

Jewish Literacy # 14 Zionism, Antisemitism and the Holocaust

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Overview of Modern Israeli History

- People Israel, Land of Israel and State of Israel
 - People vs. religion
- Jews have always lived in Israel
 - God's first words to the first Jew "Go to the land that I will show you."
- Modern Zionism starts in the late 1800s
 - Response to antisemitism and the Russian pogroms
- Theodor Herzl (1860-1904)
 - Turned Zionism into an international movement
 - Influenced by the Dreyfus Affair
 - Convened 1st Zionist Congress in 1897
 - 204 delegates from 19 countries
 - Zionist Congresses would adopt what will become the Israeli flag, the Hebrew language, etc.
 - Uganda proposed by British, rejected by 1903 Zionist Congress
- Balfour Declaration 1917
 - Undone by "White Paper" in 5/17/39
 - Limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 over 5 years

Overview of Modern Israeli History

- Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922)
 - *Meshugga le-davar* – obsessed with an idea
 - Allowed only Hebrew to be spoken in his home in Palestine
 - His son becomes the first native Hebrew speaker in 2000 years.
- UN vote for partition in 1947
- Israeli Independence Day, 5 Iyar/May 14 1948
- Wars
 - Independence 48-49
 - Suez 1956
 - 6 day 1967: capture of major amounts of land (Suez, West bank, Gaza, Golan)
 - Yom Kippur 1973
 - Lebanon 1982-2000
- Peace with Egypt (1978) and Jordan
- State of Israel as contrasted with *Am Yisrael* (people Israel) or *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel)
 - The Law of Return
 - The Israeli Political System
 - Religious Pluralism in Israel
 - Peace Process with the Palestinians

Antisemitism

What are the reasons for Antisemitism?

- Usual excuses: scapegoats, ethnic hatred, xenophobia, resentment of affluence, professional success, and religious bigotry.
- The reason is Judaism
 1. Jew's allegiance to God, Torah, and Israel
 2. Reason for Existence: to change the world for the better
 3. Jewish Chosenness
 4. Better quality of life as a result of Judaism
- As a result, Jews could escape by converting (except for the Nazis): Thus, Antisemitism is unlike other forms of racial or ethnic prejudice.

Jew hatred is unique:

- Jews have been expelled from nearly every country in which they have lived.
- Horror is nothing new, Chmelnitzky massacres in Eastern Europe 1648-49 targeted all Jews including infants and the general (non-Jewish) population nearly always joined in. (see Attachment A)
- Depth and permanence, all of history's great powers with any sizable Jewish populations have viewed Jews as a threat: Egypt, Roman Empire, Christian World, Muslims/Arabs, Nazis, Soviet Union.

Antisemitism in 15th Century

Attachment A: Chmelnitzky Massacre: From *Why the Jews, the Reason for Antisemitism*, D. Prager & J. Telushkin, Touchstone, 1983, pp. 19-20.

Some of them [the Jews] had their skins flayed off them and their flesh was flung to the dogs. The hands and feet of others were cut off and they were flung onto the roadway where carts ran over them and they were trodden underfoot by horse. . . . And many were buried alive. Children were slaughtered in their mothers' bosoms and many children were torn apart like fish. They ripped up the bellies of pregnant women, took out the unborn children, and flung them in their faces. They tore open the bellies of some of them and placed a living cat within the belly and left them alive thus, first cutting off their hands so that they should not be able to take the living cat out of the belly . . . and there was never an unnatural death in the world that they did not inflict upon them.⁶

Antisemitism

- **God Torah & Israel**
 - **God:** Jews first to be intolerant of other Gods - Greek, Roman, Christian, Muslim or Human (the Nazi or Communist State)
 - **Torah:** Jews must proclaim belief in God and denial of other Gods. K kosher laws. Sabbath. But Jews do not live apart like the Amish.
 - **Israel:** Jews are both a nation and a religion. Since 1948 Israel is also a state.
- **Chosenness**
 - God chose the Jews to be His messengers on earth.
 - Meaning: "spread ethical monotheism to the world and to be a light to the nations" **ALL OTHER MEANINGS ARE NON-JEWISH**
 - Confers neither privilege nor superiority, only obligation & suffering.
 - Not racial since anyone can become a Jew, anyone can become chosen.
 - See Attachment B.
- **Antisemitism in the ancient world**
 - Jews denied the Gods of their neighbors.
 - 3rd century BCE, Greeks.
 - Maccabee revolt in 167 BCE.
 - Rome: Jews denied Roman gods, Roman values (such as killing handicapped newborn infants). Jews rebelled twice and lost their land in 135 until 1948.

On Chosenness

Attachment B: Chosenness: From *Why the Jews, the Reason for Antisemitism*, D. Prager & J. Telushkin, Touchstone, 1983, pp. 44-45.

Almost every nation sees itself as special in some sense—from the Chinese whose word for China is "center of the earth" to the Americans and their belief in "manifest destiny." Christians have believed that only Christians go to heaven, and Muslims see themselves as God's messengers. Yet of all the world's peoples it is the Jews whose doctrine of chosenness is the one that elicits the sharpest attacks. That is yet another unique aspect of the unique phenomenon known as Jew-hatred.

Christian Antisemitism

- **Jesus came to preach to the Jews. By rejecting the messiahship and divinity of Jesus, the very existence of the Jews was an affront to Christian legitimacy.**
- **The Christian reaction was to deny the legitimacy of the Jews. The Church was now Israel. The authors of the New Testament had to discredit Judaism, with whom they were competing. This is the origin of the Antisemitism in the Christian Scripture.**
 - That the Jews (all Jews: Mt. 27:25 "let his blood be on our heads and the heads of our children") murdered Jesus.
 - Jews were incarnation of the Devil. (John 8:43, 44, 47)
- **Church Fathers. St. John Chrysostom -- theological justification for violence against Jews (see Attachment C).**
- **Crusades; Mission to recapture holy land from Muslims. When found, Jews were offered either conversion or death.**

Writings of an Early Church Father

Attachment C: St. John Chrysostom: From *Shadows of Auschwitz, A Christian Response to the Holocaust*, H.J. Cargas, Crossroad, 1992, pp. 11-12.

First, their synagogue or school is to be set on fire and what won't burn is to be heaped over with dirt and dumped on, so that no one can see a stone or chunk of it forever.... Second, their houses are to be torn down and destroyed in the same way.... Third, they are to have all their prayerbooks and Talmudics taken from them.... Fourth, their rabbis are to be forbidden henceforth to teach, on penalty of life and limb.... On penalty of life and limb, they are to be forbidden publicly to praise God, to thank (God), to pray (to God), to teach (of God) among us and ours.... And furthermore, they shall be forbidden to utter the name of God in our hearing; no value shall be accorded the Jewish mouth (Maul) by us Christians, so that he may utter the name of God in our hearing, but whoever hears it from a Jew shall report him to the authorities or throw pig droppings on him.... Fifth, the Jews are to be deprived totally of walkway and streets.... Sixth, they are to be forbidden lending for interest and all the cash and holding of silver and gold are to be taken from them and put to one side for safe keeping.... Seventh, the young strong Jews and Jewesses are to have flail, axe and spade put into their hands.

How can Christians dare "have the slightest converse" with Jews, "most miserable of all men" (Homily 4:1), men who are "...lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits." Are they not "inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil" whom "debauchery and drunkenness have given them the manners of the pig and the lusty goat. They know only one thing, to satisfy their gullets, get drunk, to kill and maim one another..." (1:4). Indeed, "they have surpassed the ferocity of wild beasts, for they murder their offspring and immolate them to the devil" (1:6). "They are impure and impious..." (1:4).

The Synagogue? Not only is it a theater and a house of prostitution, but a cavern of brigands, a "repair of wild beasts" (6:5), a place of "shame and ridicule" (1:3), "the domicile of the devil (1:6), as is also the souls of the Jews" (1:4, 6). Indeed Jews worship the devil; their rites are "criminal and impure"; their religion is "a disease" (3:1). Their synagogue, again, is "an assembly of criminals...den of thieves...a cavern of devils, an abyss of perdition" (1:2, 6:6).

God hates the Jews and always hated the Jews (6:4, 1:7), and on Judgment Day He will say to Judaizers, "Depart from Me, for you have had intercourse with My murderers." It is the duty of Christians to hate the Jews: "He who can never love Christ enough will never have done fighting against those [Jews] who hate Him" (7:1). Flee, then, their assemblies, flee their houses, and far from venerating the synagogue because of the books it contains hold it in hatred and aversion for the same reason" (1:5). Chrysostom himself gives the example: "...I hate the Jews precisely because it has the law and prophets..." "I hate the Jews also because they persecute the Christians..."

Three Medieval Libels

- 1. Ritual Murder: Jews accused of murder to recreate Easter. Leads to 150 trials of Jews and often entire Jewish communities tried and put to death. Became associated with Passover using Christian blood to make matzohs (ironic since any blood is unkosher!). Nazis devoted 5/1/34 issue of *Der Sturmer* to ritual murder including illustrations of rabbis sucking the blood of Christian children. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia continued to tell newspaper interviewers that Jews celebrate Passover with Christian blood.**
- 2. Plots to Poison Christians: Lots of examples but most significant associated with Black Death of 1348-49. Plague killed 1/3 of Europe's population including Jews. Jews tortured into confessing in a trial in Switzerland and the verdict had all Jews above the age of 7 put to death and those below 7 baptized.**
- 3. Desecration of the Host: In 1243 (28 years after 4th Lateran Council accepted dogma of transubstantiation), all of Berlitz's Jews were burned alive for allegedly torturing a wafer. In Prague in 1389, 3,000 Jews murdered; Berlin 1510, 26 Jews burned and 2 beheaded.**

Roots of Nazism

- Christian Roots of the Holocaust: Nazism was anti-Christian but Christian Antisemitism made the Holocaust possible. Nazi anti-Jewish laws used medieval Church law as a model (see Attachment D).**
- Martin Luther was initially critical of Church's anti-Jewish policies because he believed they prevented Jews from converting. When Jews didn't convert to Protestantism, his rhetoric became so venomous that Nazis used it as a defense at the Nuremberg trials. The first Nazi pogrom was held in honor of Luther's birthday. A selection of Luther's writings about the Jews is presented in Attachment E.**
- Christians must accept the reality of their Antisemitism -- most have (see Pope John 23's prayer -- Attachment F). Jews must recognize Christianity has changed.**

Christian Antisemitism & the Holocaust

Attachment D: Church Law & Nazi Law: From *Why the Jews, the Reason for Antisemitism*, D. Prager & J. Telushkin, Touchstone, 1983, pg. 105.

Church Law	Nazi Law
Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together, Synod of Elvira, 385.	Jews barred from dining cars (Transport Minister to Interior Minister), Dec. 30, 1939.
Jews not allowed to hold public office, Synod of Clermont, 535.	Law for the Re-establishment of the Professional Civil Service, April 7, 1933.
Jews not allowed to show themselves in the street during Passion Week, Third Synod of Orleans, 538.	Decree authorizing local authorities to bar Jews from the street on certain Nazi holidays, Dec. 3, 1938.
Burning of the Talmud and other Jewish books, 12th Synod of Toledo, 681.	Book burnings in Nazi Germany.
Christians not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors, Trulanc Synod, 694.	Decree of July 25, 1938.
Jews obliged to pay taxes for the support of the Church to the same extent as Christians, Synod of Gerona, 1078.	The "Sozialgleichbehandlung" which provided that Jews pay a special income tax in lieu of donation for party purposes imposed on Nazis, Dec. 14, 1940.
The marking of Jewish clothes with a badge, Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 68 (copied from Islamic legislation which had decreed that Christians wear blue belts and Jews, yellow belts).	Decree of Sept. 1, 1941, authorizing that Jews are required to wear yellow star.
Christians not permitted to attend Jewish ceremonies, Synod of Vienna, 1267.	Friendly relations with Jews prohibited, Oct. 24, 1941.
Jews not permitted to dispute with simple Christian people about the tenets of the Catholic religion, Synod of Vienna, 1267.	

Martin Luther's Early Writings

Attachment E: Martin Luther on the Jews: From *Disputation & Dialogue, Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter*, Edited by F.E. Talmage, Ktav Publishing, 1975, pp. 33-36.

WRITINGS ON THE JEWS

Martin Luther

A. THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN A JEW—1523

I will therefore show by means of the Bible the causes which induce me to believe that Christ was a Jew born of a virgin. Perhaps I will attract some of the Jews to the Christian faith. For our fools—the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks—the coarse blockheads! have until this time so treated the Jews that to be a good Christian one would have to become a Jew. And if I had been a Jew and had seen such idiots and blockheads ruling and teaching the Christian religion, I would rather have been a sow than a Christian.

For they have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs and not human beings. They have done nothing for them but curse them and seize their wealth. Whenever they converted them, they did not teach them either Christian law or life but only subjected them to papistry and monkey. When these Jews saw that Judaism had such strong scriptural basis and that Christianity (Catholicism) was pure nonsense without Biblical support, how could they quiet their hearts and become real, good Christians? I have myself heard from pious converted Jews that if they had not heard the gospel in our time [from us Lutherans] they would always have remained Jews at heart in spite of their conversion. For they admit that they have never heard anything about Christ from the rulers who have converted them.

I hope that, if the Jews are treated friendly and are instructed kindly through the Bible, many of them will become real Christians and come back to the ancestral faith of the prophets and patriarchs. . . .

[Luther considered the heroes of the Old Testament good Christians.] I would advise and beg everybody to deal kindly with the Jews and to instruct them in the Scriptures; in such a case we could expect them to come over to us. If, however, we use brute force and slander them, saying that they need the blood of Christians to get rid of their stench and I know not what other nonsense of that kind, and treat them like dogs, what good can we expect of them? [Mediaeval Christians believed in a *Foetor Judaicus*, a "Jewish stench."] Finally, how can we expect them to improve if we forbid them to work among us and to have social intercourse with us, and so force them into usury?

If we wish to make them better, we must deal with them not according to the law of the pope, but according to the law of Christian charity. We must receive them kindly and allow them to compete with us in earning a livelihood, so that they may have a good reason to be with us and among us and an opportunity to witness Christian life and doctrine; and if some remain obstinate, what of it? Not every one of us is a good Christian.

I shall stop here now until I see what the results will be. May God be gracious to us all. Amen.

Luther 20 Years Later

B. CONCERNING THE JEWS AND THEIR LIES—1543

What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? [The Jews were rejected by God since they refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah.] Since they live among us and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing, we can not tolerate them if we do not wish to share in their lies, curses, and blasphemy. In this way we cannot quench the inextinguishable fire of divine rage (as the prophets say) nor convert the Jews. We must prayerfully and reverentially practice a merciful severity. Perhaps we may save a few from the fire and the flames [of hell]. We must not seek vengeance. They are surely being punished a thousand times more than we might wish them. Let me give you my honest advice.

First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so

that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians, and that we have not wittingly tolerated or approved of such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of His Son and His Christians. . . . [Luther and others believed that the Jews cursed the Christians in their daily prayers.]

Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. For they perpetrate the same things there that they do in their synagogues. For this reason they ought to be put under one roof or in a stable, like gypsies, in order that they may realize that they are not masters in our land, as they boast, but miserable captives, as they complain of us necessarily before God with bitter wailing.

Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer-books and Talmuds in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught.

Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach any more. . . .

Fifthly, passport and traveling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to the Jews. For they have no business in the rural districts since they are not nobles, nor officials, nor merchants, nor the like. Let them stay at home. I have heard that there is a rich Jew riding around the country with a team of twelve horses—he wants to be a Messiah—and he is exploiting princes, nobles, land, and people to such an extent that important people look askance at this. [This was "the wealthy Michael," court-Jew of Joachim II of Brandenburg, a famous commercial magnate of the time.] If you princes and nobles do not close the road legally to such exploiters, then some troop ought to ride against them, for they will learn from this pamphlet what the Jews are and how to handle them and that they ought not to be protected. You ought not, you cannot protect them, unless in the eyes of God you want to share all their abomination. . . . [Luther seems to be inciting the robber barons to attack the Jews on the roads. Michael, the wealthy Jew, was actually seized in 1549 by highwaymen acting as agents for some of the most prominent citizens of Magdeburg.]

Sixthly, they ought to be stopped from usury. [Usury means any degree of interest, not only an exorbitant rate.] All their cash and valuables of silver and gold ought to be taken from them and put aside for safe keeping. For this reason, as said before, everything that they possess they stole and robbed from us through their usury, for they have no other means of support. This money should be used in the case (and in no other) where a Jew has honestly become a Christian, so that he may get for the time being one or two or three hundred florins, as the person may require. This, in order that he may start a business to support his poor wife and children and the old and feeble. Such evilly acquired money is cursed, unless, with God's blessing, it is put to some good and necessary use. . . .

Luther 20 Years Later

Seventhly, let the young and strong Jews and Jewesses be given the flail, the ax, the hoe, the spade, the distaff, and spindle, and let them earn their bread by the sweat of their noses as is enjoined upon Adam's children. For it is not proper that they should want as cursed *Goyyim* [Gentiles] to work in the sweat of our brow and that they, pious crew, idle away their days at the fireside in laziness, feasting, and display. And in addition to this, they boast impiously that they have become masters of the Christians at our expense. We ought to drive the rascally lazy bones out of our system.

If, however, we are afraid that they might harm us personally, or our wives, children, servants, cattle, etc. when they serve us or work for us—since it is surely to be presumed that such noble lords of the world and poisonous bitter worms are not accustomed to any work and would very unwillingly humble themselves to such a degree among the cursed *Goyyim*—then let us apply the same cleverness [expulsion] as the other nations, such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., and settle with them for that which they have extorted usuriously from us, and after having divided it up fairly let us drive them out of the country for all time. For, as has been said, God's rage is so great against them that they only become worse and worse through mild mercy, and not much better through severe mercy. Therefore away with them. . . .

To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden—the Jews.

Pope John XXIII's Prayer

Attachment F: Pope John XXIII's Prayer: From *Why the Jews, the Reason for Antisemitism*, D. Prager & J. Telushkin, Touchstone, 1983, pg. 109.

Christians, for their part, must acknowledge the horrors of Christian antisemitism and the latent antisemitic as well as blatant antisemitic elements that still live on in Christendom. They must also understand that the Jews retain their place in God's scheme despite their rejection of Christian claims for Jesus. One Christian who did was Pope John XXIII. Shortly before his death he composed this prayer: "We realize now that many, many centuries of blindness have dimmed our eyes, so that we no longer see the beauty of Thy Chosen People and no longer recognize in their faces the features of our firstborn brother. We realize that our brows are branded with the mark of Cain. Centuries long has Abel lain in blood and tears, because we had forgotten Thy love. Forgive us the curse which we unjustly laid on the name of the Jews. Forgive us that, with our curse, we crucified Thee a second time."⁹⁸

Islamic Antisemitism

- Jews historically treated better by Muslims than Christians.
- In early years Mohammed related well to Jews.
- When Jews rejected Islam, he condemned them.
- Jews and Christians afforded better treatment than pagans but still must be humiliated as *dhimmis*.
- Most Christian communities under Islam disappeared, Jews survived and often thrived.
- Judaism as a religion is not a threat to Islam, but the Jews refusal to be subordinated is. The State of Israel is since it's inconsistent with the view of Jews as humiliated or wretched.

Nazi Antisemitism

- Only Antisemitism that did not provide for conversion.
- Claimed to be racial.
- Robbed war effort to continue murdering Jews (see Attachment G).
- Christian response – Attachment H.
- European Antisemitism aided the Nazis:
 - Whenever the local population refused to cooperate, many Jews were saved.
 - Denmark hid virtually all of its Jews and secretly ferried them to Sweden. Of the 400 Jews sent to Theresienstadt, “only” 51 died of natural causes due to the Danes’ interest in saving their lives. At the war’s end, Denmark’s Jews could reclaim their property.
 - Finland simply refused to deport its Jews; no Finnish Jews were murdered.
 - Bulgaria, with the support of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church saved 50,000 of its 64,000 Jews
 - The opposite is true
 - In Poland, where Jews were 10% of population, 3 million (of 3.3 million) Jews murdered. Every major Nazi death camp was in Poland.

Nazi Antisemitism

Attachment G: Murdering Jews vs. Winning the War:
From *Jewish Literacy*, J. Telushkin, Morrow, 1991,
pg. 347.

Between 1941 and 1945, murdering the Jews was as great a priority for Hitler as winning World War II, if anything, greater. When the Nazis were forced to withdraw from Greece in 1944, almost all German trains were diverted to that country to bring back the troops; not a single train, however, was diverted from those that were taking Jews to death camps. When the Germans ordered a ban on all nonmilitary rail traffic, in order to free all trains for a summer offensive in southern Russia, the only trains exempted from this order were those transporting Jews to the death camps. Hitler's policy of murdering the Jews actually was destructive to the Nazi war effort, since it would have been more pragmatic to use them for slave labor. Yet, even those who were used for slave labor were so mistreated that many of them died within months. When a Nazi general, Kurt Freiherr von Grienanth, suggested in September 1942 that “the principle should be to eliminate the Jews as promptly as possible without impairing essential war work,” he was demoted by the chief of the Gestapo, Heinrich Himmler, who denounced his proposal as a subtle effort to help the Jews.

Attachment H: Catholic Church Responses: From
Why the Jews, the Reason for Antisemitism, D.
Prager & J. Telushkin, Touchstone, 1983, pp. 166-
167.

In March 1942, the leader of the Slovak People's party, Father Joseph Tiso, a Catholic priest, agreed to expel the Jews of Slovakia. After his Fascist Hlinka Guard conducted massive manhunts for Jews, 35,000 were sent eastward to be murdered in the death camps. A Slovakian rabbi went to Archbishop Kametko and asked him to influence his former private secretary Tiso to stop the expulsions. The archbishop responded: “This is no mere expulsion. There you will not die of hunger and pestilence; there they will slaughter you all, old and young, women and children, in one day. This is your punishment for the death of our Redeemer. There is only one hope for you—to convert all to our religion. Then I shall effect the annulling of this decree.”²⁸

In the fall of 1944, Rabbi M. D. Weissmandel escaped while en route to a concentration camp, and met with the papal nuncio, describing for him the horrors of the Jews in temporary camps awaiting deportation to Auschwitz. He begged the papal nuncio to intervene with Tiso. The papal nuncio answered: “This, being a Sunday, is a holy day for us. Neither I nor Father Tiso occupy ourselves with profane matters on this day.” Weissmandel persisted, arguing that the lives of innocent human beings, including infants and children, were not a profane matter. The papal nuncio responded: “There is no innocent blood of Jewish children in the world. All Jewish blood is guilty. You have to die. This is the punishment that has been awaiting you because of that sin” [the death of Jesus].

Nazi Antisemitism

- What happened
 - In WW2, 55 million people died.
 - 6 million Jews (including more than 1 million children) equal to 1/3 of world's Jews murdered.
 - 70% of Europe's Jews.
 - 80% of Rabbis and students -- huge impact on Judaism.
 - Nov. 9, 1938 “*Kristalnach*” the night of the broken glass:
 - Synagogues burnt, homes and businesses vandalized, thousands of Jews beaten, many to death. Jews fined for the damage, Jewish property handed to Germans.
 - Held in honor of Martin Luther's birthday.
 - After this, virtually all remaining Jews (earlier, “the pessimists went into exile, the optimists went to the gas chambers”) tried to leave. But virtually every country refused admission to large numbers of Jews (including the British who controlled Palestine) THIS IS WHY JEWS NEED ISRAEL!

Nazi Antisemitism

- **Voyage of the St. Louis to North America:** In May, 1939, 937 Jews had passage and visas to Cuba; the Cuban government changed its mind and wouldn't admit them. Pleas to the US and other countries were to no avail as the ship went up and down the east coast of the US. Hitler was ecstatic. Finally some European (England, Belgium, Holland and France) countries agreed to admit them. Only those fortunate enough to have been selected by England survived. FDR, other American leaders, were largely indifferent to the plight of the Jews.
- **Refusal to bomb rail lines, concentration camps.** The town of Auschwitz was bombed but only at its synthetic oil factory. Despite pleas from Jewish organizations, neither the rail lines, or the gas chambers nor the crematoria were bombed.
- **Jews in many communities (esp. Poland) herded into Ghettos.**

Nazi Antisemitism

- **Early murders (1 to 1.5 million) were by Einsatzgruppen.** Jews of a town dug their own mass graves and were then shot. Leaders of these units were disproportionately highly educated men.
- **Murder squads followed German troops into Russia.** At Babi Yar, 30,000 Jews were shot -- the guns fired nonstop for 3 days.
- **Death Camps:** in 1942 it was judged that the machine gun (or CO poisoning) was too slow, costly, and bad for morale. It was calculated that using gas would cost about 2/3 of a penny to take a life. Later the amount of gas was halved to save costs even though it greatly increased suffering. Babies were sometimes burned alive to save gas (see Attachment I).
- **In Treblinka, of the 870,000 Jews sent, 70 survived.**
- **In some camps, decent food was served only on Yom Kippur and Tisha B'Av, Jewish fast days.**

Burning Babies Alive to Save \$

Attachment I: Burning Babies Alive: From *Shadows of Auschwitz, A Christian Response to the Holocaust*, H.J. Cargas, Crossroad, 1992, pp. 35-36.

Here is the testimony of a Polish guard at Auschwitz, given at the Nuremberg trial:

WITNESS: ... women carrying children were [always] sent with them to the crematorium. [Children were of no labor value so they were killed. The mothers were sent along, too, because separation might lead to panic, hysteria -- which might slow up the destruction process, and this could not be afforded. It was simpler to condemn the mothers too and keep things quiet and smooth.] The children were then torn from their parents outside the crematorium and sent to the gas chambers separately. [At that point, crowding more people into the gas chambers became the most urgent consideration. Separating meant that more children could be packed in separately, or they could be thrown in over the heads of adults once the chamber was packed.] When the extermination of the Jews in the gas chambers was at its height, orders were issued that children were to be thrown straight into the crematorium furnaces, or into pits near the crematorium, without being gassed first.

SMIRNOV (Russian prosecutor): How am I to understand this? Did they throw them into the fire alive, or did they kill them first?

WITNESS: They threw them in alive. Their screams could be heard at the camp. It is difficult to say how many children were destroyed in this way.

SMIRNOV: Why did they do this?

WITNESS: It's very difficult to say. We don't know whether they wanted to economize on gas, or if it was because there was not enough room in the gas chambers.¹⁰

Nazi Antisemitism

- **Reaction of the Church:**
 - **Pope & Catholic Church silent through most of the war.** Despite many requests, there was no public condemnation, threat of excommunication, etc. even when Rome's Jews were sent to the camps. We should understand that the Church may have been afraid of losing Catholic allegiance, of the problem of a war in which Catholic fought Catholic and of a possible Catholic holocaust.
 - **Nazism not Christian, but most Nazis were Christian (see Attachments J&K).**
 - **Many Protestant churches in Germany supported the Nazis.**
 - **But Christianity has responded to the Holocaust (see Attachment L).**
 - **The Vatican only recognized Israel at the end of 1993.**

Nazi Antisemitism

Attachment J: Christian Nazis: From *Shadows of Auschwitz, A Christian Response to the Holocaust*, H.J. Cargas, Crossroad, 1992, pg. 40.

Who were the people who devised the policies that Christians and others carried out? Adolf Hitler was a baptized Catholic who claimed to be doing God's work in killing Jews. Paul Joseph Goebbels, propaganda expert, came from a strict Catholic family and had his education, in part, funded by the Albertus Magnus Society. Auschwitz's Commandant Rudolf Hoess said he took his Catholic religion "very seriously." Heinrich Himmler, the ruthless head of the SS was from a devout Catholic family. Reinhard Heydrich, who led the Reich Security Service, was Catholic. It has not gone unremarked that Hitler's heir apparent, Hermann Goering, was given the full funeral rites of the Lutheran church.

Attachment K: Christian Response: From *Shadows of Auschwitz, A Christian Response to the Holocaust*, H.J. Cargas, Crossroad, 1992, pg. 45.

Himmler, who insisted that members of the SS must believe in God, could thus, speak of the honor and decency of the work of slaughter: "By and large, however, we can say that we have performed this task in love of our people. And we have suffered no damage from it in our inner self, in our soul, in our character."²² And there was no significant challenge. Not even after the terrible events of 1939-1945 was there a moral cry of pain from certain quarters. Goering was buried with full funeral rites of the Lutheran church, as noted. Until recently, a mass was celebrated annually in Madrid for Hitler (though not for the victims) and it has not been lost on investigators that, at the war's close, the Vatican and others close to it helped thousands of war criminals to escape, including Grand Stang, the commandant of Treblinka. "In 1948, the German Evangelical Conference at Darmstadt, meeting in the country which had only recently carried out this genocide, proclaimed that the terrible Jewish suffering in the Holocaust was a divine visitation and a call to the Jews to cease their rejection and ongoing crucifixion of Christ."²³ As Irving Greenberg has asked, "May one morally be a Christian after this?" That is the question that haunts me. Was Christianity in some way buried at Auschwitz? If so, is a resurrection of a more humanly significant Christianity — less dedicated to its own preservation and more to the teachings of Christ, not so fixed on the next world that it is incapable of interacting with this world — is such a resurrection taking place in us, in me? That is the motivation for my words. What I have written here only hints at a response. The meaningful answers will come from lives, not books or talks.

Nazi Antisemitism

Attachment L: Modern Christian Response: From *A Jewish Guide to Interreligious Relations*, A.J. Radin, The American Jewish Committee, 1996, pp. 4-5, 11.

The Second Vatican Council declared:

The Church, moreover, rejects every persecution against any person. For this reason and for the sake of the patrimony she shares with Jews, the Church decries hatreds, persecutions, and manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against Jews at any time and by anyone

Similar statements repudiating anti-Semitism have been issued by other Christian bodies, including the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Methodist Church, and the Anglican Communion.

In 1987 the General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a statement affirming that "Judaism has not been superseded by Christianity," and that "God has not rejected the Jewish people." The UCC publicly acknowledged:

The Christian Church has throughout much of its history denied God's continuing covenantal relationship with the Jewish people This denial has led to outright rejection of the Jewish people . . . and intolerable violence Faced with this history from which we as Christians cannot, and must not, disassociate ourselves, we ask for God's forgiveness.

Pope John Paul II declared in 1985:

Anti-Semitism . . . has been repeatedly condemned by the Catholic teaching as incompatible with Christ's teaching Where there was ignorance and . . . prejudice . . . there is now growing mutual knowledge, appreciation, and respect.

Annual Holocaust commemorations are increasing in many American churches, and in April 1994 there was a formal and official Holocaust Commemoration Concert at the Vatican at which Pope John Paul II spoke with eloquence about the evils of the Shoah:

We are gathered . . . to commemorate the Holocaust of millions of Jews This is our commitment. We would risk causing the victims of the most atrocious deaths to die again if we do not have an ardent desire for justice, if we do not commit ourselves, each according to his own capacities, to ensure that evil does not prevail over good as it did for millions of the children of the Jewish people . . . do not forget us.

Nazi Antisemitism

- The story of Concentration Camp Jews meeting to try God for crimes against humanity, convicting Him then praying the afternoon service.
- Rescuers:
 - Wallenberg - gave out more than 20,000 Swedish passports & and credited with saving up to 100,000 Jews - arrested by Russian as a Nazi collaborator - never heard from again.
 - Many religious Christians did save Jews -- one was Martin Niemoeller, pastor of a German Protestant Church -- arrested and sent to death camps he survived. His quote: "First they came for the Jews. I was silent. I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists. I was silent. I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists. I was silent. I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me."

Could It Happen Here? Today? The Milgram Experiment – New Haven 1961

Participants were told they were taking part in a study of memory. They were assigned the role of teacher by a rigged test draw.

I'm glad that's over me.

Participant saw the 'learner' strapped into chair. The participant also received a 45V shock.

Participants had to teach the 'learner' word pairs and test them on what they had learned.

They had to administer shocks for every wrong answer. They thought they were giving real shocks to a person.

All of the participants did the experiment up to 300V.

The experiment requires you to continue.

After 300V, the 'learner' banged on a wall and asked them to stop, but the 'experimenter' told the participant to continue using verbal prods.

You have no choice.

14 out of 40 participants left. 26, or 65%, continued giving shocks up to 450V even after the 'learner' went quiet.

Participants showed signs of stress such as sweating, nervous laughing fits and even seizures.

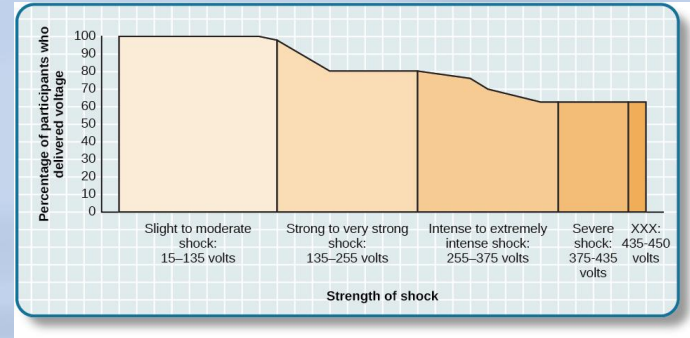
Afterwards, the participants were debriefed and told their actions were not abnormal.

They had simply been obeying the authority of the 'experimenter'.

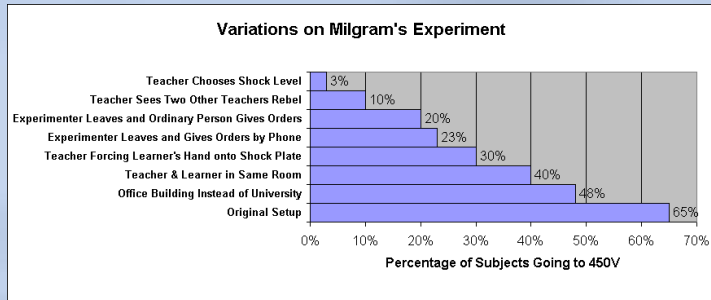
The Milgram Experiment



The Milgram Experiment



The Milgram Experiment



Bottom Lines

- Understand why Jews are so sensitive about Antisemitism -- why we react so strongly to even the slightest suggestion.
- Understand why some Jews react so negatively to Christianity -- especially where conversion is suggested.
- Remember the Jew hatred never stops at Jews.

Further Reading

- Dennis Prager & Joseph Telushkin, Why the Jews? Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 1983.
- H.J.Cargas, Shadows of Auschwitz, A Christian Response to the Holocaust, Crossroad, 1992