jews are plotting against Poland, that there are literally masses of them hiding under Polish names, and that they have great power through their inter-

<sup>58</sup> 'Antisemitism used in Polish Election', *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 Nov. 1991.

<sup>59</sup> 'Bez maski', *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Warsaw, 22 Sept. 1990).

<sup>60</sup> Jennifer Golub, *Antisemitism in the Postcommunist Era*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Adam Rok, 'Antisemitic Propaganda in Poland: Centres, Proponents, Publications', *East European Jewish Affairs*, 22/1 (1992), 24-37.

national connections. Comparative surveys show, indeed, that Poles express the greatest negativity among east Europeans towards Jews (though Slovaks run them close), with levels of antisemitism running at between 30 and 40 per cent of the population on some issues.<sup>63</sup> At the same time it should be said that an overwhelming majority of Poles (and of Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, and Croats) support Israel's right to exist. Similarly, a substantial majority of Poles (unlike Germans or Austrians) believe it important to keep alive the memory of the Holocaust.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, I would like to say something about Russia which, today as in the past, is both within and outside Europe. Within the borders of the ex-USSR there are still some 1.5 million Jews, concentrated mainly in Russia, the Ukraine, and Belarus. In recent years their future has been in the balance with the economic crisis, political instability, and the upsurge of nationalist and religious fervour. Antisemitism has once more become an integral part of a new Russian nationalist ideology, which is fiercely anti-Western, anti-liberal and anti-socialist.<sup>65</sup> In its more extreme form, as propagated by Pamyat and many similar 'patriotic' organizations, this antisemitism has revived older tsarist and Black Hundred traditions, in denouncing the so-called 'Judaeo-Masonic' conspiracy against Russia. The Pamyat blackshirts combine straightforward chauvinism ('Russia for the Russians') with a satanic image of the West as the source of all decadence and evil. Jews are believed to be the main promoters of westernization—responsible for the increase in crime, for drugs, pornography, and alcoholism, and for the infiltration of degenerate rock music.<sup>66</sup> Along with the corrupt liberal intelligentsia they are the internal enemies and main polluters of Russian culture. Supporters of Pamyat have not yet gained a real mass following, but they have shown how antisemitism can provide an ideological cement to bind seemingly incompatible traditions in Russia's past: the tsarist state-building ethos (Stolypin is a hero), Russian Christian orthodoxy, a xenophobic nationalism based on racial purity, and an unrepentant neo-Stalinism.

<sup>63</sup> Cohen and Golub, *Attitudes Towards Jews*, 2–3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 7, 39–43.

<sup>65</sup> Andrei Sinyavsky, 'Russophobia', *Partisan Review*, 3 (1990), 339–44.

<sup>66</sup> Yitzhak M. Brodny, 'The Heralds of Opposition to Perestroika', *Soviet Economy*, 5 (1989), 162–200. See also Walter Laqueur, 'From Russia with Hate', *New Republic*, 5 (Feb. 1990), 21–5.



A more subtle threat to Russian Jewry probably lies in the populist platform of other New Right politicians like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (leader of the misnamed Liberal Democratic party), who polled six million votes in the June 1991 Russian presidential elections. The focus of his appeal was the defence of Russians in non-Russian republics and the promise to slash vodka prices, along with a vague programme of get-rich-quick privatization.<sup>67</sup> But behind the liberal democratic veneer there is once again a Russian ultra-nationalism that can attract both skinheads and intellectuals, the underclass in the cities and the disaffected in the remote countryside, disillusioned Communists and Orthodox believers. The abortive rising in October 1993 against President Yeltsin underlined the dangerous potential of this 'Brown-Red' coalition, which finally had to be crushed by tanks.<sup>68</sup>

The intellectual basis for Russian ultra-nationalism lies in a plethora of Russian cultural bodies (including the Russian Writers Union), many of whom support and also manifest outright antisemitic sentiments. Eminent Russian writers like Valentin Rasputin have, for instance, openly blamed Jews for the October revolution, the Gulag system, and the Stalinist terror. Others, like Igor Shafarevich, the renowned mathematician and former dissident, have accused the 'little nation' (which inevitably has a Jewish core) of subverting the 'big nation' (i.e. Russia) through its corrosive Russophobia.<sup>69</sup> Apocalyptic novelists like Vasili Belov and Yuri Bondarev also believe, with Shafarevich, that Russia is on the brink of total disaster and that the rootless Jewish 'cosmopolitans' have a great responsibility for this dizzying decline. For them, the root of the Russian spiritual crisis lies in its slavish imitation of the decadent West and salvation can only come from within—through a return to patriotism, law and order, and the traditional values rooted in blood and soil.<sup>70</sup> This made-in-Russia ideology has obvious affinities with that of the integral nationalists in France and with the Fascist populists in

<sup>67</sup> Roger Boyes, 'Russia Invaded by New Army of Fascist Rabble-rousers', *The Times*, 13 Feb. 1992, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Bruce Clark, 'Anti-Semites Strut the Moscow Stage', *The Times*, 10 Feb. 1992; 'Fascists Start Drive to Remove Yeltsin', *ibid.*, 29 Oct. 1992.

<sup>69</sup> Josephine Woll, 'Russians and "Russophobes": Antisemitism on the Russian Literary Scene', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 19/3 (1989), 3–21.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Duncan, 'The Phenomenon of Russian Nationalism Today', in *Nationalism in the USSR* (Amsterdam, 1989), 52–7.

central and eastern Europe before the war. What makes it so dangerous for Russian Jewry today is that it has such a powerful cultural underpinning. It is led by prestigious artists and intellectuals and operates in a country which has suffered a major national humiliation in its loss of great power status, and which currently stands on the brink of economic catastrophe.<sup>71</sup>

Antisemitism clearly plays a major role in the ideology and propaganda of the anti-democratic forces in contemporary Russia, whether they are conservative, nationalist, populist, monarchist, anarchist, neo-Stalinist, Christian Orthodox, or openly Fascist. Its audience is considerable, for it is propagated by no less than forty-five different Russian newspapers and periodicals—some of them, like *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, *Nash Sovremennik*, *Molodiya Gvardiya*, and *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, of major importance.<sup>72</sup> Hence its potential harmfulness is greater than anywhere else in Europe, especially given the weakness of Russian democratic structures, its desperate economic hardships, and the real possibility of an authoritarian dictatorship emerging there in the next few years. The Russian antisemites like to proclaim that the Jews have a plan to achieve world mastery by AD 2000. I believe it more likely that by the beginning of the twenty-first century there might be some antisemites in power in Russia as part of a much broader conservative–nationalist–military coalition.<sup>73</sup>

What I have just said is not meant to be a prophecy, let alone a prediction. Historians, as Friedrich Schlegel is reputed to have said, are at best prophets in reverse. When venturing into analyses of the present, let alone speculations about the future, we are, to quote Michael Howard: ‘like interpreters trying to make sense of a long sentence in German, only at the end of which they know what the verb is going to be.’ Moreover, the data on which to base our interpretations are necessarily incomplete. Let us not forget that optimists and pessimists are liable to regard the same evidence in a diametrically opposed fashion—to see that the cup is half full or alternatively half empty. Events, too,

<sup>71</sup> Vitaly Vitalyev, ‘Seeds of a Racist Disaster’, *Guardian*, 20 Feb. 1990.

<sup>72</sup> For a comprehensive list of Russian antisemitic publications today, see *Antisemitism: World Report*, 65–7.

<sup>73</sup> These remarks were made in February last year and have unfortunately been vindicated by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy’s stunning success in the parliamentary elections of December 1993.

can change with startling rapidity, upsetting the best-laid plans and prognoses. We need only look at the expectations of European Community leaders for 1992. A year inaugurated with festivals to mark an intended *annus mirabilis* turned into an *annus horribilis*, not only for the British royal family but also for the new Europe. Thus far, Europeans have found no ready formulas to contain the centrifugal forces of ethnic nationalism symbolized by the never-ending siege of Sarajevo and, somewhat less violently, by the break-up of the Soviet Union and of Czechoslovakia. Across the continent, from east to west, we have seen a striking revival of populist movements, the nauseating violence of neo-Fascist skinheads, a notable rise in antisemitism, and a resurgence of New Right ideologies.<sup>74</sup> These are all warning signals that the new Europe is caught in a maelstrom, that it has not yet emancipated itself from the demons of its past. In Russia and eastern Europe decades of Communism have palpably failed to change feelings about Jews, even where they have virtually disappeared as a coherent minority group. In central and western Europe, the insistent issues of race and immigration have helped to revive long-established stereotypes of the Jew as a mythical enemy, even if this antisemitism is still partly held in check by post-Holocaust taboos.

The pattern which I see emerging from this *tour d'horizon* of the current situation looks, then, as follows. Antisemitism has revived throughout Europe and should not be evaded or downplayed. Its anatomy and underlying structure seem remarkably similar to those of the late nineteenth century: the same anti-liberal orientation, the same insecurity, fear of freedom, and leaning towards authoritarianism, the same cultural isolationism and racist xenophobia towards all minorities and dissident outsiders.<sup>75</sup> Contemporary antisemites, like their prede-

<sup>74</sup> These phenomena really began to strike observers and provoke extensive comment in the West in the spring of 1990. See e.g. Ian Buruma, 'The Jews, Again', *Spectator*, 19 May 1990, pp. 9-11, and William R. Doerner, 'Eruption of the Ancient, Ugly Fever', *Time*, 28 May 1990, pp. 22-3.

<sup>75</sup> Adam Michnik, 'The Two Faces of Europe', *New York Review*, 19 July 1990, p. 7, notes that this line of thinking can be observed most clearly in Russia but 'it is the manifestation of a psychological mechanism that has been set off in all of the countries in which the Communists held power, including Poland'. Michnik adds that the most important conflict in Polish culture today is between those who see the future of Poland as part of Europe and those who are 'natiocentric'. As elsewhere in Europe, it is the latter who are more prone to accept antisemitic stereotypes into their world-view.

cessors before the Holocaust, often seem to be economically insecure, prone to envy and resentment, suspicious of the outside world. They are frequently hostile to the idea of a united Europe, and indeed to all supranational organizations. Anti-Americanism seems endemic to most of them, and in eastern Europe often extends to resentment of all forms of Western influence. As they did a century ago, today's antisemites generally distrust representative institutions, detest liberal democracy, repudiate the central ideals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and loathe the fundamental notion of human equality. They are instinctively authoritarian, intolerant not only of chaos but of genuine pluralism and diversity, whether it be ethnic, religious, or political. For them the new Europe offers only the nightmare of being swamped: by new migrants, by alien tongues, by destitute refugees, and by unfamiliar cultures. In the tribal racist vision of the nation, there lurks a hatred of the other, which in most European countries has been historically linked to the ancient, ugly fever of antisemitism. Those European gentiles who hate Arabs, Asians, Blacks, or Gypsies seem more likely to hate Jews, though the precise content and intensity of these antipathies and the links between them may vary greatly across national boundaries.

Antisemitism is not, of course, confined solely to populists, Fascists, or reactionary conservatives. As we have seen, the Communists in Russia and eastern Europe did not hesitate to exploit it for political ends, and Socialists, too, have had their own share of chauvinism, xenophobia, and a long tradition of anti-capitalist hostility to Jews. Liberals, too, have been far from immune to anti-Jewish feelings, especially of the kind engendered by Jewish resistance to the uniform assimilation of the melting-pot. A further complication has been introduced in recent decades by a growing distaste in many parts of Europe, especially on the liberal Left, for the theory and practice of Zionism. Israel's embattled existence and its military prowess have undoubtedly modified some classic antisemitic stereotypes and at the same time reinforced others. Its treatment of the Palestinians has sometimes prompted genuine critics to slide almost unconsciously into the murky waters of anti-Jewish prejudice while often also serving as an alibi for avowed antisemites to stay on the right side of the law. Though anti-Zionism is a theoretically distinct ideology from antisemitism (and has therefore only been touched on here in passing), there have been times when it appears to be little more than its politically correct and respectable face.

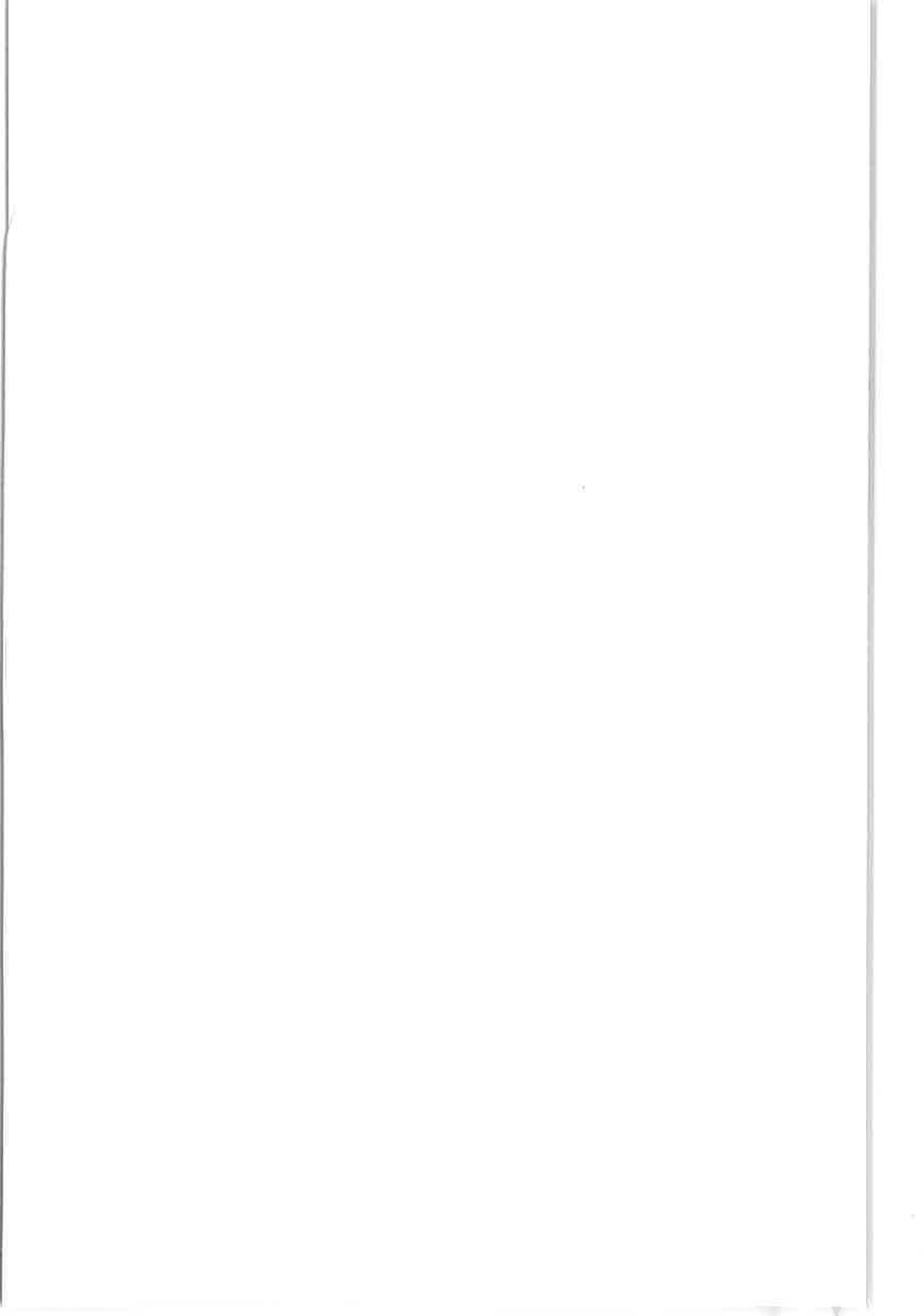
Significantly, many of the antisemites to whom we have referred, from le Pen to the ideologues of Pamyat, would have no difficulty today in defining themselves as anti-Zionist.

Finally, what of Jews themselves in the new Europe? In many respects their position since 1945 has changed very much for the better, as it has in America and Israel. No longer being the most distinctive minority in modern Europe has helped shield them from the sheer scale of pre-1939 antisemitism. So, too, has the martyrdom of the Holocaust with its tragic effect of having destroyed the main centres of Jewish life in eastern Europe. Although, as we have demonstrated, 'antisemitism without Jews' is still alive and well, it is much less dangerous than its antecedents. Nor does the racism of the New Right as yet have the same vehemently explicit, antisemitic quality of its ideological predecessors in the 1930s.

Today there are approximately a million Jews in the European Community (concentrated mainly in Britain and France) and up to two million in Russia and eastern Europe. By now western European Jewry is probably sufficiently prosperous, self-confident, and well organized to withstand any immediate threats to its security. The existence of a powerful Israel, the influence of American Jewry, and the good will of the United States provide it with further vital support. These factors indeed moderate any temptation for governments in eastern Europe to pursue antisemitic policies that might undermine their hopes for badly needed Western assistance. By the same token, most Jewish leaders recognize that only a democratic, tolerant, united Europe which truly respects pluralism and the rights of minorities can ultimately guarantee the stability of Jewish life on the Continent.<sup>76</sup> The revival of racism and antisemitism are an obvious threat to that currently receding European ideal. Here the old biblical injunction in the Book of Exodus must be taken to heart if the new Europe is to survive and prosper: 'And a stranger shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him.'<sup>77</sup> In the Hebrew Bible the commandment to love the stranger is repeated no less than thirty-six times. Commenting on this remarkable fact, the philosopher Hermann Cohen aptly observed that it was in the alien that man had discovered the idea of humanity. Contemporary Europe still has a lot to learn from the ancient Hebrews.

<sup>76</sup> See the remarks of Lord Weidenfeld, 'Building the Third Pillar: European Jewry Must Look to a Wider Future', *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 Feb. 1993, p. 4. <sup>77</sup> Exod. 22: 20





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