

LÉON DE PONCINS

**THE PROBLEM WITH THE JEWS
AT THE COUNCIL**

Translated from Italian by G. F. H.

**AAARGH
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Translator's Suggestion

I suggest that those interested in this translation of Léon De Poncins' essay: *Il Problema degli Ebrei al Concilio* look also at another work, Maurice Pinay's *Complot Contra La Iglesia (The Plot Against the Church)* (available in English online at: <http://www.catholicvoice.co.uk/pinay/> and in the original Spanish at: http://ar.geocities.com/catolicosalerta01/complot_contra_la_iglesia). There are also German, French and Italian translations of this book, which seem not to be available online at this time. The French translation (two vol.) is available at Éditions Saint-Rémy, at editions.saint-remy@tiscali.fr

The following is an excerpt from the "Introduction to the Italian Edition" of Pinay's book.

The most infamous conspiracy is in progress against the Church. Her enemies are working to destroy the most holy traditions and thus to introduce dangerous and evil-intended reforms, such as those Calvin, Zwingli and other false teachers once attempted. They manifest a hypocritical zeal to modernise the Church and to adapt it to the present day situation, but in reality they conceal the secret intention of opening the gates to Communism, to hasten the collapse of the free world and to prepare the further destruction of Christianity. All this it is intended to put into effect at the coming Vatican Council. We have proofs of how everything is being planned in secret agreement with the leading forces of Communism, of world Freemasonry and of the secret power directing these. . . .

In addition, we have confirmation of what will still be unbelievable for those who are not initiated, namely that the anti-Christian forces have at their disposal, in the ranks of Church dignitaries, a veritable “Fifth Column” of agents who are the unconditional tools of Communism and of the secret power directing it. For it has been revealed that those cardinals, archbishops and bishops, who form a kind of progressive wing within the Council, will attempt to bring about a break through shameful reforms, whereby the good faith and the eagerness for progress of many devout Council Fathers will be deceived...

A further disastrous plan, which is being prepared, is that the Church shall contradict itself, so as a result to sacrifice its regard with the faithful; for later it will be broadcast that an institution which contradicts itself cannot be divine. With this proof they wish to desolate the Churches and achieve that the faithful lose their confidence in the clergy and abandon them.

It is intended to cause the Church to declare that what it has represented for centuries as bad, is now good. Among such manoeuvres spun for this purpose one particularly stands out on account of its importance, and refers in fact to the conduct of Holy Church towards the damned Jews, as Saint Augustine calls them; and this in reference both to those who nailed Christ to the cross, as also to their descendants, who are both archenemies of Christianity. The unanimous doctrine of the great Church Fathers, that “*unanimis consensus Patrum*” which the Church regards as a source of faith, condemned the unbelieving Jews and declared the struggle against them to be good and necessary.

For example, in this struggle, participated, as we will prove by means of irrefutable evidence, the following Saints: Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Athanasius, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, Saint Basil, Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Saint Isidore of Seville, Saint Bernhard and even Tertullian as well as Origen, the latter two during the period of their indisputable orthodoxy. In addition, the Church fought energetically for nineteen centuries against the Jews, as we will likewise prove by means of reliable documents, and among which are found the following: Papal Bulls, Protocols of the Ecumenical and Provincial Councils as well as the highly renowned Fourth Lateran Council and many others, the teachings of Saint Thomas of Aquinas, of Duns Scotus and of the most important doctors of the Church. In addition we will quote Jewish sources of indisputable authenticity, like the official Encyclopaedias of Jewry, the works of famous rabbis as well as of the most well known Jewish historians.

The Jewish, Freemasonic and Communist plotters now have the intention at the coming Council of utilising, as they assert, the lack of knowledge of most clergy concerning the true history of the Church, to execute a surprise coup by adopting the standpoint at the assembled Holy Ecumenical Council that anti-Semitism must be condemned, as well as every struggle against the Jews who, as we will elaborate, are the wirepullers of Freemasonry and of international

Communism. They would like the infamous Jews, whom the Church has regarded as evil for the course of nineteen centuries, to be declared good and beloved of God. As a result the “*unanimis consensus Patrum*” would be contradicted, which laid down exactly the opposite, as well as what also found its expression through various Papal Bulls and Canons of Ecumenical as well as Provincial Councils.

Since the Jews and their accomplices pillory every struggle within the Catholic Church against the wickedness of the former, as well as the plots directed against Christ Our Lord, as antisemitism, we will likewise reveal in this book that Christ Himself, the Gospels and the Catholic Church can be included among the sources of antisemitism, since they campaigned for nearly two thousand years against those who denied their Messiah.

With the condemnation of Antisemitism, which at times is called Antisemitic racialism, it is wished to attain that his Holiness the Pope and the assembled Council in condemnation of Antisemitism experience the catastrophic event that the Church contradicts itself, and therefore, without giving account to this, silently also condemn Christ Our Lord Himself, as well as the Holy Gospels, the Church Fathers and most Popes, among them Gregory VII (Hildebrand), Innocent II, Innocent III, Pius V, and Leo XIII, who as we will show in this book, have fought bitterly against the Jews and the “*Synagogue of Satan*”.

G. F. H.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most disruptive changes in Catholic doctrine introduced by Vatican II is certainly the Church's teaching about the Jewish people. Up to forty years ago, in fact, all theologians, relying firmly on the Gospels, on the Fathers of the Church and on the ecclesiastical Magisterium of nearly 2,000 years believed that with the coming of Jesus Christ and the advent of the New Covenant sealed with His Blood, the **New Israel** of God is no longer the people of the Old Covenant, but all men called to be part of the Catholic Church through Baptism. It was also common opinion that the Jewish contemporaries of the Savior and those who lived subsequently (insofar as they "shared in" their forefathers' "crucifixion") were **deicides**, or that they were stained with the worst crime: **the murder of the Son of God and the rejection of His messiahship and divinity**. That was what all Catholics believed at least until 1965, when with the approval of the council's document *Nostra Aetate* a **new doctrine** was introduced according to which the Jews were in fact not responsible for the death of Jesus (unjustly attributed to the Romans, simple material executors of the crucifixion), and therefore had no longer to be considered as cursed by God for their enormous sin. Continuing along this line of thought and action one went even further and proclaimed that the Old Covenant between God and his people was still in force,¹ and thus maintained in fact that God had not rejected Israel because of its refusal of Christ and the salvation offered by Redemption which he accomplished on Calvary²; that **anti-Semitism** was a sentiment fed in the population from pre-council Christian teaching,³ and that such a sentiment had led to the fierce persecution of Jews put into action by Nazism and in the Holocaust, for which, therefore, the Church would be responsible. And thus it is that the highest representatives of the Bride of Christ, without blemish and without sin, prostrated themselves and asked forgiveness of Caiaphas' successors for the crime committed by "Christian peoples" (!?), fomented in their hatred toward the Jews by a "distorted" reading of the Evangelists and by the excessive enthusiasm of some Christian orators of the first centuries. In fact, this council document—one must read it to believe it—is not equipped with any notes, and that is because this far-fetched thesis, imposed on the faithful of the whole Catholic

¹ That the New Covenant replaces the Old, now devoid of any saving power and made useless by the sacrifice of Christ, Christians have sung this for centuries in the very beautiful Eucharistic hymn *Tantum Ergo*, in which in fact it is said that "**the figures of the Old Covenant yield to the truth of the new rite**" ("Et Antiquum documentum novo cedat ritui"). [*More accurately, "yield to the new rite." An asterisk * here and below marks notes by the translator.]

² However, about the rejection of Israel by God, the Gospel speaks a language that leaves no room for doubt: "Jesus issued a loud cry, and expired. **And behold the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**" (Matt. 27:50-51). The God of Israel has abandoned the Temple of Jerusalem in order to inhabit every soul in God's grace.

³ In fact, anti-Semitism had been condemned long before Vatican II. On March 21, 1928, at the end of a plenary meeting, the most Reverend Fathers of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office prepared a document that condemned "all feelings of hatred and animosity between peoples, and especially hatred against the people **at one time elected** by God, that hatred which today is vulgarly designated with the word 'anti-Semitism'" (cf. *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 1928, vol. II, pp. 171-172). [*However, cf. the Translator's Suggestion above for the opinion that anti-Semitism forms part of traditional Catholic teaching.]

world, rests on nothing! Not a single passage of Holy Scripture, not a single saint, not a single Pope—at least until 1962—has ever supported a similar theory. On the contrary, as results from a reading of this simple essay, all the Saints, all the Fathers of the Church and all the Popes have strongly reaffirmed the traditional doctrine. Nevertheless, except for a few voices out of the “politically incorrect” chorus which were hence immediately silenced, the Christian people, slowly poisoned with other new doctrines brought forth by the Council (Ecumenism, religious freedom, etc....), have passively accepted this *diktat* and have aligned themselves with the novelty. Notwithstanding every human calculation, every willingness to compromise and every plan for peace on earth, we believe that every betrayal of the Evangelical truth is a betrayal of the faith which we have received in baptism and which we want to keep intact until our death, even if this should entail the misunderstanding of our brothers and even persecution on the part of some of them, since we are certain that soon the Lord will restore the truth in its fullness.

I

NOSTRA AETATE

On November 20, 1964, the conference of bishops, archbishops and cardinals from all around the world, meeting in Council in Rome (3rd session), proposed a *schema*⁴ on the attitude and position of the Catholic Church concerning Jews and Judaism. Behind an innocent appearance of ecumenical unity, of Christian charity, of common spiritual affiliation and of the reconciliation of the churches, this *schema* presupposed a matter (*fatto*) of a serious consequences, since it implicitly asserted that for 2,000 years the Church was in error in this regard, and that it ought then to repair and completely revise its behavior toward the Jews. This objective satisfied the powerful propaganda in those years by the spokesman of the great international Jewish organizations (B'nai B'rith,⁵ the Jewish World Congress, etc....), which sought to obtain a “review and a purification” of the Christian teaching in respect to Judaism, propaganda which we will take up again shortly in what follows. This *schema* immediately aroused some violent reactions in the Muslim world and among Catholics of the Eastern Rite. John XXIII (1881-1963) thought that this matter, being of a very serious political and doctrinal import, required mature reflection. Therefore he refused to ratify it and postponed the decision to the next and final session of the Council, whose reopening was scheduled for September 14, 1965.⁶ I will now briefly summarize the facts, for it is necessary to know them in order to grasp the real significance of this problem, certainly one of the most serious treated by the Council. 99 council fathers voted “no,” 1651 “yes,” and 242 voted “yes,” but “with reservations.” The *schema*, on the other hand, was provisional; in the 4th session of 1965 the final ballot would take place. In the course of the general congregations, the Eastern Bishops intervened to say that they were against the very idea of the council’s making a declaration regarding the Jews. Here is an extract of the declaration *Nostra Aetate* concerning this issue, voted by the Council of the Fathers on November 20, 1964: “Since the spiritual heritage common to Christians and Jews is so great, this sacred council wants to foster and recommend a mutual understanding and respect among them, which

⁴ **Schema* can mean “outline,” “plan,” “project,” and also “scheme,” although it does not connote underhandedness or dishonesty as the English “scheme” frequently does.

⁵ “A Jewish fraternal association founded in the United States in 1843. In Hebrew ‘B’nai B’rith’ means ‘of the children.’ The purpose of this association is to maintain the Jewish tradition and culture and to fight against anti-Semitism[...]. The members are called ‘Brothers,’ and receive an initiation and meet in lodges” (cf. D. LIGOU, *Dictionnaire Universel de la Maçonnerie*, Ed. P.U.K., Evry 1987): “One can assume that the twelve founders of the ‘B’nai B’rith’ were already freemasons affiliated with the American Lodges, from the moment that they chose a ritual that is a mixture of the Rite of York and the American Rite of the ‘Odd Fellows’”(cf. *Tribune juive*, No. 997/1986; cit. in EPIPHANIUS, *Massoneria e sette segrete: la faccia occulta della Storia* (Freemasonry and Secret Societies: the Hidden Side of the Story), Trento s.d., pp. 478).

⁶ “I am the chief (*capo*)—John XXIII said to Prof. Jules Isaac with his friendly and somewhat irreverent language—but I have to consult the others, and see to it that the problems raised are studied by the offices. We are not here in an absolute monarchy” (see S. SCHMIDT S.J., *Agostino Bea, il Cardinale dell’unità*, Ed. Città Nuova, 1987, pp. 354). The *schema* was then finally voted on and ratified on October 28, 1965 within the confines (*ambito*) of the *Declaration Nostra Aetate, on the Church’s relations with non-Christian religions* (The Jewish religion, § 4).

is obtained above all through biblical and theological studies, and through a fraternal dialogue. And if Jewish authorities along with their followers did their best to achieve the death of Christ, nevertheless what was done during His passion cannot be charged either indiscriminately to all Jews then living, or to the Jews of our time. And if it is true that the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected by God, nor as cursed, though that may seem to emerge from Sacred Scripture. Let all therefore take care that in the teaching and the preaching of the word of God one does not teach anything that does not comply with the truth of the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ. The Church, moreover, which detests all persecutions against any man, which is mindful of the patrimony that it has in common with the Jews, and which is not driven by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, regrets the hatred, the persecutions and all the manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone. In reality, Christ, as the Church maintains and has always maintained, by virtue of His immense love, voluntarily submitted to His Passion and death because of the sins of all mankind and in order that all people attain salvation. The duty of the Church, in its preaching, is therefore to announce the cross of Christ as the universal sign of love of God and as a source of every grace.”⁷ At first glance, this motion would seem consistent with the perennial doctrine of the Church, which, while trying to oversee the Christian community and to protect it from Jewish influences, has always condemned all persecutions. Even a Jewish writer in good faith like Max I. Dimont said: “If they had desired it, the Popes and the kings of the Middle Ages could have removed the Jews, but they did not do so. When for social, economic and religious reasons the presence of the Jews became undesirable, they chased them away without massacring them. The Church teaches that every human being has a soul, and that for a man a lifetime is not nearly enough to save his own. Only when religion lost all its influence on a people did it happen that a western people could coldly conceive the extermination of millions of human beings on the mere pretext that for them there was no space on earth.”⁸ In reality, the motion voted on in Rome demonstrated on the part of many Fathers a deep misunderstanding of Judaism. It seems that they were concerned with just the humanitarian problem, cleverly presented by the spokesman of the Jewish world and in a manner (*da una stampa*) inspired by Israeli elements.

⁷ Cf. *I documenti del Concilio Vaticano II (The documents of Vatican Council II)*, Ed. Paoline, Rome 1979, pp. 577-578.

⁸ Cf. M. I. DIMONT, *Les juifs, Dieu et l'Histoire* (“The Jews, God and History”), Ed. Robert Laffont, Paris 1964.

II

ORIGINS OF THE REFORMS PROPOSED TO THE COUNCIL

In fact, at the origin of the reforms proposed to the Council in order to change the conduct and the secular doctrine of the Church towards Judaism and to Freemasonry were several Jewish personalities and organizations: **Jules Isaac Marx** (1877-1963), **Label Katz**, President of B'nai B'rith, **Nahum Goldmann** (1895-1982), of the Jewish World Congress, etc. Among the above cited Jewish figures, there is one who played a preeminent role: the writer Jules Isaac, a Jew from Aix-en-Provence, a former General Inspector of French Education, author of classic texts and of *L'Histoire de France* (Ed. Malet-Isaac), and a member of B'nai B'rith. During the Council, where he found support among the progressive bishops, Jules Isaac was the principal theorist and promoter of the campaign against the traditional teaching of the Church concerning Judaism. We now see the position which he took to make prevail his thesis. After the loss of his wife and daughter, who died in a Nazi concentration camp, he spent the last twenty years of his life on the critical study of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and devoted to this study two important books: *Jésus et Israël (Jesus and Israel)*, published in 1946 and reprinted in 1959; *Genèse de l'antisémitisme (Genesis of Anti-Semitism)*, published in 1948 and reprinted in 1956. Here is the crux of the thesis maintained by Isaac. It is necessary at last to bring an end to anti-Semitism, the result of which was the massacre of European Jews at Auschwitz and in other extermination camps during the Second World War. The "**Christian anti-Semitism,**" with its theological basis, is the most fearful anti-Semitism.⁹ Indeed, the attitude of Christians towards the Jews and Judaism has always been based on the story of the Passion which has been reported by the four Evangelists, and on the teaching which the Fathers of the Church have made: in particular, **St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Agobard**, etc. Jules Isaac tried to demolish this fundamental theological basis by challenging the **historical value** of the evangelical accounts and by discrediting the arguments advanced by the Fathers of the Church to protect it from the influence of the Jews, who were accused of feeding subversive intentions against the Christian order.¹⁰ Immediately after

⁹ That this corresponds to the thinking of many Jews, we conclude from an anecdote: in 1938, Austria was annexed to Hitler's Germany. The Jew **Sigmund Freud** (1856-1939), who in those days was in Vienna, was urged by one of his close collaborators to leave the city in order to avoid capture by the Nazis. The father of psychoanalysis responded with these words "The Nazis, I do not fear them. **The enemy is religion, the Catholic Church**" (see E. INNOCENTI, *Critica alla psicoanalisi*, Sacra Fraternitas Aurigarum in Urbe, Rome, 1988, 115 pages).

¹⁰ For further confirmation, here is a short excerpt from an article published in February 1936 in the London magazine *Catholic Gazette*, which contains some excerpts of conversations of Parisian Jews in the course of secret meetings: "We have already done most of our work, but we cannot say that we have reached the goal of our operation (*opera*). We still have a long way to go **before being able to overthrow our main enemy: the Catholic Church**. We must keep well in mind that the Catholic Church is the only institution that is set to block our route and will remain so for however long its existence will last. The Catholic Church, with its methodical work and its educational and moral teachings, forms in its own children such a mindset that will keep them too proud of themselves to submit to our domination and to

the war, he began to organize meetings with national and international philo-semitic Catholic personalities favorable to his thesis. In 1947,¹¹ after meetings of this kind between Jews and Catholics, in which on the part of the Jews there figured persons such as **Edmond Fleg** (1874-1963) and **Samy Lattés**, and on the part of the Catholics philo-semites such as **Henri Irénée Marrou** (1904-1977), **Father Jean-Guinolé-Marie Daniélou** (1905-1974), appointed Cardinal after the Council by Paul VI in 1969 (N.d.R.), and **Father Vieillard**, a member of the Episcopal Secretariat. Isaac edited a report, consisting of eighteen points, on the “*Revision of Christian Teaching with regard to Israel.*” In the same year, he was invited to the International Conference of Seelisberg, in Switzerland, in which seventy people coming from nineteen different countries participated, among whom were **Father Callixte Lopinot**, **Father Démann**, **Pastor Freudenberg** and the **Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan** (1895-1994). The conference adopted in plenary session the “Ten Points of Seelisberg,” which proposed to the Christian churches the measures necessary to take to amend the religious teaching in respect to the Jews. Later, with the Grand Rabbi of France, with the Jews Edmond Fleg and **Léon Algazi**, and some Catholic friends such as Henri Marou, **Jacques Madaule**, **Jacques Nantet**, as well as other Protestant friends such as Professor **Lovsky** and **Jacques Martin**, he founded the first Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne (“Judeo-Christian Friendship”), which was followed soon by the foundation of other “Amitiés” at Aix, Marseille, Nimes, Montpellier, Lyon, and finally at Lille, where he obtained the protection of **Cardinal Achille Liénart** (1884-1973).¹² Later, he also founded other similar associations in Northern Africa. In 1949, he entered into relationship with some members of the clergy of Rome who saw to it that he be received in private audience by Pope Pius XII (1875-1958), before whom he pled the cause of Judaism, specifically asking him to take into consideration the “Ten points of Seelisberg.” In 1959, Jules Isaac held a conference at the Sorbonne on the necessary revision of Christian teaching in respect to the Jews, that ended with an appeal for justice and love for the truth to John XXIII. Shortly thereafter, he met with many prelates of the Roman Curia, especially **Cardinal Eugene-Gabriel-Gervais-Laurent Tisserant** (1884-1972), with **Cardinal André-Damien-Ferdinand Jullien** (1882-1965), with **Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani** (1890-1979), with **Cardinal Augustin Bea** (see the juxtaposed photo; 1881-1968),¹³ and

kneel at the feet of the future King of Israel.” Shortly thereafter, the Parisian weekly *Le réveil du peuple* reported that these statements were made during a meeting of the Masonic Order B’nai B’rith (cf. *Chiesa viva*, n° 178, October 1987, p.16).

¹¹ All the information that follows has been extracted from statements by this same Isaac.

¹² According to some authors, Cardinal Liénart was enrolled in the Masonry of Luciferine Rite (*Massoneria di Rito Luciferino*).

¹³ “But who was the Cardinal Agostino Bea? Many have pointed to Jewish origins [...]. A German Jesuit, formerly confessor of Pius XII and a friend of John XXIII, Bea was professor of Sacred Scripture and rector from 1930 to 1940 of the Pontifical Biblical Institute. His close ties with the high Jewish Freemasonry are known and documented: like his meeting with the president of the ‘B’nai B’rith’ Label Katz which took place on February 16, 1963 in Rome [...] But Bea was also in touch with the Grand Master of the United Lodges of Germany, Pinkerneil” (see EPIPHANIUS, op. cit., p. 488). About his Jewish origins, we note that “in recent centuries there are in Germany and Austria different personalities who bear the surname ‘Beha,’ phonetic equivalent of the Sephardic surname ‘Beja,’ which their Sephardic ancestors brought into Spain where they lived. But Cardinal Bea was not the only crypto-Jew in the Vatican; besides him there worked actively other so-called Jewish converts like Monsignori John Oesterreicher and the Augustinian Gregory Baum, who joined the Bishops Kempe, auxiliary of the Diocese of Linburg

on June 13, 1960 he was received by John XXIII, from whom he asked condemnation of the “contempt” and advised the creation of a subcommittee charged with the study of this problem. Later, Jules Isaac “*had the joy of knowing that his proposals had been taken into consideration by the Pope and had been transmitted for study to Cardinal Bea,*” who then created, within the Secretariat for the Unity of Christians, a group of experts specifically charged with examining the relations between the Church and Israel. In 1964, the matter was submitted to the Council, which led at last to the vote on November 20, 1964.

(Germany) and Sergio Mendez Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca, Mexico (Mendez is a typical Hispanic-Jewish surname; he was descended from Sephardics who tried to judaize the Mexican population of Cotija)” (cf. *Chiesa viva*, n° 179, November 1987, pp. 16-17).

III

JULES ISAAC AND CHRISTIAN TEACHING

Jules Isaac has devoted two books to criticizing and breaking down the two pillars of Christian teaching in regard to Judaism. In the first of these two works—*Jésus et Israël*—published in 1949 (596 pages), and reprinted in 1959,¹⁴ Jules Isaac criticizes the Evangelists, and especially St. John and St. Matthew. “The historian has the right and the duty—the absolute duty—to consider the evangelical accounts as **factious testimonies** (against the Jews), with this aggravating circumstance that they are the only witnesses and all four go in the same direction; we have neither Jewish testimonies (of a certain value) nor pagan testimonies to compare with the first and wherewith to refute them. Now, in no other document is the partiality (*il partito preso*) of the Evangelists more evident and more accentuated; however, in no other case is the absence of non-Christian documents more regrettable than it is for everything regarding the story of the Passion [...]. However, it is clear that all four Evangelists have had the same concern, that is, to minimize Roman responsibilities, in order to augment those of the Jews... On the other hand, this partiality takes different shades: Matthew far exceeds not only Mark and Luke, but maybe even John. Is it any wonder? Brothers, if enemies, are the most relentless [enemies]; now, Matthew is Jewish, fundamentally Jewish, the most Jewish of the Evangelists. According to a tradition that seems well founded, he wrote “in Palestine and for the Palestinians,” to demonstrate, in reference to the Old Testament, that Jesus Christ really was the Messiah foretold by Scripture [...]. But has all this been historically proven? **It is licit to doubt it.** It is not in fact surprising to note that of the three synoptics the most partial is Matthew, and that his account of the Passion is the most **tendentious**; for the moment, the **most impartial**—or the least impartial—is Luke, the only non-Jewish Evangelist, the only one from the “Gentiles.”¹⁵ The Christian accusation against Israel, the accusation of deicide, an accusation of a crime—which is itself criminal—is the most serious, the most **harmful** and the most **iniquitous**. Jesus Christ was sentenced to the torture (*supplizio*) of the Cross, a Roman torture, by Pontius Pilate, a Roman procurator [...]. But the four Evangelists, unanimous on this point, affirm that Jesus Christ was delivered into the hands of the Romans by the Jews; only because of irresistible pressure from the Jews did Pilate, eager to present Jesus as innocent, condemn him to torture. So, not on the Romans, simple executors, but on the Jews lies the responsibility for the crime; this weighs upon them, with a supernatural weight which crushes them [...]. Only Matthew (27: 24-25) knows and says that the prosecutor Pilate washed his hands, according to Jewish custom, to rid himself of responsibility for the innocent blood which he was forced to shed. Only Matthew also notes that “all the people” exclaimed: “Let His blood fall on us and on our children.” Mark, Luke and John know nothing, and say nothing, about the washing of the hands or the terrible exclamation. This verse, **which has caused so much harm**, and which has been exploited to the detriment of the Jewish people for so many centuries and by so many Christian authors, is only in the Gospel of

¹⁴ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, Nouvelle Edition Paris, Fasquelle 1959.

¹⁵ *“Per il momento, il **più imparziale** - o il meno imparziale - è Luca”

Matthew, which makes it close then to the apocryphal gospels, and not corresponding at all to historical truth.¹⁶ In brief: in the story of the Passion revised and corrected by Jules Isaac, the Evangelists appear as **arrant liars**, of whom the most poisonous is without a doubt Matthew. “To him the palm for having launched with his hand the poisoned dart that cannot be extracted.”¹⁷ Jules Isaac peremptorily concludes by saying: “Never does the **tendentious** nature of a story, never its concern ‘to make a point’ appear with greater obviousness, an obviousness that bursts forth and culminates in these verses (24-25), generating conviction in every free spirit. **No, Pilate did not wash his hands according to the Jewish custom.** No, Pilate did not display his innocence. **No, the Jewish crowd did not exclaim: ‘Let his blood fall on us and on our children’[...].** Why persist further? The reason is clear. It is for all people of good faith. I would say: it is also before God himself.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Cf. J. ISAAC, *L'enseignement du mépris* (“The Teaching of Contempt”), p.141

¹⁷ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, p. 483.

¹⁸ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, p. 493.

IV

JULES ISAAC AND THE CHURCH FATHERS

In the second of these works—*Genèse de l'antisémitisme*—published in 1956, Jules Isaac strove to discredit the Fathers of the Church. It is impossible to summarize in a few words a volume of 350 pages. Let us limit ourselves to mentioning some of its most characteristic passages: “It is true that in the pagan world there was a strong current of anti-Semitism, much earlier than Christian anti-Semitism; it is equally true that this anti-Semitism has at times sparked bloody conflicts or ‘pogroms.’ Just as there was a pagan anti-Semitism, whose origin dates back to the divine commandment, in what would Christianity find its justification for having inherited it (after having been itself a victim of it for a long time), and even more, after having pushed to paroxysm its **virulence, malignity, calumnies** and **mortal hatreds**? Against Judaism and its followers, no weapon has been more fearful than the ‘teaching of contempt,’ especially inculcated by the Fathers of the Church of the fourth century; and in this teaching no thesis was more harmful than the ‘deicide people.’ The Christian mentality is still steeped in the depths of its subconscious [...]. To fail to recognize this and not to stress it is equivalent to ignoring or disguising the largest source of Christian anti-Semitism.”¹⁹ “This is the great source whence Christian sentiments are fed without certainly being the origin of them.”²⁰ The ‘teaching of contempt’ is a theological creation.”²¹ “We hear emerge for the first time throughout the centuries, like a dull noise, the chorus of accusations, Christian imprecations—permit me to say—spoken by those who are Christians only in name, because these do not accord with the words of charity, of mercy and of brotherly love, which are the fundamental teachings and the glory of Jesus Christ. ‘Deicide’: this is the accusation launched unreservedly and without any distinction against the whole Jewish people.”²² “The blind violence of the ignorant masses is intimately linked to the cold

¹⁹ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l'Antisémitisme*, Ed. Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1956, p. 327.

²⁰ *My translation of this sentence assumes *originarla* in the Italian text is a misprint for *originarli*.

²¹ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l'Antisémitisme*, Ed. Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1956, p. 327.

²² Here are some extracts from the writings of the Church Fathers regarding the deicide and Jewish hatred towards Christ and Christians: **St. Justin** (100-165) writes: “You have killed the Just and before him his prophets, and now you reject perfidiously those who hope in him and in him who has sent him, God Almighty and the author of the universe; you dishonor them as much as you can and in your synagogues you raise up imprecations against those who believe in Christ, because you do not have the power put your hands on us, thanks to those who now govern us, but whenever you could, you did” (cf. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 16.4; PG 6, 511); **Origen** (185-253) thought that the Hebrew people as such had committed “the greatest of crimes” (see *Contra Celsum*, IV, 32; PG 11.1087), that of killing the Son of God. **St. Ambrose** (339-397) spoke of the Jews as a “parricide people” and loaded them with all the responsibility for the death of Jesus: “He (Jesus) was killed by the whole people of the Jews, and they persecute him still with their hatred” (cf. Psal. 39.14; PL 14, 1062); **St. Cyril of Alexandria** (370-444) speaks of the Jews [who had] become “Lord-killers” (“kyrioktoni”), and before him **St. Gregory of Nazianzus** (329-390), who accuses the Jews of having killed Christ “with deicide hands” (“chersi taïs theoktonis”) (see PG 37,466). According to **St. Cyril of Jerusalem** (387), “Israel has crucified the Son of the (heavenly) Father and has thrown him out of the vineyard” (cf. *Cath.* XI); **Theodoret of Cyr** writes: “Up to today, Jews still execrate the Savior” (in Psal. 109, 28).

science of the theologians. A fundamental accusation to which is linked the theme of capital punishment, of the terrible curse that rests on the shoulders of Israel, explaining (and justifying in advance) its unfortunate fate, its most cruel trials, the worst violence committed against it, torrents of blood flowing continually from its open and living wounds [...]. So that through a skilful manipulation, alternately, of doctrinal judgments and popular anger one makes fall back on God what, when viewed from the terrestrial sphere, is without doubt the result of human wickedness, this perversity, skilfully exploited in different ways from century to century, from generation to generation, and which culminated in Auschwitz, in the gas chambers and crematory ovens of Nazi Germany.²³ “We must acknowledge with sadness: almost all the Fathers of the Church took part, each with his own stone, in these feats of **moral lapidation** (not without material consequences): St. Hilary of Poitiers (315-367) and St. Jerome (347-420), St. Efreem (306-373) and St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Ambrose and St. Epiphanius (315-403), a Jew by birth, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and I say no more. But in this illustrious court, venerable from other points of view, two names, among all, have the right to a special mention: the medieval sculptural allegory exalts (*raffigrande*)²⁴ the Greek orator St. John Chrysostom (Greek for ‘mouth of gold’; N.d.R.) for the abundance and ferocity of his invectives, and for the overflowing of insults; and the great doctor of Latinity, St. Augustine, for his wonderful and (perilous) ingenuity in the development of a coherent doctrine.”²⁵ After this global overview of the Church Fathers,²⁶ we shall now proceed to the individual cases, citing some passages of the study which Jules Isaac devoted to the great Doctors: St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great and St. Agobard.

St. John Chrysostom

In 386, St. John Chrysostom (345-407) began to preach at Antioch, where there was a Jewish community. He first produced eight homilies against the Jews, whose tone “is often of an unheard-of violence. Therein are gathered together all the prejudices and all the insults.”²⁷ In him is more apparent than in others, together with a vehemence and sometimes with a measure of incomparable **coarseness**, this fusion of elements tainted with the popular anti-Semitic vein and with the prejudices of clear theological origin, by

²³ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, p. 351.

²⁴ *The Italian text reads: “l’allegoria scultorea medievale raffigrande l’oratore greco San Giovanni Crisostomo (dal greco “bocca d’oro”; N.d.R.) per l’abbondanza e la ferocia delle invettive, e per lo straripamento degli oltraggi; e il gran dottore della latinità, Sant’Agostino.” I am unsure of the meaning of *raffigrande* which I have translated as “exalts.” I do not know to what “medieval sculptural allegory” Isaac has in mind.

²⁵ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 161.

²⁶ St. Gregory of Nyssa apostrophizes the Jews thus: “Murderers of the Lord, murderers of the prophets, enemies of God, men who hate God, adversaries of grace, advocates of the devil, race of vipers, descendants of the Pharisees, synagogue of Satan, sinners, perverse men, stoners, enemies of all probity”(cf. *Oratio in resurrectionem Christi*).

²⁷ According to St. John Chrysostom, the Jews, after the death of Jesus, gave themselves over to committing the greatest evils and therefore “God hates them” (in the sense that he hates the evil they commit). With him, St. Atanasio (295-373), another Father of the Church, says that “the Jews are not the people of the Lord, but the heads of Sodom and Gomorrah” (cf. *De Incarnatione*, 40, 7).

means of the use of the biblical texts, the ultimate feature of Christian anti-Semitism.²⁸ “We say now: whatever was the purpose he pursued, this excess in outrage and slander is revolting in a sacred orator. These seeds of contempt and hatred are forever sprouting. Nice work, beautiful harvest; beyond the holy rhetoricians of the fourth century, piously working to drag their enemies into the mud, I see emerge in future centuries the countless legion of theologians, of Christian preachers, of teachers and writers, intent to embroider on the impressive themes of the carnal Jew, of the lecherous Jew, of the greedy Jew, the demonic Jew, the cursed Jew, the Jew the killer of prophets, the killer of Christ, the deicide; and they conscientiously applied themselves, in good faith, to make these dangerous, deadly and false notions penetrate into receptive minds; they were ready also—a logical consequence—to admit, with Chrysostom, that if the odious Jew had inherited exile, desperation, slavery, misery and shame, this is just (the justice of God); he has repaid for his misdeeds.” “Today, at a distance of about one thousand six hundred years, if you want a clear conscience, you must convince yourself that one is dealing here with figures of speech; and so be it, but “we must understand” where the figures of speech lead which were introduced by the “Golden Mouth” and taken up through the centuries, as by a chorus, by myriads of disciples. The rhetorical figures have taken on a vital and virulent consistency and have become encrusted in millions of souls. Who would dare believe that the Christian soul is free of them today? Who can say if it will ever be free of them? And after the Christian preachers, see, come the shameful slanderers, the “Streicher Nazis.”²⁹

St. Augustine

Jules Isaac writes that St. Augustine (354-430) is less violent than the Greek orator. “(This Father of the Church) is not less passionately hostile to Judaism and the Jews; he is no less concerned to combat their persistent influence in order to preserve the faithful, and to forearm them with a complex of valid arguments in view of disputes with these stubborn men, these reprobates. The method is the same; very similar are the points of view and the interpretations of Sacred Scripture well before the coming of the Savior. Judaism is gradually corrupted, desiccated, made stale; after the revelation of Christ, it has no other inspirer than Satan. Those who once were the privileged children of God, now have become the children of the devil.”³⁰ **“In this passionate teaching that has defied the centuries and still today dares to raise its voice, there is no more respect for biblical truth than for historical truth.** One does not fear to make oneself a cruelly sharp soul in order the better to strike to death the old Israel by making use of the regrettable crucifixion and the diaspora.”³¹ “I have not yet said the essential thing, St. Augustine’s own doctrinal contribution, [something] characteristic of his spirit, that is, the elaboration of an ingenious, opportune thesis, and therefore destined to a greater

²⁸ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, p. 256.

²⁹ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, pp. 162-164, 165-166. Isaac refers to **Julius Streicher** (1885-1946), a teacher in Nuremberg appointed by the Führer, in 1925 to be *Gauleiter* of Franconia, who conducted for two decades a very ferocious anti-Semitic campaign that ended with his hanging at the Nuremberg trial on October 16, 1946.

³⁰ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p.166.

³¹ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p.167.

(theological) fortune: the doctrine of the ‘witness people’[...]. If, in spite of everything, there are still Jews who have refused to believe in Christ, it is because it is necessary that they exist; because God wanted thus in his supernatural wisdom, to testify, to testify to the Christian truth. In fact, they prove it through their sacred books, along with their diaspora [...]. Right now, we see the radical difference that distinguishes the Christian system of debasement from its **modern imitator, the Nazi system; blind and ignorant** are those who do not recognize their profound bonds! Nazism was a stage, a short stage that preceded the mass extermination; that other, in contrast, entailed (*implicava*) survival, but a shameful survival in contempt and decadence. It was therefore made to last, to harm, and slowly to torture millions of innocent victims.”³²

St. Gregory the Great and St. Agobard

“We consider now the Church’s teaching in the high Middle Age. There cannot be found such a perfect expression of it except in the masterpiece of St. Gregory the Great (540-604), who lived between St. Augustine and St. Agobard, at the end of the fourth century. After the Fathers of the Church, no work has been more echoed and more welcome, especially in Christianity and Catholicism in the West. No example can be more convincing, because we know already, by having seen him act as head of the Church and as head of the State, that, far from being a fanatic, this great Pope is immortalized for outstanding qualities: generosity of heart, moral elevation, fairness and humanity. Drunk with pride, the Jews have put all their energy to close their intelligence to the word of God’s messengers. By losing humility, they have lost the understanding (*intellegenza*) of truth.” This is the theme of the carnal people, closely connected to the previous theme (of Judaism degraded by the coming of Christ).³³ “Imitating the fourth Evangelist, St. Gregory continually abuses the word “Jews” by using it to describe the party of the opponents of Jesus Christ, and that means dooming the entire Jewish people to the contempt and hatred of the faithful: “The Jews have delivered the Lord and have accused him [...]. Not even the best examples were sufficient to lead this rough nation to serve God out of love, and not fear [...]. It was faithful only to the letter of the divine precepts [...], and sought in the divine words not a means of sanctification, but an occasion for pride.”³⁴ “The theme of the ‘carnal people’ is infinitely dangerous, because it leads with a fatal crescendo to the people of the “Beast,” of the “Antichrist,” and of the “devil,” inspired by a perverse, diabolical hatred against God and his defenders.”³⁵ “Such are the teachings of the Great Pope, for him purely doctrinal, and in practice reconcilable with the humanitarian duties of Christian charity and respect for legality. For him, but not necessarily for others [...]. The mediocre minds and hearts, always and everywhere in the majority, drew necessarily from this teaching a horror for the ignominy carved on the brow of the Jewish people: their crimes, their curse, and their satanic perversion. You do not need others, in this era and in every era, to unleash the barbarity of the ‘Beast.’”³⁶ “I will not omit to say and repeat where such a teaching leads when launched with great

³² Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, pp. 168, 172, 267, 289.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 289.

³⁵ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 290.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

velocity among the ranks of the **ignorant and cruel** faithful; it is not just a matter of ‘unjust acts of violence’ which they condemned, with their lips, but a matter of the most despicable consequences of crimes, of murder, of genocide, of great massacres, or monstrous ‘pogroms.’”³⁷ “It’s too simple to believe, or to let it be believed, that the worst acts of verbal violence are harmless, as if they did not risk generating the worst acts of actual violence. Between the mouth which outrages and the arm which strikes, which is the more culpable? Let us therefore leave St. Agobard, in spite of the apologists, his part and the weight of his responsibility.”³⁸ “And so, by a methodical infiltration, a Christian man, who is not an angel, is irresistibly led to dream of punishment, vengeance and blood. If the occasion comes, whether it be the crusade, the plague or famine, or held back anger, accumulated in the bottom of hearts, easily reinforced in the popular belief by absurd calumnies inherited from paganism (the accusation of ritual homicide), the anger explodes, and there is always some fuse to set it off, and there follows the thousand and one “pogroms” of the Middle Ages, which pious eloquence and theological knowledge will know how to elevate to the plan for “providential punishment” and “divine vengeance.”³⁹ “To maintain the contrary requires an inveterate and lunatic partiality, or blind obedience to a tradition, which in any case, as we know, is not ‘normative,’ [and] which should not then be imposed as a rule of thought even on the most docile son of the Church.”⁴⁰ In reality, it is a matter of a lively tradition, **infinitely harmful**, of a **criminal tradition** of which I have already spoken, and which leads—I repeat it—to Auschwitz and other places where six million Jews were murdered just because Jews!” [...] This is a disgrace not only to the German people, but to Christianity. Without centuries of Christian catechesis, preaching and **vituperation**, the Hitlerian catechesis, propaganda and vituperation would have been impossible.”⁴¹ “How can we forget that Christianity, especially from the XIth Century onwards, has practiced against the Jews a policy of debasement and ‘pogroms’ which has lasted, among some Christian nations, up to the contemporary era, of which we still see today the survival in very Catholic Poland, and of which the Hitlerian system is nothing more than an atrociously perfected copy? Until the Christian churches and peoples will have recognized their initial responsibilities, and until they will have the keen desire to retract them, anti-Semitism will retain its virulence. Not long ago the Archbishop of York noted that there exists in Great Britain a latent anti-Semitism which is spreading everywhere, and the contrary would be really surprising, as the permanent source of this latent anti-Semitism consists of Christian religious teaching in all its forms.”⁴²

³⁷ “Pogrom” is a Russian word that means “destruction.” It was a matter of popular uprisings with massacres and looting against Jewish minorities accused of usury, fraud, ritual murders, frequent especially in Central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century.

³⁸ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 285.

³⁹ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, pp. 365-508.

⁴⁰ “Per sostenere il contrario, si richiede un inveterato e forsennato partito preso, o la sottomissione cieca ad una tradizione che tuttavia, come si sa, non è “normativa,” che non dovrebbe dunque imporsi come regola di pensiero nemmeno al figlio più docile della Chiesa.” The purport and logic of this sentence are to me inscrutable.

⁴¹ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, pp. 365-508.

⁴² Cf. J. ISAAC, *Jésus et Israël*, p. 572.

V

WHAT JULES ISAAC DEMANDED FROM THE COUNCIL

After reading the books by Jules Isaac, **Josué Jéhouda, Rabi, Elijah Benamozegh** (1822-1900), **Albert Memmi** and other contemporary Jewish authors, one understands very well the maneuver and trap set for the councilar Fathers. “**The Church**, writes Jules Isaac, **is the only culpable party; the Jews are completely innocent**, free from any responsibility, which falls thence uniquely on the Church, whose teaching is the inexhaustible source of anti-Semitism, the same anti-Semitism that has fermented throughout the centuries until it led to the cursed place: Auschwitz. Only the Church, therefore, must make an **act of reparation amending and rectifying its millenary teaching.**” Following these remonstrances, Jules Isaac passed on to the practical realizations. He asked, or rather demanded, from the Council the following assurances:

- The condemnation and the elimination of all racial, religious or national discrimination against the Jews;
- The modification or deletion of liturgical prayers regarding the Jews, and in particular those of Good Friday;
- The assertion that Jews are not responsible for the Death of Christ, for which the responsibility falls on humanity;
- The removal or annulment of those Evangelical passages which mention the crucial episode of the Passion, and in particular that of St. Matthew whom Jules Isaac coldly treats as a liar and falsifier;
- That the Church confess to shoulder all the wrongs that for two thousand years persist in a state of latent war between Jews and Christians and other men;
- The promise that the Church would assume in the future, in a definitive way, an attitude of humility, contrition and forgiveness toward the Israelites, or, finally, that it would make every effort to repair the wrong it caused, by amending and rectifying its traditional teaching according to his directives.

VI

THE “JUDEO-CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP”

Despite the insolence of his *ultimatum*, and despite his virulent indictment against the Gospels and the teaching of the Fathers of the Church—which finds its foundation in the very words of Christ—Jules Isaac met right in Rome, among modern prelates, powerful support, starting with the many followers of the “Judeo-Christian Friendship.” In the edition of January 23, 1965, the weekly [newspaper] *Terre de Provence (Land of Provence)*, published in Aix, published a report of a talk given by **Msgr. Robert de Provenchères**, Archbishop of that diocese, about the “Judeo-Christian Friendship” at the inauguration of the “Avenue Jules Isaac,” an event which had taken place that same morning. The article in question began in these terms: “A dense crowd was stuffed into the Ziromski amphitheater to hear the talk which Msgr. De Provenchères was about to give, as part of the ‘Judeo-Christian Friendship’ on the following theme: ‘The Councilar Decree on the relations between Catholics and non-Catholics.’ ‘The Deacon Palanque first of all recalled the moving ceremony which had taken place that morning at ‘Mount Saint-Eutrope’ in the presence of the mayor, Mr. Mouret, Mr. Schouraki and Mr. Armand Lunel, President of the Friends of Jules Isaac. At this meeting, which focused on the councilar *schema* of the 3rd session of the Council, the figure of Jules Isaac was once again recalled. Msgr. De Provenchères presented a first hand documentation, having himself participated in the Council. Later, expressing our gratitude for his *gesto* (*gesto*), one gave him the floor. Msgr. De Provenchères revealed how happy he was the evening of that memorable day of celebration to give his testimony, because the councilar work had procured him great joy. Speaking of Jules Isaac, he said that since their first meeting, in 1945, he held him in profound esteem, a respectful esteem that soon became tinged with affection.⁴³ The Councilar *schema* seemed to be the solemn ratification of that which was their conversation. The origin of this *schema* was due to a request by Jules Isaac to the Vatican, examined by more than 2,000 bishops. This initiative was taken by a layman and a secular Jew. Msgr. De Provenchères observed then that great historical acts (*atti*) often begin from some deeds (*fatti*) and become consecrated subsequently. So [...] the meeting of Jules Isaac with John XXIII was the sign of the nascent Judeo-Christian friendship. [...] Msgr. De Provenchères made afterwards a detailed report of the role played by Jules Isaac in Rome in the preparation for the Council. Then, Dean Palanque, thanking Msgr. De Provenchères, noted the role that the bishop of Aix had played for the successful path of this *Schema*.”⁴⁴ And since in this chapter we are treating the “Judeo-Christian Friendship,” it is very interesting to see with what haughty and contemptuous

⁴³ *My understanding of this passage is as follows: Msgr. De Provenchères first gives a formal informative talk about the Council (not about Isaac). This is the planned talk that everyone came to hear. Then, the others, in gratitude to him either for this talk or for his having participated in the Council (it is unclear to what *gesto* refers), ask him to give another talk (unplanned and less formal) about the Council; and it is in this second talk that “the figure of Jules Isaac” appears.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Terre de Provence*, on January 23, 1965.

irony Josué Jéhouda, one of the spiritual leaders of contemporary Judaism speaks of it:⁴⁵ “The current expression ‘Judeo-Christian,’ which points to the Jewish origin of Christianity, has even falsified the course of universal history because of the confusion which it provokes in minds. Abolishing in fact the fundamental distinctions between Jewish messianism and the Christian one, it joins together two radically contrasting notions. Putting emphasis exclusively on ‘Christian’ to the detriment of ‘Judeo,’ it makes disappear the Monotheistic messianism, a valid doctrine on all levels of thought, and reduces it to a purely confessional Messianism, preoccupied like Christian messianism with the salvation of the individual soul. The term ‘Judeo-Christian,’ though it designates a common origin, is without doubt **the most lethal concept**. It is in fact based on a ‘contradiction in the adjective’ (*contradictio in adjecto*) and has also falsified the course of history. It unifies, in a single expression, **two irreconcilable concepts**, and wants to demonstrate that there is no difference between day and night, between hot and cold, or between black and white; it therefore contains a ruinous confusion on which, however, you are trying to build a civilization. Christianity offers the world a **limited messianism** [...]; Even Spinoza, the thinker farthest from the historic monotheism of Israel, writes: ‘Regardless of what some churches say about the assumption of human nature on the part of God, I confess that theirs is an absurd language, like that of those who affirm that a circle is covered by [or: dressed in] the nature of a square.’⁴⁶ The dogmatic exclusivity that Christianity professes must finally stop [...] **Christian stubbornness** claims to be the sole heir of Israel and propagates anti-Semitism. This scandal sooner or later must end; first there will disappear and end the climate of lies in which Anti-Semitism is enveloped.”⁴⁷ This is called speaking clearly; but let us continue: “**Christianity is based on a faith which has emerged from a myth** which is tied to Jewish history, and [which is] not [tied] to a precise tradition transmitted by written and oral Laws, as is the case for Israel.”⁴⁸ “Christianity yet claims to bring into the world the ‘true’ messianism which seeks to convert all pagans, Jews included. But as long as the monotheistic messianism of Israel lasts, even to the virtual state (*anche allo stato virtuale*), the Christian messianism is presented as that which it actually is, that is, an **imitation** disappears in the light of authentic messianism.”⁴⁹ It seems that Christians have given evidence of a certain **naïveté** while throwing themselves with enthusiasm into the trap of “Judeo-Christian Friendship,” but we fear that in this case, once again, they have not been entirely innocent victims of Talmudic duplicity. When Jules Isaac and the other leaders of Judaism came to Rome, they were urged not to recall these passages found in their writings; they spoke of Christian charity, ecumenical unity, of common biblical affiliation, of the “Judeo-Christian Friendship,” of the fight against racism and of the martyrdom of the Israelite people. They had won the game since the 1,651 bishops, cardinals, archbishops and

⁴⁵ Cf. J. JÈHOUDA, *L'antisémitisme, miroir du monde* (“Anti-Semitism, mirror of the world”), Ed. Synthésis, Geneva 1958.

⁴⁶ It is no coincidence that Jéhouda cites in its favor the Jewish philosopher **Baruch Spinoza** (1632-1677), whose relations with the Jewish Cábala, and the consequent continuous return to cabalistic teaching in his theses, are known to all the scholars of this special area (cf. for example, J. MEINVIELLE, *Influsso dello gnosticismo ebraico in ambiente cristiano* (*Influence of Jewish Gnosticism in Christian Environment*), Sacra Fraternitas Aurigarum in Urbe, Rome 1988, pp. 184-189).

⁴⁷ Cf. J. JÈHOUDA, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

⁴⁸ Cf. J. JÈHOUDA, op. cit., p. 132.

⁴⁹ Cf. J. JÈHOUDA, op. cit., p. 155.

councilar fathers approved the reform of the Catholic teaching according to the directives of Jules Isaac. The leaders of Jewish organizations did not tell the Pope and the Bishops: “Your Evangelists are patented liars. Your Fathers of the Church are counterfeiters and unjust because they spread worldwide hatred against Jews and have unleashed the barbarism of the ‘Beast.’ They were the precursors of Hitler and Streicher, and are therefore the true [persons] responsible for Auschwitz and the six million Jewish victims of Nazism.” These accusations can be read clearly in the books by Jules Isaac, books that are for sale in all the bookstores, but, as it seems, the Councilar Fathers did not read them, as they have never read the books of Jéhouda, Benamozegh, Rabi, Memmi and so many others. No, Isaac and the heads of the major Jewish organizations did not say with Josué Jéhouda, one of the masters of contemporary Jewish thought: “Your monotheism is a **false monotheism, a bastard and falsified imitation of the only true monotheism**, the Jewish one, and if Christianity does not return to Jewish sources, it is condemned without remedy.” They did not say with the glory of contemporary Jewish thought, the rabbi of Livorno, Elijah Benamozegh: “**The Christian religion is just a false religion calling itself divine.** For it and the world there is no other way of salvation than to return to Israel.”⁵⁰ They did not say with Memmi: “**For Jews, your religion is a blasphemy and a subversion. For us, your God is the devil, that is, the essence (*concentrato*) of evil on earth.**”⁵¹ They did not say with Rabi “Conversion of the Jew to Christianity is tantamount to **treason** and to **idolatry** because it implies the **great blasphemy**, that is, the belief in the **divinity of a man.**”⁵² They were very skilful not to frighten Rome by clearly expressing their thought, and succeeded in having on their side a certain number of prelates. All this is a rather unusual story. How is it possible that several progressive bishops who, in their opposition to traditional Catholicism (qualified as “fundamentalism” [*integrismo*]), have come to avail themselves of all weapons, including those poisoned by Jewish hatred against Christians? Nevertheless, one can rightly maintain that they constitute a minority. But then, how do you explain the success of the Jews in this quandary? It owes its good fortune to the two following reasons:

The majority of the councilar Fathers did not know the role played by Jewish organizations and Jules Isaac in the preparation of the *Schema*; they, moreover, had never read the works of the latter.⁵³

Taken as a whole, the councilar Fathers understood poorly (*conoscevano male*) the Jewish question, and easily let themselves be fooled by the Jewish disquisitions, very

⁵⁰ Cf. E. BENAMOZEGH, *Israël et l'Humanité*, Ed. Albin Michel, Paris 1961; the first edition of this goes back to 1914.

⁵¹ Cf. A. MEMMI, *Portrait d'un juif* (“Portrait of a Jew”), Ed. Gallimard, Paris 1962.

⁵² Cf. RABI, *Anatomie du judaïsme français* (“Anatomy of French Judaism”), Les Editions de Minuit, Paris 1962.

⁵³ *However, copies (in Italian or Spanish) of the book *Plot Against the Church (Complot Contra La Iglesia)* were, “following the first Italian edition, distributed in the Fall of 1962 among the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council.” So we are told in the first paragraph of the “Introduction to the Spanish Edition” of this book; the same point is made in the last paragraph of the “Introduction to the Italian Edition.” Cf. <http://www.catholicvoice.co.uk/pinay>.

ably presented with subtle and fearsome (*sottili e temibili*) “arguments” of the kind made by Jules Isaac.⁵⁴

However it happened, the maneuver was conducted with great skill, and succeeded. The vote confirms this: 1,651 Fathers believed that the story of the Passion, in the version of Jules Isaac, was to be preferred to that of St. John and St. Matthew. These 1,651 bishops, archbishops and cardinals admitted that the teaching St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose and St. Agobard had to be amended and adjusted according to the orders to Jules Isaac, about whom the Jewish writer Rabi recently said: his book *Jesus and Israel* has been “a successful weapon of war against that particularly harmful Christian teaching,”⁵⁵ namely, the codified teaching by the above mentioned Fathers of the Church. By changing the liturgy of Good Friday and eliminating, among other things, the prayer of *improperi*, these 1,651 bishops gave support to Jules Isaac, who, when speaking of this prayer, said: “It is not easy to say what in it is the most striking, its beauty or its iniquity.”⁵⁶ Apparently, the bishops believed that the iniquity of this prayer exceeds its beauty.⁵⁷ In short, the vote on November 20, 1964, behind the **appearance of Christian charity**, of reconciliation of Churches and of **ecumenical unity**, is another step on the path of **yielding**, of **abandonment of traditional Christianity**, and of the **return to Judaism**.

⁵⁴ *For such a “subtle and fearsome” argument by someone other than Isaac, cf. “Rabbi Heschel sent a statement to the Vatican stating, in part, ‘Since this present draft document calls for “reciprocal understanding and appreciation, to be attained by theological study and fraternal discussion,” between Jews and Catholics, it must be stated that spiritual fratricide is hardly a means for the attainment of “fraternal discussion” or “reciprocal understanding.” A message that regards the Jew as a candidate for conversion and proclaims the destiny of Judaism is to disappear will be abhorred by Jews all over the world and is bound to foster reciprocal distrust as well as bitterness and resentment.’ Heschel concluded with these now-famous words, ‘**As I have repeatedly stated to leading personalities of the Vatican, I am ready to go to Auschwitz any time, if faced with the alternative of conversion or death.**’”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nostra_Aetate#_note-3

⁵⁵ Cf. RABI, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 309.

⁵⁷ Here is the text of the incriminated Holy Friday prayer, eliminated from the Roman Missal by John XXIII: “We pray also for the perfidious Jews, in order that the Lord our God remove the veil from their hearts, so that they too with us recognize our Lord Jesus Christ”; one should note that etymologically the term “perfidious” (from Latin *pérfidis*) means “without faith,” and therefore, far from being an offensive word, it corresponds well to the Catholic doctrine expressed in this beautiful prayer. The same fate has befallen the prayer in the Preface of the Mass of the Third Sunday of Lent according to the Ambrosian rite: “Oh, how perfidious and stubborn is the evil race (*stirpe*) of the Jews, who boast of their carnal descent at the same time as they refuse to recognize the Father who is in heaven. O ungrateful people, many times already hit by exemplary punishments, who disdain the Father when present without knowing how to keep the absent [Father] (*che disdegna il Padre presente senza saper conservare l’assente*). It is quite just that we exult loudly, for having obtained the place and the kingdom of the Jews, thanks to Christ, our Lord.”

VII

JUDAISM'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

In fact, behind the appearance of an ecumenical search for a reconciliation between religions and other equally seductive words, it was a matter of demolishing the bulwark of Catholic Tradition, defined by Josué Jéhouda as “the ancient fortress of **Christian obscurantism.**” According Jéhouda, there were three attempts at the “straightening out of Christianity,” which “sought to cleanse the Christian conscience of the miasmata of hatred”; three attempts at the straightening out (*raddrizzamento*) of Christian theology which had become suffocating and paralyzing; “three open breaches in the old fortress of Christian obscurantism.” In fact, three important stages in the destruction of traditional Christianity:

- **The Renaissance;**
- **The Protestant Reformation;**
- **The French Revolution.**

In these three major movements, Jéhouda perceives the wonderful work of dechristianization to which each of them, in various forms, has powerfully contributed. He does not tell us this so brutally, since he is very skilful at handling the artifices of language, but that bursts forth clearly from his writings, as we will show with some quotes extracted from his works: “The Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution represent the three attempts at straightening out the Christian mentality to put it in tune (*mettersi al diapason*) with the progressive development of reason and science, and while dogmatic Christianity continued to make itself obscure, the Jews were gradually emancipating themselves.” Speaking of the Renaissance, he maintains: “We can affirm that if the Renaissance had not deviated from its original course to the detriment of the dualized Greek world (*a svantaggio del mondo greco dualizzato*), we would have had without a doubt a world unified by the creative thought and doctrine of the Kabbalah.”⁵⁸ We shall now proceed to the Reformation: “With the Reformation, which exploded in Germany fifty years after the end of the Renaissance, the universality of the Church was destroyed. Before Luther and Calvin, John Reuchlin,⁵⁹ a

⁵⁸ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, op. cit., p.168. [*I interpret this statement to mean that originally the Renaissance was inclined to reject the Greek and Catholic duality of (mortal) body and (eternal) soul, but later “deviated” from this line of thought and adopted this same duality. Cf. Section X below where Elie Faure expresses the Jews’ desire to destroy “the Classical Greco-Latin and Catholic edifice.”]

⁵⁹ “With John Reuchlin, the humanist of Pforzheim (nephew of Melancthon, and a partner of Luther in the Protestant Reformation), the struggle for the introduction of the ‘Cabala’ into Christianity gains strength. (He) made use of his knowledge of Hebrew, as a key that helped him to enter the wonderful world of cabalistic science. [...] Reuchlin published two books: ‘De verbo mirifico’ (‘On the Miraculous Word’) and ‘De arte cabalistica’ (‘On the Cabalistic Art’). [...] Rightly fearing a new prevalence of Judaism, the Dominican Santiago Hochstratten, professor of theology and researcher (*inquisitore*) in Cologne, took on the job of refuting John Reuchlin in his destruction of the ‘Càbala.’ In it, he proved that the cabalistic

disciple of Pico della Mirandola, shook the Christian conscience by maintaining from 1494 on that nothing was greater than the Jewish wisdom [...]. With the return to ancient sources, Reuchlin advocated also the return to Jewish sources. Finally, he had taken revenge on the convert Joan Pfefferkorn, who was calling loudly for the destruction of all 'Talmuds' existing in circulation. The new spirit that was to revolutionize the whole of Europe [...] appeared with regard to Jews and the 'Talmud' [...]. However, not without surprise, we found among the protestants as many anti-Semites as among Catholics." In short, Jéhouda concludes, "the Reformation was the revolt against the Catholic Church, which itself is already a revolt against the religion of Israel."⁶⁰ Speaking of the French Revolution, Jéhouda affirmed: "The third attempt at the straightening out of the Christian position is accomplished after the failure at unification of Christianity through reform, it was driven by the French Revolution [...], which marked the beginning of atheism in the history of Christian peoples. This Revolution, having assumed a quite anti-religious attitude, extended into Russian Communism, and contributed powerfully to the dechristianization of Europe."⁶¹ And to crown this straightening out of the Christian mentality, there came **Karl Marx** (1818-1883) and **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900). "In the nineteenth century, two new attempts to make healthy (*risanare*) the mentality of the Christian world were made, respectively, by Marx and Nietzsche."⁶² In truth, "the deep sense of history is the same in every age, and it's a struggle, tough and open (*sorda e aperta*)⁶³ between the forces working for the progress of humanity and the forces that cling to crystallized values, obstinately trying to maintain what exists to the detriment of what must yet come [into being]."⁶⁴ For Jewish thinkers, the conciliar reform was supposed to constitute a new stage on the road to the abandonment, the **yielding** and the **destruction of the Catholic Tradition** (*Tradizionale cattolica*),⁶⁵ emptied little by little of its substance.

doctrine was not in fact supportive of Christian dogmas, but rather denied them, and that Reuchlin's books were teeming with erroneous propositions" (cf. J. MEINVIELLE, *op. cit.*, pp.164-165).

⁶⁰ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, pp.169-172.

⁶¹ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, pp.170-172.

⁶² Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, p.187. The real name of the Jew Marx was **Mordekhai Levi**.

⁶³ **sorda e aperta* The basic meaning of the adjective *sordo* is "deaf"; but it also carries several other senses ("dull" and "muted" of sounds; "insensible" and "indifferent" of people; "secret" and "hidden" of anger; "prolonged but not intense" of suffering), none of which seems to me particularly appropriate to juxtapose in this context with *aperto* ("open"). The translation "tough" is my best guess.

⁶⁴ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁶⁵ *I take "*Tradizionale*" in the Italian text as a misprint for "*Tradizione*."

VIII

ONLY THE MONOTHEISM OF ISRAEL IS OF DIVINE ESSENCE

Actually, it was a matter of a new episode and a new battle with the context of the millennial Judeo-Christian clash. Here's how Jéhouda, Rabi, Benamozegh and Memmi depict for us this clash: "Christianity—Jéhouda tells us—stubbornly refuses to consider Israel as its father on the spiritual level [...]. To believe that Christianity is the 'fulfilment' (*pienezza*) of Judaism, that it is its culminating point, or that Judaism has been completed by Christianity is (*significa*) to corrupt in the root (*in radice*) universal monotheism [...]. Now is the time when it will be necessary to effect the indispensable purification of the Christian conscience by means of the doctrine of Jewish universal monotheism."⁶⁶ "Christian anti-Semitism, while calling itself messianic, claims to replace the messianism of Israel with the faith in a crucified God who assures to every faithful personal salvation. Abasing Jewish messianism by putting it at the level of paganism, Christianity aims to convert all Jews to a **reduced messianism** [...]. But as long as the monotheistic messianism of Israel shall last, even only in a virtual mode, the Christian one will always appear as what it is: **an imitation tottering in the light of authentic messianism** [...], and anti-Semitism will continue as long as Christianity refuses to face its true problem, which is due to the **betrayal of monotheistic messianism**."⁶⁷ "**Christian stubbornness** claims to be the sole heir of Israel and advocates anti-Semitism. Sooner or later this scandal must end; first there will end and disappear the climate of lies which surrounds anti-Semitism."⁶⁸ Let us hear now Elijah Benamozegh, one of the masters of contemporary Jewish thought: "If Christianity agrees to revise its thought about Judaism, it (*esso* = Judaism) will always be the true religion of the Gentiles."⁶⁹ "The religion of the future must be based on some positive or traditional religion, wrapped in the mysterious prestige of antiquity. Now, among all the ancient religions, Judaism is the only one that claims to possess the religious ideal for the whole of humanity, because the work of Christianity is nothing but a copy which must be put before the original (*una copia che dev'essere posta davanti all'originale*) [...]. As it is the uncontested Mother, it is the more ancient religion which will become the newest [...] in front of Christianity [...] **with its claimed divine origin and its infallibility** [...]. To replace an authority which declares itself infallible and which is born only in year one of the Christian era or of the Muslim Hegira [...], we must find another **much more serious** infallibility which, beginning with the history of man on earth, will end with him."⁷⁰ "The dreamed-of reconciliation among the first Christians, as a precondition for the Parusia or the final advent of Jesus Christ, the return of the Jews into the Church, without which—all the different Christian denominations are in agreement on this—the work of Redemption remains incomplete, this return, we say, will be effected, as has been expected, but in the

⁶⁶ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁷ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-160.

⁶⁸ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁶⁹ Cf. E. BENAMOZEGH, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁷⁰ Cf. E. BENAMOZEGH, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

only serious, logical and sustainable way and above all in the only way profitable for mankind. The unification of Judaism and the religions that have emerged from it will be realized, and, according to the words of the last of the Prophets, seal of Veggenti—as the doctors call Malachi—there will take place the cordial return of the children to their Father.”⁷¹

⁷¹ Cf.. E. BENAMOZEGH, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

IX

SUPPOSING THAT JESUS CHRIST HISTORICALLY EXISTED

Let us now pass on to Rabi: “Among Jews and Christians—Rabi said—there is an insurmountable divergence. It concerns Jesus. **Assuming that he historically existed, for the Jew he is neither God nor the son of God.** At most, you might say, as a last concession, the theory of Joseph Klausner: **neither Messiah**, nor prophet, nor legislator, nor founder of a religion, nor Tanna⁷² nor Pharisean rabbi; for the Jewish nation, Jesus is a great moralist and an artist in parables [...]. The day in which it will be freed from the tales of the miracles and from mysticism, Jesus Christ’s book of morals (the Gospel; N.d.R.) will be one of the most precious gems of Jewish literature of all time.”⁷³ “Sometimes, I happened to imagine, in the last century, the last living Jew on his feet in front of his Creator, as is written in the ‘Talmud’; the Jew, bound by oath, remains on his feet all the way from the Sinai. I imagine therefore this last Israelite who will have survived the outrages of history and the attractions of the world. What he will say to justify his resistance to the attritions of time and the pressure of men? I hear him; he says: **‘I do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.’** It is logical that this profession of faith be scandalous for a Christian. But is the profession of faith by Christians not perhaps scandalous for us Jews? For us [...] the conversion to Christianity entails the **greatest blasphemy**, namely, the belief in the divinity of a man.”⁷⁴ These writings are relatively recent. We return now to two thousand years ago and re-read the story of the Passion: “Then those, who had arrested Jesus, led him to the high priest Caiaphas, where were already assembled the scribes and the elders [...]. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin sought false testimony against Jesus, to put him to death; but they did not succeed in finding any, although they had made in advance many false witnesses. Finally, two of these presented themselves and said: ‘He declared: ‘I can destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’” And the high priest arose and said: ‘You answer nothing? What is this that they testify against you?’ But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him: ‘I beseech you, by the living God, that you tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’ ‘You have said it,’ Jesus replied, ‘I indeed say to you: henceforth you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God and come on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? Now you have heard the blasphemy; what think ye?’ ‘He is guilty to

⁷² *The *tannaim* (Hebrew: תנאים, singular תנא, *tanna*) were the [Rabbinic](#) sages whose views are recorded in the [Mishnah](#), from approx. 70-200 CE. The period of the *Tannaim*, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 130 years. It came after the period of the [Zugot](#) (“pairs”), and was immediately followed by the period of the [Amoraim](#).

The root *tanna* (תנא) is the [Talmudic Aramaic](#) equivalent for the [Hebrew](#) root *shanah* (שנה), which also is the root-word of *Mishnah*. The verb *shanah* (שנה) literally means “to repeat [what one was taught]” and is used to mean “to learn.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tannaim>)

⁷³ Cf. RABI, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁷⁴ Cf. RABI, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

death!”⁷⁵ (Matt. 26:57-66). After two thousand years, mutual positions remain unchanged, and the Judeo-Christian clash remains irreducible.

⁷⁵ This is how St. Luke describes the same incident: “Hardly had the day begun when the council of the elders of the people met with the chief priests and scribes; they led him before the Sanhedrin and said to him: ‘Are you the Christ, tell us.’ Jesus replied: ‘Even if I tell you, you will not believe me; if I ask you questions, you will not answer me. But from this moment on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.’ They all said, ‘You are then the Son of God.’ And he said to them: ‘You say it yourselves: I am he.’ They answered: ‘What need do we still have of testimony? We have heard it ourselves from his mouth’” (Luke 22:67-71). St. Mark’s account is much more similar to that of St. Matthew.

X

ISRAEL AND THE REVOLTS OF THE MIND⁷⁶

The Jewish antagonism has been manifested in a continuous—even if underhanded—manner in the two thousand year course of the Judeo-Christian clash. “The Jew—**James Darmesterer** tells us—was the champion of reason against the mythical mind; in the intellectual night of the Middle Ages, only in it did he think that he could find asylum. Provoked by the Church which wants to persuade him, after having tried in vain to convert him by force, he undermines with irony and perspicacity some of her controversies, and, like no one else, knows how to find the vulnerabilities of her doctrine. The understanding of the Sacred Books, and even more the terrible sagacity of the oppressed, are his means to discover those points. He is the doctor of the incredulous; all the revolts of the mind are presented to him in the shade or under an open sky. He worked in the immense forge of curses of the great Emperor Frederick and of the princes of Swabia or Aragon; he fashions together this deadly arsenal of reasoning and irony that he offered then to the skeptical of the Renaissance and the libertines of the Seventeenth Century. And the sarcasm of Voltaire is none other than the heavy echo of a word murmured six centuries earlier, in the shade of the ghetto, or, even earlier, (in the Counter-Gospel of the I and II Century) at the time of Celsus and Origen, and at the very origins of the religion of Christ.”⁷⁷ For his part, **Elie Faure** (1873-1937), whose works were recently reprinted and highly publicized, talks about “this sarcastic snickering (Heine, Offenbach) towards all that is not Jewish [...]. His ruthless analysis and his irresistible sarcasm acted as vitriol.” Following the course of our history, “it is easy to follow the trail, and although it is not possible to quantify the dissemination of Jewish thought, after its passage we can take note of its destructive power. **Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Marcel Proust, Charlie Chaplin** opened up to us, in all senses, the prodigious streets which demolish the narrow lanes (*strettoie*) of the Classic Greco-Latin and Catholic edifice in which for five or six centuries the burning doubt of the Jewish soul was waiting for opportunities to destroy it. For it is necessary to note that its [sc. that of the Jewish soul] own skeptical pole appears to emerge for the first time from the complete silence that surrounds the action of the Jewish mind in the Middle Ages, silence in the middle of which, from the Renaissance onwards, some voices burst forth, and which [sc. silence] today is annihilated by a great din.” Yes, “is it possible to consider the Jew as anything other than a demolisher armed with corrosive doubts who, since the times of the Greeks, has always opposed Israel to the sentimental idealism of Europe? [...] His historic mission is clearly defined, and perhaps forever. It will be the main factor of each apocalyptic period, as it was at the end of the ancient world, and as it will be at the end of the Christian world in which we live.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ **“Israele e le Rivolte dello Spirito”*; *spirito* can of course mean “spirit” as well as “mind.”

⁷⁷ Cf J. DARMESTERER, cited in A. SPIRE, *Quelques juifs* (“Some Jews”), Ed. B. Grasset, Paris 1928.

⁷⁸ Cf. E. FAURE, *L’ame juive* (“The Jewish soul”); cited in *La question juive vue par vingt-six éminentes Personnalités juives* (“The Jewish question as seen by twenty-six prominent Jewish Personalities”), Ed. EIF, Paris 1934.

XI

JEWISH IMPERIALISM

Citizens of the proud British Empire, at that time at the height of its power, who on the morning of February 9, 1923 read the newspapers, certainly did not give any attention to a few lines appearing in the Hebrew weekly *Jewish World*, fearsome lines because prophetic for those who knew how to grasp their meaning. The *Jewish World* said: “The dispersion of the Jews has not made them a cosmopolitan people. In fact, this [sc. the Jews] is the only truly cosmopolitan people, and, as such, it must act—and in reality it does act—as a **dissolver** of any distinction of race and of nationality. The great ideal of Judaism is not that one day Jews will gather in a corner of the earth for separatist purposes, but that **the entire world will be imbued with Jewish teaching**, and then in an universal brotherhood of nations—in reality, a **vaster Judaism**—all the separate races and religions will disappear. They [...] go even further. With their literary and scientific activities, with their supremacy in all sectors of public activity, they are preparing to gradually melt (or merge: *fondere*) thoughts and systems which are non-Jewish or which do not correspond to the Jewish models (*stampi*).”⁷⁹ “Already on the horizon burns the dawn of the ‘Our Day,’” wrote one of their modern prophets amazed by the vision of their near triumph.⁸⁰ The messianic dream can take many different forms, but the final goal remains unchanged: **the triumph of Judaism, Jewish law and the Jewish people**. Under the universalist appearance, it is, indeed, a matter of Jewish imperialism which intends to govern and enslave the world. Elie Faure writes: “The Jewish people, right from the time of Jesus Christ—**still not accepted by his people**—believed itself the people chosen as an instrument of a higher power. With respect to other nations, it still today believes itself the chosen people because representative of a supernatural force. [...] **For it the beyond there** [sc. the afterlife] **does not exist**. However often it has been spoken about, Israel has never believed in it. The pact of alliance is only a bilateral contract quite precise and positive. If the Jew obeys, he does so only in order to have dominion over the world.[...] Israel is a terrible realist: it wants recompense down here on the earth for those who do good and punishment for those who live in evil [...]. Even in the darkest moments of their history—and of universal history—these eternal losers (*vinti*) preserve in their faithful hearts the promise of an eternal victory.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Cf. *Jewish World*, February 9, 1923. At the *British Museum*, I was able to verify personally the correctness of this citation (N.d.A.).

⁸⁰ Cf. A. NOSSIG, *Integrales Judentum*, Ed. Renaissance-Verlag, Berlin 1922.

⁸¹ Cf. E. FAURE, *art. cit.*

XII

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST: OBSTACLE FOR JEWISH MESSIANISM

But to achieve this goal, **it is necessary to abolish Christianity**, which represents an insurmountable obstacle on the path to Jewish imperialism. Until the coming of Jesus Christ, the position of Israel was simple and clear: according to the Prophets, by the grace of Yahweh, Israel was called upon to govern the world; if the people of the servants of Israel had complied with the divine requirements, the time would have come when Israel would have reigned over all the earth. But here unexpectedly in Galilee was born a Prophet: A Prophet—Man and God—even He from the real race of David, and thence son of the Covenant. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17). And as proof of his mission, he performed a series of unprecedented miracles; the fascinated crowds follow him...

But—in this is the enormous gravity of his mission—he interprets the promise in a completely new and different sense, so as to destroy the proud Hebrew edifice by spiritualizing and universalizing it. The realization of the promises was transferred from the material to the spiritual plane; surpassing the national level, it was no longer solely addressed to the Jews, until that moment the only beneficiaries, but was extended to the entire world... It was no more a matter of the supremacy of a race or a nation, or the triumph of a privileged nation: the chosen people were reduced to the rank of an ordinary people, one people among others.

The religious pride and nationalism of the Jews did not permit this leveling; it was contrary to the messianic promises, and put off irremediably the moment of the submission of all the kingdoms of the earth to Israel. The heads of the priests and the Pharisees could not tolerate such a blasphemy and such an attack on their privileges, and thus to get rid of that dangerous agitator, delivered him to the Romans and had him condemned to death. But Jesus Christ rose from the dead and His preaching spread in the ancient world with the speed of flame. Jews denounced His disciples to the Roman authorities as rebels against the empire; Rome persecuted them incessantly, offering them as food to wild beasts, burning, skinning and crucifying them. Nevertheless, the Christian wave proceeded without respite, winning over the senior imperial power; then suddenly the world wavered and inclined in favor of the Church of Christ. On October 28 of the year 312, the battle of Ponte Milvio took place, just outside of Rome, which saw **Constantine** against **Maxentius**; the former was the winner, while the latter drowned in the waters of the Tiber. “One battle was enough to change the organization of the world and its religious outlook (*l’assetto del mondo e l’aspetto religioso*)... Constantine’s victory is rightly seen as the starting point of a new era, that of the Christian Empire... Starting from that moment, for reasons that have not yet been fully clarified, the winner—Constantine—tied his destiny to that of the Church of Christ. A great and surprising revolution, deplored by some and exalted by others, it remains one of the most important of human history; the reign of Constantine is only the prelude to a phenomenon

that continues and is completed during the chaotic and extraordinary period which was the fourth century. But the unheard-of luck of the Church had to entail the ruin of the synagogue. For this reason, the fourth century was a fatal epoch that resulted in a future of anguish, grief and disaster.”⁸² The Israelites have never accepted and will never accept this defeat. The rupture was total and definitive; the collision now became inevitable (*irriducibile*) on both sides. “If the Jew is right, Christianity is nothing but an illusion. If instead the Christian is right, the Jew is, under the best of hypotheses, an anachronism or at most the image of that which no longer has reason to exist. For the Jew, Christianity represents the renunciation of a monopoly, and the rejection of a “nationalist interpretation”—**not to say racist**—of the “election”; it [sc. Christianity] is the opening up to the human brotherhood, and, at the same time, a big “amen” said to God, and to everything God decides: it is the acceptance of suffering and death, the renunciation of the proud I [...]. As far as I know, Christianity has never submitted any other people to so difficult a test. Because for no other people has the transition to Christianity meant, in the more or less long term, its expiration as such. For no other people were the traditions, which would have to be abandoned in order to embrace the faith in Christ, so intimately tied to all the manifestations of belonging to a nationality. And here we touch on the other reason (or excuse), which justifies the Jew’s ‘no’ to Christ, who did not correspond to the idea that the Jew had made for himself of the Messiah and of salvation.”⁸³ Pretending to be the true ‘Israel’—Israel according to the spirit and not according to the despicable flesh—Christian theology wants to replace Israel permanently. Too bad, however, that Israel has not disappeared and will not disappear.”⁸⁴ “Christianity is concerned essentially with the salvation of every individual person. Judaism aims instead at the salvation of the house of Israel, the only one that can permit the salvation of the seventy nations of the universe.”⁸⁵ “Israel appears (*si presenta*) in history as a peculiar (*particolare*) people because it is simultaneously religion and nation, without any possibility of separating these two factors, something possible for all other peoples. Without a doubt, Israel is also a race, not in the biological sense, as racism has alleged, but in the ethical sense (*senso etico*) of history.”⁸⁶ “The way in which the Christian faith has gained its independence, had to quickly and inevitably drag it into a war against Israel ‘according to the flesh,’ since the Church proclaims itself the only Israel and the only Israel according to the spirit. But is the full gravity of this claim well grasped? It is worse than the defamation of the Jewish people, and means trying to take from them the very spark of life and the sacred fire, and even their very soul. Moreover, it means to remove Israel from its place in the sun and take from it its privileged status in the empire, because such are the close ties and the interweaving of the spiritual and temporal.”⁸⁷ We then return to the same point: to overthrow the Christian religion, born from her womb (lit. breast), is a vital necessity for Israel, which views it as her most formidable opponent; Jules Isaac repeats this continually in his writings. The next passage, an extract from one of his relatively recent works, well shows the state of mind of most contemporary Jewish

⁸² Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, pp. 155-156.

⁸³ Cf. F. FEJTO, *Dieu et son juif* (“God and his Jew”), pp. 34-190-192.

⁸⁴ Cf. J. JÉHOUDA, *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Cf. J. ISAAC, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 150.

youth: “We live enthusiastically awaiting new and unprecedented times, and we believe we see already precursory signs: **the agony definitely started by the religions, the families and the nations. We nourish only anger, irony and contempt for the laggards of history who take root in these residues** [...] Alas! Whether it is that we are completely wrong or that we have returned afterwards, in a period of reflux,⁸⁸ or that I have simply gotten old, I see myself forced to admit that these residues had the tenacity of couch grass and have persisted to remain as deep structures of the life of the peoples and their collective being [...]. Apparently, we were condemned, and for a long time, to accept the religions and the nations. Again, I do not judge, but I limit myself to observe.”⁸⁹ In his book *Le malheur d’Israël (The Misfortune of Israel)*, the Jewish writer **A. Roudinesco** provides a wonderful response to all these curses filled with anger: “Survival down to our days of this small community, despite persecution and unprecedented suffering, has been called the ‘Jewish miracle.’ This survival is not a miracle, but rather is **a disgrace. The real Jewish miracle is the spiritual conquest of humanity through Christianity. The mission of the chosen people ended a long time ago.** Those who, among the Jews, hope one day to be able to complete Christianity with a renewed messianism ignore the essential laws of the evolution of humanity.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ * “o che siamo rientrati dopo, in un periodo di riflusso.”

⁸⁹ Cf. A. MEMMI, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁹⁰ Cf. A. ROUDINESCO, *Le malheur d’Israël* (“The Misfortune of Israel”), Ed. de Cluny, Paris 1956.