# CHRISTIANITY AND ANTI-SEMITISM<sup>1</sup>

THAT fervent Catholic, Léon Bloy, wrote in one of his works: Suppose that there were people round you continually speaking of your father and mother with the utmost contempt, who had nothing to offer them but insults and offensive sarcasms, how would you feel? Well, this is just what happens to our Lord Jesus Christ. We forget, or rather we do not wish to know, that our God made man is a Jew, nature's most perfect Jew, the lion of Judah, that his mother is a Jewess, the flower of the Jewish race; that the Apostles were Jews, as well as all the Prophets; and finally that our whole sacred Liturgy is drawn from Jewish books. In consequence, how may one express the enormity of the outrage and blasphemy of vilifying the Jewish race?

These words are addressed to Christians, who ought to understand them. In truth, the superficiality of Christians who believe they can possibly be anti-semites is prodigious! As a matter of fact, Christianity, in its human origins, is a religion of messianic and prophetic type, the spirit of which, as utterly foreign to Greco-Roman spiritual culture as to Hindu culture, was introduced into world religious thought by the Jewish people. The 'Arvan' spirit is neither messianic nor prophetic; to await the coming of the Messiah-the irruption into history of forces beyond history-is foreign to it. Moreover, the fact that German anti-semitism has evolved into anti-Christianity must be considered a highly significant symptom. A wave of anti-semitism has broken upon the world, casting away the humanitarian theories of the nineteenth century and daily threatening to submerge new lands. In Germany, in Poland, in Rumania, in Hungary this movement is triumphant, and it is taking shape even in France, the country most fully saturated with liberal ideas, where it had suffered a defeat after the Dreyfus affair. The first alarming signs of the disease can be detected in the publication of Celine's book, a veritable call to a pogrom; and they are also betrayed by the fact that a growing number of Frenchmen reproach Léon Blum with his origins, even though he is one of the most honest, idealistic and cultured of political figures in the country. Anti-semitism is coming to the surface of political life with glaring obviousness, and the press gives us a daily account of this process.

The Jewish question, however, is not simply one of politics, economics,

1. Translated from the French version of Princess Theodore, by Alan A. Spears, and approved by the author before his death.

law or culture. It is incomparably more profound than that, a religious question with a bearing upon the fate of mankind. It is the axis about which religious history turns. How mystifying is the historic destiny of the Jews! The very preservation of this people is rationally inconceivable and inexplicable. From the point of view of ordinary historical estimates it should have vanished long ago. No other people in the world would have survived the fate which has befallen it. By a strange paradox, the Iewish people, an historic people par excellence who introduced the very concept of the historic into human thought, have seen history treat them mercilessly, for their annals present an almost uninterrupted series of persecutions and denials of the most elementary human rights. Yet, after centuries of tribulation which have strained its powers to the full, this people has preserved its unique form, known to all and often cursed. No other nation would have resisted a dispersion lasting so long without in the end dissolving and disappearing. But, according to God's impenetrable ways, this people must apparently be preserved until the end of time. As for trying to explain its historic destiny from the materialist standpoint, this is to court certain defeat. Here we touch upon one of the mysteries of history.

The Jewish problem may be viewed from many sides, but it assumes a particular importance, as a problem essentially bound up with Christianity. In the past anti-semitism was fomented and propagated above all by Christians, for whom, precisely, it should have been least conceivable. Did not the Middle Ages witness the persecution and annihilation of the Iews by the feudal knights who thus avoided having to pay their debts! There can be no doubt that Christians bear a heavy burden of sin in regard to the people of Israel, and it is upon Christians that the duty of protecting them now rests. We know that this is already the case in Germany. It is not without value to recall, in this matter, the fact that Wladimir Solovyev believed the defence of the Jews to be one of the important missions of his life. For us Christians the Jewish problem does not consist in knowing whether the Jews are good or bad, but whether we are good or bad. For it is more important that I should consider this question with reference to myself rather than to my neighbour, since I am always inclined to accuse him. It must be sadly confessed that the Christians have not risen to the height of the revelation they have received, and have in general been considerably inferior to the Jews.

The Christians and their Churches have a great many things to repent. We have just spoken of the Jewish problem, but we could also mention the social problem, that of war, that of their perpetual compliance with the most hideous regimes, and so forth. The question of inherent Jewish mperfections is of no importance in principle at this point. It is futile to deny them, for they are many. There is in particular a Jewish self-importance which is irritating, but it can be psychologically accounted for: this people, always oppressed by others, has sought compensation in the idea of its Election and its high mission. In the same way, the German people, oppressed during the years after the war, found reparation in the idea that it formed a superior race with a vocation to dominate the world. Likewise the proletariat, the most oppressed class in capitalist society, finds a remedy for the effects of this humiliation in the conviction of its own messianic mission, namely to emancipate humanity. Every individual, every class or people, defends itself as best it can against the inferiority complex.

The Jewish people is a strange people reconciling the most diametrically opposite qualities: Within it the best traits blend with the lowest, the thirst for social justice with the tendency towards gain and capitalist accumulation. The Russian people, because of its polarised nature and its messianic consciousness, shows certain similarities to the Jewish. Antisemites freely invoke the fact that the Bible bears witness to the cruel spirit of the Hebrews. But what people could flatter itself upon exemption from cruelty? Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians-did they display greater forbearance? Did not the Greeks, to whom we owe the greatest culture in the world, show certain imperfections? In truth, every people must be judged by its greatest heights, not by its lowest depths. The German people must be judged by its great philosophers, its mystics, its musicians, its poets, not by its Prussian Junkers and its shopkeepers. In the same way, the Jewish people, which has a religious vocation, must be judged by its prophets and its apostles, and not by its money-lenders. Everyone is free to have his national sympathies and antipathies. Some people harbour an acute dislike for the Poles or the Rumanians. It is scarcely possible to remedy this state of affairs, for love cannot be ordered and it is difficult to overcome an unconsidered antipathy. At any rate hatred for a whole people is a sin in the same category as murder, and he who harbours it in his heart must bear the responsibility.

The question we are dealing with here is still more complex in its reference to the Jews, for they cannot be classed as a national entity. They lack many accepted attributes of a nation, and on the other hand they possess traits which cannot be classified as national. Israel is a people with an exceptional religious destiny, and it is this which determines the tragic element in its historic destiny. How could it have been otherwise? God's chosen people, who at one and the same time gave us the Messiah and rejected him, could not have an historic destiny like that of other peoples. Their descendants are forever strengthened and united by the exclusive possession of their religious destiny. Christians are bound to acknowledge

the Election of the Jewish people, for their religious doctrine demands it, but they do so most often against their will and try as much as possible to forget it.

We are living in an age of ferocious nationalism, of the worship of brute strength, of a veritable return to paganism. By a strange turn of events, we are witnessing a process diametrically opposed to the christianising and humanising of human Societies. Nationalism should be condemned by the Christian church as a heresy, and the Catholic Church is not far from pronouncing this verdict. But nationalism is not the only force which should be held responsible for implanting anti-semitism. To find the roots of it one must dig more deeply. There undeniably exists a mystical fear of the Jews. True, it is experienced by creatures of a fairly low cultural level who can be easily infected by myths and legends of the most debased variety, but it plays havoc none-the-less for that.

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How paradoxical the Jewish destiny is! In fact we see them passionately seeking an earthly kingdom, without, however, possessing their own State, a privilege enjoyed by the most insignificant of peoples; they are fired with the messianic idea of their Election to which are related, however, contempt and persecution at the hands of other people; they reject the Cross as a temptation, while their whole history presents nothing but a perpetual crucifixion. Perhaps the saddest thing to admit is that those who rejected the cross have to carry it, while those who welcomed it are so often engaged in crucifying others.

Anti-semitism takes many forms which can evidently exist together and support each other. I shall not pause over the anti-semitic feelings of the average man, displayed in sarcasm, comical imitations and a contempt for the Jews whom he refuses to treat as his equals; although these do not play a minor part, they are in principle irrelevant, since they are generally unconnected with any ideology. It is in racial anti-semitism, the variety which is anyhow most widespread, that a real ideology appears. Germany is its classical cradle, and we find that even her most outstanding and famous men such as Luther, Fichte or Wagner felt hostile to Israel. This ideology holds that the Jews are an inferior race despised by the rest of humanity to whom they are themselves hostile. But, on the other hand, it considers this inferior race to be the strongest, eternally triumphant over all the others wherever free competition exists. Is there not a certain contradiction here?

Racial anti-semitism is plainly ruled out for the Christian, since it is inevitably barred by the universalism of his faith. This universalism, precisely, is the cause of the persecution of Christians in Germany, Christianity proclaimed that there was no longer Greek nor Jew. It speaks to the whole of humanity and to every individual irrespective of his race, his nationality, his class and his social position.

Not only racial anti-semitism, but racialism pure and simple does not bear criticism from three points of view: religious, moral and scientific. The Christian cannot accept it, for it is inhuman, it rejects the dignity and the value of man in admitting that he can be treated as an enemy who may be destroyed. Racialism presents the crudest form of materialism, singularly cruder than that of economic materialism. It corresponds to an extreme determinism and a final negation of spiritual freedom. Members of the outcast races suffer the fatal consequences of their blood and cannot hope for salvation. Economics depend upon ideas, not upon physiology and anatomy, and its determining factors are after all not conditioned by the shape of the skull and the colour of the hair. This racial ideology is dehumanised in a greater degree than proletarian ideology. From the standpoint of social class, in fact, a man may gain salvation by proceeding to transform his conscience, for example by adopting the marxist conception of the world. Even if he is by birth a bourgeois or an aristocrat he can hope to become a people's commissar. Neither Marx nor Lenin was a proletarian. From the racial point of view, however, the Jew can have no salvation; neither conversion to Christianity, nor even adherence to national socialist doctrine can help him in the least. Blood overrules any development of conscience.

From the purely scientific point of view racialism is yet again inconsistent. As a matter of fact, contemporary anthropology considers the very concept of race to be extremely dubious. Racialism is really founded upon mythology rather than upon science. The category of race depends not at all upon anthropology and history, but upon zoology and prehistory. History is only conscious of nationalities, the result of a complex intermixture of blood. The notion of the chosen Aryan race is a myth developed by Gobineau, a remarkable artist and highly sensitive thinker who intended to justify not anti-semitism but aristocratism; at any rate, his value as an anthropologist is more than debatable. The notion of the chosen race is a myth of the same order as that of the chosen class. But a myth can be very effective in practice; it can carry an explosive dynamic energy and move the masses to action, for they are not much concerned with scientific truth, nor with the plain truth either. We live in an era especially fertile in myths, but their quality, alas, is of a low order. The only serious racial philosophy to have existed in history is that of the Jews. The synthesis in which blood, religion and nationality were fused, the faith in a people's Election, the concern for racial purity, are so many ideas of Jewish

origin. I sometimes wonder whether the German racialists are aware of the influence they submit to. Racialism contains precisely no Aryan element. The Hindu and Greek Aryans were far more in favour of individualism. At the same time there is a profound difference between Jewish and German racial philosophies. The former is universal and messianic, while the latter is an aggressive particularism aiming to conquer the world. This racialism undeniably marks a lamentable relapse into barbarism and paganism.

There is also a form of anti-semitism which may be called political and economic, for here politics serve as the tool of economics. It is a particularly vile variety, since it springs from the idea of competition and the struggle for superiority. The Jews are accused of speculation and of self-enrichment at the expense of other peoples. Most often, however, it appears that those who accuse them reveal not so much a contempt for this kind of risky enterprise, as a desire to go in for it themselves and finally to triumph over the Jews. In these circumstances, it will be agreed that the argument loses something of its value.

Still more often hatred of the Jews corresponds to the need of having a scapegoat. When men feel unhappy and connect their personal misfortunes with historic ones, they try to make someone responsible for it. This state of mind does not of course do honour to human nature, but man is so constituted that he feels relief and satisfaction when he has found a culprit whom he can hate and on whom he can take reprisals. Now nothing is easier to exploit, in men whose thought is crude and credulous, than the culpability of the Jews. The emotional soil is always ready to receive the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy, of the secret forces of Jewish freemasonry, etc. I think it beneath my dignity to refute at this point the authenticity of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' for any man who has preserved a rudimentary psychological sense realises, in reading this counterfeit document, that it is nothing but a shameful falsification by the detractors of Israel. Moreover, it can now be considered as proved by the police that this document is a fabrication from beginning to end. I sometimes happen to meet men who try to blame someone for every iniquity and are ready to attack the Jews, the Freemasons, etc. When they ask: 'Well, then, whose fault is it?' 'What!' I reply: 'Whose fault? You and I are mostly to blame.' This accusation is the only one which seems to me worthy of Christians.

Besides I find something humiliating in this fear and hatred of the Jews; the result is that people regard them as very powerful, and think themselves unable to stand up to competition with them. The Russians were inclined to believe that they were weak and powerless when they possessed an immense State with an army, a Secret Service and a police force, and they used to regard the Jews, who were deprived of elementary human rights and persecuted, as invincible in the struggle. There is something childish in this. The pogrom is not only a shameful and inhuman thing: to me it is a sign of terrifying weakness and incompetence. In fact, if we return to the source of anti-semitism, we will find a confession of lack of ability, for how are are we to interpret the regrets we hear expressed that Einstein who discovered the law of relativity, Freud and Bergson are of Jewish origin, if not as the resentment of men themselves devoid of talent? These reactions contain an element which is pitiable. As I see it, there is only one way to fight against the alleged Jewish domination in science and philosophy, and that is to get on with research ourselves, to make great discoveries ourselves. Here we can only fight by producing our own creations, for the realm of culture is that of liberty. Now liberty is a test of powers. And it would be humiliating to think that this liberty could always be in favour of the Jews, to the detriment of the others.

Another grievance against the Jews must be faced. They are accused of having laid the foundations of capitalism and socialism. But it would seem desirable as much for supporters of capitalism as for those of socialism to give some credit to the 'Aryans'. After all, one can't surrender everything to the Jews! Yet, indeed, it is they who have made all the scientific discoveries, distinguished themselves as eminent philosophers, founded capitalist industry, recruited the world socialist movement, concentrated into their hands public opinion, the press, etc. I avow that as an 'Arvan' my self-respect is wounded, and I refuse to accept this point of view. I will pause to consider the creation by the Jews of capitalism and socialism. To begin with, if a reproof has to be formulated on both counts, no single person can utter it. Indeed, if the fact that the Jews founded capitalism is regarded as a virtue by supporters of that regime, their contribution to socialism is praiseworthy from the point of view of socialists. A choice must therefore be made between these two accusations. A well-known work by Sombart argues that the Jews played a predominant part in the birth of capitalism. Actually, European capitalism saw the light of day among Florentine merchants. None-the-less, that the Jews took an active part in its development is beyond question, likewise the fact that they amassed great sums of capital in their hands. Their particular qualities, developed in the course of history, counted for much in this process. If the Jews practised usury in the Middle Ages, it must not be forgotten that this was the sole profession permitted to them at the time. I think it an injustice to stigmatise the Jewish race for having created the figure of the usurer and the banker, while pretending not to know that it has created equally the model of the idealist, completely devoted to an idea, of the unworldly living entirely for higher purposes. Further, if we admit that

the Jews were active in founding capitalism, we can hardly deny that the 'Aryans' laboured eagerly in the same cause. Those who reproach the Jews with having begotten capitalism are not generally opponents of this regime, and their invective springs from a feeling of spite or envy, a desire to predominate in competition. It is curious to observe that Karl Marx, a Jew and a socialist, was in certain respects anti-semitic. In his article on the Jewish question, which worries a great many Marxists, he accuses the Jews of introducing capitalist exploitation. Thus Marx's revolutionary anti-semitism refutes the legend of the Jewish world conspiracy. Marx and Rothschild, though both Jews, are implacable enemies and could not co-operate in one and the same conspiracy. Marx fought against the power of capital, Jewish capital included.

The second allegation, to the effect that the Jews instigated socialism and have been the chief agitators of revolutionary movements, can apparently come only from those who feel no disdain for capitalism and would like to protect the regime. To this we shall reply that in all revolutions those elements which are wronged and oppressed, whether they be nationalities or classes, will always play the biggest part. That is why the proletariat has always raised the standard of revolt. For my part, I hold that their championing of a more equitable social order is to the honour of the Jews.

To tell the truth, all the attacks can be finally reduced to a single complaint: the Jews aspire to power and world domination. This reproach would have a moral meaning on the lips of those who abjured power and dominion. Alas! the 'Aryans' and the 'Christian-Aryans' whose faith exhorts them to seek the kingdom which is not of this world have always been infatuated with worldly supremacy. Not only have the Jews never had world sovereignty, but they have never had even a particle of sovereignty, while Christians have been in possession of mighty states and have pursued a policy of expansion and empire.

Let us now turn to the type of anti-semitism with a religious basis, the most serious type and the only one worthy of study. It is chiefly this variety that Christians once professed. It holds the Jews to be a race reproved and accursed, not by reason of the blood in their veins, but because they rejected Christ. Religious anti-semitism is, in fact, confused with antijudaism and anti-talmudism. The Christian religion actually is opposed to the Jewish in the form it took after the refusal to see the awaited Messiah in Christ. The Judaism which preceded Christ's coming, and that which succeeded it, are two distinct spiritual manifestations. A profound paradox must be observed in the fact that the divine incarnation, the assumption by God of human form, arose in the heart of the Hebrew people, for whom this mystery was even less acceptable than it was to the pagans. Indeed, the idea that God could become man seemed a sacrilege to the Jews, an assault upon divine power and transcendence. For them God is continually active in our human life, even in its slightest details, but he does not become unified with man, never fuses with him and could not borrow his likeness. There lies the gulf separating the Christian conscience from the Jewish. Christianity is the religion of God-humanity, and trinitarian, while Judaism is a pure monotheism. Indeed the chief reproach uttered by the Jews against Christianity is that it constitutes a betraval of the One God in whose place it puts the Trinity. Christians base their religion upon the fact that there appeared in history a man who called himself God, the Son of God. Now, to the rigid Jewish conscience, man can only be prophet or Messiah, but never God. The man who could take this title as his own is not the true Messiah. Here is the crux of the universal religious tragedy. The pagans had many god-men and men-gods; according to them the gods were always immanent in human and cosmic life. Moreover, they had no difficulty in admitting the incarnation; indeed it harmonised with their aesthetic conception of the world. It was not so with the Jews. Among them no man could look upon God's face and live. However, the question suddenly arose not merely of looking upon it, but of recognising it in human features. Worse still, the Jewish conscience was faced with a yet more insuperable obstacle. It had never conceived of a God other than great and powerful; now, as the highest temptation, it was offered a crucified God to worship. God's humiliation, willed by God himself, seemed a sacrilege, a betrayal of the ancient faith in the glory and majesty of God. These beliefs, hard-set and deeply rooted, gave rise to the rejection of Christ.

So throughout Christian history voices were raised to anathematize the Jews, guilty of having crucified Christ, and to assert that from then onwards they bore a curse, which they brought upon themselves when they allowed the blood of Christ to fall upon themselves and upon their children. Christ was rejected by the Jews because he was not the Messiah who should found the kingdom of Israel, but revealed himself as a new God, suffering and humiliated, preaching a kingdom not of this world. The Jews crucified Christ, Son of God, in whom the whole Christian world believes. Such are the arguments urged by the detractors of Israel who overlook the fact that their condemnations betray a serious omission. It is this: if Jews rejected Christ, Jews none-the-less were the first to follow him. Who were the Apostles, forming the first Christian community, if not members of the Jewish race? Why, then, see only the backslidings and ignore the virtues? The Jewish people cried 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' But haven't all peoples shown an extraordinary propensity to crucify God's messengers to them, their teachers and their great men? Everywhere

prophets have been stoned. The Greeks condemned Socrates, the greatest of their sons, to death by hemlock. Should we on that account curse all their progeny?

Besides, when we go a little further into the question we shall be forced to admit that the Jews have not been the only ones to crucify Christ. In the course of a long history, the Christians, or rather those who usurped the title, have by their deeds contributed to this torture. They have done so, among other things, by their anti-semitism, their hatred and their violence, their submission to the powerful of this world, their betrayal of Christ's truth which they have adjusted to their own interests. Well, it is better to renounce Christ openly than to use his name for opportunist motives while building one's own kingdom.

When Jews are cursed and persecuted because they crucified Christ, the principle of generic vengeance is accepted. This principle was inherent in the peoples of antiquity and so in the Jewish people. But this sort of vengeance is unalterably opposed to Christianity, for it contradicts the Christian idea of individual dignity and responsibility. Besides, Christian morality permits no vengeance of any sort, neither that aimed at the individual nor that which spreads and becomes transmitted to all the descendants. Vindictiveness is sinful, and it is right to repent of it. Descent, race, reprisals—all these notions are foreign to pure Christianity; they have been brought into it from outside and derive from the paganism of antiquity.

## III

The Jewish problem is connected with the historiosophic theme of the Second Coming. Does the kingdom of God belong exclusively to the other world, or may we await it and prepare its coming here and now? Christ said 'My kingdom is not of this world.' From these words it has generally been deduced that efforts aimed at bringing it about were in vain. It was sadly confirmed that our earthly city could not possibly be removed from the power of the prince of this world, although indeed the latter was highly venerated by professed Christians. Upon this notion was constructed the Christian state, in which no evangelical truth was realised. However, Christ's words may have another meaning; they may mean that the kingdom of God does not resemble earthly kingdoms, that its foundations are different, that its justice is diametrically opposed to the law obtaining here below. In this case the Christians would be wrong to submit to the prince of this world, wrong not to labour in promoting the justice of God's kingdom—not to take up the task of transforming this world.

Jacques Maritain, leader of French Thomism and defender of true Christian humanism, has written a remarkable article on Judaism which has been published in a collection of essays called The Jews. In it he makes an interesting distinction between the Jewish and Christian vocations. In his view the Christians welcomed the supernatural truth of Christianity in its relation to heaven, while they neglected the realisation of justice in social life. The Jews, on the other hand, rejected the supernatural truth of Christianity, while they appointed themselves the messengers of truth on earth, the promoters of justice in collective life. It is a fact that the idea of social justice was introduced to the human conscience chiefly by Judaism. The ancient Hebrew prophets were the first to demand truth and equity in social relations, the first to espouse the cause of the humble and the oppressed. The Bible gives us an account of a periodic redistribution of wealth, the aim of which was to avoid its being monopolised by one group and thereby to eliminate the radical distinction between rich and poor. The Jews, as we have seen above, took an active part in the world socialist movement, directed against the power of capital. The 'Aryans', for their part, easily came to terms with iniquity. Thus, in India, a caste regime, sanctioned by the religious conscience, was set up. In Greece, the greatest philosophers did not reach the level of condemning slavery.

Christians freely proclaim that the kingdom of God cannot be attained without the Cross. In this they are completely right. Everything on our sinful earth must be raised upon the Cross before it can enter the kingdom of God. But they delude themselves when they hold this axiom up against every attempt to clear the way for the achievement of Christ's justice upon this earth. The unfortunate thing is that the Christians, while accepting the Cross, should have neglected to put its message into practice; although the final realisation of God's kingdom is impossible in this world and implies its transfiguration, a new heaven and a new earth. Moreover, the representatives of historical Christianity, that is to say Christianity adapted to the conditions of this world, were not in the least disdainful of the things which are Caesar's. Quite the reverse: they acknowledged them as their own and consecrated them. Now Caesar's kingdom was just as far removed from ordinary human justice as from Christian justice, and neither equity nor humanity was known to it. Such were, in the past, the 'Christian States', the Christian theocracies, as they came into being both East and West.

The current objection expressed by the Jews against Christianity is tha the Christian faith cannot be realised, and that those who profess it have proved this only too well. This faith demands a morality so high that its laws are often in conflict with human nature. To support their argument the Jews point to Christian social life, so unlike that advocated by Christ, and confront Christianity with their own faith which can be, and has been put into practice. Salvador, an eminent French Jewish thinker and scholar of the mid-nineteenth century who wrote one of the first lives of Jesus, developed this theory. Rosenzweig, a notable Jewish religious philosopher who, with Martin Buber, translated the Bible into German, formulated the difference between Judaism and Christianity in a curious way. According to him the Jew is destined by his religion to remain in the Hebrew world of his birth and should confine himself to improving and perfecting his Judaism. He is not required to abdicate his nature. This is the reason why the Jewish faith can be easily achieved. Now the Christian is by nature pagan; in order to carry out the precepts of his faith he has to withdraw from the world to which he belongs, repeal his nature, and break with his original paganism. This is what makes the Christian faith so difficult to apply in practice. We are reduced to inferring from these assertions that the Jews, in short, are the only ones who are not born pagans. In making this distinction Rosenzweig reaches a conclusion in favour of Judaism. For my part I think his assertions do honour to Christianity. The Divine Revelation is drawn from another world and naturally seems ill-adapted to this world, naturally requires an advance along the line of greatest resistance. Having said this, we must agree that the Christians have done everything to discredit their faith in the eyes of their adversaries. They have terribly abused the argument of its inaccessibility. They have drawn the most harmful deductions from the doctrine concerning human nature, invoking this in order to yield to sin and to contrive a system enabling them to adapt themselves to it. Constantin Leontyey, a very sincere and acute thinker, is in this respect especially instructive. He reduced Christianity to the salvation of the soul in the next world, to what he called 'transcendent egoism' and rejoiced because Christian justice could never be instituted on earth, for this achievement would have been out of harmony with his pagan aesthetic. Borrowing Rosenzweig's terminology, we can say that Leontyev remained in his pagan world and only wished to withdraw from it with the help of monastic asceticism in order to save his own soul. We must admit that these errors have done the greatest harm to Christ's cause; but do not let us forget that they must be imputed to Christians and not to Christianity.

# IV

Can the Jewish problem be resolved within the bounds of history? That is a tragic question. Whatever the answer may be, the solution does not seem to lie in assimilation, the XIXth century's hypothesis which did honour to its humanitarian feelings. To-day, alas, we are not living in a century of mercy, and the events we are witnessing give us little hope of seeing the problem solved by the fusion of Jews with other peoples. Besides, we must observe that this isolation would have meant their disappearance. There is likewise no room for optimism on the ground that this riddle will be answered by the establishment of an autonomous Jewish state, in other words by Zionism. The Jews experience persecution even in the land of their forefathers. In any case this solution does not, in our view, appear to conform with the messianic mission of the Jewish people. Israel is and remains a wandering people. It might be said that its destiny is eschatological and will find no solution till the end of time. This hypothesis is not, however, a reason for Christians to cast off their human duties to the Jews. In the Apostle Paul we find mysterious words wherein he affirms that all Israel shall be saved. These words are variously interpreted, for some understand by Israel not only the descendants of the Hebrew people, but also Christendom, that is to say, the new Israel. At all events, it is very possible that the Apostle Paul had in mind the conversion of the Jews to Christianity and attached a particular value to this.

If we are witnessing the development of an insane anti-semitism we are also witnessing at the same time an increase in Jewish conversion to Christianity. This manifestation is of no interest to racial anti-semites for whom the material fact of blood overrides the spiritual fact of faith. But so-called religious anti-semites ought to see in this conversion the only possible solution to the problem. For my part I am inclined to think there is indisputable truth in this. At any rate, there should be no possible ambiguity upon this subject. There can be no question of the Christians' demanding that the Jews be converted by holding a knife to their throats and, should they refuse, of regarding the pogrom as a natural sanction; this would be nothing but a monstrous moral aberration utterly unrelated to faith. In that case, why not demand the conversion to Christianity of various 'Aryan' peoples who have remained aloof from it or who maintain a purely external Christianity? Conversion to Christianity is, moreover, an essentially personal thing, and it is doubtful whether we shall be able to confer upon the whole peoples the title of 'Christian' or 'Anti-Christian' in the future.

In order that Jews may become converted it is of the highest importance that Christians should make a start by getting converted themselves, that is by becoming real believers and not formal ones. Those who hate and crucify have no claim to be called Christians, whatever external forms they may adopt. For it must not be forgotten that professed Christians are the principal obstacle to the conversion of the East, to that of the Chinese and Hindus. The state of the so-called Christian world, with its wars, its national hatreds, its colonial politics, its oppression of the working classes, presents a formidable temptation. Those of the faithful who think they are the most just, orthodox and pious—it is precisely they who are held

in the greatest contempt by the lowly. Christians thrust themselves in between Christ and the Jews, concealing the true image of the Saviour from them. It is possible for the Jews to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, for this tendency already exists in the heart of Judaism; it is possible for them to declare the historical and religious error which resulted in the rejection of Jesus to be a fatal one. But in so doing they will recognise the crucified Messiah and, through him, the humiliated God.

The forms taken by present-day persecution of the Jews amount, from the Christian point of view, to a final condemnation of anti-semitism. In this fact must be found the virtue of Nazi racialism. This doctrine has deep roots in Germany, but they do not draw sustenance from Christian soil. To me this is some relief. I consider that anti-semitism based upon orthodoxy, the kind which is widespread for example in Rumania, is infinitely more harmful, for it compromises Christian faith and is not even worth seriously refuting. Anti-Semitism is fatally sure to develop into anti-Christianity; it must reveal its anti-Christian nature. That is what we are seeing to-day. Corresponding to this phenomenon, a process of purification is going on within Christianity itself; Christian truth is freeing itself from the accretions of the centuries. Thanks to these, Christian truth had been adapted to the regimes in power, to everyday social conventions, to a lower level of conscience and culture, and had been made use of for particularly worldly ends. This process of purification, which we owe partly to the fact that Christians are themselves being persecuted, has brought two forms of Christianity into relief: the old, tenacious of the acquired deformities, and the new, trying to get rid of them and to renew its promises of fidelity to Christ and to the evangelical revelation of God's kingdom. At all events, true Christians, free from all formalism, nominalism and conventionalism, will always be a minority.

The concept of the Christian state, which amounted to a serious lie and a depreciation of Christianity will henceforth exist no more. Christians will struggle in the spirit, and, by doing so, will be able to exert an inner influence which they had lost. To this end they will have above all to uphold justice and not power which enables them to prosper. It is they, precisely, who will have to come forward to defend the dignity of man, the value of every single human being, irrespective of his race, his nationality, his class and his position in society. It is Man, the human ideal, freedom of spirit that the world is attacking from every side. The attack is carried out partly through the anti-semitic movement which rejects human dignity and human rights. The Jewish question is a test of the Christian conscience and of its spiritual strength.

There have always been, and there always will be, two races in the world, and the boundary between them is more important than any other; crucifiers and crucified, oppressors and oppressed, persecutors and persecuted. It is superfluous to specify which one Christians should belong to. Of course, in history the roles can be reversed, but that does not alter the truth. To-day Christians are being persecuted as in the early centuries. To-day Jews are being persecuted as so often before in history. These facts are worth thinking about.

Russian anti-semites, living in a condition of morbid emotion and obsession, allege that the Jews rule Russia and oppress the Christians there. This assertion is deliberately false. It was not the Jews in particular who were at the head of militant atheism; 'Aryan' Russians also played an active part. I am even inclined to believe that this movement represents a specifically Russian phenomenon. A nobleman, the anarchist Bakunin, was one of its extreme representatives, as was Lenin too. It was precisely on the subject of Russian nihilism and the inner dialectic of its nature, that Dostoievsky made such sensational revelations. It is just as false to maintain that Jews are ruling Russia. Lenin was not a Jew, neither were the principal leaders of the movement, nor the masses of peasants and workers who ensured the triumph of the revolution. Those who were Jews have been shot or imprisoned. Trotsky has become the object of an unanimous hatred. It would be infantile to conceal the facts that the Jews played their part in this social upheaval, that they formed an essential element of the revolutionary intelligentsia, but this behaviour can be explained by their previous position as oppressed people. That the Jews took part in a fight for liberty I think a virtue. That they too resorted to terror and persecution I consider not the outcome of any specific Jewish quality, but of the hideous character of every revolution at a certain phase in its development. In fact, the Jews were by no means Jacobins in the terror, and besides, they form to day an impressive percentage of Russian emigrés.

I recall that at the time I was still in Soviet Russia the proprietor of the house I lived in, who was a Jew, used often to say to me: 'You don't have to answer for Lenin being a Russian, while I shall have to answer for Trotski being a Jew. Isn't that a flagrant injustice?' As things turned out, it was granted him to return to Palestine. As for me, I am ready to accept my share of responsibility for Lenin's coming to power. Unfortunately, facts do not exist for those whose thought is determined by resentment and befogged by emotions and crazy obsessions. Only a spiritual cure can open their eyes and give them a glimpse of realities in their true light.

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### NICHOLAS BERDYAEV